

A well-rounded student: an analysis of core curriculum

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The implementation of a core curriculum requirement in the college system is highly beneficial because all of the standard subjects that comprise a common core curriculum, especially English, mathematics, science, and a foreign language, promote the development of fundamental skills. All colleges should enforce a core curriculum with the study of English composition and literature because of the important reading and writing skills students from these classes. Regardless of their majors, whether it is biology, mathematics, or business, all students need strong reading and research skills.

Although Colleen Pulley, writer for Helium Inc. argues, "students have obtained enough general knowledge in high school," English is a subject that is never fully mastered (Pulley). Even students who arrive at college with adequate writing skills benefit from taking college level English classes. Commenting on a national survey of the nation's colleges and universities, American Council of Trustees members, Laura Sampson, Tom Back, and Eric Markedly assert, "literature is fundamental training for critical thinking skills" (Sampson, Back ; Markedly).

They state that college courses are likely the last time students will read a book they do not choose themselves, which often proves to be a highly educational experience. Another subject required in an ordinary core curriculum is mathematics; the study of mathematics at the university level is absolutely critical because of its frequent application in daily life situations. Innumeracy at the college level benefits all, from areas such as the workplace to home finance to even evaluating statistics in the newspaper.

Even many entry-level jobs require employees to have a degree of math knowledge, so it is important to practice solving mathematical problems as much as possible. Even understanding the basic math functions can be advantageous in daily life situations. College level math courses help students further develop logic and critical thinking skills, problem solving skills, and the ability to identify and analyze patterns. Although high-level math classes such as advanced calculus are not technically used in everyday situations, the practice of calculus provides advantageous brain training.

Students who challenge themselves with a math course, learn to work hard to achieve their goals. Obtaining personal satisfaction by working hard helps students accomplish astounding feats in all areas of their life. The study is important because the information learned in such courses relates to everyday life. Although many students studied some form of science in high school, further developing this knowledge is extremely useful.

Colleen Pulley, writer for Helium Inc, states that students should not be required to "suffer through two years" of science classes if they have no relation to their educational goal; however, even if science does not pertain to a student's career goal, the study of science will increase this student's general knowledge and provide important advantages. Although Pulley makes a very valid point that forcing students to take core courses, such as the social and natural science classes, can often create financial strain because students have to pay for these courses, she does not consider the true and immense value of learning science.

By gaining any general knowledge about human physical, mental, or social health, students learn to pay attention to and care for their own personal health, a priceless skill. Even if students do not plan to work in healthcare, some level of consciousness of one's own wellness is critical for one to simply know when he or she should see a doctor or professional. Colleges should necessitate a core curriculum requirement that includes the completion of an exit level foreign language class because of the numerous benefits associated with learning a language.

Students who learn to speak and write a language that is not native to them expand their knowledge of a different culture because language is the most fundamental aspect of culture. Many studies show that students who study a foreign language often acquire better writing and oral communication skills. Learning a second language introduces tremendous job opportunities because many occupations and positions require fluency in more than one language. Only students who studied language in high school up to a high enough level can test out of this requirement, so all students under a core curriculum reap the benefits of mastering a foreign language.

In America in particular, the number of immigrants who have a first language other than English is rapidly increasing. In the very near future, these immigrant groups will likely make up the majority of the citizens in America. This sheer fact alone emphasizes the importance of learning a foreign language. Students who learn the language of the predominant immigrant group in their region of the country will better understand and gain insight into the different culture of their neighbors. Effort in learning foreign

languages, compassion, and multicultural armory seed the growth of America.

Although there are many arguments against the core curriculum, the many benefits outnumber the few potential negatives. An enforced core curriculum promotes students to think critically from a variety of disciplines. Students enrolled at a college with core requirements acquire better skills in reading and writing, master critical mathematical skills, and even better understand important historical events. All of the subjects required in a core curriculum promote the development of well-rounded students. Word count: 1, 503