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Examination of the New Tech Model as a Holistic Democracy

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Abstract

Using the Degrees of Democracy Framework (Woods & Woods, 2012), we examined eight New Tech (NT) high schools to determine the extent to which they demonstrated characteristics of holistic democracy. We collected qualitative data, including observations and interviews during the fourth year of implementation. Findings indicated that the eight NT schools demonstrated many features of holistic democracy with a few exceptions. This study has implications for researchers and school communities interested in measuring holistic democracy in other schools and within school models.

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DEWEY (1916) DEFINED *democracy* as "a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience" (p. 87). His description embedded the concept of democracy within social life. However, he recognized that broad diversity across society makes it challenging to create a sense of connection to any particular ideal. Therefore, democratic societies "must have a type of education which gives individuals a personal interest in social relationships and control, and the habits of mind which secure social changes without introducing disorder" (p. 99). Dewey believed that education could bring about common values and that the role of the school is to provide students with opportunities for collaborative communication and investigation (Noddings, 2012). These opportunities characterize the way that students engage in "democratic living" and develop common goals and understandings, as well as the behaviors needed to pursue justice, equity, and

social change (Noddings, 2012, p. 36). Noddings (2012) portrayed Dewey's notion of "democratic living" within schools:

Students working together on common problems, establishing the rules by which their classrooms will be governed, testing and evaluating ideas for the improvement of classroom life and learning, and participating in the construction of objectives for their own learning. (p. 36)

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This description embodies the ways that modern schools can implement Dewey's philosophy of democratic schooling.

Dewey (1916) also insisted that measures be developed and utilized to determine the value of various models of social life when applied in schools. He noted that there are both positive and negative models of social living, and suggested two standards for considering the value of these. First, we must examine the number and variety of shared interests within the example. Second, we should assess the interactions within and beyond the model. Dewey warned against creating ideal models without applying them to actual societies, or schools when we are using metrics to examine models of democratic education. In other words, we cannot create democratic school models that are impractical or impossible. At the same time, we need ways to measure school models in order to define and describe exactly what distinguishes them from other types of schooling.

This study responds to Dewey's insistence on using metrics to assess school models. The purpose is to examine the New Tech (NT) model using the Degrees of Democracy Framework. Woods and Woods (2012) developed the framework to distinguish the "ways of being and acting" that define a holistically democratic school (p. 708). The use of such a framework to scrutinize a school model is exactly what Dewey insisted we do in the context of pursuing democratic education. We cannot know for certain that a particular school model is democratic and worthy of pursing if we do not first examine it systematically. We now define *holistic democracy* and explain the framework. Then we describe the New Tech model and share the design of the study. Next, we convey the findings and discuss how they characterize holistic democracy. Finally, we conclude with our thoughts about New Tech as a democratic school model.

Theoretic Framework

We utilized Woods and Woods's (2012) Degrees of Democracy Framework (DDF) to examine the extent to which the NT school model embodies characteristics and practices related to democratic education in general and holistic democracy in particular. Woods and Woods (2012) defined *holistic democracy* as a collaborative process through which each person develops more fully when in spiritual and ecological communion with others. Holistic democracy enables individuals to find their purpose and seek "truth in an open-hearted, open-minded way" while extending their individual capacities (p. 708). Further, it entails all members of the school community to act in inclusive, egalitarian, and peaceful ways when collectively making decisions, solving problems, and resolving conflict. Holistic democracy includes four "ways of being and acting:" (a) holistic meaning, (b) power sharing, (c) transforming dialogue, and (d) holistic well-being (p. 708). Holistic meaning describes our consciousness of what it means to be human, and how we pursue our human nature as spiritual, moral, intellectual, emotional, artistic, and physical beings. Power sharing identifies the ways that we ought to interact with each other through structures that distribute decision-making and include all stakeholders. Transforming dialogue defines an atmosphere where individuals may share ideas openly

and disagree respectfully with the intention of reaching understanding of self and others, personal growth, and community good. and utilitarian ends. Finally, holistic well-being embodies a sense of connection among individuals through "democratic participation and a sense of agency" (p. 709).

