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ABSTRACT
                This paper addresses the issue of defining the
concept of core curriculum by first examining some of the literature
on the subject, discussing why there is resistance to defining
"core," citing common uses for the term "core curriculum," and
exploring the historical roots of core curriculum. Next, the paper
describes eight characteristics of core curriculum in general
education. These characteristics provide that: (1) student needs and
learning experience take precedence over subject matter; (2) courses
form a coherent whole, integrated either through disciplines, themes,
content, skills, ways of knowing, modes of teaching and learning, or
a combination of these; (3) core courses emphasize discussion and
group problem-solving; (4) learning is not restricted to the
classroom; (5) core courses offer the study of many types of original
materials, not only great books; (6) core course emphasize practice
over subject matter in the disciplinary arts as they are applied to
original sources; (7) core programs weave common elements together
for common reflection and discussion; and (8) almost without
exception, core curriculum involves a special program of faculty
development. The paper concludes that a short simple definition of
core curriculum is largely unobtainable, since the features that
distinguish core curriculum show a complicated network of
similarities characterized by many overlapping qualities. Contains 25
references and a list of works cited. (GLR)

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2

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No more important issue faces advocates of core curriculum than that of defining the concept. Professor John Norton observed about the last AAACC conference that "so much equivocation of terminology and concepts were occurring that crucial words were meaning almost anything and hence . . . nothing." "Define, define, define!" he admonished.[1]

Core in the Literature on General Education

Literature on general education also seems to avoid defining core. Nowhere in the fourteen essays titled In Opposition to Core Curriculum (1982), for example, does one find the term defined. The bone of contention, however, is clearly the "core curriculum of the 1950's," the monolithic set of a few traditional courses that all students were compelled to take (Hall and Kevles 15). In their 1979 Report on the Core Curriculum the Arts and Sciences, faculty at Harvard neglect explicitly to define core, though they refer to "intellectual experiences and skills [that] should be required of all students" and to a "mandatory core curriculum based . . . on 'distinctive ways of thinking that are identifiable and important'" (2).

Boyer in "The Core Curriculum: A Search for Commonness" (1980) speaks generally of the preministerial "core" of colonial times, such as that at William and Mary, which prescribed "Latin, Greek, rhetoric, logic, ethics, physics, Aramaic, Syriac, history, botany, mathematics, scriptures, Hebrew, and catechism" (277). What "core" might mean in a modern context is less clear, but Boyer stresses the aspect of commonality as its governing principle: understanding of common heritage, grasp of "common existence in a world of messages," acquaintance "with the roles, rights, and responsibilities of the principal [social] institutions," reflection on the meaning of vocation, and study of the images and "history of the future." Such a core, which all students would take in common, promises to end "our splintered dumbness" and help us "focus together on our common goals." "This," concludes Boyer, "is both the rationale and the urgency of the common core" (279-84).

In their essay A Quest for Common Learning: The Aims of General Education, Boyer and Levine return to the colonial model as one of two types of core presenting "two

sharply contrasting alternatives to the distribution approach." The second, less drastic, type is exemplified by the eight thematically linked courses required at St. Joseph's College. The authors observe that for both models each student must take the same subjects in the same fashion (Boyer and Levine 27-28).[2]

More recently, the Association of American Colleges report, A New Vitality in General Education (1988), bypasses "core curriculum" entirely, even though the report reads like a manifesto for core.[3] The important AAC project "Engaging Cultural Legacies: Shaping Core Curricula in the Humanities" embraces the term in its title. In describing the project for a special issue of Liberal Education, Carol Schneider emphasizes: "Each institution in the project is working to establish the core program as a common learning requirement for all its students" (4). But core itself is fleshed out no further in her introductory essay.[4] 50 Hours: A Core Curriculum for College Students is no more illuminating. Piecing together Lynne Cheney's commentary one infers that core means "a required course of studies," or "core of learning," dealing with "enduring human questions," "landmarks" of culture, and intellectual skills like writing (11-13).[5] Either the meaning of core curriculum is obvious or educators, as I believe, find it difficult to define the term precisely.[6]

