**HTH**

**EDU 7701 – INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES**

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**Mobile Learning Institute: PBL at HTH:** Larry Rosenstock – Narrator first commented that it is imperative to ignore all the issues that generate segregation and utilize your “will” to create products that are worth doing and have sustaining value. Rosenburg narrates that at HGH they utilize tools to create products according to individual tastes and instructors are at the Charter school to utilize technology in order to emphasize the humanities. One student presented her artwork about “parabolas.” Another student explained his robotics project. Yet another displayed a bridge which could withhold a substantial amount of weight. The outside of the facility is merely a box, but the inside displayed everything practical from the extensive glassware, which was designed to enable spectators to see their projects. In other words, Mr. Rosenstock explained that it looks like an “incubus.” The students are able to enjoy the fruits of their labor primarily because there are no discipline issues. The students are treated with respect, and respect for their instructors and peers is reciprocated. There seems to be a virtuous cycle in the area of student decorum, with an emphasis upon support and nurturing. Instructors are expected to utilize their interests and embed their passions into their instructional strategies. Rigor is facilitated by utilizing your passion, in the area of inquiry and enables others to create products while s/he coaches about techniques so that a product of worthwhile and sustaining value is created.

**Edutopia: Team Teaching Transformed by Technology:** This film is about the team teaching/project based learning. It is narrated by Blair Hatch and Jeffrey Robbins with a guest appearance by the “emperor of Rigor.” The entire video concerned wyas in which the students were able to individually utilize their talents for a group project. The theme seemed to entail how to promote the Blood Drive in San Diego. The advantages of the team approach are manifold: for example; students communicate with the professors using the digital portfolio (Dr. Smith: this is a familiar approach), to communicate the progress of each phase of the project where every student must become involved in each of the phases of the project.

**HTH Restrospective 2007 – 2008:** This video began with brief snapshots of all the learning experiences of the aforementioned school year as selected students, parents and teachers commented on the advantages of attending the HTH School. Primarily, the comments were in regard to their appreciation of utilizing technology in creating projects as a group process, which enabled each of the students to utilize his/her individual talents in creating a product that is worthwhile and sustainable. The teachers emphasized an encouragement of individual learning styles (Dr. Rita Dunn) and Multiple Intelligences (Howard Gardner). These episodes of HTH displayed many social, intellectual, physical and emotional scenarios. Also, the video concentrated on projects of the guitar, the medieval fair, the political process as a registered voter, the project of walking on water utilizing “walking shoes”, and a math review board game. The last portion of the program emphasized the importance of the new graduate program where the process of learning is similar and the products were created by adults utilizing similar leaning processes.

**Final Group Critique:** The art class, instructor is Andrea Barrett who led a class period on critiquing an art portrait project. The first step of the class critique entailed enabling students to place one, two, or three stars on their three favorite portraits, which were hung on the wall of the classroom. Students had five minutes to do so. Afterward, the teacher discussed the criteria of the student critique. The features of the portrait of importance included several things. The characteristics of a quality portrait included whether the facial features were balanced and had contrast; other features of a quality portrait were whether the portrait looked like the person, and whether the character had correct proportions. The second step in the critique included a critique sheet where students were encouraged to create a standardized process for their comments and reasons for their critiques. The last step in the critique was a discussion of the student critique. During the discussion, the instructor encouraged her students to give accurate reasons for their comments and gave them praise for their efforts. Also, the instructor was articulate, she circulated around the room to address her students, and she added information to the comments of her students. Toward the end of the video the art instructor gave her students an opportunity to improve their portraits on the next class utilizing the comments of each the students in the critiques of the portraits.

**Learning to Change, Changing to Learn:**  This video encompassed many of the comments of the students attending the charter school in California. Some of the comments consisted of the following ideas. As one student goes through the process of learning,, using technology, Technology is so convenient, reading and writing have been taken over by technology. “It is a trial and error process.” “It makes the ordinary, extraordinary.” “I am a person, I am not a computer.” “Technology paves the way for our society.” It is an extension of who I am as a person.” “I can experiment using technology…it is paving the way for us to move forward as a civilization.” When you have access to everything,, you sort of learn to know yourself better because you are forced to decide what to use and what not to use. “It teaches people to think in a different way.”

The video of choice for me entailed how the students made use of puppet making in the movie **Casting Shadows**. During this video several students commented on the process of utilizing puppet mastery for the creation of the puppets and how their movements were a peaceful replacement to discuss important current events. The entire process of utilizing puppetry involved a team approach where individual students were encouraged to utilize their individual talents in the creation of a situation where puppets were utilized to carry out scenarios of public importance to an interested audience.

**Q & A Question:** Assuming that I am the principal of High Tech High and I am responsible for the evaluation of teachers in HTH, it would seem that the current standards reform movement methods of evaluation of the school and the instructors are inappropriate. The process of learning at HTH school for elementary, secondary as well as for graduate students is similar. Also, the process for learning at HTH is familiar to me in that I believe it encompasses the same process of learning at St. John’s University at the Oakdale campus which, I have been told, is a different process than at the Queens campus. It is rather obvious that at HTH, as well as at St. John’s University that there is a tremendous spirit of inquiry which drives learning. Technology is important as a medium for communicating ideas, and group work facilitates the process of sharing knowledge in order to generate new ideas that create alternative answers to age-old problems in our society in general and for educational leaders in particular. Of course, one would have to begin to recognize John Dewey in this process of learning. Models of the school process of learnig, contrasting a technical or illusory style, it would seem that a constructivist model of instruction would be present at HTH. Aforementioned, Howard Garner’s multiple intelligences and Rita Dunn’s individual learning styles are encouraged at HTH. If one utilizes the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire by Andrew W. Halpin and Don B. Croft (OCDQ) it is apparent that the climate of the school seems to be open in that the teachers tend to be energetic, showing concern for their students, and the students seem to know and adhere to the rules. With respect to Rensis Likert’s four management styles HTH seem to be recognized as a participative model of group interaction, where there is high motivation for learning, teamwork with respect to student-to-student interaction as well as teacher-to-student interaction, the decision-making process involves all stakeholders in the learning process, the goals for learning are well established and all members of the group feel a strong responsibility to contribute positively toward their learning outputs in creating products that are practical and sustainable.

As the principal of the school, it is imperative that I should not “get in the way of learning” by imposing a structure of instructional strategies that require the teachers to fragment their lessons. First, I must earn their trust so that they dod not engage in infrequent “performance” in a formal evaluation procedure which justifies the standardized regulations that require me to report to the Board of Education. My method of evaluation would be to be visible and engage in “three minute walkthrough’s” so that I can have enough information of their instructional strategies to give them support in their endeavors to help ours students to become productive citizens and lifelong learners. I would engage in frequent contact with all stakeholders and encourage the teachers to include their “passions” to communicate their respective content as they see fit as it related to utilizing technology as a medium to create wonderful projects that are useful and build the students’ skills in many areas. Finally, I would report to the Board of Education the usefulness of the many skills that are learned by the students as presented by the digital portfolios as a means of sharing with them, the teachers’ skill in preparation of the content, the manner in which they interact with their students, and the skills that are learned in the instructional process.