

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY INCORPORATING OUR EDUCATIONAL FRAMEWORK

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The Hutchins School Board as established by The Christ College Act 1926

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HUTCHINS

ESTABLISHED 1846

Educational Philosophy: Incorporating our educational framework

“We must remember that intelligence is not enough. Intelligence plus character—that is the true goal of education.” Dr Martin Luther King.

Rationale

This philosophy exists to guide the implementation of The Hutchins School vision and mission, that is ‘to provide an inspirational education where each student strives to achieve their personal best and is willing to serve their community as an informed and active citizen.’ Hutchins is an Anglican school in which a supportive learning community works together to nurture the character of students.

The belief that character is the foundation of all that we do is anchored by our motto, *Vivit Post Funera Virtus*, meaning Character Lives on After Death. Our school values of humility, kindness, courage and respect are easily identified as central aspects of good character. We believe that what we do in life matters.

At Hutchins, we are unashamedly committed to encouraging and fostering our students to flourish intellectually. We prize the active expression of intelligence in all its dimensions. We champion capacity becoming capability and potential being realised, and at the forefront of intellectual life at Hutchins is nurturing character. Thus, our pedagogical framework at Hutchins anchors character development into our classrooms and our teaching.

Fundamental to our mission is the belief that all students possess intelligence. This we define as attributes, dispositions and abilities. We believe that intelligence is more than the conventional measure of IQ. While IQ has validity as a measure of latent capacity, especially within traditional academic

disciplines, an IQ score never presents a full description of a child’s intellect and humanity. Children may be predisposed to intelligence in more or fewer domains, but never none.

A child’s intellect is comprised of dispositions like curiosity, humility, courage and creativity. Intelligence is the expression of these dispositions. Dispositions must be deliberately acknowledged and purposefully developed, and while every subject area requires the development of a variety of dispositions, it is when we harness a child’s dispositions to problems, situations and contexts that learning occurs.

In fact, Ron Ritchhart in *Intellectual Character* says that once a child’s dispositions are developed and can be consciously used, they become the very means by which they express their intelligence. Our emphasis on the notion of intellectual character focuses on developing dispositions.

We believe that these two elements, intelligence and character, must be inextricably linked and that good judgment is an outcome of a successful education.

For these reasons—and because our world requires ethical solutions to complex problems—a Hutchins education is about much more than academic achievement. Our deliberate objective is for a Hutchins graduate to be an intentional and active influence who strives for the betterment of individuals and the broader community.





Character is a quality that embodies many important traits such as integrity, courage, perseverance, confidence and wisdom. Unlike your fingerprints that you were born with and cannot change, character is something that you can create within yourself and must take responsibility for changing. (Jim Rohm)

Thinking dispositions represent characteristics that animate, motivate, and direct our abilities toward good and productive thinking are recognized in the patterns of our frequently exhibited, voluntary behaviour.

(Holly Thornton)



Educational Framework

Our framework draws primarily from the following four research-based programs.

Intellectual Character

In this regard the research of Ron Ritchhart and Jason Baehr are central. This overarching element of our philosophy affects curriculum planning and daily learning through a focus on developing dispositions.

There is a whole-school focus on developing the dispositions of humility, courage, respect, curiosity, etc. Furthermore, individual faculties focus on creativity and discipline-specific dispositions.

Understanding by Design

Our curriculum documents are the blueprint for our learning experiences and these are developed using the Understanding by Design framework. Understanding is revealed when students autonomously make sense of and transfer their learning through authentic performance. Teachers are designers. An essential act of our profession is the design of curriculum and learning. Teachers are not merely those who deliver content knowledge, skills or activities but are coaches of understanding. They focus on ensuring that learning happens, not just teaching (and assuming that what was taught was learned); they always aim and check for successful meaning-making and transfer by the learner. Understanding by Design assists them in identifying the deep and meaningful learning and especially the application of higher-order thinking to disciplinary and inter-disciplinary contexts and problems.

The principal outcome of this framework is on improving student outcomes.

Relational Learning™

Dr George Otero has developed a theory of relational learning. We draw two main ideas from this framework. Attitude matters in learning and we use of the five dimensions of attitude from this framework.

Secondly, learning progresses through the level of understanding where:

[f]acts or concepts are tested through application, interaction and interrelationship, not simply for short-term memorization but to be understood as they relate to other facts and concepts as well as other human beings and the world at large. They are now making sense because they seem to be relevant, useful and of potential value to our lives. Through to Co-Creating 'where learning is shared with others in meaningful, productive ways that enhance the functioning of the learner, others, and the community'. At this level, learning represents a call to the self, to find one's own place, way and meaning in relating to the world personally and collectively.

Gratitude

The work of Kerry Howells—and principally, her publication *Gratitude in Education: A Radical View*—is of central importance here. Gratitude has an important place in learning as students orientate themselves to where they can feel valued and where there is trust.

This framework provides vital insights into how to coach attitude development.

