

# *Wild Scholars*

*Thriving in our wild world ... with intelligence.*

coordinated by Darrell Velegol  
04jan2010 (draft 06)



*"Liberation"*, painted by Ben Shahn (1945).  
Let's help our kids get out of the rubble ...  
and become free and capable in their community.

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## *Twelve years of schooling, but not able to thrive ...*

More than a decade of schooling, and still he didn't know the first step to take in pursuing his dream. My friend Matt was my high school weightlifting partner. He graduated from high school – barely – with a 2.3 GPA. But he was the star linebacker on our football team; he led our team to win the state football championship; he was selected to the All State team. He even got a scholarship to play football at a top NCAA Division I school.

Matt knew what he wanted to do – open a gym for weightlifting and fitness. But he didn't know the first step to take. He didn't know how to “survive the wild” of this tough world. In fact, after all those years of schooling, Matt still couldn't find a job. So he relocated to Las Vegas, and he spent 7 years parking cars and driving taxis. It was a tough story.

Eventually Matt landed a job at the Hotel Bellagio as a weightlifting trainer. One day a client of his said to him, “Matt, we need someone like you in San Diego.” So he and his wife moved to San Diego! In Matt's words, “I wanted to make things happen.”

But what was he going to do? How could he start a gym? He didn't know how to start a business! He didn't know much about nutrition. He didn't know how to get out the word about a new gym. Then someone told Matt about SCORE, an organization of retirees who help young people start businesses. He borrowed money from friends and clients who believed in him. Matt even went to the library! That's something he seldom considered during his years in school.

He recounted to me how he learned nutrition. “I signed up for a course from the National Association of Sports Nutrition. I had to study hard, and a lot of what they were saying didn't sound real. So I got a blood sugar kit and started testing what they taught. Bananas, steaks, pasta, candy bars. I'd prick my finger and measure the sugar level. That's how I learned about glycemic index! By pricking my finger and measuring the blood sugar.”

I asked him how he learned about accounting and taxes? “Taxes?” He said the word with a chuckle. “I bought a copy of TurboTax, and starting playing with numbers. I found out which deductions mattered by trial and error. It was almost like playing Nintendo.” For advertising, Matt went to a studio and made radio programs for free. He wrote articles in seniors' magazines, with titles like “10 ways not to bust your pants buttons”.

Matt got “thrown into the wild”, and he learned by fire how to make it. He tried and failed, tried and failed, and tried and failed again and again. But he was mapping the unknown, and learning ... and eventually he succeeded. He went from having 1 gym with 1 person – himself – to 3 gyms with 15 people. As the economy slid in 2008 he was back to 1 gym with a few people, but he wasn't afraid. “I learned that I had too much overhead. I see how to get through to the next step.”

Matt wasn't afraid to make mistakes. But what if a student IS afraid of making mistakes? Or what if a student doesn't have Matt's tenacity? So often schools are reluctant to let students "waste their time" by failing. We want to protect them from the wild. But we CAN'T!!! When students leave school, they will be in our wild world.

Now I'm not trained as a k-12 teacher. The gradeschool classes I've taught have been only by invitation. But I do teach students at Penn State University. And k-12 education has been a passion of mine since I was tutoring in grade school. My wife and I have two young daughters, and like YOU, it breaks our hearts when we see a child who is UNlikely to achieve their life purposes due to their lack of education. In fact, my passion right now is to facilitate education for k-12 students in PA and beyond. A group of us have assembled the first steps of a plan.

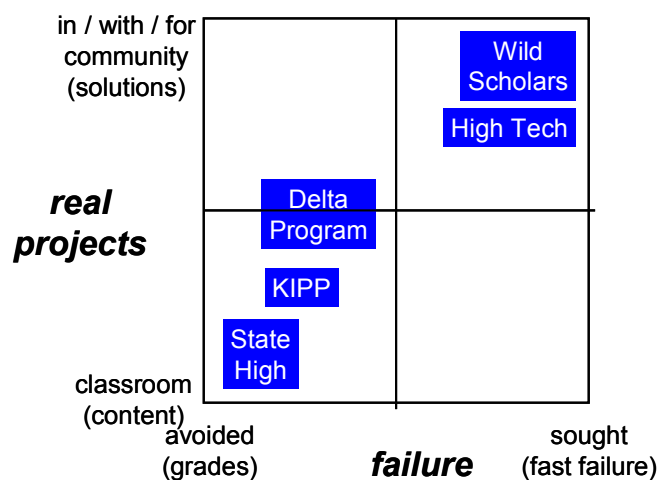
The essence of education is this: Every student wants an advantage on the future, in surviving the wild that they will surely see. What is "the wild"? The wild ... is this tough world. With all its twists, and difficulties, and rigors. It's where we feel one step behind, one pace too slow, one fact too ignorant. And our students want a school that will help them survive it. Or even THRIVE in it. Can we deliver it, if we all work together? Each of us has a part. We have to work together, integrating our expertise and experience and PASSION in each of our fields: education theory, education practice, local geography, finance, law, fitness, environment, agriculture, engineering, science, communications. Let's give our kids the education they need to thrive in the wild.

