

A School Like No Other – From Middle School to College All in One Year



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From Middle School to Scholars . . .

Transition School taught me how to think.



Overview



- ◆ **What is the Transition School?**
- ◆ **Curriculum, Support Structures, Meeting Social/Emotional Needs**
- ◆ **Research Findings**

Mission Statement

- ◆ **The mission of the Halbert and Nancy Robinson Center for Young Scholars at the University of Washington is threefold: teaching, research, and service. The RC is a leader in the nation for developing programs that serve highly capable young pre-college and college students.**

Robinson Center

- ◆ **Early Admittance Programs to University of Washington**
 - ◆ **Transition School/ Early Entrance (EEP)**
 - ◆ **UW Academy**
- ◆ **Saturday Program**
 - ◆ **High Interest - No Qualifications**
- ◆ **Summer Programs**
 - ◆ **Qualifications for Specific Subject Areas**



What is TS/EEP?

- ◆ **TS: a one-year accelerated learning experience on the UW campus, to prepare for early entrance into University**
- ◆ **EEP: Admission into UW as full undergraduate, with access to special facilities at Robinson Center**

Early Entrance Students

Transition School

EEPers



Enter as Cohorts

Criteria Transition School

- ◆ Recent ACT scores in the 85th percentile or above in English, Math and Reading
- ◆ Two years of grade transcripts that show a consistent level of excellence
- ◆ A birthdate that indicates the student will not yet be 15 as of the start-date of Transition School
- ◆ U.S. citizenship or permanent resident status
- ◆ Students with these additional qualifications tend to perform better in Transition School and the University:
 - ◆ Completion of 8th grade
 - ◆ Completion of Algebra 1 & 2 (the latter can be completed over the summer before classes begin)

Who thrives in Transition School?

- ◆ **Self-motivated, proactive about learning**
- ◆ **Passionate about one or more subjects**
- ◆ **Excels in current educational setting**
- ◆ **Self-reflective, able to express self-knowledge**
- ◆ **At least some organizational skills in place**
- ◆ **Willing to learn from others**
- ◆ **Isn't interested in the high school experience**

Elements of Cohort Model

- ◆ **Build an Academic Community**
- ◆ **Provide Academic Counseling and Support Services**
- ◆ **Provide Opportunities for Socializing**



Explicit Decisions

- ◆ **Selecting faculty to teach courses**
- ◆ **Including significant student and teaching staff contact**
- ◆ **Hiring students from previous years' cohorts as teaching assistants**
- ◆ **Hiring counseling intern**



Before the Term Begins



Camping and Mentoring

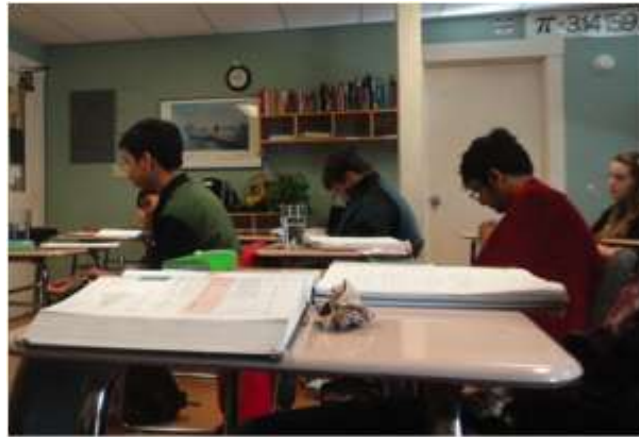
Goals of Transition School

- ◆ **Scholarly Habits**
 - ◆ Time management skills
 - ◆ Organizational strategies
- ◆ **Critical Thinking Skills**
 - ◆ Writing
 - ◆ Critical Reading
 - ◆ Analysis, Synthesis and Evaluation
- ◆ **Core understanding of High Level Content**
 - ◆ Physics
 - ◆ American Literature
 - ◆ European History
 - ◆ Precalculus
- ◆ **Introductory knowledge of Ethics**



