

ReCulturing

Ethos of warm persistent relationships at the heart of school

Case Study: HIGH TECH HIGH, SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

CULTURES – a culture of connecting kids to adults

A small (by American standards) coherent community of like minded young people and adults, focussed on using technology to generate self organisation, self-sufficient learning and individual and group responsibility. A friendly and relaxed adult atmosphere gives the school the feeling of a high-tech workplace than an exam factory. Students interact with adults in a positive way and teachers give a huge amount of time to helping students organise their work and to helping them to evaluate it. Collaboration not competition is an overriding value. Adults committed to this vision of education want to work at the school and young people who are not yet qualified as teachers are encouraged to gain experience at High Tech High as interns or coaches.

Students' comments:

"Teachers teach us real life skills as well as academic subjects and lots of life advice"

"Teachers are really supportive. They tutor after school to do homework or if you get here at 6.30 or 7 am a tutor /coach will here to help"

"We don't have the sports school macho so that's why we don't have a football or lacrosse teams but we do cross country, swimming, track, dance, robotics, chess"

According of respect, responsibility, equal value

Case Study: Sir William Burrough Primary School

CULTURES – A positive culture of respect and hope:

The 'You Can Do It' programme at Sir William Burrough keeps levels of confidence and resilience high, and is deeply woven into relationships of respect, tolerance, kindness and courtesy. Its focus is on building the social, emotional, and motivational capacity of young people rather than on their problems and deficits. Its unique contribution is in identifying the social and emotional capabilities that all young people need to acquire in order to be successful in school, experience wellbeing, and have positive relationships including making contributions to others and the community.

Case Study: St. Nicholas School

CULTURES – broadening while valuing community engagement:

The school has a very inclusive vision and as part of this has linked with four mainstream secondary schools and an FE college. This facilitates wider opportunities for the pupils of the school and community engagement. The school also provides outreach support to all of the schools in the locality for pupils with learning difficulties. The school values diversity and difference and respects the contributions and efforts all of the pupils make towards creating a vibrant learning community. The school uses schemes such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, residentials and community based learning to challenge our pupils and build confidence, safe risk taking and success.

Case Study: Stantonbury Campus, Milton Keynes

CULTURES – a culture of connecting students and teachers.

Stantonbury placed an emphasis on developing relationships between students and teachers.

First names were introduced for everybody on Campus, students, teachers, support staff, caretakers and cleaners. There was no uniform and a refreshing absence of bells. First names were to symbolize this quality of informality and mutual respect; although there would still be the same expectations regarding norms of behaviour and effort. Collaboration, not competition, was an overriding value. For teachers and students there was an emphasis of working in teams alongside the sharing of resources.

Case Study: The Reggio Emilia Approach

CULTURES – a culture of respect for the child

Central to the practice of all Reggio Schools is the vision of the child as 'unique, competent and powerful'. From a very early age children are seen as 'capable of making meaning from their daily life experiences through mental acts of planning, coordination of ideas and abstraction'. Reggio teachers believe on the basis of close observation and recorded documentation that a child's knowledge is built up through social interaction and cooperation and the autonomous exploration of his or her own world.

"Children are moved by an unlimited curiosity and by a great and innate desire to know and to discover. This extraordinary desire to investigate reality must be made visible and helped to grow and develop without being imprisoned in pre-constituted models based on programmed formalisation". - **Director of Reggio Schools**

Case Study: Madeley Court School

CULTURES – education as a lifelong process of personal transformation

The vision of Henry Morris, founder of the Cambridgeshire Village Colleges, was to be realised at Madeley Court by integrating the school with the local Recreation Centre forming the Madeley Education and Recreation Centre thereby abolishing the separation of education from ordinary life and ensuring that all members of the local community participated in lifelong education. It was a school in which every child as held to be of equal value and learning in a context of sharing. A school that believed in the potential of personal transformation for every child in a lifelong process. Within this organic educational entity the individual child would find security and the possibility of personal growth and transformation.

Processes of well-being, restorative and social justice

Case Study: Bishops Park College, Jaywick, Essex

CULTURES – aspiring beyond one's expectations

The College adopted a 'Schools within a School' approach and consisted of three small mini-schools on the same campus. The school was established in 2002 to serve a severely socially deprived area of East Anglia. The aim was to create a safe and secure environment where students felt valued and confident so that they would be able to aspire beyond their expectations, and to engender intellectual curiosity and a desire to learn in an area where education was not traditionally highly valued. There was a strong focus on skills as well as content, and on pastoral care of the students, many of whom had very difficult lives. This aspect of the college was supported by its many highly effective multi-agency links, so that a truly holistic approach to children's education was developed, to which the whole staff was thoroughly committed.

Students' comments

"The teachers are easy to talk to; if you've got a problem you can talk to them, they have time for you. They try and sort things out for you if you have a problem, and try and make you happy."

"You're comfortable with them [teachers]; not being afraid to ask for help and it's when they let you know they are there to help."

"Windmills [mini-school] is like a family to me."

Practising democracy, voice, participation, diversity

Ebbsfleet Academy, N.W .Kent

CULTURES – A culture of feedback

The Ebbsfleet Academy is committed to listening to students and staff and using this feedback to inform school practices and culture. An in-depth student and anonymous staff survey is carried out twice per year to ensure that every single member of the school community's voice is listened to. Survey feedback is then used to reframe the school development plan and shape working practices to further improve students' education.

Respecting risk-taking, authorship and agency

Case Study: Stanley Park High School

At Stanley Park High School there is considerable buy-in to the culture of the school by students, teachers and parents. A friendly, relaxed and yet purposeful atmosphere pervades the school. Emphasis is very much on the children being 'free range' and not 'battery farmed'. Collaboration is dominating value, as is risk-taking within a no-blame culture. The school experience is open to challenge and change as a result of the views of its young people.