

Educating Whole Human Beings



BOSTON COLLEGE
Lynch School of Education

Whole Child, Whole Person
Summit, October 2017



The challenge

Youth distress is increasing

- In 2016, **62 percent** of undergraduates reported “overwhelming anxiety” in the previous year
- UCLA asks incoming freshmen if they felt “overwhelmed by all they have to do.” In 1985, **18 percent** said they did. In 2010, that number **was 29 percent** and in 2016 it increased to **41 percent**
- The number of teenagers hospitalized for suicide risk has **doubled** over the last 10 years





Symptoms

- ▬ Lack of purpose in education
- ▮ Disengagement, alienation, anxiety and burnout
- ▮ Rising suicide rates, declining happiness
- ▬ Not involved in activities that might help them find their life's passion
- ▬ Feelings of alienation from society





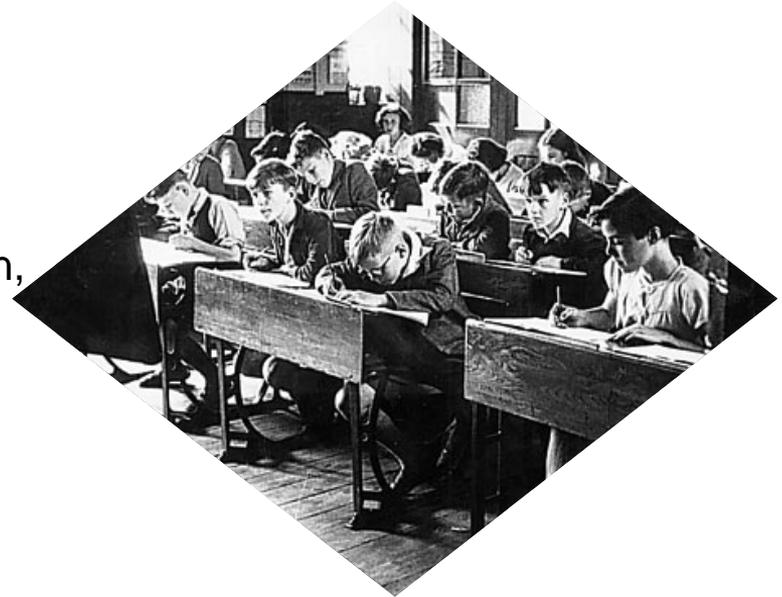
Dewey lost, Thorndike won

- Dewey represented a mix of humanistic, critical, child-centered and social efficiency
- But his perspective lost to Thorndike's psychometrics
- System built on instrumental rationality:
 - ▷ Measureable outcomes
 - ▷ Training for the economy
 - ▷ Accountability systems



How did this come about?

- ▀ Social-efficiency educators provided technical tools to expand the school system under the factory model
- ▀ By the 1960s, the key pillars of the US high school system had been established. Since then, we've improved and refined it
 - Higher graduation rates
 - Better teacher preparation
 - Reducing achievement gaps
- ▀ But without making structural changes





What's the problem?

- Disengagement, alienation; lack of purpose and passion
- Practical concerns related to making our educational institutions efficient have narrowed our sense of what education is, so we are experiencing a disconnect
- This means many dimensions of the students' and teachers' lives are often neglected



