Why the Core Has Failed

The core curriculum is assumed to be sound because few have read what dozens of nationally and internationally known and respected experts in the arts and sciences have said about why the core fails, or read the conclusion of studies by the Association of American Colleges and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, both of which give the core a failing grade.

As traditionally implemented, the core curriculum that organizes most of the middle school and high school day…

1. Fails to model the systemically integrated nature of reality

2. Compartmentalizes knowledge by subject, blocking the knowledge-creating relating process

3. Excludes important new fields of study

4. Has no mechanisms continuously adapting it to change

5. Ignores the human brain's way of organizing and integrating information

6. Has no agreed-upon overarching pedagogical aim

7. Ignores the enormous importance of unexamined cultural assumptions

8. Fails to prioritize information by level of relevance for learners

9. Paces instruction by clocks and calendars rather than learner understanding

10. Reflects cultural, regional, social class, ideological and other biases

11. Emphasizes learner ability to recall, neglecting dozens of higher-order thought processes

12. Is insufficiently concerned with probable, possible and preferable futures

13. Privileges secondhand information over reality and primary sources as resources

14. Neglects moral, ethical and other values issues

15. Privileges text interpretation and teacher talk over experiential "learning by doing"

16. Is unduly influenced by the priorities of manufacturers of instructional materials

17. Underestimates importance of learner emotions, sense of autonomy, and dialogue

18. Ignores possible learning enhanced by learner interests and abilities

19. Requires a degree of learner passivity at odds with adolescence

20. Perpetuates America's deep-seated, educationally destructive assumption that competition rather than the desire to know and understand is the primary motivator of human behavior.

Marion Brady's homepage: http://www.marionbrady.com

Quotes by scholars on core failure: https://www.marionbrady.com/documents/QuotesFragmentation.pdf

An annotated list of core problems: www.marionbrady.com/documents/20CoreProblems.pdf