

What Does it Mean to Use One's Mind Well?

"Democracy is not a state. It is an act, and each generation must do its part to help build what we called the **Beloved Community**, a nation and world society at peace with itself." John Lewis shows us why the soul of our nation is worth fighting for



Andrea M. Hyde & James G. La Prad

School of Education

Western Illinois University

With support from the WIU Foundation - Thanks!

Intro to Presenters



Andrea M. Hyde, PhD

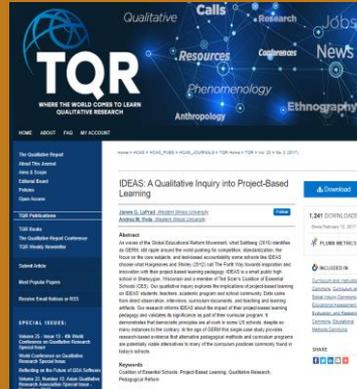
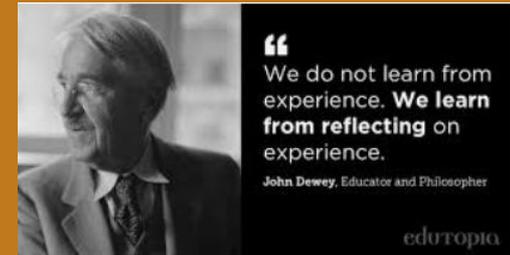
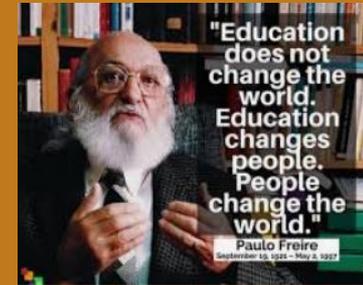
← Mindfulness
Coalition of Essential
Schools
Democratic Schools
Social Justice Education
Outdoor Education →
Teacher Education
School Leadership →
Philosophy of Education



James G. La Prad, PhD

Body of Knowledge (Lit Review)

1. Democratic Schools
2. Coalition of Essential Schools (CES)
3. Mindfully Democratic Schools
4. Project-Based Learning: IDEAS
5. Present Study

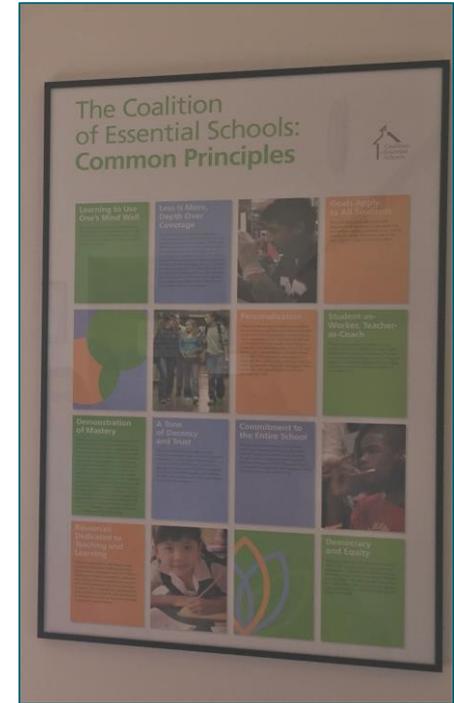




CES' 10 Principles

In December 2016 the Coalition of Essential Schools' Executive Board voted to cease the organization's operations.

- **Learning to use one's mind well**
- Less is more: depth over coverage
- Goals apply to all students
- Personalization
- Student-as-worker, teacher-as-coach
- Demonstration of mastery
- A tone of decency and trust
- Commitment to the entire school
- Resources dedicated to teaching and learning
- Democracy and equity



Poster on the wall of the interview room

Using One's Mind Well: Habits of Mind?