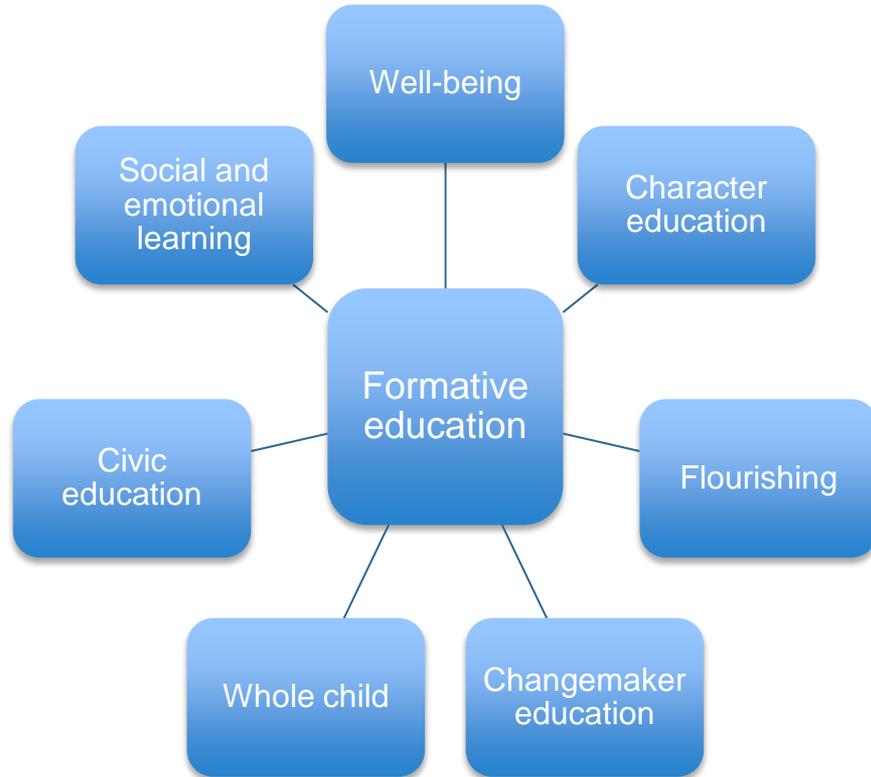
A Response: “Formative Education”



- Formation is the guided development of the whole human being
- Help students to develop interpersonally, emotionally, ethically, and spiritually in addition to vocationally and cognitively
- Boston College and the Lynch School help young people to work toward lives of meaning and purpose



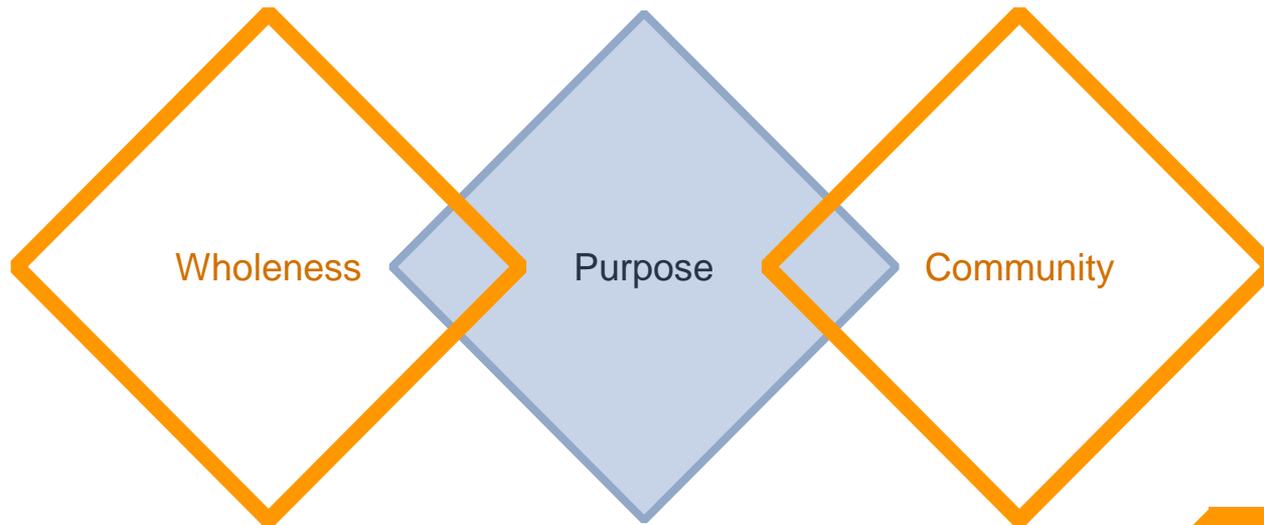
Converging traditions globally





Our approach

How is the Lynch School's take on formative education useful?





Doing Formative Education

- Purpose: beyond instrumental reasoning; toward more ideal selves and society
- Retreats for vocational discernment
- Measuring progress toward lives of meaning and purpose





Takeaways

- Global reactions against a narrow, instrumental view of education
- Need for formative education, toward wholeness, purpose and community
- Expand our educational aspirations
- BC as a hub for research, interventions, PD

