

The Ninth Grade Experience

An Interdisciplinary Approach to Education

The Ninth Grade Experience is a unique program that aims to promote interdisciplinary learning, while facilitating the transition to high school for incoming students at North Shore High School. Through team-teaching, inquiry projects, and the creative use of technology, the students become a part of a tight-knit learning community, as they develop academically throughout the school year.

Key Aspects of the NGE:

- *Interdisciplinary Curriculum & Team teaching*
- *Transition to High School*

Unique Features:

- *NGE themes*
- *Centering class*
- *Year-long Inquiry Project*
- *Mentoring*
- *iPads*
- *Flexible schedule*
- *Inter/Intrapersonal Skills*

KEY ASPECTS

Interdisciplinary Curriculum/Team Teaching:

The NGE Team Meetings

- Preliminary schedule (subject to change based on the needs of the teachers):
 - **Mondays, period 6:** Meeting will focus on students.
 - NGE Facilitator (Deirdre Davison) will maintain a binder to record discussions/ "plan of action" for each student.
 - **Thursdays, period 6:** Meeting will focus on interdisciplinary planning.
 - Each teacher will collaborate with another teacher on the team at least *three times per year*. Collaboration might include a single lesson, a long-term project, an in-school event, a field-trip, etc.

Visitations:

- Teachers will visit each other's classrooms *1-3 times per week* to learn about the content of their courses. They will give the classroom teacher advance notice.

Flexible Schedule:

- The NGE is unusual in that the team has the ability to use the schedule flexibly to meet the needs of interdisciplinary study.

Transition to High School:

- Introductory meeting will be held in the first or second week of school for all NGE students & teachers.
- An introductory letter will be sent home from the team, and will include a *student survey* (personal & academic background info) for the parents & students to complete, and basic guidelines for using the iPad in the NGE classrooms (i.e., only when the teacher tells the students it's okay).
- *NGE eNewsletter*: A student-generated email newsletter to the parents & school community that highlights exciting NGE classroom events.

Unique Features

NGE Learning Goals & Themes for the year:

Learning Goals for Centering	NGE Themes	Outcomes
Perspective: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who are you? • What is knowledge? • What is real? 	Perspective	Students will understand that who they are affects how they see the world. They will also understand that everyone has a different perspective, a different critical lens through which they see the world.
Research & Observation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we know what we know? • What is research/evidence? • How do we conduct a test? Collect evidence? Make observations? • What is the relationship between evidence and knowledge? 	Patterns, Systems & Relationships	Students will understand that certain patterns, systems, and relationships, emerge when we begin to analyze the ways in which ideas/facts are connected. Research helps us to discover these connections, and therefore enhance our learning.
Ideas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do <i>you</i> think? • Where do ideas come from? • How do you formulate ideas based on discovery? 	Ethics & Morality	Students will understand that they have the power to form their own ideas, which are based on perspective as well as evidence/research. In forming their ideas, they are faced with the ultimate question of difference between "right" and

		"wrong," and the implications of their beliefs.
<p>Conclusions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What have you learned? • How do we explain & share ideas/knowledge/discoveries 	Final Project	<p>Students will understand that their work at school is omnipresent in their lives. Student findings must be presented so that an audience can understand their point of view, their evidence, and their beliefs. Conclusions are formed as arguments and based on solid evidence. Through all of their work in the disciplines, they will understand that great thinkers have to do more than just think brilliant thoughts; they must be able to share them effectively.</p>

Centering Class:

- Centering class will focus on a year-long inquiry project that culminates in the NGE Film Festival.
- iLab: A Laboratory for Ideas
 - iLab is a collection of students & teachers to casually meet & discuss "big ideas."
 - Listen iLabs from 2010 here: <http://www.mrsdavison.typepad.com/ilab/>
 - All iLabs are recorded and used for further discussion purposes in Centering.
- Centering class will focus on the following skills:
 - *Developing ideas*
 - *Discerning between the subjective & the objective*
 - *Research (library skills)*
 - *Questioning*
 - *Organization of ideas*
 - *Use of technology*
 - *Performance/publication*

Inter-Intrapersonal Grading:

NGE students are graded similarly in all of their classes. See below for a sample guideline. Further details will be discussed with NGE team teachers in September.

80% Content

Teachers can divide this section into percentages or points as they see fit — including testing, essays, projects, journals, etc.

10% Interpersonal Skills

Student...

- communicates clearly and effectively
- collaborates
- is respectful of the community

10% Intrapersonal Skills

Student...

- adapts well to change
- is flexible
- is self-directed
- is organized and submits work on time

iPads:

The NGE teachers and students will be a part of the North Shore Schools iPad pilot program. Teachers will have to experiment with the iPads in order to figure out how they would like to use them. Ideas include using the iPad to:

- get the students familiar with keeping an agenda/daily planner application.
- teach proper electronic communication between teachers & students.
- create multi-media presentations.
- access iTunesU or share iTunes playlists.