Learning Expeditions: The Lynchpin to Rigor, Relevance and Relationships

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Casco Bay High School
Portland, ME
Who are we?

- 275 students, grades 9-12
- A Reflection of Portland
- 20+ teachers, 100% Dedicated
- Rigor, Relevance and Relationships
- “They say our school broke the mold, but I think we just made a new one.” - Alex Lyscars, ’09
Learning Targets

• I understand the phases of an interdisciplinary “learning expedition” and how it can be implemented.

• I can generate an idea for my own learning expedition, using a template.
We Start with Relationships

- We are Crew, Not Passengers
- Teaming and Looping
- Conferences
- Partner with Parents and Community
- Casco Bay Quest
What Is An Expedition?
What is an expedition?
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What Is An Expedition?
Phases of An Expedition
Phases of An Expedition

- Immersion
Phases of An Expedition

• Immersion
• Building Background Knowledge
Phases of An Expedition

- Immersion
- Building Background Knowledge
- Independent Investigation
Phases of An Expedition

- Immersion
- Building Background Knowledge
- Independent Investigation
- Product Development and Synthesis
Phases of An Expedition

• Immersion
• Building Background Knowledge
• Independent Investigation
• Product Development and Synthesis
• Culmination
Phases of An Expedition

• Immersion
• Building Background Knowledge
• Independent Investigation
• Product Development and Synthesis
• Culmination
• Reflection
Phases of An Expedition
Edutopia: Anatomy of a Project

“Give Me Shelter”
Key Attributes of an Expedition

Expedition = Real Work + Real Rigor + Real Audience

• Compelling Topic

• Social or Environmental Justice

• Interdisciplinary

• Field Work
Key Attributes of an Expedition

Expedition = Real Work + Real Rigor + Real Audience

- Outside Experts
- Clear, High Standards for All
- High Quality Craftsmanship (many drafts)
- Authentic Audience

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How Do You Develop An Expedition?

- Yearly Summer Institute
- Review Course Standards for Synergies
- Start Where Inspiration Strikes on Template
- (Compelling Topic, Key Skill, Vital Product, Local Need)
- Include Key Course Content
- Seek Diverse Feedback, Including Stakeholders
How Do You Implement An Expedition?

- Interdisciplinary Grade Level Teams
- Weekly Team Planning Time
- Mini-Lessons on Key Skills and Knowledge
- Class Time As Work Time (Research, Peer Edits, Drafting)
- Flexible Scheduling
- Walls Down
- Dress Rehearsal
- One Math/Science and One Humanities A Year
Another Entry Point?...
Intensives

- One Week, Concentrated Expeditions
- One Elective Course, 6 hours a Day
- Immersion to Culmination in a Week
- Designed Around Learning Styles, Teacher Passions, Student Passions, Curricular Gaps
Why Use This Approach?
Our Quantitative Results

• SAT's that Exceed State and District Average

• 99% College Acceptance Rate

We Learn Survey

• 98% of Responses More Favorable (81% by more than 10%)

• “The school has high expectations for all students” (83% vs 62%)

• “My teachers make learning fun” (67% vs 43%)

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### MHSA (incl. SAT's)

**3 Year Trend: 2008-2010**

Percent of Students Who Met/Exceeded the Standard

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CBHS</th>
<th>Vs. District, CBHS</th>
<th>Vs. State, CBHS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>14% Higher</td>
<td>15% Higher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>10% Higher</td>
<td>13% Higher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>5% Higher</td>
<td></td>
<td>2% Lower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>11% Higher</td>
<td>7% Higher</td>
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What do Others Think?

- WCSH’S “SCHOOLS THAT SHINE” award (December 2008)
- “...Casco Bay High School is raising the bar for all schools to model....” (Dr. Russell Quaglia, President, Quaglia Institute for Student Aspirations)
- “Casco Bay High School “has produced superior results for less." (The Portland Press Herald, lead editorial, May 8, 2009)
- Featured in Edutopia magazine as part of “SCHOOLS THAT WORK” Series (March 2010)
- “MODEL SCHOOL” at “Successful Schools Network” Conference (June 2010) and MENTOR SCHOOL for Expeditionary Learning
The Qualitative
The Qualitative

The Stromsky

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The Qualitative

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The Final Word
The Qualitative

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The Final Word

The Voices of 2010
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