## Vision. Thriving in this wild world.

Wild Scholar: You will *thrive in your chosen communities*. When you have an idea, you will be able to conduct a process to make your idea into reality. You will engage teams; you will learn rapidly; you will channel resources; you will satisfy customers and clients. Your ideas will increase in reach and excellence; your friendships will grow in number and authenticity; your skills will increase in range and impact. When immersed in new communities, you will be able to adapt and thrive readily.

Why? What will make you *different* as a Wild Scholar?

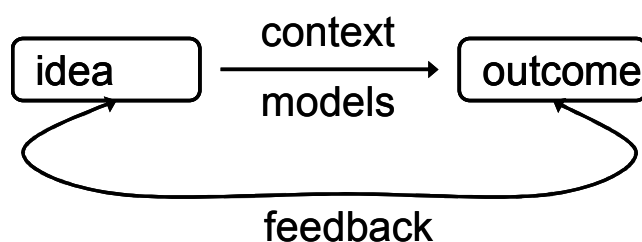
- 1 **Customers/clients.** You will come to recognize customer needs, and learn what is required to satisfy them. Your “goal” is to be able to thrive in the wild, not simply achieve dead “standards”. And so your assessment will ultimately be through clients.
- 2 **Intelligent fast failure (IFF).** You will come to *embrace Failure*, through the process of *intelligent fast failure*. Embracing and learning from failure will accelerate your ideas forward, grant you ownership of your future, instill tenacity in addressing needs, and build in you the courage to risk positively for new relationships and ventures.



**Figure 1. Differences of Wild Scholars.**

Wild Scholars will focus on real projects of real value – done in their community, with their community, and for their community. In the end, the work is for a client or customer. In the process of learning, the Scholar will *embrace* learning from failure rather than avoiding it.

Wild Scholars is not driven by information and content – these are pieces that will come by pursuing solutions in real projects.



**Figure 2. Intelligence and failure.**

Failure is not a dirty word. The opposite of failure is not “success” – it is “not trying”. Intelligent people fail continually ... but often they fail in their mind. They generate a plate of ideas, try the ideas mentally using the context and models they know, simulate the outcome, and revise the initial idea.

## ***Mission. Catalyzing the creation and growth of Institutes.***

The organization “Wild Scholars” exists for Scholars in the approximate grades 7-12. For these Scholars, we will catalyze the creation and growth of Wild Scholars Institutes, which are locally-tailored, grassroots Institutes accredited by Wild Scholars. The organization will ...

1. *identify coach-community fits.* Sometimes a Coach might have an idea and be looking for how to implement it, while at other times a community might have a need and be looking for an Coach to fill it. Wild Scholars will bridge that disconnect.
2. *train Coaches.* Through various mechanisms, Wild Scholars will work with and practice with and guide and advise entrepreneurial Coaches, both initially and long term. The Coaches are the facilitators of learning at the Wild Scholars Institutes.
3. *channel funding.* We will marshal funding through investor funding (e.g., Yunus-style microfinancing”), federal or state monies or tax credits (e.g., REACH in Pennsylvania), foundations (e.g., Gates, Pew), or other sources. Investor funds will be repaid.
4. *cut red tape.* By having processes in place for legal and paperwork matters, Wild Scholars will enable entrepreneurial faculty to facilitate learning – what they do best.
5. *engage other organizations.* We will engage organizations like Communities in Schools, which can provide extensive expertise.
6. *accredit.* Coaches who demonstrate that their scholars can accomplish real work for real clients, and who can use failure as a learning strategy, will receive accreditation. The accreditation is not a bean-counting exercise, but rather a thorough quantitative and qualitative assessment. In some sense, the parents, the investors, and the community supporters are the accreditors, since they make the school possible.
7. *experience.* We will identify and celebrate best practices, and we will summarize the ideas, coordinate them, and share them via web sites across all Wild Scholars Institutes. Wild Scholars will be an open organization.
8. *alumni.* We will facilitate communication across friends and Scholars who have worked with Wild Scholars.

## ***Values. “Communities in Schools” plus a few.***

There are several core values we require in every Wild Scholars Institute. Many of these come from the Communities in Schools<sup>1</sup> model. They include:

1. *dignity*. You are a person. You will be respected for that, and also held responsible for that. We reject the industrial model of “schooling”, and replace over-simplified numerical treatment of scholars with personalized growth.
2. *purpose*. You have a purpose in life – all of us do – and we will support each other in achieving that purpose. Cooperation before competition. Dialogue before debate. When you complete your Wild Scholars education, you will have a marketable skill(s).
3. *safety and health*. We aim to prevent harm to you: intellectually, emotionally, spiritually, or physically. And yet we dare expose you to the dangers of the Wild ... and failure. Furthermore, we will offer meals with wholesome foods, and advise on sleep and exercise.
4. *adults*. You will engage a broad range of adults, even when it is not comfortable, since we want the best for you and have immense skills to teach.
5. *customers*. Customers and clients – some who pay, and some who simply need our help – give you a chance to give back to your community.
6. *community*. We must all listen, mesh frames, and co-design and co-create futures. Those “without” will not have unnecessary disadvantage imposed on them, and those “with” will be able to use every advantage at your disposal. Each toward our own purpose.
7. *rapid learning*. You will embrace intelligent fast failure, which is not always comfortable. You will learn to change, and learn to infect new territories. You will listen, and speak.

