

19 Colleges That Make You Think

Many college students today can easily skip the kind of classes that can truly make them stretch and think and give them a broad base of knowledge that will help them succeed in the world.

Students ignore courses in the classics, sciences, composition and Shakespeare in droves and instead stampede into business courses and other vocational classes. Sixty four percent of college students are pursuing vocational majors including business, education, sports management, park and recreation, information technology and homeland security, according to the authors of *Higher Education? How Colleges Are Wasting Our Money and Failing Our Kids - And What We Can Do About It*.

Students can get away with avoiding thought-provoking classes because schools let them. That is an on-going complaint of the American Council on Trustees and Alumni, which decries that fact that so many schools allow students to avoid substantive classes in a required core curriculum that can stimulate students and turn them into strong writers, thinkers and, frankly, better citizens. Instead what a lot of students do is take a mishmash of classes.

Colleges Flunking Out

In attempt to draw attention to this problem, ACTA just released its annual report card on how

schools are faring in requiring that their students take courses in critical disciplines. To receive an A, a school has to require students to take a class in at least six of the following core subject areas:

1. Composition
 2. Literature
 3. Foreign language
 4. US government or history
 5. Economics
 6. Mathematics
 7. Natural or physical science
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Only 19 out of more than 1,000 schools received an A on their report cards, while many flunked. In alphabetical order, here are the only schools that received a top mark on ACTA's report card:

1. Baylor University
2. California Polytechnic State University-San Luis Obispo
3. City University of New York-Brooklyn College
4. Gardner-Webb University
5. Kennesaw State University
6. Morehouse College
7. Pepperdine University
8. St. John's College (MD)
9. St. John's College (NM)
10. Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi
11. Thomas Aquinas College
12. Thomas More College of Liberal Arts
13. United State Air Force Academy
14. United State Coast Guard

15. United States Military Academy
16. University of Dallas
17. University of Georgia
18. University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma
19. University of Texas-San Antonio

Getting a Well-Rounded Education

Do I think you need to take a course in each of these classic liberal arts and science categories to emerge a thoughtful, well-rounded person.?

My short answer is yes though I'm not sure that taking a couple of intro foreign language classes is going to do much good if you have no intention of becoming fluent.

Looking back on my own college experience, I took courses - and in some cases multiple classes - in six of the categories. I was, however, thrilled when I arrived at the University of Missouri and learned that nobody was going to force me to enroll in a math class. Of course, years later I regretted not taking a college-level math course.

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