

Curriculum

I went to a ultra conservative, religious high school, so to imagine a new curriculum for the confused, queer, young, me is an incredibly therapeutic exercise. I found I was struggling against years of passed down conservative thinking. I found some refuge in my honors english class when we would read works from modern writers that would question the ideals of conservative thinking and would open students up to more diverse viewpoints. These are where I found the most useful conversations happening.

I imagine a course load of classes which test the worldviews of students coming into their own viewpoints. Through juxtaposing classical thinking with modern philosophies in literature, sciences, humanities, and the arts, we can create a basis for which students can think critically about their place in the world.

Between the ages of fourteen to eighteen, individuals begin to form an idea of who they are beyond the ideals of their family. Classic standards of thinking are important, but can be more widely explored when put in a context of modern scholars. For example, teaching *To Kill a Mockingbird* by itself only gives one perspective on racism and classism (that for the most part it's an old issue), and while important, it could be expanded upon by putting it in conversation with *The Kite Runner*. Teaching the history of the civil war without including modern takes on racism such as "Between the World and Me" by Ta-Nehisi Coates does an incredible disservice to both the students and to the society in which they are soon to be a part of. Classical ideas only give a one view look of the world and to students on the precipice of adulthood seem antiquated at best and boring at worst.

The classic classes I'd want to replace would be expanded upon throughout a student's time at school. So english would be broken up into classic and modern literature, history would have an extra modern politics class added, the arts would include new media art that relates and builds off of classical works. Science classes would remain mostly the same, but past that, I'd like to include a radical sexual education as a staple of the curriculum. Based off of Al Vernacchio's "Sexuality and Society" class at Friends' Central High School, the sex ed would be LGBTQ+ inclusive and would open students up to question themselves and what makes good relationships. This type of thinking opens students up to fight for meaningful interactions in both romantic and platonic relationships.

In conclusion, high school is a ripe time to start integrating a range of diverse experiences in tandem with classic thoughts. There are lots of conversations which can be deepened with a understanding of current events and viewpoints. High schoolers are more than capable of this type of thinking and development and it would set them up to be more active in their communities down the line and get a head start on developing their own personal ideals.