The DDF explores holistic democracy through 13 variables whereby schools are examined along a continuum from a "rational bureaucratic hierarchy" (RBH) to a holistic democracy (HD) (Woods & Woods, 2012, p. 714). Holistic meaning is measured by organizational purpose, the goals of learning, teaching pedagogies, and approaches to learning. Levels of power sharing are identified based on the structure of authority, as well as spaces for and scope of participation. Transforming dialogue is examined via the direction of communications, dialogic purposes, and overall engagement in dialogue. Finally, holistic well-being is evaluated based on the nature and quality of relationships within the school, the personal sense of belonging to the school, and the way(s) of thinking encouraged and supported by the school. Table 1 shows the Degrees of Democracy Framework. The variables are listed in the first column under each of the four "ways of being and acting," which are shaded. The second and third columns provide a brief description for each variable of the features of the rational bureaucratic hierarchy and the holistic democracy, respectively.

A more detailed description of each variable will contribute to a better understanding of the DDF. As describe above, *holistic meaning* includes four variables: (a) principal organizational purpose, (b) knowledge goal, (c) method of teaching and creating knowledge, and (d) mode of learning. First, *principal organizational purpose* refers to the school's mission, which is gauged through the most valued measures of success, as well as the overarching principles that drive teaching and learning. RBH schools might focus on measures such as standardized test scores and grade point averages. These compare students or schools to each other, creating a competitive rather than collaborative environment. Conversely, HD schools prioritize principles such as equity, care, and parity so that students may learn to balance their own growth with the growth of others. Second, *knowledge goal* describes the types of student and teacher knowledge that are valued and pursued within the school. RBH schools emphasize the types of knowledge traditionally measured through standardized tests. However, HD schools are more likely to teach and measure 21st-century learning such as collaboration, problem solving, critical thinking, technology integration, and communication. These learning goals embody not just traditional academic performance, but also interpersonal and intrapersonal learning and growth. Third, *method of teaching and creating knowledge* includes a school's organizational structures and understanding of knowledge. RBH schools would utilize departmental structures whereby content is taught in isolation demonstrating delimited instruction. But HD schools approach knowledge as interdisciplinary and cocreated by students and teachers alike. Additionally, instructional approaches such as inquiry or project-based learning offer students ways to master skills-based knowledge beyond the learning objectives defined within lists of content standards. Finally, *mode of learning* describes the emphasis placed on specific types of learning. While RBH

Table 1 Degrees of Democracy Framework

Variables		
Holistic Meaning	**Features of Rational Bureaucratic Hierarchy**	**Features of Holistic Democracy**
Principal organizational purpose	Competitive performance	Substantive
Knowledge goal	Cognitive-technical	Holistic
Method of teaching and creating knowledge	Instruction within boundaries	Cocreation across boundaries
Mode of learning	Cognitive	Embodied
Power Sharing		
Authority structure	Pyramid	Flat
Spaces for participation	Exclusive	Inclusive
Scope of participation	Minimal	Maximal
Transforming Dialogue		
Communication flows	One-way	Multiple
Key purpose of dialogue	Information exchange	Transformation of understanding
Engagement	Transactional	Holistic
Holistic Well-Being		
Community	Instrumental	Organic
Personal	Alienation	Connectedness
Mindset	Compliant mindset	Democratic consciousness

Note: Adapted from Woods & Woods, 2012

schools emphasize cognitive learning, HD schools move toward inclusive learning that incorporates not only cognitive learning, but also emotional, kinesthetic, artistic, transcendent, and instinctual learning. In practice, HD schools might emphasize students' social and emotional development as equally important to learning content standards.