Why Resistance to Defining Core

"To define" in Samuel Johnson's terms means "to explain a thing by its qualities and circumstances," "to circumscribe, to mark the limit; to bound." The act of circumscribing, however, sets in motion a dialectic of inclusion-exclusion: some options or uses for "core" will find themselves "out of bounds." Not surprisingly, this can have political consequences. In a recently formed organization, such as the AAACC, an effort to define core rigorously might trigger the mechanism of exclusion just at the moment when inclusion is the order of the day. A little compromising of conceptual integrity now may seem preferable to a rancorous debate over whose core program qualifies and whose should be excluded.

When early in the campaign, furthermore, a certain candidate for high political office threatened to "define" his challenger, his was not the rigorous pursuit of an essence, but an exercise of rhetoric intended, like curses and rites of exorcism, to remove his opponent from leadership in the body politic. Academics left and right, in a similarly vindictive spirit, have seized upon core to flagellate each other. John Searle comments: "the debate about the freshman 'core' course . . . tends to be shallow because it is presented as a conflict between the cultural left, on the one hand, and the somewhat oversimplified views held by Bloom" and others, on the other (38). Bloom's panacea for liberal education, "the good old Great Books approach," undoubtedly rubs much fur the wrong way (Closing 344). But the debate's shal-

lowness stems mainly from each side's eagerness to "define" the other negatively. In that effort Bloom's deliberate oversimplification allows core to be misrepresented by others as synonymous with great books and Western interests. Francis Oakley, for one, points a warning finger at the "core-curricular approach to general education, with its reverential canonization of selected ancient classics and other 'great books of the Western tradition'" (285).[7]

In national as in academic politics, the act of definition has lost its function to present of something in terms of its _sensus proximus_ and _differentia specifica_ to become instead just another rhetorical cudgel. Even so, we must acknowledge that even analytic definition of the proper, non-manipulative sort often fails to account for a term's full meaning. Catharine Stimpson observes, "The very phrase 'core curriculum' calls out for rhetorical analysis, for 'core' is a metaphor. As a metaphor, the word 'core' implies that we do possess a central body of knowledge, that there is a heart of the matter. . . ."[8] Tongue-in-cheek she goes on to associate "core" with "corps," suggesting that "a core curriculum guards and defends us from the monsters of marginality; from the trivial and trendy at our tables. Like its sibling word 'canon,' a 'core/corps curriculum' bristles with militancy" (27).

It is therefore not altogether a matter of laxity when reformers of general education seldom mention the term "core curriculum." Jerry Gaff in his recent New Life for the College Curriculum prefers instead a locution like "integrated general education."[9] I surmise the reasons: not only has the act of defining itself become discredited or is felt to be inadequate, but "general education" is not trapped like "core" in a thicket of negative associations or caught in political crossfire. And since advocates of core and reformers of general education both stake out their positions in opposition to distribution requirements, avoiding "core" keeps the two terms from competing for the same territory. Further, if core becomes the positively valued type of general education, among several types of lesser sheen, then the more general term is pushed into a zone of value neutrality, while the narrower, core, as the term of positive value, steals its thunder. Whether programmatic or merely descriptive, rigorous definition will inevitably tarnish core in the same manner, because different categories of core programs will emerge, some better than others. Perhaps Professor Norton's well-intentioned admonition, "Define, define, define!" ought to be observed only in the context of Disraeli's dictum, "I hate definitions."[10]

Common Uses for the Term "Core Curriculum"