According to CES (& deduced from partner schools)

- A central intellectual purpose
- “applying what we’ve learned. “...analytical reasoning...” “a disciplined way of construing information...” that is distinct from an accumulation of facts
- The possession of “intellectual behaviors” (Habits of Mind)
- “ways to articulate the type of thinking and emotional dispositions that help students develop their social-emotional intelligence and succeed in school and life”

 <p>1. Persisting <i>Stick to it!</i> Persevering in task through to completion; remaining focused. Looking for ways to reach your goal when stuck. Not giving up.</p>	 <p>2. Managing Impulsivity <i>Take your time!</i> Thinking before acting; remaining calm, thoughtful and deliberate.</p>	 <p>3. Listening with understanding and empathy <i>Understand others!</i> Devoting mental energy to another person's thoughts and ideas; Make an effort to perceive another's point of view and emotions.</p>	 <p>4. Thinking flexibly <i>Look at it another way!</i> Being able to change perspectives, generate alternatives, consider options.</p>
 <p>5. Thinking about your thinking (Metacognition) <i>Know your knowing!</i> Being aware of your own thoughts, strategies, feelings and actions and their effects on others.</p>	 <p>6. Striving for accuracy <i>Check it again!</i> Always doing your best. Setting high standards. Checking and finding ways to improve constantly.</p>	 <p>7. Questioning and problem posing <i>How do you know?</i> Having a questioning attitude; knowing what data are needed & developing questioning strategies to produce those data. Finding problems to solve.</p>	 <p>8. Applying past knowledge to new situations <i>Use what you learn!</i> Accessing prior knowledge; transferring knowledge beyond the situation in which it was learned.</p>
 <p>9. Thinking & communicating with clarity and precision <i>Be clear!</i> Strive for accurate communication in both written and oral form; avoiding over-generalizations, distortions, deletions and exaggerations.</p>	 <p>10. Gather data through all senses <i>Use your natural pathways!</i> Pay attention to the world around you Gather data through all the senses. taste, touch, smell, hearing and sight.</p>	 <p>11. Creating, imagining, and innovating <i>Try a different way!</i> Generating new and novel ideas, fluency, originality</p>	 <p>12. Responding with wonderment and awe <i>Have fun figuring it out!</i> Finding the world awesome, mysterious and being intrigued with phenomena and beauty.</p>
 <p>13. Taking responsible risks <i>Venture out!</i> Being adventuresome; living on the edge of one's competence. Try new things constantly.</p>	 <p>14. Finding humor <i>Laugh a little!</i> Finding the whimsical, incongruous and unexpected. Being able to laugh at one's self.</p>	 <p>15. Thinking interdependently <i>Work together!</i> Being able to work in and learn from others in reciprocal situations. Team work.</p>	 <p>16. Remaining open to continuous learning <i>Learn from experiences!</i> Having humility and pride when admitting we don't know; resisting complacency.</p>



Eagle Rock's Mission

*Implement effective and engaging practices that foster each student's unique potential and helps them **use their minds well** at Eagle Rock and to support schools nationally to do the same.*



2015 CES Fall Forum



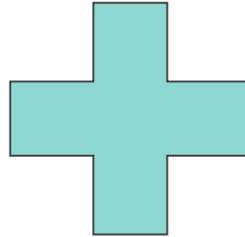
Eagle Rock School Values



Using One's
Mind Well?

Themes

1. Intellectual Discipline
2. Physical Fitness
3. Spiritual Development
4. Aesthetic Expression
5. Service to Others
6. Cross-cultural Understanding
7. Democratic Governance
8. Environmental Stewardship



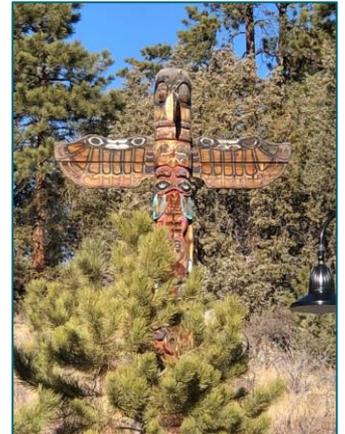
Expectations

1. Developing an expanding knowledge base
2. Communicating effectively
3. Creating and making healthy life choices
4. Participating as an engaged global citizen
5. Providing leadership for justice

