
A School Outline

Based on the philosophies of Emerson and Thoreau

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PHILOSOPHY AND MISSION

“A government is best when it governs least” (Thoreau 1)

This school’s primary focus will be the pursuit of all natural knowledge. For “nature is as truly beautiful as it is good, or as it is reasonable, and must as much appear, as it must be done, or be known.” (Emerson 67) Considering nature is the perpetual controller of all cosmic interactions, the school will have “one aim, namely, to find a theory of nature.” (Emerson 1) This coincides with the aim of all sciences. The school will allow students to pursue their current interests and will not restrain them from leisurely reflection on their own experience. This may require a personal redefinition of productivity. A student must be productive, but only by his own standards. Productivity can be defined as any alteration of oneself, by any means, which has been intentionally induced by the student. The school discourages strict schedules and any form of extrinsic motivation. The school finds it most important for students to “believe their own thought” for it “is genius.” (Emerson 19) Students are encouraged to be vocal and “speak their latent conviction.” (Emerson 19).

Amenability is prohibited, students must never “surrender their culture and liberty.” (Emerson 21) Contentious debates must only resolve of their own volition. A debate may not seize merely because of the termination of the school’s operating hours, true interests have no temporal or constrictions otherwise. Although students are encouraged to speak their conviction with conviction, they must respect those whom disagree with them. Students must understand that “to be great is to be misunderstood.” (Emerson 25) Therefore, students may criticize other’s

arguments and premises, however, they may never use others' candor as a weapon. If students are at all dubious to speak their mind, they will not achieve their maximum potential.

Ambivalence and the vacillation of opinion is not discouraged. Arguments' purpose are not to prove a side (often to other individuals), but rather to understand the argument and realize the student's position. Students must practice honesty. For in character and opinion, it is alike their interest...and all men's...to live in truth." (Emerson 31) Students must be comfortable with both social and intellectual rejection. If they are to practice the above precepts, they may very well provide their "friends pain." (Emerson 31) This is an inevitability of social nonconformity; genuine honesty is difficult to practice and tolerate. Rather than impose morality upon the students, they must learn to obey their own personal morality.

The school's mission is to promote individual learning that is intrinsically motivated. The school achieves this by providing its students with the means to teach themselves. This may be considered an indirect socratic method. This allows the prosperity of two qualities that society instills in its members: independence and autonomy. The strong, illusionary conviction that these two qualities are currently possessed by the multitude in fact allows for the abuse of these unalienable rights. The school provides students with a true taste of these two entitlements, enabling them to understand when they are being exploited by their tendency to the false-consensus effect.

The individual is powerless against the masses unless trained to fight. The individual must be taught to be introspective and critical but not self-doubting. Confidence is a crucial factor in nonconformity, and as many pupils will obtain this confidence through their peers and

level of social acceptance, they must be trained otherwise. The school's objective is to provide students with such self-confidence, and alternative means of obtaining it if necessary.

Individuals will receive knowledge, truth, intellect through the pursuit of them. They will search for such things in the natural world, the science of nature, not of humanity. The school is centered around the individual, and its relationship with nature and its understanding of this relationship.

The school will focus on progressive and contemporary thinking, rather than retrospective analysis used for later application. The school will have a "poetry and philosophy of insight and not of tradition" and will not "grope among the dry bones of the past" (Emerson 1).

CURRICULUM

All taught subjects will remain broad to ensure the instructor freedom within their topic. Although, as students spend more time at the school, they are able to take more topic specific courses. Students must commit to a minimum of three classes each trimester. Students are free to drop any class at the turn of a trimester. Many of the broader classes will require multiple trimesters to be completed. Students may be enrolled for a maximum of four years, for each of these years they increase their rank by one (e.g. a four year student will have a rank of IV). There is a maximum of fifteen students per class, many classes (although not marked) will be offered by multiple instructors. Students are free to audit other classes of interest as long as doing so does not interfere with the classes they have committed to. Instructors may only be responsible for a maximum of forty-five students. Below are some of the available classes:

Course	Trimester Slots	Offered to
Philosophy	3	Open
Literature	2	Open
Applied Mathematics	3	Open
Ethics	2	Open
Introspection	2	Open
Philosophy - Existentialism	1	II,III,IV
Open Discussion	1	Open
Nature - Underlying principles	2	II,III,IV
Mathematics - Explaining Physical Phenomena	2	III,IV
Creative Writing	3	Open
Humanities	2	Open
Current Events	2	Open
Natural Systems	2	III,IV
Ecology	2	III,IV
Biological Anatomy	1	III,IV
Sociology	3	II,III,IV
Psychology	2	III,IV

The only restrictions on students are time and class rank. Students are not required to receive a certain number of credits in a given subject. Written work is to only be assigned for completion during class. The only work to be completed outside of a class will be personal observations and applications that are pertinent to the class. The curriculum will develop student's analytic and implementation skills throughout their career. Interpersonal discussion

will be facilitated in such a manner to discourage amenability and encourage the prospering and expression of independently founded ideas.

