

All students in high school and college should be required to take at least two a...

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CLASSIC ENGLISH LITERATURE

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The issue whether all high school and college students should be required to take at minimum two years to learn a foreign language is debatable. There are individuals who argue against this requirement and some strongly advocate for this requirement. The two opposing parties have their reasons for either rejecting this requirement or supporting it.

Individuals who are against learning a foreign language in high school and colleges argue that it is a waste of time and money. Very few people realize or even care about the importance of learning a foreign language. The argument here is that, since every other person around the world is striving to learn English, then there is no urgent need of learning other languages. The opponents of learning foreign languages also claim that English is a global language. It is used by a large percentage of the countries in the world. This means that individuals only have to improve their competency in English to communicate effectively with individuals who speak a different language. Most students, teachers and parents alike thus claim that they only went through a foreign language class not to actually learn the language, but because it was a requirement for their courses in various capacities.

The opponents of college and high school students having to go through a two year foreign language class could not be so far from the truth as they are now. World languages are as important as English considering the value people put on their cultures. Language is the backbone of any culture in the world without which a culture would cease to exist. Just the same way

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English speakers give precedence to their language is the same way in which other people take their various languages with weight. Learning foreign language does not only mean that an individual master the mechanics of that particular language, but goes further to learn about the culture of the people who speak that particular language (Alvarez-Sandoval, 2005). This is a very good way of enhancing cross cultural understanding among individuals from different culture. In a cosmopolitan country like the United States of America, cross cultural understanding is extremely vital in enhancing and maintaining unity and cohesiveness amongst the individuals in various jurisdictions. English might be the prevalent language but it by no means overshadows the importance of other world languages.

There is not even one particular language that developed in isolation. This means that English is related to numerous other languages. For instance, English is related to French and German (Ruiz-Funes, 2002). The learning and mastery of these two languages aids a great deal in the mastery of English. Learning English as a language in itself therefore limits the level to which an individual can rise in competency and fluency. The learning of foreign languages German and French in particular would enable an individual to have a high level mastery of the English language.

Alvarez-Sandoval (2005) points out that most of American citizens are so ignorant of the world cultures. This is in part by the lack of interest many Americans have in other languages. Considering the importance other countries have on American sustenance, it is vital that Americans change their attitude and develop interest in the rest of the world especially by learning foreign languages. Countries in the world are interdependent. This

means that every other country in the world depend on every other countries despite the economic disparity. There is no country which can sustain itself in isolation. It is for this reason that Americans and especially those still in high school and college should learn foreign languages as the country is dependent on them to steer the county forward.

Learning a foreign language improves and individual competency in communication. For instance, in a cosmopolitan locale, a multi lingual individual would be more at ease than a person who only speaks a single language (Lally, 2001). Business transaction with individuals in foreign countries abroad would be made easier and effective for those with knowledge in at least more than one language. Since high schools and colleges are meant to shape individuals to adapt to the corporate society, it is therefore vital for the students to go through at least two years of foreign language class.

The national security is of vital importance to any country. America gives its natural security a high priority. To ensure that the country is well secured and that vital information are not leaked through espionage by using secret codes and foreign tongue, it is vital for Americans to learn foreign languages to be able to intercept such covert messages that would be detrimental to the countries security (Alvarez-Sandoval, 2005). Opponents would argue that if America needs such services, it can simply hire individuals from other countries. This would pose a greater threat and risk to the national security since the individuals hire may not be fully loyal to the country. It is therefore vital to train and hire American personnel. High school and college thus is the best level within which individuals can learn foreign languages to later fill

this important position.

Generally, learning a foreign language not only allows cross cultural communication and corporation but also is improves an individual cognitive ability. Psychologists assert that multilingual individuals are sharper than those who speak only a single language. Advantages of teaching foreign languages in high schools and colleges clearly outweigh those against not teaching. It is therefore necessary and important for high school and college students to go through at least two years of foreign language classes if not more.

References

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