



Abstract

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## From the primary school to the common core: literature and humanistic culture

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An ideal for our time? For the humanist of the European Renaissance, literature built up the individual at the same time as it allowed the development of common values that enabled discussion. Today, the common core of knowledge and competencies set up in French classroom devotes its fifth pillar to humanistic culture; in this context the literary approach is a fully appropriate one for building our modern outlook.

How can, and how should, literature, as a subject of study in school, interact with the expectations of common culture and humanistic culture, insofar as the concept of competency requires that a strict disciplinary-based approach be kept at a distance; and what role does it play in building the "*honnête homme*" (the 17<sup>th</sup> century respectable and honourable citizen) of the twenty-first century, a man of cultural competency?

While the humanism of the European Renaissance largely inspired the definition given in the texts on the common core of knowledge and competencies and does not seem to have given rise to any debate in the historical any more than in the literary field, one cannot escape the questions raised by the establishment of a common culture in the context of the Lisbon process.

And yet literature and the teaching of literature are not without their advantages when it now comes to meeting with the expectations of a humanistic culture, even if it is a question of reconsidering methods and stances. The literary approach, sometimes misjudged, is a perfectly adequate tool for building our modern outlook.

This issue presents recent research work, both French and international, on these questions.

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