Nevertheless, more is to be gained in seeking to define, I believe, than is lost, and in the absence of explicit definition, we may glean much about how "core" is actually used from the foregoing discussion. Core may be taken as the traditional regimen of colonial times or set,

like general education, over against requirements for the major and electives. It is often opposed to distribution requirements. It may be understood as intellectual experiences, skills, and ways of thinking important enough for every student. Many hold core to concern itself with enduring human questions, such as are incarnate in great books. To some critics core recalls the coercive requirements of the 1950s; to others it means exclusive focus on Western culture; yet others connect core with cultural literacy.[11] Chameleonlike, core curriculum assumes a variety of guises, now synonymous with general education, now any set of general requirements other than distribution, now a specially designed program of courses for every student, or now a non-compulsory integrated group of courses taken in common. This broad range of uses, many overlapping and some contradictory, suggest that core is a dynamic, open-ended concept only gradually emerging into focus. Perhaps more than other factors, the multiple meanings for "core" make it difficult to define descriptively.

The Historical Roots of "Core Curriculum"

Historical background may help locate common elements in this variety of uses of "core." We recall first the core curriculum movement in the schools during the 1930s and 40s. This effort chiefly to reform secondary education overlapped with the concurrent revival of general education in the colleges. The latter was intended to counter an overabundance of electives and to oppose early specialization, which hindered the formation of "any common ground or bond among educated people" (Rudolf 236, 256).[12] The ideals and motives behind core curriculum in the schools blended with those of general education, and the two terms became intertwined. In fact, it appears that the term "core curriculum" originated in the schools and only retrospectively came to be applied to the college domain.[13]

Second, the general education experiments of the 1930s, especially at Chicago and St. John's, were conceived as a rethinking of the medieval artes liberales for modern times, not as a resuscitation of the colonial curriculum, and certainly not merely as a great books design, though for many that has become the signature of core curriculum.[14] Core curriculum's distinctive profile, I would argue, reveals itself most clearly in terms of core's two points of origin--the general education movement as a rethinking of the trivium and quadrivium and the core curriculum movement in the schools.[15]

As Bossing defines it for the schools in his influential Principles of Secondary Education (1949), "the term core has come to be applied . . . to those types of experiences thought necessary for all learners in order to develop certain behavior competencies considered essential for effective living in our democratic society" (394). Bossing and others assign to core five distinctive characteristics: (1) learning experience and process form the backbone of core,

not mastery of factual knowledge; subject matter serves as a means or tool for engaging common social and personal needs, not as an end in itself; (2) core emphasizes problem solving by the group across fields and disciplines; textbooks and teachers do not control the agenda; (3) more time is allotted to core classes than the standard forty-five to sixty minutes; (4) teachers guide students inside and outside the classroom, often working with the same pupils for two or three years (Bossing 394-95; Faunce and Bossing 7-9); (5) core becomes the organizing scheme for the entire school experience; non-core activities supplement core (Bossing 395). Among the habits and skills sought in core are the following: proficiency in the use of language, civic competence, grasp of economic structure and issues of consumption, understanding of family relationships, appreciation of beauty, skill in rational thinking and respect for rational truth, ability to work cooperatively, "insight into ethical values and principles," ability to manage time and plan own affairs (Faunce and Bossing 5-6). In practice the content of core curricula in schools varied. Foshay identifies three types of core common in the period 1930-45: culture epochs, adolescent needs, and social problems.[16]

The other historical root of core, the more familiar general education movement, needs less attention.[17] I want, rather, to underscore two points decisive for my exposition. The first concerns the relation between general education and core in the schools. The classic models of general education, such as those at Columbia, Chicago, and St. John's, appear now as "traditionalist" or "perennialist" in philosophy (Levine 8, Adler and Mayer 163-173). That is, they stress common cultural heritage, enduring questions about life and nature (as expressed in great books), and continuity with the tradition of the liberal arts. Core curriculum in the schools, by contrast, places its emphasis on life experience, problem solving, and skills, and favors a modernist, progressive philosophy of education (Levine 8-9; Adler and Mayer 152-162). *What is distinctive about core curriculum today, in my view, is that it strives to combine these two philosophies.*

