

High Tech High

Q&A Question
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In reading the latest “unboxed” edition from HTH and the videos you suggested, it became apparent that teachers at HTH must be willing to abandon most of the “*traditional*” training and conventional ideas they had been told of what makes a superior teacher. From the principle down, staff at HTH must be willing to step *outside the box* of traditional teaching and explore their creative ideas and talents with their students. The typical classroom of teacher as front and center and students sitting quietly with hands folded is not what is expected at HTH. In the article “An Article of Faith” teacher Cindy Jenson- Elliot makes an important observation as she states: *“I learned that nothing could replace careful preparation and planning on my part. That said, I also knew that the most beneficial learning experiences allowed for active exploration. My plans needed to be flexible enough to allow for dynamic inquiry, where students could work at different paces”*. Another teacher, Wendie Ward in the article “Into the World of Projects” states that *“I want my students to feel like our classroom is a haven where they are safe to create and explore. I want them to know that I value their opinions and ideas. I want them to be at the center of what we do together.”*

From the videos that presented team building projects, their emphasis on the new and latest technology, as well as the HTH Retrospective that discusses “lots of individual attention”; using physics and math skills in making electric guitars and a math review board game among other ideas, it is apparent that as a principle evaluating teachers in such a program I would look to see the following key elements are followed to insure continued success in the program:

1. The work conducted in classroom must incorporate a **multi-faceted** approach to learning that can overlap with more than one core subject. For example : math can be introduced in art lessons or as is presented in the Edutopia: Team Building video, lessons on “*blood*” can be taught on many different levels from anatomy exploration through the use of three dimensional models, mathematical odds for different blood types, hands on interaction and even conducting community blood drives.
2. **Group projects** are a key element in classroom learning as students need to be able to work in a cooperative atmosphere utilizing skills that will be needed when they graduate to the work force.

3. Teachers must use **ongoing assessments** of concrete work students present with both positive and critical feedback from both teachers and peers to evaluate the work created and completed.

4. **Technology** and the ability to use *tools* must be included in student work completed; the traditional book report is not what is expected from HTH students or from assignments given by teachers. As is presented in the video “Learning to Change, Changing to Learn” “technology makes you a better learner”.

5. Teachers should be able to **integrate their passion** and interests into the classroom and lessons. As was stated by Larry Rosenstock, (HTH CEO) in the video “Mobil Learning Institute: PBL at HTH”, “teachers will be evaluated on the sophistication of their students work”. The more creative and intergraded the lessons learned, the more valuable the teacher.

6. In the article “Keeping it Real” Adria Steinberg (1997) adds additional excellent suggestions for teacher assessment which includes:
“The work has personal and/or social value, beyond the school setting”.
“The work is taken seriously by adults engaged in similar issues or work”.
“Students see a reason for what they are doing beyond getting a grade” and
“The work is structured to emulate high performance work environments”.

An evaluation of the teachers of such a program I was responsible for must also encourage teachers to continue to be “life long learners” and support them in new and innovated ideas that they can incorporate within the classroom. In such an innovated program not only are the teachers needed to think “outside the box” but so must the leader of such a program, where the need to lead by example is self-evident.