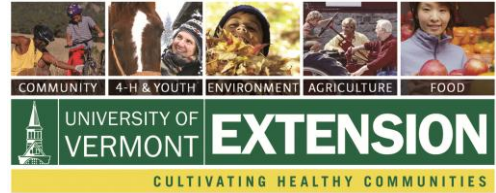


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## TRANSCRIPT

EPISODE DATE: 3/30/12

EPISODE NAME: Students from Norwich University discuss their documentary “Education Transformation”

Good afternoon and thanks for joining us; I'm Judy Simpson. Students at Norwich University have a history of collecting national recognition when it comes to video story-telling. Regular viewers of *Across the Fence* may remember a series of stories produced by Norwich students on Vermont soldiers killed in action in Iraq.

Norwich students are now tackling an entirely different subject: Education. They've spent time in schools across Vermont, learning about learning. We begin with an extended preview of the students' work:

Sam Francouer: Some thrive in a traditional setting and wouldn't be able to learn in the kind of chaos that we learn in but for me that's the best way for me to learn I can't learn sitting in rows the hand raising thing just doesn't work.

Jean Berthiaume: We're trapped in systems that we can't think beyond. So I look at it in terms of only thinking of we only know what we know and we can't think outside the box. So that seems to be a barrier to really recognizing what we transform to.

Jason Finley: We have been the same for so long that any change is revolutionary, different is bad, when you make a change you have to say look here's the way we are doing things now education has to evolve.

Mary Whalen: Transformation to me is a very interesting word because I think transformation is just simply improvement but we have this political organization that is saying that transformation is something new when really to me it's about people growing and teachers growing and empowering students.

Mark Tashjian: I think it's a mindset. It's a mindset around caring for kids. It's a mindset around the connection you want to have between a student and a teacher.

Armando: One of the things I think the problem of education is really focused on is helping improve instruction for kids. How do we support schools so they can do a better job of instructing kids?

Stoleroff: There is so much content that kids are asked to have in this millenia that it's very overwhelming. So, life lessons become very important in terms of learning how to learn, learning how you learn best,

Jeff: I think what's most important for us is to understand how the students learn best. You're going to have to know what your skills are, and how do you assess them yourself.

Bruce: You have to build a sense of community, you have to build a sense of something greater than the self but you also have to focus on the individual as well. One of the things we work on is building a sense of community but not diminishing the individual.

Rick Gendron: But they learn a language from feedback they've gotten. Self-assessment, peer assessment, teacher assessment that says here's areas where you're really strong and here's where you need to grow. Their portfolios are based on those same learning realms in those folders they have.

Scranton: Vermont is a perfect state for reform, for one reason its size. There's sixty principles most of them know each other. You can get from one school to the other in three hours it's easy to get around the state.

Gary Gilbert: We are taking the most serious approach I have seen us take in years. We are seeing the same reports that have generated over the last ten years reappear in a different form but they're not becoming shelf documents.

Peter Evans: I have been in education for 33 years and this is probably the most important time in education that I have been involved in. I say that because it's not a matter of when we make changes to become better at what we do. It's a matter of how quickly we can make changes. It's not an option anymore.

Tom Sedore: As long as we are not targeting teachers and making them feel comfortable in the fact that we do need to change and that we need to help provide them with the pathways to get there, I think is key.

Peter: How do we create an flexible educational system so that it meets a really wide range of students and at the same time have that flexible system be accountable to certain outcomes.

Jeff: You have language issues as well as socioeconomic issues. You have to look closely at how my best, how am I most effective in reaching students. One of the guiding questions we try to look at is, "How do I know my students are learning?"

Jason Finley: Really there's the components of how do you make education we need for students, and how can students demonstrate what they learn in purposeful ways, and that could look like anything. You know, it doesn't have to be, you know, a hike up Mount Washington; it doesn't have to be a student making a cooking show, when she's talking about nutrition.

Jeff: You have to educate the students you have, not just the kids you want to have. All of our educational institutions need to work hard on meeting the kids where they are, not getting caught up in having a relationship with a student; you need to have a relationship with their potential.

Chuck Scranton: We put all of the kids over here and give them a funny name like the bluebirds and robins in first grade. I mean we all know what those names mean. And they're preprogrammed not to be successful.

Tom Sedore: How are kids going to be ready for what they're facing when they get out of here? And I think that's one of the big keys we want to work towards in the future is not just answering test questions and getting the right answer, what happens when you don't have the right answer?

Nikole Maloy: You can't standardize kids so I don't know why you should standardize schools. I feel like teachers are under such strict rules and regulations that they don't have any flexibility. It's almost like they're forced to teach this and what they're forced to teach isn't really interesting kids.

Bruce: The thing that we know is that all individuals learn in different ways. The thing that is hardest to address is how do you take the system that we have and the way that the system has develop, which is really not catered to the individual and develop it so that it is catered to the individual.

Louise: Is teacher as coach rather than...so I do think of myself as coach. I don't walk in the room and know everything that is going to happen or every bit of learning that is going to happen that day. I'm hoping that it will come with them and I do a lot of sharing from each other.

Jody Emerson: Kids can learn a lot of different ways and they each have strength and we can meet those strengths without textbooks or without lecturing and we just need to get to know our students better.

Sam: For me I know I really have trouble learning if I'm not interested in it and it's not, I don't see a reason to learn it that you know I've been good at math but I don't really see the need to know all these different formulas because I don't see how they are going to help me in real life.