Second, much of the criticism leveled against core curriculum, and even some of the arguments advanced in its support, not only fails to consider the philosophy of core in the schools but also, as indicated, misrepresents the aims of the general education movement. Even Mortimer Adler, Mr. Great Books impersonate, never equates general education with canonized texts, nor did he wish to revive the "classical college" of yesteryear.[18] Adler, and other reformers like Scott Buchanan and Richard McKeon, conceive of liberal study as a process of dialogue about ideas of perennial relevance and as practice in the liberal skills, perspectives, and habits which promote analysis of ideas and dialogue. "A genuine great books program," Adler contends, "does not aim at a historical knowledge of cultural antiquities or at achieving a thin veneer of cultural literacy. On the contrary, it aims only at the general

enlightenment of its participants, an essential ingredient in their initial liberal education and something to be continued throughout a lifetime of learning. Its objective is to develop basic intellectual skills--the skills of critical reading, attentive listening, precise speech, and, above all, reflective thought" (Adler xxxi). The texts give high quality expression to important ideas which in turn feed reflection and stimulate practice in the skills of the trivium.[19]

Scott Buchanan once spoke of a "war going on, headed by Hutchins against John Dewey" (180). But in weighing the ideals of the general education reformers against the goals of the core curriculum movement in the schools, it strikes me that Dewey and Hutchins have already consummated a marriage of educational theory. Both stress learning experience and process over subject matter, both see learning as an ongoing modification of behavior, both reject the compartmentalization of knowledge, both favor collaborative problem-solving through dialogue, both give priority to skills and habits that will permit further growth, both believe that relevant problems and controversies will grip students, and both believe in education for moral purposes and civility. Perhaps it is my own ignorance of the finer issues that allows me to see the common ground and view their disagreements as a lover's quarrel, not a war (Adler and Mayer 152-181; Graff 165-166). Neither Buchanan nor Hutchins would have disagreed with Dewey's view that "books which are cut off from vital relations with the needs and issues of contemporary life themselves become ultratechnical" (Dewey 123).[20]

Distinguishing Features of Core

It is out of these common ideals and purposes, the terms of the Dewey-Hutchins marriage contract, that I offer my own definition of core curriculum. A species of general education, core curriculum combines eight characteristics:

> 1. Student needs and learning experience take precedence over subject matter. Needs, of course, may be assessed in various ways, but the initial questions remain: What must college students learn to survive intellectually, spiritually, physically, and to contribute socially?[21] What in their situation are they capable of learning? What kind of learning experience most engages them and moves them toward the promise of freedom held out by liberal education?
> 2. Courses in a core curriculum form a coherent whole, integrated either through disciplines, themes, content, skills, ways of knowing, modes of teaching and learning, or a combination of these. Integration implies at the minimum a cross-disciplinary approach.
> 3. Core courses emphasize discussion and group problem-solving. Adler calls this the "dialectical method" of reading, teaching, and learning (xxvii ff.). Teachers function

less as authoritative distributors of the commodity of knowledge than as integrators, agenda setters, modelers of interpretive discourse, partners in conversation, and mentors.

4. Learning is not restricted to the classroom. Most core programs also provide for informal activities outside of class--common meals, lectures, films, field trips--to complement classroom work. In some cases core students live in the same residence hall. Teacher-to-student instruction may occur more in one-on-one advising and tutoring outside the classroom than inside.

5. Study of original materials, whether print, film, art, music, dance, drama, or other original sources, typifies core. These materials need not only be great books.

6. More important than subject matter, however, is the study and practice of the disciplinary arts as they are applied to original sources. History, philosophy, ethics, and language (dialectic, rhetoric, interpretation through discussion and writing) form the overarching disciplinary arts. Core curricula preserve and reinterpret the tradition of the liberal arts.

