

The Perfect School

Many critics argue that the institution of public school is failing our students (see especially the lectures by Sir Ken Robinson). Given our research and discussion, it is difficult to disagree with this. So, to help your understanding of how students learn and what they need, you are going to create the “perfect school”—a finely tuned machine that serves all students in the best way possible.

Scrap the whole system we have now: classrooms, bell systems, grade levels, single-subjects, even teachers. You don’t have to take any of the traditional elements with you as you start over. Be creative and innovative, and take risks. You will use your research to support your decisions, so as long as you can justify and explain your innovative design, there is no “wrong” answer here.

Your group will put this information into a visual for a presentation and share it with the group on the morning of Thursday, 29 June along with your EDUC 529 materials that same morning.

AS YOU BRAINSTORM, CONSIDER:

- Is the school in a physical building? If so, what is that building like? If not, what do you offer instead?
- How many students attend this school?
- Are students organized by grade? Age?
- Are classes organized by subject, or in some other way? (Is there “History class” and “Math class”, separately?)
- Will students receive grades? How will students “move up” in the school?
- Will extracurricular activities be a part of your school? (E.g., can students be on the football team, in a play, in knitting club, or on student council?) How might that impact learning?
- Are there classrooms? What do they look like? How many kids in a classroom? How many teachers?
- What time will your school day start and end?
 - Per Minnesota state law, your school must meet for a minimum of 175 days a year for about 7 hours per day (or a time frame that meets that same math).



- Will there be electives? How many? For each subject area?
 - Per state graduation requirements, high school students require: 4 years of English, 3 years of Science, 3.5 years of Social Studies, 3 years of Math, 1 year of art, and seven electives, which are often World Language and Business Education courses.
- How many classes will students have per day? Will it be a block schedule? Will they have the same classes every day?
- How does your school stand out? What is just totally awesome about it?

EXPECATIONS FOR YOUR PRESENTATION—“SELL IT TO US”:

- What is the name of your school? Why?
- **Summarize** your responses to those questions above—anything needed for us to understand your plan.
- Offer a visual of this school. This can be a sketch/map of the entire building, or just a classroom, or a hallway...choose one element and *show me*.
- You must present at *least* three credible sources that acknowledge child/adolescent development as you put together your school. That is, you must directly cite material and justify your design with the support of that material. (For example, “Vygotsky supported the Zone for Proximal development, wherein he noted _____, thus we did _____ in our school to align with that research.”)
 - Consider what you have learned in *all* of your TPC classes thus far, not just REDG 600.
- You must research the school structure of at least two other countries (and/or a Montessori school in the United States). Report briefly on what you learned about those school models and whether they offered a new perspective for you as you designed your own school. (Be sure to cite these sources.)
- Create a weekly schedule for a “typical” student. Tell us what they would do Monday through Friday, generally. Consider which elements of school might “come home with them”. (You must cover the subject of *homework* in this part. Will you give it?)
- Note how your school is *extra*. Maybe you have a rollercoaster or something.

BE ENGAGING. Only include the needed text in your presentation—don’t show us full paragraphs. Only outlines are needed...and lots and lots of pictures, and perhaps even dialogue between your group as you present. You’re teachers, you know what this looks like.
We practiced.

I will grade the presentation as you deliver it, but please hand in any notes or documents or brainstorming you used to prepare.