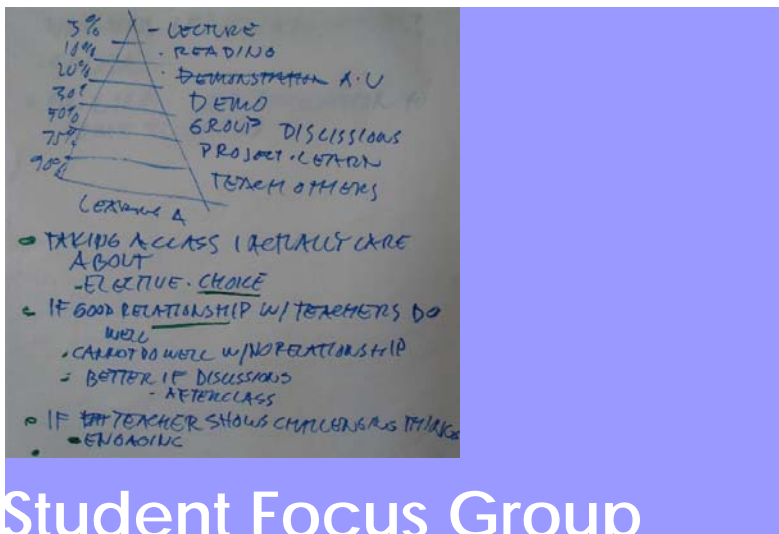




INTRODUCTION

A group of 27 students from all grade levels met with Dr Locker for an animated two hour workshop on February 6th. Virtual learning was the first issue discussed. It opened up the question: why come to school? This was followed by an outline of the Table3H concept developed by the Futures Team, plus “What Works/ What Doesn’t Work?” at WHS, and considerations of motivation to come to school.



Student Focus Group

TABLE 3/H CONCEPT

The concept developed in the Futures Team Workshop of a four year sequence from Freshman transition through Senior Project was presented to the students. The idea was generally well received, with the following comments from the students:

- Interesting
- In MS they had events that brought whole grade together: these were good
- In an informal vote, 20 of the 27 students indicated they like the idea
- They liked especially the Senior Project idea:
 - Now work in WHS is not related to the community
 - “In HS, we miss our responsibilities to give back to community”

WHAT WORKS?

- Taking a class I actually care about
 - Electives offer choices
- If I have a good relationship with teachers, I can do well
 - Cannot do well with no relationship
 - Better if discussions after class
- If teacher shows challenging things
- If the course is engaging



WHAT DOESN'T WORK?

- Lots of homework is just problem sets out of textbook
 - Not interesting
 - Why do it?
 - Get into college?
 - "Repetition reinforces learning" the teachers say
- Lot of kids don't want to come to school
 - They come because society/parents say so
- Some kids
 - Would be bored at home
- Not many classes geared toward profession
 - 99% disconnected from outside world
 - Everything geared to next level
 - Should have tech-type classes
 - Should have cooking/sewing + life skills
 - Teach us how to learn in relevant context, not how to find missing side of triangle
- History can be boring
 - Just reading
 - Not dealing with problems
 - Not applying knowledge

WHAT MAKES YOU WANT TO COME TO SCHOOL?

The "Works? Doesn't Work?" exercise and the discussion about virtual schools evolved into a discussion of "why come to school?" Several students cited the social aspects of school. Others were concerned that virtual learning would reduce the motivation to attend school in a building. To gain clarity, note cards were passed out and students were asked to provide two answers to the question "What make you want to come to school?"

By far the most common reason was related to friends and social interaction, with 23 of the 27 students so responding. Learning was second, but with far fewer citings, at 13. Future opportunities were cited in 9 responses, with sports, extra-curricular,

expectations/approval, and "other" reasons mentioned by fewer than 4 students

The responses below are organized in categories, and with an indication of whether the response was a first, second, or other choice.

I WANT TO COME TO SCHOOL BECAUSE:

FRIENDS, SOCIAL

- 1 Friends
- 1 Interacting with people
- 1 My friends
- 1 Friends, interactions with people
- 1 To see my friends
- 1 To be with my friends
- 1 Friends – Ms Lowen – teachers – chem.
- 1 To see friends
- 1 To interact with people
- 1 To come to see my friends
- 1 Seeing my friends everyday
- 1 The social aspect
- 1 The prospect of learning and making new friends
- 1 Friends
- 2 To engage with my friends, classmates, teachers, and teammates for memories
- 2 Social reasons (friends, teachers, building social skills we can't do on a computer)
- 2 To see my friends
- 2 Friends
- 2 Socializing, meeting new people
- 2 Socializing
- 2 The social aspects – athletics, seeing my friends (and making new ones,) etc
- 2 Social reasons
- 3 Social reasons

LEARNING

- 1 Hands-on learning (actually doing the things we learn about)