Commitments

1. Live in respectful harmony with people of all races, cultures, religions, genders and sexual identities, some of whom will have disabilities or different learning styles
2. **Develop my mind through intellectual discipline**, my body through physical fitness, and my spirit through thoughtful contemplation
3. **Learn how to communicate more effectively in speech and writing**
4. Serve the Eagle Rock and other communities through the contribution of my labors
5. Become a steward of the planet
6. **Make personal choices that will support healthy living**
7. **Find, nurture and develop the artist within**
8. Increase my capacity to exercise leadership for justice
9. Practice the arts of citizenship and democratic living
10. **Devise an enduring moral and ethical code**

totem pole in
school driveway



Methodology

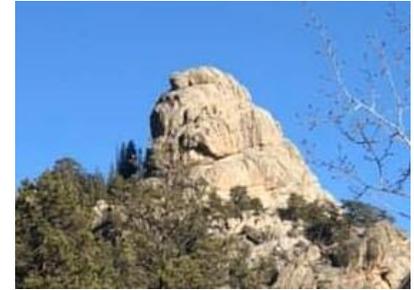


- **Case Study** influenced by generic (Lichtman, 2012) or basic (Merriam, 2002) QR
- **Research Partnership:** Andrea phase I, both phase II and beyond
- **Constructivist Epistemology** - believe that participants are the best, most credible sources of their own experiences
- **Critical Transformative Frame:** wanting to highlight progressive, justice oriented education; and help the school to achieve their goals; Unfinished and ongoing
- **Methods:** Observation, Interviews & Focus Groups; Documents and Artifacts

Participants & Site



- coed, independent, residential high school; selective – not in lieu of incarceration or therapeutic/treatment program
- students have not been successful in home schools
- students commit to changing their lives
- tuition free, supported by honda foundation
- democratic community, social justice, leadership, service; “not college prep but prep for life”
- Rocky Mountains, CO - outdoor engagement (outward bound)
- Coalition of Essential Schools



Professional Development Center

- Outreach to public and private schools
- Residencies, internships, research, PD retreats and workshops
- Project-Based Learning
- Using Restorative Justice (and other justice-oriented techniques)
- Presentations of Learning
- Wilderness Experiences
- Retreats





The Study Design



Hey, ER: What Does it Mean to Use One's Mind Well?

1. **December 9-12, 2018:** PI's first observations, introductions, conversations, participation as a panel judge for presentations of learning (POLs)
2. **June 10-14, 2019:** Interviews, observations
3. **July/Aug/Sept 2019:** Preliminary data analysis and generation of themes (**Heuristic created**)
4. **October 15, 2019:** Initial Report to Funders
5. **December 5-10, 2019:** Final observations, focus groups to present themes; research partner joins as peer debriefer, observer, interviewer and both serve as POL panel judge
6. **January - December, 2020:** Refining Themes (**Heuristic revised**)

Findings

Theme	Self-Discipline	Getting to Know Yourself	Reflection	Personal Growth/ Changing yourself		Critical Thinking & Problem Solving
Sub-Themes	Self-Improvement; Staying Focused; Staying Positive	(Self) Reflection	Never divorced from action.	Discovering, planning for and working toward personal goals	Preparing yourself for the life you want to have	Thinking efficiently; Taking multiple perspectives; Taking responsibility for your life (action)
Examples	Sticking to the schedule; Avoiding or working off dings; Learning to get along with all sorts of people; Conforming to the Community Norms; Wilderness	Metacognition; POLs; Wilderness	Critical reflection on local and global issues; questioning the way things are; taking others' perspectives; Working on a student council; studying historical and contemporary oppression; POLs; Wilderness (reflective journaling); O4s?	Advisory; Students requesting more traditional academic courses; Internships; Exploration Week	Advisory; Wilderness; Developing positive relationships	Science/environment-based investigations
Quotes	"taking responsibility for my life"; "staying grounded through conflict"	"how you are being or "showing up"; "learning about myself"; "what it means to be me"	"the amount of self-reflective learning they have to do outside of the classroom is intense"; "we do a lot of reflection here" (only 2 instances of using the word "reflect", both staff)	"powerful" "life-changing" "not for everybody...have to be motivated" "challenging yourself"		"Research (class) should be called How to Think Good"
Overlap with Q2: Spiritual Development		Yes	Yes	Yes		