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<sup>1</sup> Communities in Schools. 1) A one-on-one relationship with a caring adult, 2) A safe place to learn and grow, 3) A healthy start and a healthy future, 4) A marketable skill to use upon graduation, 5) A chance to give back to peers and community. See <http://www.cisnet.org/> or [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Communities\\_in\\_schools](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Communities_in_schools).

## Strategies

Wild Scholars Institutes will embrace many or all of the following:

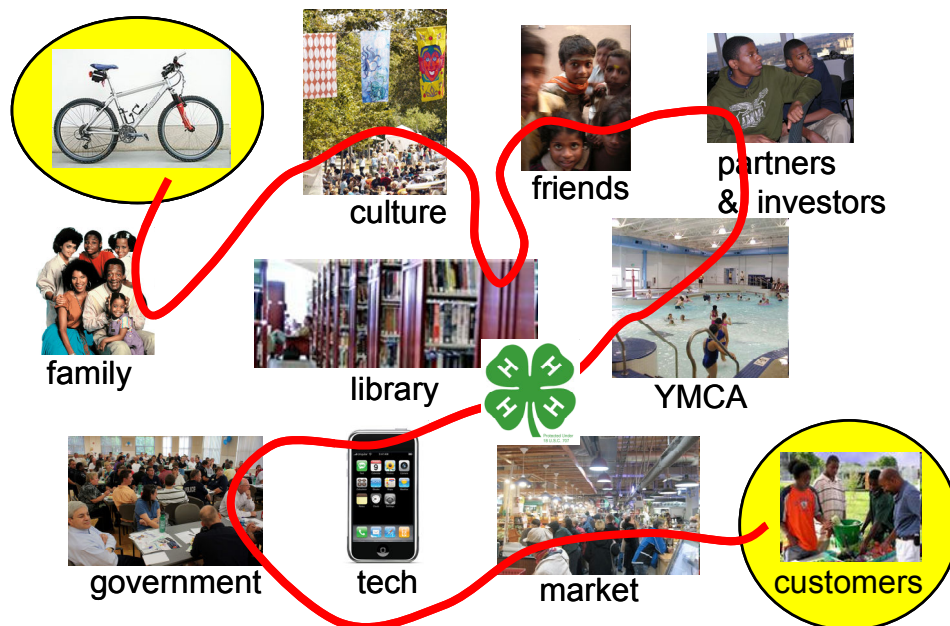
1. *curriculum*. Each Institute will have a curriculum – a path of learning – that helps students both as individuals and as teams.
2. *discipline*. Institutes will engage assertive discipline, which is positive and constructive.
3. *health*. Exercise, intramural sports, food that is home-grown and cooked by scholars.
4. *technology*. iPhones, Macbooks or netbooks, Smart Boards, Google, Wikipedia, Rosetta Stone language software, Skype. Most classic books are found free online, using an iPhone.
5. *highly-respected Coaches*. Excellent faculty must be paid well, not only to provide personal comfort and to alleviate day-to-day concerns, but also as a sign of respect in the community. Salaries of 2× the local median family salary (\$110,000 in State College PA, in 2009) or even or 3× will be normal, and EFs will earn roughly \$2000 to \$3000 per scholar. The EFs are personal, caring mentors to their scholars. In some cases they provide a 1-on-1 relationship, while in other cases they identify an adult mentor(s) for their scholars.
6. *travel*. Scholars need to be able to travel to where they need to go, in order to accomplish their venture. Sometimes it is a walk across the street; sometimes it is a 2-week trip to Lesotho. They might need to travel to business, government, or university locations.
7. *experts*. Scholars must visit, video-phone, email, or contact experts as needed.
8. *simulation*. Before entering the community to work on the project, the scholar should practice what he or she can “at the base”. Sometimes these will involve computer simulations (e.g., Rosetta Stone software), while at other times they might involve practice with a human partner (e.g., interviewing elderly patients).
9. *team skills*. Scholars will often need to form, develop, and dissolve teams quickly. They will gain “people skills” in collaboration, dialogue, respect, and facilitation.
10. *“batch process”*. Wild Scholars Institutes are not built on an industrial, economies-of-scale model. They must be nimble and quick. We do not envision a reason to have more than 150 scholars at a single location.
11. *metrics*. Eagle Scout-type metrics, e-portfolios. We will not reduce individual scholars to simple numbers, out of convenience. It does everyone a dis-service. Initially, grades and SAT scores might be made as a convenience to college admission. But the only way to show the enormous gain in educational effectiveness, is by evidence of real-world projects.
12. *online modules and simulations*. Like iPhone apps, we will pursue volunteer help in developing simulations to learn writing, math, and other modules, free of charge for online or iPhone use. Employ as much volunteer help as possible!
13. *evening or weekend time*. Some scholars might prefer “base” time to other less productive or harmful time. Wild Scholars will aim to keep the doors open until late hours, enabling longer work times, and providing safe transportation for scholars.

