

Research Paper-Outline

- I. Introduction
 - A) Hook: “American students score highly in one area relative to their international peers: self-confidence” (2 Million Minutes).
 - B) Topic: The film 2 Million Minutes portrays the American education system as inept while its counterparts in India and China are more than qualified to become globally competitive. However, the real question is whether this movie accurately predicts America’s demise or if it is blown out of proportion with slippery slope logic?
 - C) Summary: This paper analyzes the from both perspectives.
 - D) Thesis: *2 Million Minutes* supports the claim that the U.S. is no longer competitive through evidence such as the difference in the education systems’ rigor and the difference in test scores; however while the evidence is valid, it does not support the assumption that America’s economy will collapse from foreign competition.
- II. Background: History of Comparative Education
 - A) Topic: Looking to other countries to improve the nation’s education system is not a new concept.
 - B) Whenever the world was going through “rapid changes” educational reformers analyzed the advantageous differences in other education systems and implemented them into American schools (Post).
 1. For example, Horace Mann used Prussia’s “state-controlled education” as a basis for the government –controlled American education system (Brouillette).
 2. The launch of Sputnik led to the emphasis on mathematics and science in education (Post).
 - C) Conclusion: Now Bob Compton, executive producer of the film in question, hopes of stirring the same kind of panic that the infamous satellite caused.
- III. Background: Summary of Documentary
 - A) Topic: The documentary follows the lives of six high school seniors: two from the U.S., China, and India.
 - B) The movie puts the Asian students in a favorable light to American education.
 1. *Logos*: The film uses unnerving statistics
 2. *Ethos*: Expert commentators give their opinions
 3. *Pathos*: Americans feel panic that we are behind
 - C) Conclusion: Stacking the Cards Fallacy- purpose of paper is to voice other side
- IV. Body Paragraph: Documentary’s Argument – America is no longer globally competitive
 - A) Topic: The film attributes America’s recent lag in global competition to students’ lack of global awareness and motivation
 - B) Evidence
 - a. Students lack motivation because they grow up in a wealthy world.
 - b. Asian parents in movie talk about reasons why they wanted an education. “It’s either education or nothing” (2 Million Minutes).
 - C) Evidence
 - a. Parents are a main motivating factor (Editor)
 - b. 70% of Americans think that “their child’s high school is teaching the right amount of math and science.” Apoorva’s father’s first priority is global competitiveness. Neil’s father feels no urgency (2 Million Minutes).

- c. Contrast in parent's belief causes lack of awareness.
 - D) Evidence
 - a. Critics believe that there is no need to worry.
 - b. "The idea that two kids could represent a country is ludicrous on its face, especially for a country that has one third of its people still illiterate (India) and one where 40% of the students do not get past 9th grade (China)" (Bracey).
 - c. I disagree with this because "a glass half empty in no way diminishes the fact that it is also half full" (Post).
 - E) Conclusion: With the world becoming smaller, it would be beneficial for American students to become aware of other countries' progress.
- V. Body Paragraph: Documentary's Evidence – Academics are not America's top priority
 - A) Topic: The documentary ties competitiveness with studying challenging classes and with studying longer hours.
 - B) Evidence
 - a. The documentary asserts its claim that Americans are no longer globally competitive based off the fact that the Asian students study challenging classes.
 - b. Difference between classes taken in India and in America (Post & 2 Million Minutes)
 - C) Evidence
 - a. The Asian students also tend to study for longer periods of time, both in and out of the classroom.
 - b. Chinese schedule = "a six-day schedule, Monday through Saturday, 7:40 AM to 5:00 PM ..." (Guterk, 379). Indian students also spend more time through tuitions (Reenu). Americans have one hour of homework (2 Million Minutes).
 - D) Evidence
 - a. Americans spend time on other activities.
 - b. In his book *American Education in a Global Society*, Guterk notes that America's emphasis on extracurricular activities weakens "its academic and intellectual character" (173).
 - E) Conclusion: The documentary implies that Americans must making academic their top priority like the other countries; however in my opinion, the current focus of a balance between academics and experience is more beneficial.
- VI. Body Paragraph: Rebuttal – America's priority on well-roundedness is more beneficial
 - A) Topic: A focus on extracurricular provides necessary skills in life.
 - B) Evidence
 - a. Compton believes math and science skills are needed for high wages (Hromadka)
 - b. We cannot all be engineers. Also, knowledge is useless unless it can be applied in an innovative manner.
 - C) Evidence
 - a. Provides skills for the marketplace
 - b. Examples are networking, flexibility, and leadership. Neil's "played the best game" (Post)
 - D) Evidence
 - a. Chinese students are stressed out.
 - b. Government has made it illegal to have school on Saturday (Biting).
 - c. If they are so good, why are they changing?