- 1 The environment of project based learning together
- 1 Something to do during the day, so I don't waste my time
- 1 Express myself and learn new info
- 1 The prospect of learning and making new friends
- 1 The opportunity to learn – I appreciate that I am fortunate enough to live near a decent school system
- 1 Student-teacher relationships (communicating with teachers and learning in a classroom – need to prepare for tests, etc)
- 2 I know that I'll learn more in this structured environment
- 2 Learning something new is always exciting
- 2 The new experiences you get everyday with teachers, peers, etc
- 2 I actually like learning but it's hard work
- 2 Knowing knowledge is being shared and passed down to us from our elders
- 3 To learn new things that would be hard to do on my own

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

- 1 To have a successful future someday
- 1 To get an education to make a base for a good future
- 1 Desire to succeed (\$\$)
- 2 To have a future (education)
- 2 To get into college
- 2 So I can go to college
- 2 To educate myself for the future so I can have a job I love
- 2 Prepare for college, life, and the wide world
- 2 To get an education so I can go to a good college and I can get a good job

OTHER

- 1 Desire to better myself
- 1 To get out of my house
- 2 Make changes to the community, make an impact
- 2 A way to be special

EXPECTATIONS/APPROVAL

- 2 My parents
- 2 Parents want you to, so I want to approve

- 4 Responsibility

EXTRA-CURRICULAR

- 1 Extracurricular opportunities that are made available
- 2 So I can participate in extracurriculars
- 2 Extracurriculars

SPORTS

- 2 Sports teams
- 2 Being able to participate in sports

QUESTIONNAIRE

Most of the student group agreed to participate in a longer questionnaire about attitudes toward school. The questions were developed for on-line responses, and were reviewed by the principal before deployment. 15 students participated. The questions, with their answers, are below.



WAYLAND HIGH SCHOOL
 RESPONSES TO STUDENT ATTITUDES TOWARD SCHOOL QUESTIONNAIRE
 4th March 2009



STATEMENT	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DON'T KNOW	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS					
1 My teachers are easy to understand	2	6	4		
2 My teachers put a lot of energy into teaching my classes	5	7	1	1	
3 My teachers explain how we can get more information	3	8	3		
4 This school is preparing students well for their future	3	5	3		
5 My teachers are well prepared	3	8	3		
TEACHER EMPATHY					
6 My teachers listen to what I have to say	7	6	1		
7 My teachers really want to help me learn	6	6	2		
8 My teachers provide help and support when it is needed	9	4	1		
9 My teachers are good at helping students with problems	8	5	1		
10 My teachers help me to do my best	7	6	1		
11 My teachers understand how I learn	2	7	5		
STIMULATING LEARNING					
12 My teachers make the work we do in class interesting	1	6	5	2	
13 My teachers are inspiring to listen to	2	7	3	2	
14 My teachers make school work enjoyable	1	5	4	3	1
15 I understand the relevance of the work we do in class	5	3	3	3	
STUDENT ENGAGEMENT					
16 Making things as a way of learning is engaging	10	3	1		
17 Working on teams with other students is engaging	7	5	2		
18 For me, sports at WHS are really engaging	9		2	2	1
19 For me, extracurricular activities (clubs, plays, robot competition, etc) are really engaging	14				
20 For me, classroom activities are really engaging	4	5	1	1	1
21 Listening to lectures is engaging	3	1	2	6	
22 Whole class discussions are engaging	7	5		2	
23 Small group discussions are engaging	5	5	1	3	
STUDENT MOTIVATION					
24 Doing well in school is very important to me	12	1		1	
25 I am motivated in class by the learning activities we do	5	3	3	4	
26 I am motivated in class by expectations of others, such as my parents	8	2		3	
27 I try very hard in school	9	3		2	
LEARNING CONFIDENCE					
28 I find it easy to learn new things	5	8	1	1	
29 I am a very good student	9	2	2	1	
30 I think I am generally successful at school	9	5			



ESSAY QUESTION

WHAT HAS BEEN THE MOST IMPORTANT LEARNING EXPERIENCE OF YOUR LIFE?

2. The robotics season because I learned how to work with a team going through the ego-trips and the bickering without losing myself or becoming disheartened. I realized there is more than just following your own ideas because if everyone does that then things will get out of hand. Learning to agree even when you don't agree was probably one of the most important lessons of my life when working with a team.

3. The learning experiences that I find to be the most important are the experiences in which I am challenged and forced to face adversity. For instance when I am given a real life objective as well as a deadline, whether it be in athletics, robotics, or an academic subject, and it becomes my job to accomplish the goal through my own trial and error.