Phase I



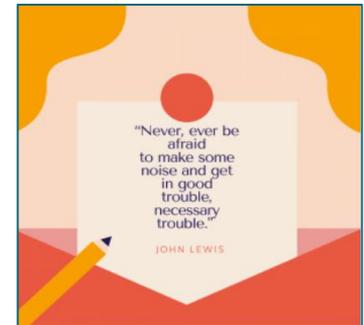
Phase II

Theme	Self-Discipline	Getting to Know Yourself	Reflection	Personal Growth/ Changing yourself		Critical Thinking & Problem Solving
Sub-Themes	Self-Improvement; Staying Focused; Staying Positive; self regulation	(Self) Reflection; Self discovery; strengths and interests; developing the artist within (school commitment)	Never divorced from action/the "real world"; reflecting on how you present yourself/how others perceive you; considering how to apply skills learned in one context to another (the passive cognitive process that precedes transferring skills?); deep and intentional engagement	Discovering, planning for and working toward personal goals; finding ways to communicate; leaning into discomfort; ("not a preparation for life, but life itself"-Dewey)	Preparing yourself for the life you want to have; Learning new ways to communicate; leaning into discomfort; encounters with the curriculum	Thinking efficiently; Taking multiple perspectives; Taking responsibility for your life (action); transferring skills (applying learning to "real life"); a requirement to ask questions (critical pedagogy)
Examples	Restorative discipline; Sticking to the schedule; Avoiding or working off dings; Learning to get along with all sorts of people; Conforming to the Community Norms; Wilderness	Metacognition; POLs; Wilderness; Explore Week; Stress-Free Saturdays (focusing activities that involve crafts or baking - indirectly teaching mindfulness" (Health, Wellness and Counseling Follow)	Critical reflection on local and global issues; questioning the way things are; taking others' perspectives; Working on a student council; studying historical and contemporary oppression; POLs; Wilderness (reflective journaling); OFOR; students learn/are taught to separate a bad action from being a bad person; learning from failure	Advising; Students requesting more traditional academic courses; Internships; Explore Week	Advising; Wilderness; Developing positive relationships; Developing the artist within	Science/environment-based investigations; Restorative Discipline
Quotes	"taking responsibility for my life"; "staying grounded through conflict"	"how you are being or "showing up"; "learning about myself"; "what it means to be me"; "learning your strengths and finding what you really want/to do and what makes you happy"; "...like understanding themselves in that context in that room, with the people that are around them. Like how am I interacting? How am I growing? What relationships am I building? Where am I pushing myself? Where am I letting myself stay comfortable? Like understanding themselves in a classroom, but then also understanding themselves just like who am I in the world?"	"the amount of self-reflective learning they have to do outside of the classroom is intense"; "we do a lot of reflection here" (only 2 instances of using the word "reflect"; both staff)	"powerful" "life-changing" "not for everybody...have to be motivated" "challenging yourself"; "the thing that students graduate with is self-advocacy"	"Research (class) should be called How to Think Good"; "they [students] expect harsh consequences, but we are restorative"; "applying what you learn to real life"; "it's like being well-rounded mentally"	
Theme	Self-Discipline	Getting to Know Yourself	Reflection	Personal Growth/ Changing yourself	Critical Thinking & Problem Solving	
Intersections with mindfulness	Intentional, focuses awareness	curiosity and open-mindedness about sensations, thoughts and emotions	first person, critical investigation; intentional consideration	though not working toward a goal, personal change is a result; growth (some positive change) is typically a result	CI is another mode of cognition from mindfulness, though mindfulness is necessary for perspective taking	

What Does it Mean to Use One's Mind Well?



- **Personal growth:** discovering, planning for and working toward your personal goals; *above all, focusing and refocusing on your goals*
 - successfully interacting with others peers and adults who would not naturally be part of your circle of friends or acquaintances
 - academic vs. personal goals
- **Reflection toward action (Praxis)**
 - gaining awareness of the diverse wide world
 - deep and intentional engagement