## Curriculum that is “alive”

Each Institute will have a curriculum that builds students individually (differentiated instruction) to thrive in their chosen communities. The curricula will draw in “core curriculum” concepts in reading, writing, mathematics, science, history, health, culture, art, and other subjects. But the emphasis is on solutions, not informational content. Classrooms will be the exception, not the norm. The “curriculum” consists of

- 1) *the ever-changing “race course” or path to follow.* The center of a Wild Scholars curriculum is a community/customer/client problem. In order to solve that problem, Scholars will need to draw in some core-curriculum skills, and gain mastery over them. But the curriculum is a problem that is “alive” and ever-changing – like life itself – and not a static list of topics.
- 2) *assessment.* There is a 3-level cascade of standards. The lowest level is computer mastery of a particular skill, perhaps in reading or adding numbers. An intermediate level is a peer-to-peer assessment of a problem solution. The final level of assessment is by the customer.
- 3) *mechanism for feedback.* Sometimes this will need to be well-defined.

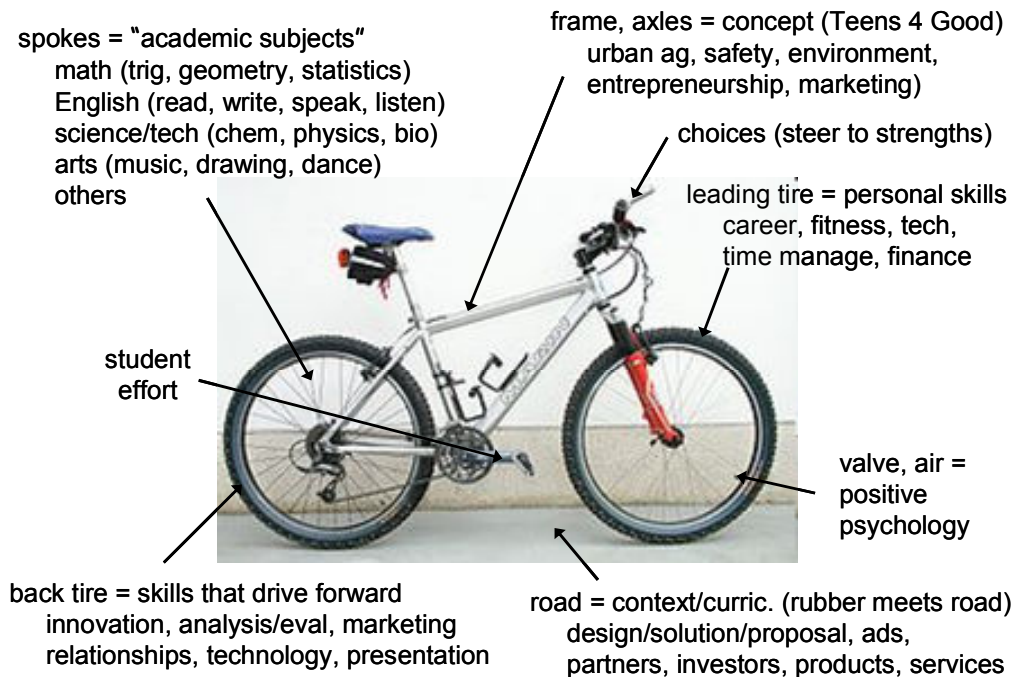
Figure 3 below starts to describe the curriculum. Rather than the curriculum being based on content – the usual case in practice, since that is how “curriculum” is assessed – Wild Scholars follow a path set by their community. Often, Institutes will invest \$1000 or more in students, to provide “micro-capital” that enables them to build their own businesses.



**Figure 3. Curriculum (Latin for “race course”).**

The curriculum is driven by community needs and solutions, and is “alive” and ever-changing. It is not driven by the bits of information – the “bag of content” – that might one day lead to solutions.

Rather than having a stagnant content-driven curriculum, the curriculum builds a “bicycle model” (Figure 4) that enables rapid progress, carrying the core concept – the hub – forward. The metrics will involve electronic portfolios, completed products, presentations to investors, and the like. These are the assessment processes for most business and community ventures, not exam scores. Wild Scholars focuses on the life skills and relationships needed. Relationship skills, character development, innovation tools, presentation skills, and others shown in the figure.



**Figure 4. Bicycle model for navigating the curriculum path.** The curriculum is driven by community needs and solutions. It is not driven by the bits of information – the “bag of content” – that might one day lead to solutions. The CONCEPT is central; this might be urban agriculture, safe streets, landscaping, 1-page newspapers, or others. The spokes of the wheel are the usual “subject areas” like math, history, and literature – what are sometimes called “curriculum” in public schools. But these connect to the more important CURRICULUM ideas of character, presentation, process, innovation. The “rubber meets the road” in the assessment, which is not done by an over-simplified numerical exam, but by customers and communities.

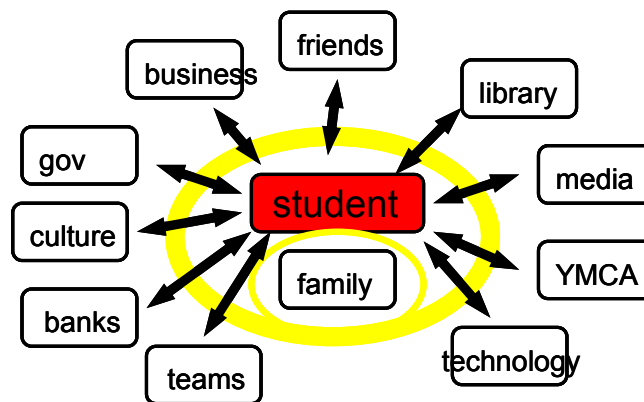
**What does a Wild Scholar learn to do?** They

