

# Discussing core academic courses research paper samples

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## **There Is More to Education than Reading, Writing, Mathematics, and the Hard Sciences**

### INTRODUCTION

There is no doubt that every single student who crosses the threshold of school should be taught the most basic academic skills. Students should be taught to read and write. They should be taught, at least, basic math. They should be introduced to scientific ideas and facts, like biology and chemistry classes. These foundational or core academic courses are important.

However, there is so much more to educating young human beings than making sure they know the facts and figures. The written word means little without the context of what is being said, regardless if it is said in a

grammatically correct way. Science would not exist if there first were not fairy-tales, magic, and the divine explanations that were once questioned allowing scientific theory to flourish. Without creativity, then mathematics would be bland and boring numbers on a page until you see that mathematics applied to the architecture of the Coliseum or the Taj Majal.

There is a false perception that, “ English, math, science, and social studies are treated as the only " important" areas of study” (Debate Organization 1).

The core subjects are important, but not at the expense of the arts, music, literature and humanities. It is as simple as that. Children who are solely

exposed to only the strict rule of language, the absolute answers of mathematics, and the hard, cold facts of science, will create overtly formal, overtly logical, and emotionally cold individuals who lack the feeling behind

how words can be used to change the world, art change perspectives, and

that there is still much to the world that even science cannot yet explain. It is

unwise and would be a great loss if the arts, music, literature, and the humanities were taken from them for good.

## **HISTORY**

“ Under the Constitution, education is a state and local responsibility” (Robbins & Bauerlein 1). However under the Jackson administration that began to change. Today we understand that every American citizen is provided the right to an education. Education in the United States has changed a great deal over the years since its founding. There have been times when have favored education only for the elite and wealthy. There have been times when it was race that determined who would be educated and who were not. There have been eras where it was gendered that denied women education. After World War I, “ vocational courses, languages and other subjects broadened the instructional menu into a smorgasbord” (Dillon 1). In the modern era, there are public, private, at-home, and online educational options available. Despite the options many education systems throughout the country, particularly in the public school systems, do not have the funding or staff to offer an array of subjects. When monies become tight, certain programs and subjects slowly but surely start to be cut from the curriculums. Schools feel compelled to focus on the most basic core academic courses, particularly at the elementary level, in order to make certain that, at least, these students will be literate, able to count, and have some scientific understanding of the world around us. Anything other than these subjects have been dubbed “ accessory,” non-essential,” or an “ activity,” as opposed to a form of education. Sadly the research done on

these issues has shown that children, preteens, and teenagers all are affected by the lack of those subjects, which may identify them as more essential than previously credited.

## **DISCUSSION**

How important is art? Art is the expression of emotion and ideas. It does not have to be mathematically accurate, or perfectly balanced in proportions, and it does not necessarily adhere to strict rules and scientific principles. So many students may make their way through core classes, but for many they have no passion for those subjects, but may have artistic talents.

Unfortunately in a core only school, these students would be overlooked. “ Schools should build on that {student’s} strengths” (Harrison 1). Art can be many things to many different people in so many different ways. Not allowing the young to be exposed to the arts and not encouraging them to engage in the arts is depriving them of a huge part of what it means to be a thinking, feeling, contemplative, and well-rounded human being. A world of education that provides solely the basic core courses are only providing half of the needed curriculum. Many famous artists throughout the United States and United Kingdom work hard to pursue the need the arts in schools. They explain, that students should receive a, “ rigorous and broad education they need to thrive (Henry 1). When people propose only teaching the basics it reflects the anti-Utopian outcomes associated with a science fiction worlds dedicated solely to science and technology. Of course, these students would never know that because they are not being exposed to literature, creativity or diverse perspectives on anything. Without creativity and deeper analysis

then “ history is a lifeless pile of facts having nothing to do with them or with today” (Martin 2).

