Experiential Education

The Colorado Springs School
Aaron Schubach, HOS
3/18/19
SKILLS
Digital Literacy
STEM
Computer Science
Communication and Collaboration

REAL-WORLD EXPERIENCES
Project-Based Learning
Outdoor Education
Community Service
Rigorous and Relevant Seminars
Capstone

MINDSET
Leadership and Teamwork
Global Perspective
Integrity and Ethical Decision-Making
Adaptability, Initiative, and Risk-Taking
Service to Others
Creative Thinking and Problem-solving

INDEPENDENT THINKING

PERSONAL INTEGRITY

INGENUITY

PREPARED FOR A DYNAMIC WORLD
Agenda

• Ex Ed defined
  • Active learning every day and Seminars
• Seminar programs
  • CS Fall Adventure and CO EX
  • MS Seminar I, II, III and Walkabout
  • US Mission Centered Seminar, Mountain Caravan, Experience Centered Seminars
• Community Service
• Senior Capstone
• Questions
ExEd Defined

Simple definition: Learning by doing

Association for Experiential Education: “Challenge and Experience followed by Reflection leading to Learning and Growth”.

At CSS, Ex Ed happens every day in the classrooms and on seminar programs.
ExEd Goals:

Increase knowledge ("Head")
Develop skills ("Hands")
Clarify values ("Heart")
Teacher Role in ExEd:

- Creates the experience
- Designs and maintains the “container”
- Asks more than tells
- Herds rather than tethers
At CSS...

1. Teachers design experiences shaped by intentional learning outcomes (often target expansion of comfort zone)
2. Student reflection (often follows on the heels of authentic and self-evident feedback)
3. Learning is demonstrated by stepwise improvement and transference to related situations
Why ExEd is Valuable

“Unless students learn explicitly to recognize when their knowledge might be useful, can recall that knowledge, and know how to apply it, they will fail to transfer what they know; their understanding is incomplete” (Janet Eyler, Association of American Colleges & Universities).
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Seminar Programming at CSS

Seminar I
Seminar II
Seminar III
Walkabout
ECSs (Experience-Centered Seminars)
MCSs (Mission-Centered Seminars)
Senior Capstone

CS
Fall Adventure
Colorado Expedition

MS

US

FALL  SPRING
Rituals common to all CSS overnight experiences

- Leader of the day (begins in 4th grade)
- Student reflection
- Meal preparation and clean up
- Independence
- Expedition Behavior
- Safety and Hygiene

Bedtime routine -
  - Bathroom and teeth brushing
  - Tent groups into tents
  - Adult check-in/debrief
  - Lights out
  - Teacher checks in with students before absolute quiet
  - Silence in tents
Differentiated by grade level but sharing common personal growth points.

1. Push each student’s personal comfort zone.
2. Develop independence, become better community members, and work on leadership skills.
3. Build appreciation for the outdoors, safety, and camp skills.
Colorado Expedition in Children’s School

Students expand upon classroom studies of CO history by:

• making observations
• asking questions
• investigating possible answers

in places of historical significance.
Seminar Program in Middle School

- Seminar 1 sets the tone for a community of peers who will embark on the academic year together.
- Seminars II and III emphasize student choice and the pursuit of a pre-professional or personal passion or purpose.
Components of Seminars II and III

Components:
• Impact
• Novelty
• Hands-on
• Comfort zone expansion
• Problem solving
• Collaboration

Categories:
• Outdoor Leadership
• Arts
• Social/Current Issues
• STEM
• Life Skills
Walkabout

A 9-day, student driven, exploration of Utah’s canyon and river country, emphasizing leadership lessons and growth

“There are no mistakes in life; only lessons. Lessons in life will be repeated until they are learned.”
Experience Centered Seminars (ECSs)

Kolb’s Experiential Learning Cycle:
“Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience.”

- Concrete experience
- Reflective observation
- Abstract conceptualization
- Active experimentation
Academic Rigor in ECSs

Each seminar is based in research, experiential application, and the following executive skills:

- Reading
- Interviewing
- Demonstration of creativity
- Writing
- Synthesizing
- Presentational sharing
Community Service at CSS...

exists in all grade levels, beginning in Pre-K (citizenship) and concluding with a community service requirement in the upper school.

• Children’s School: Civic Mindedness
• Middle School: Awareness of Self (6th grade), Others (7th grade), and Preservation of Natural Resources (8th grade)
• Upper School: 24 Hours of Individual Service
Community Service Partner Organizations

Broadmoor Court Assisted Living
Care and Share: Food Bank in Colorado
Colorado Springs Therapeutic Riding Center
CPCD Giving Children a Head Start
Rocky Mountain Field Institute
Stellar Care and Services, LLC
“With each return to routine after an ECS, I become cognizant of my responsibility to share what I’ve learned; I know that I have potential to produce considerable change in our world.”

-Bee Franklin ‘17
Senior Capstone

- An individualized, student-generated project at the end of the senior year
- Developed in consultation with Project Director, Academic Advisor, and a Committee of faculty and outside mentors
- Culminating in a report and presentation to the committee, peers, and parents
Capstone topics?

- Writing a research paper on a topic of interest
- Creating a work of art, a play or film, a musical score, or a collection of songs or poems
- Conducting scientific research
- Designing a solution to an engineering problem
- Learning a trade or skill
- Working as an intern in a local business or nonprofit
- Taking on a community service project
Capstone benefits

- Add direction, intention, and purpose to the senior year
- Reinforce CSS focus on project-based, individualized learning
- Require students to “own” their learning as they transition to a new phase of their education
- Deepen their resumes, enhance their college applications, differentiate them from the general pool of college applicants
- Help students explore possible professional goals