1. choose the community where they will prosper, rather than being forced into one;
2. relate and engage with others in the community, rather than only learning *about* it;
3. recognize and define key or unfamiliar problems, rather than being told the problem;
4. analyze, dialogue, test, and search for required data, rather than being given the input;
5. use any tool they have, rather than being limited artificially;
6. design a solution sensitive to the culture, rather than producing a “right answer”;
7. advocate their solution in dialogue, rather than imposing on the community;

## *Frequently-asked questions*

**Who is a Wild Scholar?** Wild Scholars can be students who would normally attend grades 7-12, but they might also include p-12 students, parents, and other community members. Initially we aim to work with students who are in desperate situations, but who do not have learning disabilities. This might be expanded later as experience is gained.

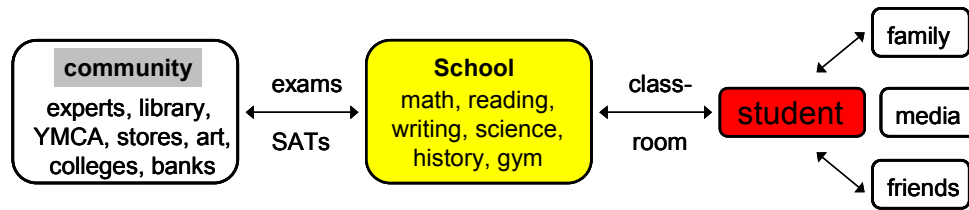
**Who will be Wild Scholar Coaches?** The Coaches establish and maintain their own Institutes. They will draw on the experience and expertise of the Wild Scholars organization, but in the end, education rests on people, not programs. Wild Scholars is “bottom-up” in that sense. The Coaches must know their community – even a piece of it – very well, and they must be skilled in integrating student learning with satisfying a client in the community (Figure 5). They often will not have educational degrees, but they might be professional writers, engineers, attorneys, community organizers, historians, or other disciplines.



**Figure 5. Wild Scholars Institutes enhances contact between the scholar and the community.**

Wild Scholars Institutes – demonstrated by the yellow band above – aim to intersect all the relationships of the student and the community. They strengthen the line of communications, represented by the thicker lines, and give the student models for that communication and designing solutions. The scholar touches all aspects of his or her community directly.

**How is a Wild Scholars education different from a more traditional education?** Two concepts: 1) real projects for real customers, 2) learning by failure, either simulated or real. A “courses in a classroom” school emphasizes models, but often neglects a full use of the hands and feet. This type of approach adds one additional place for the scholar to thrive in this world – his or her school – and separates him or her from the community at large (Figure 6). Grades often lead students to take fewer risks so that they can get that 90% for an “A”. Both aspects neglect the need for failure and speed. The opposite of failure is not success, since navigating around and learning from failures is required for success. Rather, the opposite of failure is “not trying”.



**Figure 6. Traditional schools and the community.**

With traditional schools, students have to “attend school”, which is a separate arena where they must learn to survive. When the student learns about the broader community – museums, business, libraries – it is often second-hand, through the schools.

*Is the curriculum well-established?* The details of how the curriculum is managed are established by each Institute locally, as the Coach sees fit. The curriculum is driven by community needs and solutions, not by a selected “bag of content” that can be measured with a bubble test. The curriculum will include many pieces of a typical state core curriculum, but they will be drawn as needed. The curriculum will use the experiential principles of Dewey, Vigotsky, Piaget, Montessori, and others. For many schools, the incoming student must fit within very tightly-defined bounds so that they have sufficient “pre-requisite knowledge” to learn the next element. Not so with Wild Scholars.

*Isn't Wild Scholars a vocational training then?* No. A vocational or apprenticeship school often neglects the full use of the intellect and model development, and can “train” a pupil to *respond* in a narrow set of skills. Wild Scholars embraces the hands-on, contextual part of a vocational education. But the Scholars also aim to use modeling that takes them beyond stimulus-response, to “designing future scenarios”. Design is key. Furthermore, by leading scholars to examine not one type of project, but perhaps 5 or 10 or more, Wild Scholars seeks to make scholars comfortable/confident and competent in a broad set of communities, giving a “liberal education”, but uses the mind, the hands, and speed to do so.

*Will my child be safe?* Yes and no. Our small institutes – often less than 100 scholars – will be physically safer than schools having 500 or 2500 students, as studies show. Scholars who know each other tend to treat each other better. Discipline arises, as Montessori showed a century ago and others have seen since, as students are engrossed in their work. Indeed, as scholars come to see the benefit of their effort to themselves, they will come to enforce some of their own discipline!

But scholars will not be safe to be comfortable, to avoid failures, to keep the status quo. They might spend 3 months on a project, to no avail. We don't protect them from such hardship, because the *principle of IFF* is that by allowing them to fail, not only do they learn, but they come to see that they can risk and still be OK. IFF is a concept used by many successful ventures: Suzuki music, the Sherlock Project, Presidential races, Starfall internet reading, iPhone apps, MS Office applications, and many more.

*Is tuition free?* Yes and no. Yes, in the sense that we aim for tuition to be paid for all scholars. But “no”, in the sense that tuition is never free. Somebody pays it, whether it is parents, taxpayers, or investors. We want our scholars to recognize that someone values their life enough to pay their tuition – they matter.