7. Core curriculum is based on a notion of commonality. Which common elements actually dominate may differ among programs.[22] Students live in the same natural world, participate in a common conditio humana and wrestle with the same questions of existence, share culture as heritage, if not always the same cultural heritage, must learn moral judgment, and must accept common responsibility for building the community. A core program weaves these elements together for common reflection and discussion.[23]

8. Almost without exception, core curriculum involves a special program of faculty development.

The figure that for me completes the definition and makes core a compelling concept is that of the heart of an apple or pear, for it reveals in core curriculum the seeds of intellectual training, cultural literacy, aesthetic sensibility, and moral temperament that will later bear fruit in the professions and in private life. The range of positive associations is extensive: "heart of the matter" (Stimpson), radiating center, zone of germination, seeds of growth and renewal, to name several.

The Problem of Definition Revisited

Together these components do not really serve up a definition in the classic sense but offer, rather, an explanation of core by summing up its more important "qualities and circumstances" (Johnson); "core curriculum" defies reduction to a single identifying feature as much as it

resists circumscription. The key elements will all be present in some degree most of the time, and that results ina definition with a long and shifting tail of differentia specifica. Many of these seem merely to reiterate the features desirable for any general education program. The Project on General Education Models (1978-81), for example, mentions as important such ingredients as "a common student experience," "basic skills," "interdisciplinary learning," "integration of knowledge," "non-American culture," "value-laden issues and skills to handle them," "training in the skills of good citizenship," "Western civilization," and "great books" (Wee 12-13). The distinguishing characteristics of core, therefore, must be found in the way that the the eight components combine to form some sort of whole in which most of the eight are implicated in each course. In most programs of general education, by contrast, the various elements come attached one or two to a course, so that they typically consist of a freshman seminar as a "common experience," a required course in writing, perhaps a two-course sequence on Western heritage to provide minimal integration, a course delving into ethical concerns, a course in computer literacy, an offering in math or science for poets, and so forth.

Definition in a narrow sense, moreover, presents terms abstracted from their historical use. To be understood properly, I argue, core curriculum needs historical context, for core stands in a tradition of educational reform for both schools and colleges. It is helpful to recall that core tradition accents certain components slightly more than others--the dialectical method of teaching and learning, shared experience, integration, original sources. But which of these ranks first is not given in core dogma. From a historical perspective core appears driven, as noted, not by a single philosophy, but by two visions held in tension, the progressivism of Dewey and the perennialism of Hutchins.[24] The effects of the way these philosophies interact to give core a distinctive profile or to emphasize certain qualities over others have not been worked out. Hence even a broad characterization like this one remains problematic.

Finally, the eight characteristics described may seem at once too general and too specific, too loose yet too restrictive. Taken together they do not supply the kind of precision and unified doctrine required to resolve tensions within the core tradition. Rather, they set broad limits and frame certain issues for discussion. Should core be compulsory or voluntary? If student needs precede subjects, who will define "needs"? What do American college students need to learn to survive? Should core stress common learnings or common experiences? Should modes of inquiry and disciplinary arts take priority over essential knowledge? What levels of integration should be sought? Which common elements are primary and which secondary? How do we teach the trivium effectively? Should core feature Western culture, compare cultures, or single out the phenomenon of culture itself? One core program might stress essential knowledge, another modes of inquiry. How can both equally deserve to be called

core? Our loose definition offers no refuge from hard questions. It may be a ninth feature of core that it compels us daily to wrestle with these issues.

On the other hand, broadly framed though the eight elements are, they exclude at least one common use of "core." Educators can no longer call any compulsory set of courses a "core." The dean who referred to "core distribution systems" at a recent AAACC conference would soon feel the definitory constraints. Though mainly descriptive, my effort at defining core cannot avoid giving a certain programmatic punch to the concept. Simply in trying to state what the core vision is, core advocates cannot help proclaiming what core ought to be. Even a broadly articulated concept of core will thus be felt too programmatic by some, while others clamor for greater specificity and more restriction.

