

# EQUIPPED TO INNOVATE

## Three Traits of Schools That Graduate Thoughtful Influencers

Kevin D. Washburn, Ed.D.

### ONE OF THE THINGS SCHOOLHOUSE ROCK GOT RIGHT

Back in its heyday, Schoolhouse Rock sang, “Three is a magic number.” They were on to something...

- ▶ A sheltering roof  
If we imagine the culture of our school’s as a type of “sheltering roof,” what would its three sides or three points be—especially if we are striving to produce students equipped with abilities to think deeply, meaningfully, strategically, and critically? What kind of culture helps us rise to the vision we have for producing students who will influence or impact the world?

### 1. RESPECT

“Not defensive, capable of considering other voices.” (B. Hudson)

Respect involves “principles of love, widely distributed.”(J. Evans)

- ▶ Listen
- ▶ Respond with *intellectual empathy*
- ▶ Maintain the dignity of the other
- ▶ Express genuine gratitude; begin your day/class thinking, “I love my students. I am grateful they showed up to learn from me. I need them.”
- ▶ A few related things that critical thinking is NOT:
  - shouting
  - refusing to consider another’s perspective; ignoring the points made by others
  - self-righteous thoughts/behavior

## 2. SEEING EVERY INDIVIDUAL A WORTHY CONTRIBUTOR

“Value people.” (J. Evans)

“Grow a culture that can welcome what is outside of it.” (B. Hudson)

- ▶ Recognize that the current moment arises from an individual’s backstory (Shortt)
- ▶ Act with compassion even when judgment is justified; do not diminish the individual; be glad for opportunities to do good for others
- ▶ Maintain the individual’s *intellectual independence*
- ▶ Work hard to equip *each* student with stronger thinking abilities
- ▶ A few related things that critical thinking is NOT:
  - reasoning with self-serving intent
  - arguing without sharing support due to seeing the other as inferior: “You just wouldn’t understand.”

## 3. HUMILITY

“Don’t let ego drive the cart.” (B. Hudson)

“Live humbly and worship by living in right relationship with others.” (J. Evans)

- ▶ Be curious and promote curiosity; exemplify *intellectual humility*
- ▶ Learn from everyone; draw attention to times when you learn from students
- ▶ Recognize and admit when you are or have been wrong
- ▶ A few related things that critical thinking is NOT:
  - making claims based on identity: “I should know because...”
  - offering absolutist arguments that are poorly supported

## CONCLUSION

Micah 6:8

“He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”

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