How important is literature, humanities, and more controversial subjects like philosophy? They are incredibly important. One study has shown that in strict core class curriculums students would spend little time reading novels and or great work, they explained, “ they will spend most of their time reading complex, non-fiction informational texts (Golod 1). You can teach children the facts. You can teach them the figures. You can provide concrete, incontrovertible evidence. You can explain human being’s actions and behaviors as a response to biological imperatives and psychological cues, but the aspects that make them individual, unique, and diverse gets lost in the cold goal of conformity. There will be little expansion, no experiments with creative language, like poetry. Having knowledge alone does not represent intellectual growth, and certainly does not encourage or produce open-minded, tolerant, and creative thinking people necessary for such development and growth. It is not unlike teaching a child to swim in a bathtub and then throwing them into ocean. There is so much more to life and learning than those basic core subjects. They may know the moves, understand the concepts, but be completely overwhelmed when faced with the reality of swimming. This is what teaching the youths of the United States only the core subjects would produce. Generations of students who are unprepared for what being a human being in society really entails. While visual arts, theatrical arts, and music have all seen their programs and funding dwindle over time ending their ability to offer those programs.

Recently it has become apparent that the same thing is happening to sports

programs across the country. Of course, sports are not an art or a science. Learning a sport is not the same or as essential as the arts, literature, and humanities. It is more of an extracurricular activity. However, it does give some children the opportunity to learn team work skills, how to compete fairly, and provides aspects of being a person that is not directly going to be provided by spelling and grammar lectures and solving a mathematical equations. However, in schools that have already lost their arts programs, they at least allow them to keep the sports, for no other reason than to provide some alternative to constant facts and figures. There are even other subjects, like history, that is being eliminated in favor of sciences and mathematics. " " history is being put on the back burner or taken off the stove altogether in many or most schools, in favor of math and reading" (Dillon 1).

Teaching children that the world is a mass of absolute certainties, predictable and calculable at all times, is grossly negligent. Children who are focused solely on facts and figures as their compass to determining what is right and wrong, could lead them astray. I think that most people know that sometimes the right answer, the distinction between right and wrong, leads people to do things that are not have automatic and absolute outcomes and cannot always be predicted. Children who have no concept of that will be at a loss as to how to react to it. Socializing children has more to do with the time and activities spent participating with peers than with just the " book" learning. Math, grammar, proper spelling, and not even science can explain everything about how and why people interact with one another in the diverse ways that they do. This new, sudden and " intense focus on the two

basic skills is a sea of change in American instructional practice" (Dillion 1). One of the greatest issues, as mentioned previously, that has placed these essential artistic and creative programs is a lack of money to provide these opportunities. They defend their position , that when forced to choose, reading, writing, and arithmetic are considered priority over any other course they might offer. However, this implies that reading, writing, and arithmetic are in some way more important than these artistic courses. That is why they are titled " core" courses. But that, in the eyes of many, is a false premise. There are many people in the world that believe that what one says is more important than how it is said, and whether or not they can spell the words they are using correctly. Being a gifted speller, a grammatical whiz, and having a good memory for the hundreds of facts they have memorized is not the definition of humanity, but of machines, computers, and programmable or predictable factors. Human beings are more than just the amount of right answers we can calculate or information we can store away. " You need a balance in education and the arts are fundamentally a part of it" (Martin 1). No one is insinuating that children, preteens, and teens should not be taught the basic core academic subjects. However, it is not beneficial to overwhelm them with it, " I hate having two math classes in a row two hours of math is too much. I can't concentrate that long" (Dillon 1). These subjects are imperative as they set the foundation for all new things they will learn. But they are the primer or base coat. It's flat, drab, gray, and by itself is entirely uninteresting. However, once you start to add the colors, the shapes, the shading, suddenly it becomes something more. It can elicit feelings, thoughts, and ideas. Educating students are primarily core subjects is like

giving them the base coat, but not providing the colors and not telling them where they can find them. That said the ideal solution is to make greater efforts to raise money for school systems so that all public schools receive the funding necessary to provide all students and equal and complete education. This includes having access to all of the same programs, activities, and tools that others have access to in other parts of the country.

## **CONCLUSION**

Resolving this issue really comes in finding common-ground and crating balance. There is no doubt core subjects are necessary. The ability to read, write, and perform basic math are clearly not expendable topics, however they cannot ever be considered more important than other course and programs, like art, music and science. Art, music, great literature, poetry, theatre, dance are equally as important to getting a complete picture of the world. Great literature and art thinkers and philosophers, people who may not have been great readers, writers, or counters, but have achieved great things. Not because of their achievements in academic subjects, but the artistic, creative, and unique spontaneity that they individually possess; such gifts that cannot be taught, but felt. To deny students access, understanding, and experience in such unfairly dubbed " nonessential core academic" subjects, then you are denying the most important parts of their education, the parts that will make them the most human.

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