- E) Conclusion: As has been shown, the rigor of the Asian education system is faulty evidence for a potentially competitive workforce. With an uncertain future, people will need more than just math and science knowledge. They will need skills to adapt.
- VII. Body Paragraph: Documentary's Evidence – Asian students have higher test scores
- A) Another gauge of intellect that educational reform activists tend to depend on is test scores.
 - B) Quick History and Procedures of Testing
 - a. TIMSS uses math and science because these are more “measurable.”
 - C) Evidence
 - a. Asians countries have higher test scores.
 - b. U.S. was 24th out of 29 developed countries (2 Million Minutes)
 - D) Evidence
 - a. Critics argue that China and India do not participate in tests.
 - b. Taiwan and Hong Kong participate (Gladwell 249). India has entrance exams (Guttek 175, 411)
 - E) Conclusion: While it is valid that America is behind in test scores, exams are hardly evidence of a competitive culture.
- VIII. Body Paragraph: Rebuttal – Test scores are not sufficient evidence
- A) Topic: While it is true that other countries may have higher test scores, the films claim that the countries with higher test scores are more competitive rests on the assumption that test scores predict one's successfulness in life.
 - B) Evidence
 - a. This is just not true.
 - b. If test scores could predict one's ability, then there would not be any need to create resumes or conduct interviews.
 - C) Evidence
 - a. The correlation between test scores and economic standing was insignificant.
 - b. “During the late 1900s in which U.S. test scores were mediocre, U.S. economic development was stellar” (Post).
 - D) Evidence
 - a. Tests do not assess valuable skills, such as creativity and critical thinking.
 - b. “Students [who] master and memorize incredible amounts of knowledge and information, they often lack the ability to critically think, develop their own opinions, and engage in creative activities. Facts are learnt, but rarely questioned” (David). These students excel on “textbook-based questions” but are unable to complete tasks that “require them to apply their knowledge” (Post)”
 - E) Conclusion: Test scores are not an indicator of one's ability since it does not measure useful skills such as creativity and ingenuity.
- IX. Body Paragraph: Rebuttal – High school is not final destination
- A) Topic: The movie focuses on high school students, but they will go to college which is vastly different.
 - B) Evidence
 - a. College is the institution that matters.
 - b. “U.S. college students meet and exceed standards” (Post)
 - C) Evidence
 - a. American colleges are better than other countries' colleges

- b. Other countries fall below standards in math and science (Post). American colleges offer more experience (Biting).
 - D) Conclusion: The documentary's argument is nearly invalid when one realizes that the students in the movie will attend college. In that light, the Americans are able to surpass other countries since the college system more than makes up for the lack of rigor in high school.
- X. Body Paragraph: Rebuttal – Slippery Slope Fallacy
 - A) Topic: Even if one determines that the other countries are more global competitive, this does not lead to the destruction of America's economy as Compton implies.
 - B) Evidence
 - a. China & India succeeding is not at our own expense. In fact, it may potential benefit the U.S. economy.
 - b. America "brain-drains" other countries (Torres). "Stock of highly skilled learners provided from foreign countries" is beneficial (Post).
 - C) Evidence
 - a. There is no need to worry about competition over jobs.
 - b. Currently we live in the conceptual age where it is not enough just know something. That is what the Internet provides. Americans can offer something else: "freedom to explore different options" (Post).
 - D) Evidence
 - a. This situation where the Asian countries have this rigorous education system is "unsustainable" (Post).
 - b. Improving work opportunities will cause three things: teachers will seek better employment, students will be less ambitious, and money will be transferred to the poor schools (with whom we are no in completion).
 - E) Conclusion: While it may be possible that the other countries are more competitive, this in no way will lead to the exaggerated demise of the American economy that the documentary foretells.
- XI. Conclusion:
 - A) Restated Thesis: The documentary *2 Million Minutes* utilizes valid evidence to support its prediction of the downfall of the American economy, yet the data is irrelevant and misused.
 - B) Summary: The movie bases its support on the stark contrasts between the American education system and the Asian education systems by only showing the positive aspects of the foreign countries' systems. The Asian students' give highest priority to academics by devoting nearly all of their time to challenging courses, but the film failed to mention the horrendous and crippling effect of such a rigorous system: a lack of flexibility, independence, and passion. The Asians may have higher test scores, but the Americans now how to use knowledge in creative ways to solve real problems, not textbook problems with an insignificant application to life. Furthermore, there is another and more crucial education phase before one enters the workforce, and that is college. And if even one still remained unconvinced and doubted America's position in the world, the possibility of more highly educated workers is a possibility to be embraced, not abhorred.
 - C) Final: As human beings, it is easy to get lost in the strong emotions perpetuated by this powerful film, but one must always analyze the situation from both views for the cause to panic may be unjustified as it is with *2 Million Minutes*.