The TS Year: Fall Quarter

- ◆ English (expository writing)
- ◆ History
- ◆ Physics
- ◆ Math



**Emphasis: acquisition of study skills;
expectations; introduction to topics**

The TS Year: Winter Quarter

- ◆ English (World Literature)
- ◆ History
- ◆ Physics
- ◆ Precalculus
- ◆ Ethics
- ◆ Pre-EEP Workshops – Academic Counseling

Emphasis: continued advanced work in subjects; long-term project skills; preparation for University registration and University resources

The TS Year: Spring Quarter

- ◆ English (American Literature)
- ◆ History
- ◆ Precalculus
- ◆ University course
- ◆ Service-learning/Ethics

Emphasis: **moving out** of the TS classroom
into the wider world of the University;
completion of **high-level coursework**

The TS Year: Tutorials

- ◆ **Weekly half-hour meetings with a faculty member**
- ◆ **Weekly journal assignments to practice writing, analysis, critical thinking skills**
- ◆ **“Checking in” about stress, worries, emotional well-being**
- ◆ **One-on-one work with instructor on areas of difficulty**

The TS Year: Service Learning

- ◆ **The Carlson Center**
- ◆ **Student Choice of Site**
- ◆ **Goals: doing good work in the community; experience and empathy**

Academic Skills to Succeed at the University

- ◆ **Read primary source materials and texts across genres with understanding and depth.**
- ◆ **Write for different audiences with clarity, organization, and nuance.**
- ◆ **Conduct research effectively.**
- ◆ **Conduct a lab, collect data, and write a lab report.**
- ◆ **Keep up with a heavy workload via use of a planner and other organizational tools, meeting all deadlines.**

Scholarly Skills

- ◆ **Participate frequently and effectively in class discussions.**
- ◆ **Work collegially and collaboratively with fellow students.**
- ◆ **Advocate for oneself with faculty and staff in an effective and mature manner.**

Acceleration?

- ◆ **Defining “acceleration” in a humanities context is a tricky proposition because of...**
 - ◆ **Multiple, conflicting narratives of student progress**
 - ◆ **A lack of consensus on the nature of “foundational skills”**
 - ◆ **Questions regarding student maturity and life experience**
- ◆ **What are “accelerating” towards? What is the destination of our “accelerated” curriculum?**
- ◆ **What exactly needs to be “accelerated”?**

Accelerate Where?

- ◆ **Reading and Writing at the University is...**
 - ◆ **Disciplinary**
 - ◆ Defines diverse “rules” and conventions for reading and writing
 - ◆ Work produced by specialists with their own definitions of “critical thinking,” “effective writing,” and “close reading”
 - ◆ **Inquiry-Based/Argumentative**
 - ◆ Organized as a series of disciplinary conversations and shared lines of inquiry
 - ◆ Disciplines and inquiries have their own histories, which are often a part of what students engage in learning a field

“Practice-Based” Curriculum

- ◆ **Situated Writing Instruction**
 - ◆ **Engaging and responding to academic “conversations”**
 - ◆ **Key components of academic argument: evidence, analysis, claim, stakes**
 - ◆ **Awareness of how academic arguments differ in these same areas**

Accelerate What?

- ◆ So what needs to be “accelerated”?
- ◆ **Writing**: as a disciplinary-specific mode of argumentation and inquiry within fields.
- ◆ **Reading**: as a diverse academic practice used in a variety of different types of inquiry.
- ◆ **“Situational Awareness”** as a means of anticipating and adjusting to disciplinary or methodological difference

“Practice-Based” Curriculum

◆ Scaffolding

- 1. FALL – Process-based Writing, Rhetorical Awareness in Academic Situations, Academic “Conversation”**
- 2. WINTER – “Conversation” or Inquiry into Reading, Introduction of Reading as Method**
- 3. SPRING – Working in the Discipline, Formulating Questions and Research Agendas**

“Practice-Based” Curriculum

◆ Using Course Questions

- ◆ Stages inquiry as process of critical evaluation**
- ◆ Introduces and embeds students in “academic conversations” defined by mutual questions**
- ◆ Organically incorporates issues of research, methodology, and disciplinary difference as essential issues in the process of scholarship**