If we insist on a "soundbite" definition, our efforts to define core curriculum will prove fruitless. The features that I believe combine to distinguish core curriculum show instead, "a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing; sometimes overall similarities, sometimes similarities of detail."[25] They form, in short, "family resemblances" that allow us to grasp what core really is in the absence of some exact, closed schema. What role each feature plays or should play in a program will vary and must remain open for discussion. Perhaps certain new features must be added or old ones abandoned. The power of core curriculum for educational reform may derive from the very fact that it boasts of no one identifying quality. "The strength of the thread," as Wittgenstein observes, "does not reside in the fact that some one fibre runs through its whole length, but in the overlapping of many fibres."

Notes

1. This is a revised version of a paper presented at the Fifth Annual Conference of the American Association for the Advancement of Core Curriculum, October 10, 1992, in Atlanta Georgia.

Norton's comments appear in a Caucus/Project Report sent to AAACC members in March 1992.

2. Compulsory enrollment, others would argue, is not sufficient to capture what makes core a special type of general education. That not just any set of compulsory general education courses constitutes a core is, indeed, my own view. Examples of non-compulsory core programs abound. Moreover, a definition of core that relies solely on compulsory enrollment as the common thread plays directly into the hands of critics who see core curricula as coercive.

3. Vitality does, however, clearly define "general education" as the "cultivation of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that all of us use and live by during most of our lives--whether

as parents, citizens, lovers, travelers, participants in the arts, leaders, volunteers, or good samaritans" (3) Core curriculum might then specify further the "knowledge, skills, and attitudes" to be cultivated and provide a coherent design for their teaching and learning. Vitality makes a strong case that "all students can benefit from a common intellectual experience" (6-7), arguing against general education as "a conglomerate of disciplinary courses" (8).

4. Mooney's report on curriculum reform and the "Engaging Cultural Legacies Project" in the Chronicle of Higher Education adds no more to clarifying core curriculum. Clarification, however, may be expected from the AAC's forthcoming study, Core Curriculum and Cultural Pluralism (1993), which will offer the results of the "Engaging Cultural Legacies Project."

5. This definition best seems met by the six-course "Culture and Civilizations" and is less well served by the report's proposed requirements in foreign language, mathematics, natural and social sciences.

6. Rosovsky in The University: An Owner's Manual meets his duty to define by borrowing the usage definition found in Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary: "A simple and accepted definition of a core curriculum is 'an arrangement of a course of studies that combines under basic topics materials from subjects conventionally separated and aims to provide a common background to all students'" (127). Boyer and Kaplan in Educating for Survival offer a general definition. "By 'core curriculum' we mean the coursework that undergraduates pursue in common, the cluster of subjects and classes that an institution of higher learning insists that all its students take together" (10). Although Webster's offers a rather good short definition, neither incorporates all that is distinctive about core, in my view.

7. Mortimer Adler, on the other hand, avoids equating great books seminars with core curriculum. See Adler xix-xxxiii.

8. Stimpson, in the next breath, commits the great-books fallacy!: "In literature, this heart is a reading list of Great Books" (27).

9. Gaff mentions core curriculum twice, once in reference to the Harvard ten-course core "that focuses on 'approaches to knowledge,'" and once to note that "the University of Chicago has a highly structured core curriculum required of all students" (17-18).

10. The words actually come from the mouth of a character in a Disraeli novel, Vivian Grey. A flirtatious Mrs. Felix Lorraine asks the young and aspiring Vivian if he has a "friend." Vivian answers adroitly with another question, "What do you mean by 'friend'"? Mrs. Lorraine responds: "Oh, you want a definition. I hate definitions; and of all the definitions in the world, the one I have been most unfortunate in has been the definition of friendship . . . " (Bk. 2, ch. 6).

11. In "Cultural Literacy Doesn't Mean Core Curriculum," Hirsch makes a point of linking core to "intensive" and cultural literacy to "extensive knowledge." "In literature we

cannot possibly teach in core curriculum all the literary works that literate people know about and vaguely refer to" (48).