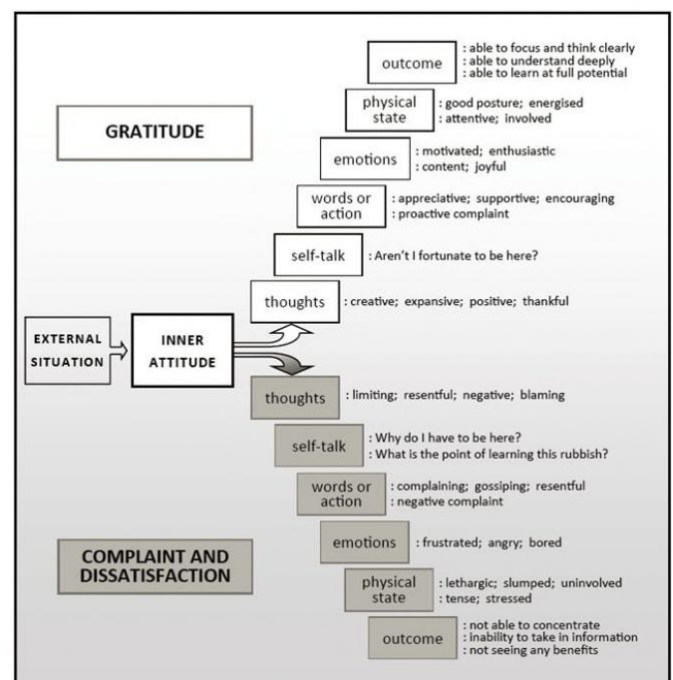


Figure 1 Dimensions of the impact of one's inner attitude. Source: *Gratitude in Education: A Radical View* by Kerry Howells

Hutchins School Values

Our core values are dispositions within our educational framework.

Humility

Intellectually humble learners are appropriately aware of and attentive to their intellectual limitations. They do not conceal these limitations or respond defensively when their limitations are brought into the light, nor are they proud, entitled or superior. They are neither preoccupied with their limitations nor subject to false modesty.

Courage

Intellectual courage involves the ability to manage and regulate fear and prevent fear from driving intellectual activity. Learning is dealing with fear. Another dimension of intellectual courage is the position to offer a perspective when required; speaking truth to power is a version of courage.

Respect

Respect means that you accept somebody for who they are, even when they are different from you and when you don't agree with them. Respect is foundational for building trust, safety and wellbeing. Respect for persons is a central concept in many ethical theories; some theories treat it as the very essence of morality and the foundation of all other moral duties and obligations.

A true understanding of a person's experience and ideas requires respect; respect ensures we remain intellectually open to validity and virtue. Respect is the foundational virtue to recognising our blind spots and complexity.

Kindness

Learning is reliant on kindness and a feeling of safety. Kindness is love in action. Kindness makes a direct contribution to the feeling of safety and maintains the depth of connection and courtesy that enables relationships to be developed within the learning community.

Maxims about Learning and Learners

The Hutchins learning community holds the following maxims about learning and learners.

It is a fundamental human right to be taught at your optimal level of ability.

People need to feel safe to learn. Wellbeing and learning are inextricably linked. The best learning involves taking risks and opening yourself to new ideas and new people. Intellectual and emotional safety are important preconditions for learning and personal growth. In regard particularly to the student teacher relationship:

Students orientate themselves to where they can feel valued and where there is trust. It is not until they find this safe haven that they can settle and be present enough to learn.

Students who do not trust their teachers or fellow students cannot learn efficiently because they invest their energy in calculating ways to protect themselves instead of engaging in the learning process.

Being 'seen' and understood is essential for identity formation and affirmation.

Learning is relational and understanding the context in which a person exists is essential to appreciating their orientation to learning, their talents and attitudes.

Attitude matters. How we internally position ourselves emotionally, intellectually, relationally and spiritually enables or interferes with learning and personal growth.

We are always in a relationship but the quality of that relationship and therefore the quality of learning varies greatly. As we move through each level, we can identify the added power that relationships can bring to our learning.





There are five key attitudes within successful learning. They are here presented with a student orientation, but equally apply to teachers and parents/carers:

1. **Attitude to self** - what students believe about their capabilities and capacity vitally influences learning.
2. **Attitude to the content or subject matter** - have previous successes or struggles in a subject affected a student's current attitude?
3. **Attitude to the teacher** - is the student relationally positioned to listen to and value the teaching?
4. **Attitude to peers** - is a student valued, connected, safe and respected by their peers?
5. **Attitudes to context/situation/ community** - how does a student see their connection to the world outside family and classroom?

Gratitude empowers engagement, learning and maturity. We believe that gratitude [is] an important missing piece of current educational practices. Gratitude is an important element of our character education. It is more than positivity. Having gratitude should foster actions of gratitude to others.

It is a reciprocity within relationship. Such an awareness transforms engagement and attitude.

The absence of gratitude marks people who are belligerently entitled, who proclaim themselves as self-made and rugged individuals, who see no need to say please and thank you because – after all – they deserve everything they have.

We teach who we are. What we instill above all is our character, integrity and values. Good teaching cannot be reduced to technique; good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher.

Every student has talents and abilities. This positions us for the discovery of a person's capability. This prevents us from stereotyping and misunderstanding.

If students want to learn then we cannot stop them. We are innate learners and connection of engagement, dispositions and perceived ability are powerful contributors to learning.



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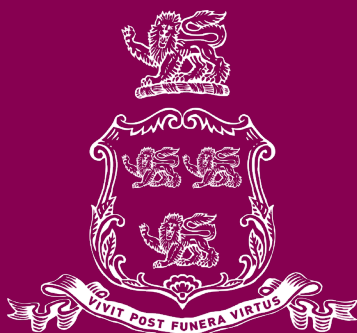
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