



# Above all compassion

The story of XP

Transforming education through  
Expeditionary Learning

A film guide for  
Edge Future Learning  
Partners & Ambassadors



# Imagine

**The school you wish you'd gone to.**

A school where every student has the opportunity to be the best version of themselves. Where every person gets to the top of the mountain.

**Imagine a better way for your children.  
Be inspired and see what education could be.**

**The XP Trust is a family of schools that are deeply connected with and positively make a difference in the communities they serve.**



At XP, we focus relentlessly on quality of work and character growth.

- ✖ **An academically rigorous curriculum with deep, visceral learning experiences**
- ✖ **A relentless focus on quality of work and character growth**
- ✖ **An authentically tough and rewarding education for everyone**
- ✖ **High expectations of all stakeholders**

## Crew

At the heart of everything we do is 'crew'. As a crew, students spend time, every day, challenging and supporting each other to become the best versions of themselves.

## Expeditions

At XP Trust, we deliver our curriculum predominantly through cross disciplinary learning expeditions. These are standards based projects that are specifically designed to make connections between subjects and encourage deep and purposeful learning experiences.

## Habits of Work and Learning

We expect all of our students to develop good habits of scholarship and learning. We call these our Habits of Work and Learning or HoWLs. We expect all of our students to:

**Work hard, Get smart and Be kind**

They are simple but powerful habits that run deep in our schools. Students are graded on their HoWLs and discuss their progress in developing these habits in both crew and expedition sessions. Students hold themselves and each other to account so that they can develop as effective learners and citizens.

## Character values

Our culture is values-driven meaning that we expect our students, staff and parents to be courageous, respectful, committed to craftsmanship and quality, to always show integrity and, above all, to be compassionate.



*'I have seen many school start-ups over the past 40 years, but I have never witnessed a more remarkable beginning than that of XP.'*

*'Great schools are created with tremendous care, sweat and love, hand-crafted through struggles and collaboration. They can't be duplicated quickly and with a formula. You need to find high quality educators to make a great school, there is no substitute.'*

**Ron Berger**  
EL Education | USA

*'I've only been teaching a few years, but it's definitely the most inspired I've ever been from a school visit.'*

*'Inspirational and challenging visit to XP. The commitment to collaboration is fantastic.'*

**XP delegates**



*'At XP - the way we learn - we don't just remember facts, we create memories.'*

**XP Student**



## Stream / Screen the Film

Watch **'Above All, Compassion: The Story of XP School'** and use the questions below to spark a discussion about education in your community.



*'To start a school is to proclaim what it means to be human.'*

**Tom James**

Professor and Program Director | History and Education | Columbia University | USA

**You don't have to start a new school to proclaim your values. You can begin with two simple questions:**

## Why? and... What if?

### Dare to ask...

**Why?**

Why do we do what we do?

Why do we do things the way we do things?

### Dare to imagine...

**What if?**

What if we did things differently?



## Essential questions

Questions are an essential part of transformation and change. They help us understand what is and imagine what could be. Asking ourselves the 'essential' questions can help us figure out what really matters.

*"It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye."*

The Little Prince

### What...

'essential' questions do you have about education?

### What...

should we be asking ourselves about the purpose and scope of education?

### What...

should schools, students, parents and communities be asking themselves?



## Guiding questions

### Purpose & Values

- ✖ What is the purpose of education? What metaphor would you use to articulate this?
- ✖ How clear is the mission of your school/organisation? Is there a clear view on the expansiveness of teaching and learning? Does it transcend the needs of exams and Ofsted?
- ✖ Do you feel that the current way we are educating children fully prepares them for life in the 21st century?
- ✖ What was your favourite moment or experience in your own education? Why was it so memorable / impactful?
- ✖ What role do teachers play? What role do students play?

### School Culture & Community

- ✖ What is your / our vision for education? How is this vision reflected in daily practices? What rituals do students, staff, and families experience?
- ✖ How does your school culture – including norms & expectations, routines and rituals, as well as the language you use – support community building?
- ✖ In what ways is your school a hub for your community? How do you engage families as partners in their children's education?
- ✖ How do you include your community in the design and delivery of learning experiences?

### School Curriculum & Assessment

- ✖ How do you balance academic rigour with holistic development?
- ✖ How do you create connections and coherence across the curriculum?
- ✖ Is standardised testing the most effective way to judge learning?
- ✖ What other ways might we capture and communicate each students' learning journey?

## Spark change: Host a screening in your community!

### We hope that you felt inspired by the film!

If this is the school you wish you'd gone to, share it with your colleagues, friends, and family and start a discussion about how to XP in your school.

- |                           |                      |                     |
|---------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| 1 Watch the film          | 3 Spark a discussion | 5 Get started       |
| 2 Ask essential questions | 4 Share ideas        | 6 Join the movement |

## I am a...

### Student

- ✂ Watch the film with your peers and present the ideas to adult allies.
- ✂ Show the film to your school's staff or SLT.
- ✂ Host a screening with your year group, school group or club, or with the whole school.

### Parent

- ✂ Host a screening for parents to spark discussion around what you value in your children's education and what your school might do differently.

### Teacher

- ✂ Watch the film with your colleagues and discuss what you can learn from the XP approach.
- ✂ Host a screening during an inset day or in a community of practice.

### Head Teacher / SLT

- ✂ Host a screening during an inset day or in a community of practice.
- ✂ Pinpoint specific practices you would like to try and support staff to implement them.

### Governor

- ✂ Share with your SLT and encourage them to reflect on how they might try some of the ideas in the film.

### Employer / community member

- ✂ Host a screening with your employees and discuss how you might partner with local schools.

[This Employer's Guide to Engagement in Education can help!](#)

Visit [Edge Future Learning](#) for training and support to change practice.

[www.edge.co.uk/edge-future-learning](http://www.edge.co.uk/edge-future-learning)

# It's happening.

# Act now!

## Join our community

Join the Edge Network to help build the change we want to see!  
[www.edge.co.uk/join-our-network](http://www.edge.co.uk/join-our-network)

## Visit Edge Future Learning

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## Come and see XP

Email [jmorrell@xptrust.org](mailto:jmorrell@xptrust.org) or visit [www.xptrust.org](http://www.xptrust.org) to book your visit and find out all you need to know.

See examples of XP's beautiful Expedition work.  
[www.xptrust.org/models-of-excellence](http://www.xptrust.org/models-of-excellence)



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