4. I am honestly not sure. I'm sorry.

5. The most important learning experience in my life would be learning how to adapt to the new school and surroundings. Moving from middle school to high school is a big step. Even though I still have my friends from the middle school with me, but the new and heavier responsibilities of being a high school student are still something not to be regarded lightly. At first, the amount of work the classes and other extra curricular activities demanded was hard to manage; however, soon I acquired time management skills and longer concentration time. Thus learning how to adapt to new surroundings and conditions was the most important learning experience I had.

6. While I believe that my entire life has been a non-stop learning experience, I have to recognize a few specific points. Firstly, my family's bare boating vacation in the British Virgin Islands. I gained knowledge of the area, the people, the art of sailing, and the value of hard work. Not to mention I have a newfound respect for another culture. Secondly, high school in general has affected me greatly. From being at the top in the eighth grade to the bottom of the totem pole in ninth, I have learned respect and humility. I have learned new social skills and more about relationships. Thirdly, an academic learning experience, was moving up from college level English to honors. I had a lot of make up work to do, and it was extremely hard. I had to really put a lot of thought into it, and work hard! This taught me that if I want to succeed, I have to give it my all. "Good enough" is not ever good enough.

7. There are so many choices to choose from. However, the learning experience that is important to me did not happen at one instant, it has occurred over the course of school. A teacher, student relationship has taught me so much about life. I have learned that my teachers enjoy having a close connection with their students. By having this connection, the teachers can learn about the student and there needs as an individual. For me, it was when one teacher knew something personal about my life and made a connection to hers. This showed me that teachers are people too. That they have a past, and feelings and can easily relate to the students around them. The close relationship allows teachers to create their lesson plans in a way that targets the students needs. I have learned that teachers and students can teach/learn when they have a bond, like a friendship.

8. I can't really pinpoint one class or specific instance that I would classify as my most important learning experience, but definitely high school at large, including all its aspects, the academic, the extracurricular and especially the social interactions that helped shape what kind of person I am in how I treat others.

9. The most important learning experience for me has been my race class at Wayland High School with Mr. Frio. I have learned more than I could ever have imagined from him and my eyes have truly been opened to the world in a different way. I have realized my ignorance and have learned to address it and will use my knowledge from his class for the rest of my life.



10. The most important learning experience of my life thus far in my high school career has been the ability to adapt to change. High School is a period of time when change is constant. I realized through my experiences on the classroom, field, and among friends is, that if you don't adapt to the "new" you will not fit in or do well. For example from 8th grade to 9th grade the amount of independence we are given is substantial. With all this free time, you must learn that in order to succeed you must devote this to your academics. In the 8th grade we are practically babied into doing work during study halls. The idea of a free period is the same thing only we aren't specifically instructed in what to do. However if a 9th grader refused to change his 8th grade ways, he or she may be left behind the rest of his or her peers. In short the ability to adapt and change for my situations has allowed me to survive high school thus far and make it a more pleasurable experience.

11. The most important learning experience of my life has simply been listening to the stories of my grandpa's life. He was born in the 1920's and he fought in World War 2. My grandpa remembers all the big historical events of that time, and I enjoy listening to how they fit into his own life. While listening to him I am not only learning a lot about our past, but I am inspired by his own life experiences.

12. Nothing for 12

13. The most important learning experience of my life has been the activities I do outside the classroom, whether it is activities outside of school that are related to my interests, or in school activities like music and sports. I feel that the most important way of learning is actually experiencing what you learn.

14. The most important learning experience of my life did not necessarily involve school itself. It was this past fall, during field hockey season. I made varsity as a goalie, and I was going to switch back and forth from varsity goalie to JV field. I was really excited for the season, and I was looking forward to being able to play with both teams, because I had friends on both teams. As it turned out, the season was not at all successful. After about a month of playing on both teams, the JV players started complaining that my friend and I (she was also in the same position) were acting superior to them. We felt uncomfortable playing with a team that did not even want us to play with them, so we told our coach. We also told her that we did not want her to make anything awkward between the two teams, but rather we just thought that she should be aware of the situation. However, telling her was a very big mistake because she then confronted the JV team about what they were saying, and so it was blown way out of proportion. My friend and I were put in a very uncomfortable situation, and it ended with my best friend on the JV team not talking to me for almost a month. This taught me that although it is good to let them teach me that although it is good to let those who have authority deal with difficult situations, it is also good to first try to handle them yourself. That way, you can maybe have more control over the outcome.

15 The most important learning experience up till this point would have to be my social sciences class this year. My teacher, Mr. Frio, has changed my view on the way we can learn. Each class Mr. Frio generally leads a discussion, but he does not hold back in these discussions, and really shows us the different perspectives and points of view of the people that we are talking about. Instead of just telling us about certain situations he actually shows us. For instance when we were taking politics he would have us make a statement and after each statement no matter if he believed in it or not he would present an almost irrefutable argument against that belief. This class has offered the most important learning experience of my life and it is because we do not only learn the curriculum, but we are experienced to things in the real world that we might have never know to watch out for before his class.