Jason Finley: Students don't come to school to sit and do nothing. Nobody wants to be bored, nobody wants to be unengaged, they just need to find that piece for them that has meaning.

Christine Milne: I think what happens in that larger school setup they don't get as much one on one action and they don't feel like their desires known or come to a meeting where they can make their desires known.

Rick Gordon: Adolescents a lot of have this innate thing wanting to have identity to wanting to be heard and have this opposition to authority. So to the extent they are not heard, they exercise their voice in other ways.

Jenna Munger: To be completely honest I do believe we have a voice that is not being heard, there is a lot of student that would like something different but don't want to ask or do know how to ask for something different.

Marcus Grace: Lend your eye to a student voice they have a lot of ideas. The power we have here at Harwood we have a lot of adults who will listen to them and include them and actually it happens here in a very systemic way so those ideas can bubble up in very very quick way.

Stew Williamson: Teachers and students working together that have passion for learning and engagement because they're interested in what they're learning about. Students and teachers working together is critical. When it's one teacher acting as the sole proprietor giving the information to students, it doesn't really work very well.

Josh Hardt: It's not hard to find strengths in any student. When you give them a forum where they can soar, it's going to come out pretty quickly and then you put a group in a position that is stressful, where students have to rely on others strengths, often times that student that has the reputation of being the tough guy or the trouble maker, they have something that is so vital to the success of that program that they actually see worth in themselves and that's got to be one of the most magical things that we see.

Rae Ann Knopf: Want to help create opportunities where whether it's your hands, feet, or your brain or you're using them differently and we're able to combine different areas of focus. Like arts and math, history and English and science and math

Rick Gordon: When students feel successful in one area, you can build success for other areas. I think that that happens in two ways, one way is that any success breeds success, you feel better about yourself, you feel better about school.

Nikole: I think that in high school it is all about finding yourself, like you need to find your boundaries, your limits. You really need to push those limits once you find them and I think it is important to compete with yourself and not compare yourself to others.

Chuck Scranton: Successes should be defined as how successful a student is in realizing his or her potential and recognizing that education is a journey, it doesn't end just because you're in the twelfth grade or the sixteenth grade when you graduate high school. It's not something you just can't wait to run away from.

Tom Levitt: It all starts with aspirations; the idea, the expectation that you can achieve great things regardless of your passions or what your background is

Joining me now are two of the Norwich University students who are producing the education documentary.

Kerry Gaspard and Collin HYTE are both seniors at Norwich.

Thanks for being with us! Collin, the video we just saw is a preview to a final project. How long will this project be when it's finished and what's the ultimate goal?

Collin.: The projects going to be about an hour-long and the goal is to expose and show education itself and how it's transforming the state of Vermont and getting to know the educators and how their innovatively thinking.

Judy.: So KG your responsibility was to visit the schools beforehand and figure out which schools and teachers are going to talk to and students. How did you do that?

KG.: We didn't pick the school's the schools picked us. We e-mail them told them what the documentary was about and we wanted their input and they loved it and responded back immediately and we made it happen from there. We went to the schools and they were chosen by their professors or the students themselves to come and speak.

Judy.: A student your cells what if you learn from working on this project?

Collin.: I think what we've learned is how education has been so vital in our lives and we want to see younger students understand that education is important and teachers be innovative.

KG.: For me personally I'm going to have to say a student voice because a lot of the students sometimes feel like there on heard and what the teachers and faculty and staff at the schools are working on are letting the students be heard and what their opinions are on life and where they want to be at two years or 20 years from now when the programs that they want inside their schools. It's going to be interesting.

Judy.: You're from Florida how different is the Vermont education experience from what you're used to in Florida?

KG.: I would say it's very populated the school I went to and it's different. The teachers here there's caring teachers everywhere but in Vermont it's very grass root and the cultures very different even though the people here are nice I would have to say it's a strong body of the staff and students and they love each other so I enjoyed it it's pretty crazy.

Judy.: How both for you Collin?

Collin.: I found my experience similar.

Judy.: You're from Massachusetts we should mention.

Collin.: And mass is a great place to learn I enjoyed working with my teachers back in high school because it was hands on learning specially as like at the compass school in Vermont there's a lot of hands on learning a lot of different ways of teaching students how to grasp their subject grassroots it's a pretty good place to learn.

Judy.: It's true because different students learn differently so did you find through this project that there's enough room in the Vermont education system to cater to that?

KG.: I fell like the students were pressured you know what I mean by the faculty and staff on standardized testing. They were really learning how to get prepared for the real world and what are going to do when they get out of school and everybody seemed happy that that's the state of Vermont period. Everybody's friendly and nice. As far as flour dough we would worried about standardized testing and it led me away from what I wanted to do when I got out of high school.

Judy.: Are you going to be going on and working on video and production when you get out of school?

KG.: I would definitely love to work on video film documentaries or whenever opportunity comes across.

Judy.: How about you?

Collin.: I feel the same way I'm big into editing and I like going out meeting people which KG enjoys too. Its cool projects like this you get to learn about the subject matter and it teaches you a lot and I think that's important. Taking on an experience of which are going to learn about when you shoot.

Judy.: Excellent. As you mentioned you can see the education transformation video and dozens of other videos that are produced by students at nor which by going to the website on your screen is VIMEO dot com/nor which television. Thanks for both for being here today and working on this great project.

KG.: Thank you Judy.

Collin.: Thank you very much.

That's our program for today. I'm Judy Simpson we'll see you again next time on *Across the Fence*.

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