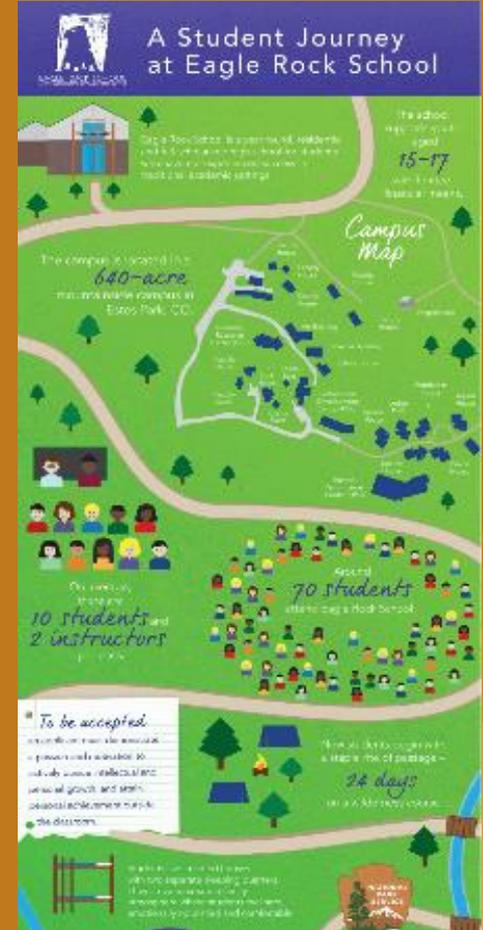
What Does it Mean to Use One's Mind Well? (Cont.)

- **Getting to know yourself**, and improving yourself
 - unburdening yourself from stereotypes
 - self discovery: strengths and interests
- **Self-discipline**, self improvement
 - living in harmony, maintaining a positive mindset, being happy
- **Applying Critical Thinking and Problem Solving**
 - multiple perspectives; critical pedagogy
 - transferring skills



Discussion

- Context is King
- It's the Relationships, Stupid
- In a word, *Wilderness*





Wilderness: All Who Dare

The unanimously agreed-upon **best and most comprehensive example of growth** is the 24-day Wilderness through hike that is required of each student in their first trimester at the school.



A Connection to Mindfulness?



- A continual and intentional refocusing process
- Emphasis on examining thoughts & behavior
- Suggestion to change the stories that students tell about themselves to be more empowering
- Health and Wellness Fellow - Stress-Free Saturdays
- Participants did not mention “mindfulness” in the interviews
- **Concern: Very few opportunities for solitude and quiet**

Theme	Self-Discipline	Getting to Know Yourself	Reflection	Personal Growth/ Changing yourself	Critical Thinking & Problem Solving
Intersections with mindfulness	intentional, focusses awareness	curiosity and open-mindedness about sensations, thoughts and emotions	first person, critical investigation; intentional consideration	though not working toward a goal, personal change is a result; growth (some positive change) is typically a result	CT is another mode of cognition from mindfulness, though mindfulness is necessary for perspective taking

Other Connection Questions



- How might other **independent schools** provide an education in democratic living? (philosophy)
- How important is the **residential nature** of the school in shaping the school culture? (sociology)
- How does the school culture affect the **self-disciplining** of students? (Foucauldian analysis)
- What are the other examples of **experiential education**?
- What part does **outdoor education** play?
- What role does one's **emotions** play?

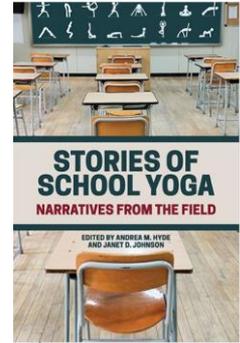
Andrea

Jim



Developing as Qualitative Researchers

- Partnership Research (IDEAS study)
- Teaching QR
- Contemplative Inquiry
- Role of Emotions - developed from Dewey & James/Pragmatism
- **Joint Mission: Telling stories of democratic schools that work**





Related Work

La Prad, J. G., & Hyde, A. M. (2017). IDEAS: A qualitative inquiry into project-based learning. *The Qualitative Report*, 22(2), 479-498. Retrieved from <http://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol22/iss2/8>

Hyde, A. & LaPrad, J. (2015). Mindfulness, Democracy and Education. *Democracy and Education*, 23 (2), Article 2. Retrieved from <http://democracyeducationjournal.org/home/vol23/iss2/2/>.

The image features a solid orange background. In the top-left corner, there are three vertical bars of varying heights, each composed of several overlapping semi-transparent circles. In the bottom-right corner, there are four vertical bars of increasing height from left to right, also composed of overlapping semi-transparent circles.

Questions?