12. Graff comments: "The general education movement was a response to two kinds of fears: that because of increasing disciplinary specialization and emphasis on vocational training, knowledge was becoming fragmented, and that because of deepening conflicts of ideology, the unity of Western culture was disintegrating into a chaotic relativism. General education expressed a desire to restore common beliefs and values, and the humanities were seen as central to this goal by endowing the student with a sense of a common cultural heritage" (162). In adducing "chaotic relativism" as one of the ideological motives for general education reform, Graff may impose something of a contemporary gloss. Uncertainty about the universality of traditional truths and values surely plays a part in the current debate about core, but was "relativism" such an issue in the 1930s? Hutchins, at least, links national security to "our understanding of and devotion to such ancient Western liberties as free speech" (61). This suggests that for him, at least, as Graff accepts for Conant (167), the ideological motives are more political than epistemological. "The world republic of law and justice," concludes Hutchins in The Great Conversation, is nothing but the political expression of the world republic of learning and the world community." If the former is to succeed, "we must recover and revive the great tradition of liberal human thought, rethink our knowledge in its light and shadow, and set up the devices of learning by which everybody can . . . become a citizen of the world" (65).

13. See also the section "Criticism, Great Books, and the Crisis of Culture," Graf 133-136.

14. St. John's College Catalog 7: "St. John's seeks to restore the true meaning of a liberal arts education. The primary function of the liberal arts has always been to bring about an awareness of the forms that are embodied in combinations of wor's and in numbers so that they become means of understanding. Traditionally, the liberal arts were seven in number: grammar, rhetoric, logic--the arts of language; and arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy--the arts of mathematics. In more contemporary terms, the liberal arts bring to light what is involved in the use of words and numbers in all kinds of discursive thought, in analyzing, speaking and writing, and also in measuring, deducing and demonstrating." The catalog statement continues: "There are many ways to develop these arts. The curriculum emphasizes six of them: discussion, translation, writing, experiment, mathematical demonstration, and musical analysis. Whatever methods are used, they all serve the same end: to invite the students to think for themselves, to enable them to practice freedom."

15. See Faunce and Bossing 40-55 for background on core in the schools.

16. A culture-epochs core, for example, might take the form of a six-year civilization sequence beginning in grade seven. Foshay (1015) gives the following subject outline:

Grades 7-9   Story of human beings through the ages

       7 Beginning through ancient period

        Discovery of America

       9 From discovery to life in the modern world

Grades 10-12   Modern civilization and culture

       10 American civilization and culture

       11 Other modern civilization and culture

       12 Problems of American democracy

17. For background see Rudolph, Graff, McNeill, and Buchanan.

18. Levine 6 sees the St. John's College curriculum as a return to the spirit of the colonial college.

19. Similar views echo in the 1937-38 Catalog of St. John's College, written mainly by Scott Buchanan and reprinted in Buchanan as Appendix II.

20. Hutchins himself seems to distinguish between Dewey's ideals for liberal education, which he respects, and Dewey's vocation-oriented methods (Hutchins 7-16).

21. The notion of survival comes from Boyer and Kaplan's Education for Survival. See also the section, "A New Definition of Teaching" in A New Vitality in General Education, where the "focus is upon what students learn and how they go about learning" (39).

22. Warren Bryan Martin in an essay, "Alternative Approaches to Curricular Coherence," identifies three types of commonality around which a core could be shaped, "common fate," "common tools," and "common ground" (In Hall and Kevles).

23. This notion finds its most drastic expression in the compulsory core, in which an entire student body must enroll. Less limiting is the version of core as a voluntary learning community constituting itself around a common set of readings, themes, problems, and skills. Not all students are required to enroll in such a program; rather, the same group must work together over time.

24. Yet strains of what Levine terms the philosophies of "essentialism" and "reconstructionism" may also be observed in some core curricula. "Essentialism" holds that "education should be based upon an essential or prescribed body of knowledge dealing with the heritage of humankind." "Reconstructionism" sees the purpose of education as the rebuilding of society (Levine 8-9).

25. Ludwig Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations 1:§66,67,69 for all quotes here. I am indebted to Dr. Jon Avery for drawing my attention to Wittgenstein.

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