

## CORE: A Different Kind of Course

CORE, an online learning experience designed specifically for high school girls, complements the academic and character-building experiences that make independent schools unique. In this three-part course, girls enhance their communication skills, increase their understanding of others, grow their capacity for empathy and compassion, discover their personal preferences for processing information and interacting with the world around them, deepen their self-confidence, strengthen their ability to manage emotions, and build resilience. While the focus of CORE is the development of social and emotional competencies, learning activities and exercises are designed to be fun while promoting conceptual, creative and critical thinking.

### What makes CORE unique?

CORE is an intellectually and emotionally engaging course, through which girls explore non-traditional subjects such as empathy, self-awareness and resilience. The learning community—an online ideas-exchange—is positive and supportive: each student is an integral part of the learning process. Assessment is based on engagement, thoughtfulness, timeliness and thoroughness in completing assignments, demonstration of applied knowledge, and a respect for others in the learning community.

In a student's words, CORE offers time for "self-reflection and learning how to understand others more thoroughly" in a "less-pressured 'classroom.'"

*"Before I took this course, my definition for 'meaningful connections' would probably be as simple and unthoughtful as happy relationships. But this course has shown me that there is so much more to connections, whether they be connections within ourselves, with others, or to ideas. Connections are things that we have to put effort into, but are very crucial to life and ultimately shape our human experience... **I would say that one of my main takeaways from this course is that I now, truly, believe that 'meaningful connections' are the pathways to happiness.**"*

*- Connectology Student*



*"I gained important life lessons and had a chance to get a clearer sense of defining my true self."*

### Elements of CORE



**C**OMMUNICATION  
**O**BSERVATION OF SELF  
**R**ESILIENCE  
**E**MPATHY

# About the Course

CORE is a **30-week, three-section course** offered to ninth, tenth and eleventh grade girls. Students benefit from the online learning format: they value the flexibility, develop higher order thinking skills through reflective writing, and appreciate a comfortable learning environment. The online delivery has proven to be especially valuable to girls who prefer to take time to process information and express themselves in writing rather than verbally in group settings.

The three sections of CORE (*Connectology*, *Self-Discovery and EQ*, and *Resilience*) include forum-based dialogue around an original mix of readings and videos assembled from a wide array of contemporary authors/experts. Student learning and growth is facilitated through the introduction of key concepts, prompted reflection, peer-to-peer discussion, and learning exercises. Alumna of an all-girls K-12 school, Mary Ellis (MA in Liberal Studies, B.S. in Psychology and Special Education) is the Learning Coach or course facilitator. Ms. Ellis encourages a student-centered environment and nurtures a respectful, supportive and collaborative learning community.

## Section I: Connectology

*Connectology* exposes girls to the ingredients of effective communication and relationship-building, delving into the many factors that influence *how* well we connect with one another, *what* drives us to connect, and *why* deepening our connections is important. *Connectology* emphasizes active listening and empathy, key components of effective and meaningful communication. The course also includes learning about tools to improve explanation skills, and it provides introductions to critical thinking and current brain research that supports our inherent desire to connect.



*“The lessons I learned in this class are just as important as the ones I learned in my other, more time-consuming classes.”*



*“This class has helped me to dive deep into this concept and grasp key ideas that I have never encountered before...”*

## Section II: Self-Discovery and “EQ”

*Self-Discovery and EQ*, the second section of CORE, relates self-awareness to a better understanding of others. *Self-Discovery and EQ* enables girls to identify and build on their individual strengths as well as recognize and appreciate differences in themselves and others, therefore building a knowledge base of emotional intelligence.

## Section III: Resilience

*Resilience* builds on *Connectology* and *Self-Discovery and EQ*, encouraging self-reliance and resilience with a focus on responding to and managing both everyday challenges and significant hardships. Students examine strategies for increasing resilience, explore self-care techniques to cultivate general well-being, and deepen their learning in empathic communication.

***Note:*** *Connectology* may be taken on its own or as part of the CORE course.

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