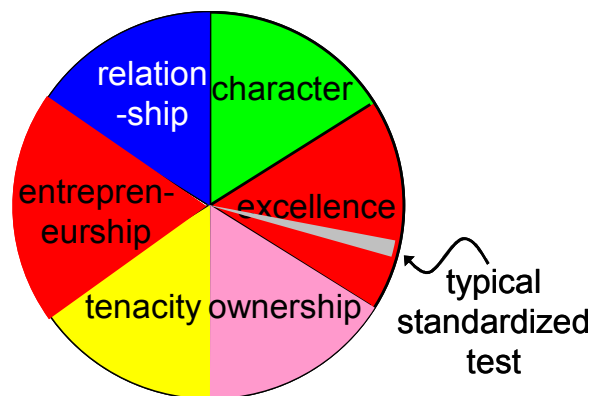
In Philadelphia, it is sometimes said that private tuition is the city’s highest tax. With Wild Scholars, we aim for investor-funding, with the understanding that upon obtaining a successful, paying position, the Wild Scholar will re-imburse the investment. It is a no-lose situation for many scholars, who might otherwise have great difficulty finding a high-paying job. Initially, we aim to use Pennsylvania tax credits and other funding to help. Our aim is to make tuition such that all students – especially the most desperate – can attend a Wild Scholars Institute, but with the understanding that yes, the tuition is being paid. Responsibility is a key value.

*Is school still 12 years?* The scholars might stay in “school” for 12 years, but some might be there for 15, while others might be there for 8 years. The time required for scholars to gain marketable design skills and embrace IFF will likely vary from scholar to scholar, and yet have little bearing on whether that scholar accomplishes his or her life purpose.

*What about extracurricular activities?* Wild Scholars Institutes will in general be 25 to 150 scholars. They will not usually have powerful football teams, large marching bands, or theatre-quality musical productions. That said, each scholar will be allowed a budget to engage in activities within the community, including local dance companies, piano lessons, or tennis lessons. For fitness, by allowing the scholars to participate on intramural teams, Wild Scholars will show them that fitness is a way of life, not just a ticket onto an all-state team.

*Is the education liberal or vocational?* Both. Liberal, since the scholar becomes comfortable in a number of communities, and vocational, since the scholar learns marketable skills. But even more than these, Wild Scholars gain a marketable *design* skill, and so in that sense, a Wild Scholar education is beyond both liberal and vocational.

*How is assessment done?* By people, and by customers. It is an illusion to think that our students can be measured by “bubble form tests”. Only a fraction of what a student needs for the future can be measured by a bubble test – most of that can be done by a computer – and what really needs to be learned is in fact difficult to measure. But we know a tenacious person when we experience their drive. We know if someone is able to form strong relationships by interacting with them over months. This assessment might seem fuzzy, but it is the essential assessment.



**Figure 7. Assessment. Changing the rules.**

A useful acronym is CEnTER = Character + Excellence + owNership + Tenacity + Entrepreneurship + Relationship. These are hard to measure, but they can be measured. Standardized tests often measure only the gray sliver shown in Excellence, and so provide little predictive value for either students or parents. On this broader assessment figure, Wild Scholars will demonstrate its true effectiveness.

*What “communities” might a Wild Scholar enter after graduation?* A Wild Scholar might choose to be landscaper, politician, corporate engineer, small business owner, actress, local gardener and grocer, water management expert, fitness assistant, chef, professor, full-time mom or dad. They adaptively choose their communities, just like adults, by seeing where their unique ability, experience, and interests mesh with those in the community.

*Will my child learn enough content?* Some would give a false dichotomy that students must learn either content or a process. Wild Scholars makes no such dichotomy. To have marketable design skills, you need content, process, analysis and synthesis skills, team skills, creativity, and many others. It is of note that with Wild Scholars, if a scholar misses a day or a week of time on the project, that they don’t simply “fall behind”. The project is more fluid, like projects in real life, and that makes time more flexible than having “chapter 1 due on Friday”.

*What milestones will mark my child’s education?* Satisfied customers, completed ventures, e-portfolios that are kept up-to-date.

*What about continuity of an individual Institute?* If a Coach leaves the Institute, or the Institute falters, the Wild Scholars organization will step in. In moving from one grade to the next, we keep in mind that “grade levels” don’t mean the same thing to Wild Scholars.

*What will the building look like?* We avoid building investments. We invest in people. We might use church halls, individual homes, or other ready-made and existing structures.

*What skills will my child learn?* Some of the skills include communication (written and verbal), honesty and integrity, teamwork (forming, developing, coordinating), interpersonal skills, self-motivation and initiative, a strong work ethic, analytical skills, technology skills, organizational skills, creativity.

*Why are current schools failing?* Let’s not take success as a “given”, and then wonder what schools are doing to screw that up. Rather, learning to thrive in a community takes well-guided effort. Rather than asking, “Why are current schools failing?”, we ask, “How can we make our

Wild Scholars Institute successful over the time the Scholars attend?" The Institutes will in general avoid using public funding, which can create an "us versus them" attitude.

