

WORKSHOP QUESTIONS

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Self-Reliance in School

In your teaching, do you try to separate *self-reliance* from *rugged individualism* as it has been cast in this essay? How are your students helped to ‘stand on their own two feet’ without learning to conquer the competition, nature, or outer space? How do your students learn to be individuals and still learn collaboration and sustainability? Give an example.

Why do you think there is so much emphasis on competition in education these days?

How much time do you spend preparing students for tests? How much of that time would you like to have to do something else? What would you do?

When in your teaching have you felt your students have been most fully, whole heartedly engaged? Can you imagine doing more of the same?

What is a teaching activity you love, that you would say, *transforms* your students? Does this activity cause your students to be able to rely on themselves better?

Give an example you have observed, where students are growing from doing things on their own? How about growth from helping another? Have you observed growth in the student being helped?

Would you rather work on a project with students and fold mainstream subjects like reading writing and arithmetic into the project – or do you prefer having time for separate subject classes? Or do you like a mix?

What if the core curriculum were much, much smaller, giving the teacher much more time? Do you think our national standards of basic proficiencies would go down?

Have you had the feeling that something you do – or have done – with your students really fosters initiative? What is it?

Do you have personal favorite subjects? If you had more freedom to teach more of your favorite parts, how would you cover enough basics?

How would it affect your students if you could spend more time showing them the subject matter you love? Besides basic skills, what would your students gain?