“Practice-Based” Curriculum

◆ Reading as Methodology

- ◆ FALL – Engaged Reading/Text as “Evidence”**
 - ◆ How do academics make use of texts for their own purposes?**
- ◆ WINTER – Conceptualizing Reading as Method**
 - ◆ How and why do academics read differently?**
- ◆ Spring – Mobilizing Methodological Thinking**
 - ◆ How does this discipline work with texts and why?**

Academic Supports

- ◆ **Carefully selected teachers**
- ◆ **Significant contact with teachers**
 - ◆ **Tutorials – Transition School**
 - ◆ **Appointments with Professors**
 - ◆ **Office Hours**
- ◆ **Teaching Assistants that once were students like them**

Interventions for Support

◆ Focus

- ◆ The **student** must make all of the appointments; come to the meetings with an agenda, questions, and problems; and must carry out all requirements with little or no reminders.
- ◆ Developing a **sense of responsibility** that is essential to do well at the University.
- ◆ The Focus period may last anywhere from 2 to 4 weeks.

Probation

- ◆ At this point, the student and family need to be thinking about **whether TS is the optimal educational match.**
- ◆ Specific benchmarks that must be achieved within 3 to 4 weeks (e.g., obtaining 70% on a math test or getting an 85% on the English final exam).
- ◆ The goal here is finally to decide whether **TS is really the right fit.**

Academic Counseling and Support Services

- ◆ **Transition School**

- ◆ **Pre/EEP**

- ◆ **EEP**

- ◆ **Bridge Program**

- ◆ **Intrusive Academic Counseling Model**

- ◆ **Mentoring Program**

- ◆ **Resiliency Training**

- ◆ **Parent Check-Ins**

What are Pre-EEP Supports?

◆ While in Transition School

- ◆ TA's who were once in Transition School and can help them "get through"
- ◆ Informational meetings with Academic Counselor and Director of EEP/Academy
- ◆ Walk through college application
- ◆ Experience university classes by taking one UW course in the spring term
- ◆ Parent information meetings
 - ◆ Financial Aid
 - ◆ Encouraging independence
 - ◆ Logistics for becoming a college student

Parent Check-Ins

- ◆ **Around the time of mid-terms or progress reports**
- ◆ **Mindful of FERPA**
- ◆ **Discussion of typical adolescent behaviors**
 - ◆ **Reminders for health and wellness of students**
- ◆ **Provide cohorts for parents**
 - ◆ **Questions and concerns from other parents**

Opportunities for Socializing

- ◆ Lounge Time
- ◆ Annual Events
 - ◆ Drama Day
 - ◆ Spaghetti Feed
 - ◆ Halloween Party
 - ◆ Pi Day
 - ◆ Celebrations – Staff and Students



The Next Step

- ◆ Advising
- ◆ The Lounge
- ◆ The RC community
- ◆ EDS and other clubs
- ◆ Blending with the University
- ◆ CADRs
- ◆ Declaring a Major



Research – What Happens?



Swimming in Deep Waters

Noble & Childers, 2009

- ◆ **International Handbook of Gifted Education (L. Shavinina, (ed.)**
- ◆ **20 years of research on early entrance programs**

Series of Studies

◆ Janos & Robinson (1986)

- ◆ Compared academic performance of EEPers with classmates who entered UW at 18
 - ◆ Mean GPA scores higher
 - ◆ Satisfaction with academic environment of UW higher

◆ Janos, Sanfilipo, & Robinson, (1986)

- ◆ Incidences and causes of underachievement (1.5 standard deviations below the mean of 3.36)
 - ◆ Only 12 participants
 - ◆ Had withdrawn from nearly twice as many courses
 - ◆ Took incompletes more than twice as often as high achieving students
 - ◆ Achieving students performed consistently across terms, underachievers “successful and dismal” terms.

