

On the uses of a liberal education

[Education](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Mark Edmundson's "On the uses of a Liberal Education" provides interesting points on why the liberal arts education is becoming part of consumer goods and how education is being advertised. Edmundson states different causes for this effect and comes up with consumer culture in society. He believes that the liberal art education is unsuccessful because Americans are attracted to consumption and entertainment. Education is becoming more about consumerism and not about students' education because it is what they are expected not because they want they choose to higher their education.

Edmundson's view on what education means that the students are learning and improving their education and not just doing it for consumerism. Students, according to Edmundson, are not being their individual selves. He believes that society is making students' part of "consumer culture" (280). Edmundson states, "that many of them have imbibed their sense of self consumer culture in general and from the tube in particular"(280). He stated that the student is influenced by the consumer culture and this happens because of television. Edmundson likes his students to be individual.

In his article he talked about a specific student named, Joon Lee. Joon Lee is a student that he and his colleague talk about when they see each other. Edmundson said that what he like about Lee is he, "decided to follow his interests and let them make him into a singular and eccentric man" (280). This quote shows how Edmundson admired this man because he did not let consumer culture change his personality. He stated that consumerism makes people step away from individuality because they are "stifled from trying to achieve anything original" (281).

Students wanting to fit in society do not allow them to learn and grow from their education. According to Edmundson the reason why students are not as passionate about their education anymore is because they are more worried about staying in consumer culture. Edmundson stated that, “ students worry that taking too many chances with their educations will sabotage their future prospects” (282). He says that students would not risk their future career to be original.

Edmundson also stated that, “ these will be the people who live for easy pleasures, for comfort and prosperity, who think of money first, then second, and third, who hug the status quo” (290). This goes back on why Edmundson believes why student would not risk showing their originality because money and staying part of the “ status quo” means more to them then a good quality education. Edmundson describes that the reason people passion for education is not to learn and grow from what they learn because they do not want to risk their future career.

Edmundson also believes that universities and teachers are also impacted by consumerism which is effecting the students’ education. Universities, according to Edmundson, are “ looking more like a retirement spread for the young” (283). He also talks about how universities in their brochures just show the best parts of the school which attracts the students. He states that this reason is because after the baby boomers left college “ turned to energetic promotional strategies to fill the empty chairs” (284). Edmundson is saying this is why it turned into consumerism.

He talks about how teachers try to please students by attracting them to class. He states, “ one of the way we’ve tried to stay attractive is by loosening up” (284). Edmundson is saying how teachers would do anything to attract their students, even if it means that they have to grade easily. He talks about how teachers teach to please but not to challenge (284). Since teachers and universities loosening up is giving, “ students more power over their teachers” (285). Edmundson believes that if universities and teachers were not affected by consumerism, students would be more passionate about their education.

Edmundson wants his students to be their individual selves because it creates their originality. He believes that the consumerism has an effect on students in being themselves because it does not encourage being original. He thinks that students should be like Joon Lee, because being original is a way to learn and improve education. Edmundson’s idea on consumerism is how it is effecting the student education because students do not want to be the odd person out, and also that schools have changed themselves to please consumer culture.