Power sharing includes three variables: (a) authority structure, (b) spaces for participation, and (c) scope of participation. First, *authority structures* describe the school's leadership approach. HD school leaders distribute decision making and share responsibility, while RBH leaders implement top-down approaches that place themselves clearly as the authority. HD structures require mutual accountability for all members of the school community including administrators, counselors, teachers, students, and parents. This might perpetuate within an HD school as student- or teacher-led decision-making groups that hold themselves accountable for reaching goals and completing tasks. Second, *spaces for participation* describes the openness of decision-making structures. Exclusive spaces limit participation to only a few stakeholders, such as administrators, and make the decision-making process secretive. Conversely, inclusive spaces allow for transparency through communal participation of all school members. RBH schools utilize exclusive spaces whereas HD schools create inclusive spaces for participation. Third, *scope of participation* describes the actual topics that are discussed collectively within the school. Although teachers and students may be invited to participate in making some decisions at an RBH school, administrators at such schools would limit teacher and student participation to more trivial topics. For instance, a principal may ask students what menus they enjoy eating from in the school cafeteria but would not ask students to help create the school's strategic plan. An HD school would focus

participation beyond operational matters and toward the mission and vision of the school. In other words, all school community members would be invited to contribute to discussions determining the overall direction of the school toward academic improvement for all students and the development of equitable policies and practices.

Transforming dialogue also includes three variables: (a) communication flows, (b) key purpose of dialogue, and (c) engagement. First, the *communication flows* variable identifies the direction of communication. On the one hand, within RHB schools, stakeholders focus more on telling instead of listening. In addition, who does the telling is limited to a small group of stakeholders such as administrators and department chairs. On the other hand, in HD schools, communication flows in numerous directions where all stakeholders are welcome to contribute in an environment of trust and respect. In other words, all members of the school community, including administrators, teachers, students, parents, and other stakeholders, are not only invited to share their perspectives and ideas openly but also are willing to genuinely listen to each other so that communication flows between and among all members. Second, the *key purpose of dialogue* in HD schools is the sharing of diverse viewpoints, epistemologies, and research with the goal of moving groups toward innovative and communal ideas that transform thinking. This purpose contrasts with that of RHB schools, where dialogue is mainly situational and focused on communicating information. When the purpose of dialogue is holistic, new ideas can be rigorously explored; stakeholders examine problems and explore multiple solutions with the goal of growth for the whole school community. Third, *engagement* describes the value that the school places on specific types of personal participation. RHB schools value participation that advantages specific individuals who are motivated

to act on balance of rewards they will receive. Conversely, HD schools engage all members as complete individuals who each bring special talents, skills, motivations, and desires to the dialogic process. This allows individuals to be their genuine selves in the context of interactions. They may share not only knowledge or skills but also beliefs and feelings.

Holistic well-being includes three variables: (a) community, (b) personal, and (c) mindset. Community well-being embodies the focus of relationships within the school. First, *community* distinguishes the ways that members of the school community connect with each other. Interactions within RHB schools are characterized by selfish or self-centered objectives, where common purposes are addressed only superficially. However, community within HD schools embodies a sense of harmony where members are valued as individuals and compassionate relationships are cultivated. This occurs in schools when teachers and students demonstrate that they care about each other as individuals. Such care might be embodied in teachers showing interest in students' lives outside of school or noticing when students are unhappy and asking them how they can help. Second, *personal* well-being signifies how the school develops and supports each member's "sense of connection" to the school (Woods & Woods, 2012, p. 726). At RHB schools, various stakeholders may feel alienated or separated from the school. However, HD schools nurture harmony with oneself, one another, the global community, and the "ultimate reality" (Woods & Woods, 2012, p. 726). Schools can nurture personal harmony by providing students and teachers opportunities for personal reflection within the school day. Finally, *mindset* describes the way of thinking valued by the school. RHB schools privilege compliance, whereas HD schools desire "democratic consciousness" (Woods & Woods, 2012, p. 726). When stakeholders are democratically conscious, they collaborate as autonomous, thinking individuals united through the common goals of seeking reality and working for social justice. This could manifest in schools via service learning projects, community partnerships, or social activism.

