

WHAT ARE THE BASICS IN EDUCATION?

The popular saying reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic implies that those 3R's are the building blocks for a quality education. While this is a very simplistic view, there is a grain of truth to the old adage. Today, numeracy and literacy are the broader terms educators use to describe these important elements in education.

Numeracy includes learning basic facts, being able to do mental math but also the ability to reason and apply simple to complex numerical concepts. This means being able to reason with numbers and concepts and apply them to solve problems. Some examples would include reading a graph, playing a card game, figuring out a loan payment or engaging in home renovations. Numeracy is integral to many jobs in our modern society. Beautiful Plains recognizes the importance of numerical understanding in students and continues to plan and work towards providing these opportunities for our students.

Literacy is defined as the ability to read and write and demonstrate those skills to handle information, express ideas and opinions. These skills are essential for success in the world our students will encounter. Some educators will argue that literacy and how well someone can make sense of the written word will be the one true indicator of success in the workplace. Whether or not that is true, it cannot be denied that literacy is vital to making lifelong learners and responsible citizens. Literacy could mean interpreting a poem, following an instruction manual, writing a thank you speech, or formulating a constructive email. As our world becomes more connected through technology, it becomes increasingly important for learners to be able to read and understand written information. Beautiful Plains continues to adapt the skills and opportunities we provide our students in this area to meet the demands of the world beyond our schools.

Although literacy and numeracy are important basic skills to be considered for students, there are additional basics that need to be addressed in our educational system. Everyone in our society has an opinion on what needs to be addressed in the system. Upon reflection, there are so many essential skills that the school system cannot hope to cover them all completely. So what should educators focus on to ensure graduates are equipped for the changing world?

For a start, students have the basic need to learn how to develop healthy habits and caring relationships. We can start by teaching about nutrition, maintaining a healthy body and getting along with others. Providing lessons on physical, mental, emotional health and opportunities to develop meaningful participation with others is the way to develop a well-rounded, connected student. In Beautiful Plains we help our students understand the importance of empathy, respect and giving of themselves for the betterment of others.

When we discuss the student's basic needs we cannot forget their need to create, experience, and learn through the arts. Students need to be able to express their ideas and thoughts through many media. But that is another whole article!

It is clear that there are many basics to education and a simple answer is inadequate. Creating a well-rounded person without holes in their education is as complicated as the world in which we live. It is a challenge the teachers at Beautiful Plains work hard to meet. They have to form a relationship with each of their pupils and build on that relationship to encourage the learning that will make such a difference to the rest of the students' lives. The support of the community and parents is really helpful to them, and the Board of Trustees tries to give them firm support, but the job of teaching a child is far more complex than just the 3Rs.

Submitted by the Board of Trustees of Beautiful Plains S.D.