Social and Psychological Adjustment

- ◆ **In all studies, no association between early entrance and psychological or social impairment, (p. 21)**
- ◆ **“One of the best things about early entrance, participants observed, is that the culture of university differs significantly from secondary school such that intellectual ambition and drive are not only expected but prized and rewarded by students and faculty alike.”**

Follow-Up Studies

- ◆ **61 EEPers**
- ◆ **Results indicated respondents appeared to be doing well**
 - ◆ **Most completed undergraduate degree**
 - ◆ **Most working in career-related jobs or still attending graduate or professional school**
 - ◆ **Majority were satisfied with degree of acceleration**
 - ◆ **Presence of peer group important – Transition School – more positive than pre-Transition School**

35th Year Alumni Study Fall 2013

- ◆ **168/588 – 29% return**
- ◆ **Early Entrance Program (EEP) 106
63.47%**
- ◆ **UW Academy Program (ACAD) 61
36.53%**
- ◆ **Were in Highly Capable Program –
86.23%**

What is Your Race/Ethnicity?

Total responses (N): 165 Did not respond: 3

<i>Numeric value</i>	<i>Answer</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
1	Asian	51	30.91%
2	Caucasian	102	61.82%
3	Hispanic/Latino	1	0.61%
4	Other	11	6.67%

<i>Mean</i>	3.90
<i>Median</i>	4.00
<i>Mode</i>	4
<i>Min/Max</i>	3/7
<i>Standard deviation</i>	.95

Did you and/or your parent(s) immigrate to the United states?

Total responses (N): 168 Did not respond: 0

<i>Numeric value</i>	<i>Answer</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
1	Yes	70	41.67%
2	No	98	58.33%

<i>Mean</i>	1.58
<i>Median</i>	2.00
<i>Mode</i>	2
<i>Min/Max</i>	1/2
<i>Standard deviation</i>	.49

Reasons to Come to Early Entrance

Selected Descriptive Statistics

Reason to Come	Very Important
Needed a challenge	64.88%
Excited to Learn	61.31%
Liked Peer Group	9.09% (Unimportant 31.15%)
Fast Track to Profession	9.04% (Unimportant 40.36%)
Disappointed with Previous Schooling	17.86% 43.45% Important

Currently, what is your highest educational degree earned?

Total responses (N): 168 Did not respond: 0

<i>Numeric value</i>	<i>Answer</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
1	GED	0	0.00%
2	Bachelors	73	43.45%
3	Masters (e.g. MA, MSW, MEd, MFA, MPA)	44	26.19%
4	Doctorate (e.g. PhD, EdD, PsyD, ThD)	25	14.88%
5	Medical (e.g. MD, DO, DDS, DVM, PharmD)	6	3.57%
6	Law (e.g. LLB, JD)	14	8.33%
7	BD or MDiv (Divinity)	0	0.00%
8	Other:	6	3.57%

<i>Mean</i>	3.21
<i>Median</i>	3.00
<i>Mode</i>	2
<i>Min/Max</i>	2/8
<i>Standard deviation</i>	1.53

On the whole, I am satisfied with my choices in life.

(1 Strongly Disagree, 2 Disagree, 3 Agree, 4 Strongly Agree)

Total responses (N): 167 Did not respond: 1

<i>Numeric value</i>		<i>Answer</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
1		1 (Strongly Disagree)	1	0.60%
2		2 (Disagree)	6	3.59%
3		3 (Agree)	94	56.29%
4		4 (Strongly Agree)	66	39.52%

<i>Mean</i>	3.35
<i>Median</i>	3.00
<i>Mode</i>	3
<i>Min/Max</i>	1/4
<i>Standard deviation</i>	.58

If I had to make my educational choice over again, I would choose to attend EEP/ACAD.

(1 Strongly Disagree, 2 Disagree, 3 Agree, 4 Strongly Agree)

Total responses (N): 167 Did not respond: 1

<i>Numeric value</i>		<i>Answer</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
1		1 (Strongly Disagree)	7	4.19%
2		2 (Disagree)	13	7.78%
3		3 (Agree)	50	29.94%
4		4 (Strongly Agree)	97	58.08%

<i>Mean</i>	3.42
<i>Median</i>	4.00
<i>Mode</i>	4
<i>Min/Max</i>	1/4
<i>Standard deviation</i>	.81