Background

The first New Tech high school was founded in 1996 with the goal of preparing students more effectively for postsecondary education and careers. Within a few years, interest in the high school led to the founding of the New Tech Network (NTN), an organization responsible for scaling up the school model (New Tech Network, 2016a). In order to facilitate school development, NTN utilizes a Learning Organization Framework, which incorporates the use of data to inform short-term decision-making with the creation of aligned learning structures, shared and emerging leadership, and progressive school culture to inform long-term decision-making (Reed, Gehrke, & Pacheco, 2015). NTN provides support to districts and schools during the implementation process through onsite instructional coaching and leadership development, as well as ongoing professional development institutes.

The NT school model consists of three design features: (a) engaging teaching via project-based learning (PBL) as the primary instructional approach, (b) empowering and egalitarian school culture, and (c) integrated technology (New Tech Network, 2016b). NT schools utilize a project-based learning instructional approach with an emphasis on rigorous and relevant projects, and links to the schools' local community. In addition, NT schools develop an empowering culture of "trust, respect, and responsibility" where students and teachers "have exceptional ownership of the learning experience and their school environment" (New Tech Network, 2016b, n.p.). Finally, NT schools use integrated technology, including a one-to-one computing ratio, internet access, and a learning management system, which allow all students to be self-directed learners and all teachers to be effective facilitators of learning (New Tech Network, 2016b).

Within the state where this study was conducted, districts sought the NT model as a response to perceptions of declining economic opportunity within rural and urban communities and small towns, as well as out of the desire to offer a more innovative education to students across the state. The state legislature facilitated growth of the model by offering grants to cover the cost of adoption and implementation. Although the NT model had originally been conceived to accommodate about 400 students per school, expansion to this state challenged NTN to broaden its implementation guidelines. For instance, rural schools often had enrollment between 400 and 600 students so that adopting the model for the whole school made more sense than implementing it with two-thirds of students. Therefore, the NT high schools in this state implemented the model in one of three ways: (a) whole school, (b) autonomous school, and (c) small learning community. Autonomous schools operate like magnet programs that draw students from across their school districts to a campus separate from the local high schools, and small learning communities function as specialized programs located within the walls of a district high school. As described above, whole-school implementations typically include around 600 students, or the entire student body, while autonomous schools and small learning communities serve about 400 students, or 100 per grade level.

Research Design

The data we analyzed for this study was collected as part of a mixed-methods evaluation examining the implementation of the NT model in one Midwestern state. We were the principal investigator and lead research assistant, respectively, for the multiyear evaluation. The qualitative data collected for the evaluation included classroom and school observations, as well as teacher and administrator interviews. The quantitative portion of the evaluation consisted of teacher and student surveys and the analysis of student-level data, including attendance rates, performance on standardized assessments, graduation rates, and behavior indicators (e.g., in-school suspensions, out-of-school suspensions, and office referrals). At the time of this study, the fourth year of evaluation had just ended.

We chose to analyze the qualitative data collected during the fourth year of implementation using Woods and Woods' (2012) Degrees of Democracy Framework for several reasons.

First, the qualitative rather than the quantitative data provided contextual and descriptive information, as well as participants' perceptions, which we believed would provide appropriate evidence of democratic school practices. Additionally, the surveys had not been designed with the intention of collecting data about democratic school practices, and therefore were irrelevant to this study's purpose. Likewise, the student outcome data were collected to provide information about the products produced by the model rather than its implementation. Second, during this year of the evaluation, three schools had implemented the model across all grade levels (i.e., grades 9–12); thus, student data, including graduation rates, could be reviewed for the first time to determine whether the model would produce comparable or better outcomes when compared to similar schools. And it did—NT schools' students scored higher on state assessments, were more likely to graduate, and had fewer in-school and/or out-of-school suspensions than comparison schools' students. Third, the eight schools included in the study had been implementing the model for at least two years so that they had all moved out of the beginning stage and into the refinement stage of implementation. Fourth, we determined that this was the first year in which we had enough data to yield robust findings. In addition, the data were considered more reliable since the evaluators had spent two to four years in the schools conducting fieldwork. By this time, they had developed strong relationships with participants, who were used to the evaluators' presence in their classrooms, and trusted them enough to share their honest reflections about the model (Mertens & Wilson, 2012).