The curriculum will reward self-reliance and intrinsic motivation. Instructors will take note of students' acts of intrinsic motivation to ensure an accurate assessment. Work completed independently will be taken into account during end-of-trimester assessments. An important component of students' success will be their general interest in learning. Students' apparent fervor for a subject will be taken into account in assessments. Therefore, instructors are responsible for uncovering an interest if students are unable to uncover it themselves.

PEDAGOGY

The majority of classes in any course will consist of guided discussion by the instructor with intermittent lecture. Instructors are advised to prepare minimally for the direction of discussion any given class will take. This ensures that the students have the most control of the discussion and therefore receive the greatest benefit from it. Each class has a break period that may be commenced by the instructor/s if they choose, the break period is 10% of the total time spent in class. Instructors will see the class as a collection of individuals, and will act accordingly, catering to the individual's interest when teaching. Instructors will employ the Socratic method above all, ensuring that students do not derive a desired conclusion from false premises or fallacious logic. The Socratic method also ensures that students are not accepting a conclusion without justification or proof.

Classes based primarily on less concrete material may be instructed by more than one instructor. The role of an instructor in any class is to design and engender an environment that is

the most conducive for learning and sustain the environment. This allows students to facilitate their own learning under the conditions of the teacher. Enabling students to eventually morph their own environment so that they may learn most effectively.

The curriculum's strength lies when students are not actively engaged in their classes. Students will find an overwhelming urge to explore subjects even when they are not being requested to. Instilling this motivation in the students is the primary focus of the school.

ASSESSMENT

Conventional methods of assessment will not be used. However, an intermediary system may be set up to allow colleges to adequately judge students from the school. An individual, oral assessment will take place at the end of each trimester between each student and their instructor/s. Throughout the course of the trimester, instructors will take note of each student's performance in their class. However, this assessment is strictly observational. During the end-of-trimester assessments, instructors will inquire the student about what has been learned. Recall of specific information is not a factor in the assessment.

The instructor's assessment contains a paragraph to multi-paragraph analysis of the student's performance. In addition to the analysis, the instructor recommends whether or not the student should continue the course. This form of assessment discourages the mindless memorization of facts and information covered in the course, and encourages students to understand the subject in its entirety and how the subject relates to others.

GOVERNANCE

School decisions will be decided by a combination of the faculty and participating school alumni. Although the decisions will be primarily trivial, major curriculum renovations and pedagogical changes will begin by a recommending vote by the students, followed by a deciding vote by the instructors and chosen alumni. The recommending vote attempts to provide faculty and alumni with assistance in making their decision.

Students are able to petition in order to hold a vote. The petitions must be signed by at least 25% of the student population for a vote to be held. This is to give the students the means to “endeavor to amend [laws]” (Thoreau 1) that they wish. This governance best resembles a direct democracy, a utilitarian society. All instructors wield equal power, the aggregate of the instructors act as each individual’s superior. Subdivisions based on fields of study within the community of instructors have dominance on the direction of their department. School-wide decisions, however, remain under the jurisdiction of the congregation of all instructors.

FACILITIES

The school will be segmented into departments. A given field of study and those topics which it encompasses has a dedicated department. Each department has a dedicated building, all of which sparsely line the circumference of a slightly arced semi circle that circumscribes a lush garden. A stone cast courtyard within the garden provides seating for all students and faculty. The entire campus is situated in complete isolation from any other man made structures, and is therefore immersed in nature.

Two student living buildings are a ten minute walking distance away from the main campus. The path connecting the student living buildings and the main campus cuts through two lightly cleared forests and rounds a small reservoir.

DAILY SCHEDULE

Schedules vary student to student, and instructor to instructor. Therefore, meals are available for long time frames and activities are planned for times when few classes are offered. The median time for morning classes is ten, and the median for afternoon classes is four. This allows students to have more free time in the morning than the conventional school. Community meetings are offered at 7pm on Fridays, this allows students to more easily voice any concerns they have to a large number of people, easing the process of forming petitions.

A SCHOOL BUMPER SLOGAN

“Learn to learn.”

AN ALMA MATER

Satisfy your yearning,
take charge of your learning.

Listen with your mind,
Understand what you find.

Decide your own future,
follow the enticing lure.

Don't expect to rest,

until you've discovered your interests.

Implore some more.

A SCHOOL SEAL