*What if my child absolutely loves math or art, without regard to community projects?* Institutes will be aware that there may be times they need to recommend such scholars to be mentored by particular specialists, perhaps at Universities or elsewhere. Specialty studies are rare, but important to the community, although not in a specific way.

*Why the emphasis on "designing solutions"?* Studying isolated facts leads to competition and disputes; designing entire solutions often leads to agreement and cooperation and dialogue. Wild Scholars learn skills for designing entire solutions to a given problem for *people*, rather than focusing on isolated pieces and parts for a competition only.

*Where will my child learn basic skills in math, reading, and other subjects?* The most basic skills – the ones studied for 50 years or more – are often learned in grades 1-4, or in simulation from online or through software or iPhone apps. The basic skills will be learned this way. They are not told which facts and skills and values to learn from an outside source, thus removing the wall between their community experience and school experience. For students who enter an Institute "behind" on basic skills, remedial work enables them to catch up. Once they are in a Wild Scholars Institute, they learn what they must to solve real problems.

*How do scholars learn design skills?* They learn quickly through projects of real value to their community, in ventures of 4 to 52 weeks, leading to full solutions, not just isolated facts or pieces. They learn to recognize community needs and make tangible, positive impact during the ventures. "Core curriculum" skills are learned as often as practical within the ventures.

*What is different about a "Wild Scholar"?* 1) Wild Scholars work in the community, satisfying a real customer demand. 2) Intelligent fast failure (IFF) is their core process for learning and working,<sup>2</sup> a laboratory style approach rather than a grade-book-style approach. Scholars "simulate-try-fail-learn" repeatedly and quickly. Scholars who embrace IFF approach excellence quickly, gain skills in tenacity and ownership, and are more willing to risk positively for new ventures and relationships.

*What is the tax status of Wild Scholars?* We are currently working to have IRS 501(c)(3) tax status.

*Why hasn't Wild Scholars been tried before?* There are several reasons:

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<sup>2</sup> Matson, Jack V. *Innovate or Die: A Personal Perspective on the Art of Innovation*, Paradigm Press (Royal Oak, Michigan) 1991. Matson describes the principle of "intelligent fast failure" and its impact in innovation and learning.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Faculty</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrate community</li> <li>• Pay 3× local median</li> <li>• Bottom-up.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Funding</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PA tax credit, REACH</li> <li>• social business</li> <li>• microfinance</li> <li>• pay for real projects</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>School</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Materials: put online</li> <li>• Place-based projects</li> <li>• Start where student is</li> <li>• Catalyze! red tape, training, advise, legal</li> <li>• Discipline, safety</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Too Risky</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current situation!</li> <li>• Charter, homeschool</li> <li>• Voucher, Kiva</li> <li>• In the end ... some risk</li> </ul>

**Figure 8. Why hasn't Wild Scholars been tried before?**

Finding the right faculty, securing investor funding, details of the school, the difficulty in trying something new.

## *Curriculum (Teens 4 Good)*

<p><b><i>Culminating task/assignment</i></b></p> <p>(What will the student produce to demonstrate achievement?)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The students will produce a vegetable garden that will accommodate a family of four.</li> <li>• Students will analyze the soil in their garden identifying any fungus or insects that prevent healthy growth.</li> <li>• Students will investigate and apply strategies for improving the quality of the vegetables grown.</li> <li>• Students will maintain the garden.</li> <li>• Students will sell vegetables to the public.</li> <li>• Students will create a business plan to present to community groups.</li> <li>• Students will seek to make a profit and continue to market their product.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Assessment</i></b></p> <p>(What criteria will be used to evaluate or score the student work/performance of the culminating task?)</p> <p>NOTE: The number of milestones required will likely drop as the scholar learns to self-assess better.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The quality of the vegetable will be judged by the students and faculty.</li> <li>• Students will write a report giving their analysis and the steps taken. The quality of the vegetable will be critiqued. The solving of the problem will be observed.</li> <li>• The quality of the vegetables will be analyzed by markets who sell the students' produce.</li> <li>• The student will demonstrate an e-portfolio, showing self-assessment, in addition to external assessment.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Instructional Activities</i></b></p> <p>(What learning activities will the student be involved in to acquire content knowledge? Consider alternative strategies)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare a plan and present it.</li> <li>• Preparing a plot of land, choose vegetables and plant.</li> <li>• Take soil samples, analyze them and create a plan for improvement.</li> <li>• Apply strategies for improving the garden. Create healthy vegetables.</li> <li>• Weed, keep animals away, and feed as needed.</li> <li>• Find a market place. Determine price for each vegetable, and sell.</li> </ul>

<p>and modifications.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a business plan for growth and profit.</li> <li>• Present business plan to community</li> <li>• Encourage other schools to plant vegetables.</li> <li>• Determine what amount to give to a food bank.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Time</i></p> <p>(How much time will be required for the student to complete the activity?)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summer</li> </ul>
<p><i>Resources</i></p> <p>(What materials, technology, documents, CDs or other resources will support the student achievement of the goal?)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seeds, fertilizer, tools, a plot of land.</li> <li>• Community resources</li> <li>• Market place</li> <li>• Seek input for a business plan from local volunteer organizations</li> <li>• Internet</li> <li>• Mac Computer</li> </ul>

## *Potential projects*

An additional benefit of Wild Scholars is that many ventures will come from projects with economic value below the threshold of where a current professional or business can afford to operate. However, for Wild Scholars the personal value is more than economic; the value is also educational. This enables the “creative destruction” economics of Schumpeter. And thus Wild Scholars might well fill a gap in community needs which currently cannot be met economically. Not only will they gain practice in recognizing and addressing community needs, but in some cases they might learn enough to turn the venture into an actual business. Wild Scholars Institutes might well also have \$1000 or more investment, such that each student can choose to start a small-scale actual business.