Still, the design of this study was limited by the fact that the data were collected for the purpose of evaluation. In the context of evaluation, the partner defines the purpose, which informs research questions, data collection methods, and analysis (Mertens & Wilson, 2012). For example, during the first three years of NT implementation, the evaluation results indicated that mathematics and modern languages teachers did not believe that project-based learning would work in the context of their content areas, and therefore, they were not implementing PBL instruction in their classrooms. As a result, during the fourth year of the evaluation, the partner asked the evaluation team to interview more mathematics and modern languages teachers than other content area teachers in order to find out what barriers existed, so these could be addressed through professional development, mentoring, and modeling in future years. Therefore, although we interviewed a variety of content-area teachers, we did not interview any social studies teachers; we were more focused on making sure we spoke with mathematics and modern languages teachers, and less focused on whether we spoke to teachers of each content area. Obviously, it would have made sense to have interviewed social studies teachers for a study of democratic practices in the classroom, as it could be argued that they are the most likely of all content area teachers to implement democratic practices. We acknowledge that using data collected for an implementation evaluation is limited by the fact that evaluation serves a different purpose than research.

According to Mertens and Wilson (2012), "evaluations are conducted on the merit and worth of programs in the public domain, which are themselves responses to prioritized individual and community needs" (p. 11). However, we maintain that despite its limitations, this study provides an important model for how the Degrees of Democracy Framework can be used to examine innovative school models including the NT model.

School Sites

The eight NT high schools included in this study represent a convenience sample, as they were all implementing the NT model in the state where the evaluation was conducted (Mertens & Wilson, 2012). The schools were at different stages of implementation, however, because the model had typically been implemented one grade level at a time, starting with the 9th grade and adding another grade level each year. As such, at the time of this study, three schools had implemented the model in grades 9 through 12, three had implemented in grades 9 through 11, and two had implemented in grades 9 and 10. Although a convenience sample, the schools were located in a variety of locales across the state. According to state-assigned locale designations, two schools were located in large cities, one in a small town, two in midsize cities, two in rural areas, and one in the urban fringe of a midsize city.

As described above, the eight schools implemented the NT model in one of three ways: (a) whole school implementation, (b) autonomous school implementation, and (c) small learning community implementation. Three schools implemented NT across their whole school. They are smaller high schools; two are located in rural communities and one is in a small town. Two schools in this study were established as autonomous schools; they are both located in midsize cities. The NT model at three schools was implemented as a small learning community housed within a large district school; two are located in large cities and one in the urban fringe of a midsize city. Table 2 describes the type of implementation, grades served, and locale for each school.

Table 2 Type of Implementation, Grades Served, and Locale for Each School

School	Type of Implementation*	Grades Served	State-Assigned Locale
School A	SLC	9, 10, 11, 12	Large city
School B	SLC	9, 10, 11, 12	Large city
School C	WSI	9, 10, 11, 12	Small town
School D	ASI	9, 10, 11	Midsize City
School E	ASI	9, 10, 11	Midsize City
School F	WSI	9, 10, 11	Rural
School G	WSI	9, 10	Rural
School H	SLC	9, 10	Urban fringe of midsize city

*SLC = small learning community; WSI = whole school implementation; ASI = autonomous school implementation

The participant schools enrolled between 178 and 539 students. Students were mostly White, although one school's population included 71.6% students of color. Around 10% of students were identified as having special educational needs, except for those in one school, whose population of students with special needs consisted of almost 21% of enrolled students. Most schools included between 25 and 45% of students who qualified for free or reduced-price meals, with the exception of two, which served almost 82% and a little more than 70% of this group of students. Finally, most schools had few English Language Learners (ELL), although two schools included 12.6% and 8.5% ELLs. The two schools whose student population was most diverse were also the two schools located in urban areas. Table 3 describes the demographics of each school.