Other possibilities:

- *1-page newspaper*. This could be developed by the scholars, and emailed to subscribers every morning. Scholars would consult with 100s of potential customers and read newspapers/news magazines/websites to learn effectiveness.
- *safe streets*. Students would identify and build safe streets in their communities. They would learn about wars and battles in history, as well as local police action, and extract concepts that are usable in helping them to build safe streets.
- *fitness (food)*. A local service could be developed, with a web page, to buy, prepare, and distribute locally-grown foods.
- *fitness (exercise)*. Exercise groups could be coordinated and facilitated by Wild Scholars.
- *landscaping*. Local landscape designs could be developed and built to scholars.
- *energy audits*. Simple auditing tools could be used to conduct the audit, and reports and recommendations could be provided, perhaps even with contracting.
- *house doctors*. Water pipes, roofs, insulation, doors, spigots, electrical, light bulbs. Everything.
- *historical brochures*. Towns, buildings, societies. Video, websites, photos, interviews could all be combined.
- *website creation*. For businesses, organizations, communities.
- *park design*. Interviews with parents, benchmarking.
- *statistical surveys*. These could be done for simple marketing, when the price of an ordinary professionally-done survey is cost-prohibitive.
- *book or magazine publishing*. Scholars could take an idea from a community member and turn it into a book or magazine.
- *stage production*. Casting to show, with tickets.
- *auto repair*. Perhaps focused repair, like tires or parts of engines.
- *family trees*. Trips to Ellis Island, interviews, photos, album development.
- *sports lessons*. Golf, tennis, swimming, fishing, skating. Develop the brochure, advertise, train, assess, video.

## ***Budget 1. A school year for 50 students.***

Here is a tentative budget for 50 scholars. The tuition per scholar might be \$10,000, which could come from parents, loans, or investor-funded scholarships (effectively giving a graded tuition). Foundation, federal, or state money (e.g., food), or even educational tax credits (e.g., Pennsylvania), might also be available. EFs, aids, and staff buy their own health insurance and invest in their own retirement. The school year might be 48 weeks (288 days, for 6 days/week), with scholars and teachers taking off time as needed.

### ***Income stream***

<b>source</b>	<b>\$/scholar</b>	<b>total</b>
tuition (investor funded, PA tax credit)	10,000	500,000
local, state, federal (busing, food)	1,000	50,000
projects	1,000	50,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12,000</b>	<b>600,000</b>

<b>expense</b>	<b>\$/scholar</b>	<b>total</b>
entrepreneurial faculty	2,500 (+20% overhead)	150,000
teacher aids (1 per 10 scholars, at \$35k)	3,000, plus 20% overhead	210,000
secretary (1 per 50 scholars, at \$40k)	600, plus 20% overhead	50,000
tech (iPhone, Macbook, smartboard)	1,200	60,000
extracurricular (tennis, piano, dancing)	800	40,000
supplies (paper, pencils, calcs, pens)	200	10,000
travel (domestic, international)	400 (periodic)	20,000
food (grown/prepared, 2/day, snacks)	5/day/scholar	72,000
investment in student businesses	1,000	50,000
transportation (1 van/25 scholars)	400	20,000
building rent	12,500 per 25 scholars	25,000
cleaning (200/week for 50 scholars)	4/week/scholars	9,600
liability insurance <sup>3</sup>	1000	50,000
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>766,600</b>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.privateschoolinsurance.com/Pages/Default.aspx>

## ***Budget 2. A Summer Program year for 20 students.***

Here is a tentative budget for 20 scholars. The tuition per scholar might be \$2,000, which could come from parents or investors. Foundation, federal, or state money (e.g., food), or even educational tax credits (e.g., Pennsylvania), might also be available. The program might be 8 weeks (48 days, at 6 days/week), with scholars and teachers taking off time as needed.

<b>income stream</b>	<b>\$/scholar</b>	<b>total</b>
tuition (investor funded, PA tax credit)	2,000	40,000
local, state, federal (busing, food)	0	0
projects	100	2,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>13,000</b>	<b>42,000</b>

<b>expense</b>	<b>\$/scholar</b>	<b>total</b>
entrepreneurial faculty	12,000 + 20% overhead	14,400
teacher aids (1 per 10 scholars, at \$3k)	6,000, plus 20% overhead	7,200
secretary (volunteer)	0	0
technology (4 Macbooks)	200	4,000
extracurricular (tennis, piano, dancing)	200	4,000
supplies (paper, pencils, calcs, pens)	50	1,000
travel (domestic, international)	100 (periodic)	2,000
food (grown/prepared, 2/day, snacks)	5/day/scholar	4,800
transportation (1 van/25 scholars)		1,000
building rent		2,000
cleaning (200/week for 50 scholars)		1,000
liability	???	???
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>41,400</b>

A summer program might be a way to launch a larger program.