Methods

We conducted classroom observations from October to April, observing a total of 55 classes one or two times each. In addition, we observed lunchrooms and hallways at two sites. These observations lasted between 30 and 90 minutes, for a total of about 73 hours of observation data collected. We followed a nonintrusive, hands-off, eyes-on approach and generally did not participate in classroom activities. We took field notes during observations to describe the classroom environment; classroom procedures; the teachers' instruction; learning activities; materials used; and interactive patterns among students and between students and teachers. We also took note of interactions between teachers, since teachers co-taught some of the integrated classes common in the NT model. We wrote as much as possible of what we saw and heard during observations and included some of our own reflections or interpretations as memos written during or shortly after observations. We also met weekly to share our notes and memos so that all team members had a more complete view of what was happening at each school.

We conducted formal interviews with 16 teachers and 7 directors (i.e., principals). We recruited teachers for interviews through snowball sampling (Mertens & Wilson, 2012), whereby we asked directors to provide the names of two or three teachers they thought should be interviewed. Directors did not always suggest teachers they expected to say complimentary things about the model or who were implementing the model with high fidelity.

Instead, most were interested in learning from teachers they believed had not bought into the model or were not implementing the model fully. Because the data was collected in the context of an evaluation, the directors had an interest in learning how they might modify their practice and/or provide further supports and professional development to better meet teachers' implementation needs.

We then invited the teachers directors recommended to participate in an interview, although not all consented. Therefore, the directors did not know exactly who participated among those they suggested. Next, we asked all the teachers that the directors had recommended for an interview to provide the names of additional teachers they thought we should speak with in order to gain an understanding of implementation at that school. The teachers who participated in interviews represented a sample of different content areas: two science teachers, five English teachers, four mathematics teachers, three modern languages teachers, and two business teachers. Almost half of the teachers we interviewed were mathematics or modern languages teachers, which was the result of a focused recruitment effort in response to specific partner needs as described above. The number of interviews conducted was also limited by the timeframe and budget for the evaluation. We interviewed two to three teachers from each school over the phone or at the school. Each interview lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes, for a total of about 10 hours of interview data. We followed a semistructured protocol that enabled the evaluation team to compare similarities and differences between stakeholder expectations of the NT model and their experiences in it. Sample interview items included "Describe teacher collaboration at your school" and "Describe the leadership structure at your school." We audio-recorded the interviews and transcribed them verbatim.

Analysis

In order to analyze the data that we had collected for the New Tech implementation evaluation, we gathered all of the data documents, including observation field notes and interview transcripts. We read through all of these in order to obtain an overall understanding of what we had collected. After this preliminary reading, we reviewed the Degrees of Democracy Framework (see Table 1) and began creating a list of possible codes, including the code examples

Table 3 Demographics of Each School

School	Enrollment	Students of Color	Students Qualifying for Special Education	Students Qualifying for Free/Reduced Meals	English Language Learners
School A	190	136 (71.6%)	24 (12.6%)	155 (81.6%)	24 (12.6%)
School B	248	36 (14.5%)	23 (9.35%)	111 (44.8%)	14 (5.7%)
School C	539	43 (8.0%)	68 (12.6%)	210 (39.0%)	9 (1.7%)
School D	178	23 (12.9%)	26 (14.6%)	N/A	2 (1.1%)
School E	266	34 (12.8%)	26 (9.8%)	106 (39.9%)	13 (4.9%)
School F	220	8 (3.6%)	46 (20.0%)	80 (36.4%)	2 (0.9%)
School G	251	2 (0.8%)	27 (10.8%)	67 (26.7%)	3 (1.2%)
School H	177	74 (41.8%)	18 (10.2%)	124 (70.1%)	15 (8.5%)

listed in Table 4. Next, we utilized NVivo data analysis software program to assign specific codes to data excerpts within the observation field notes and interview transcripts. After completing initial coding, we pulled the data we assigned to each code, and read through it, comparing the data to the descriptions of holistic democracy embedded in the Degrees of Democracy Framework. Once this reading was complete, we recoded some data in order to refine our analysis.

To check the validity of our analysis, we shared the analysis documents with the evaluation team members for peer editing because they were most familiar with the NT model, the data collection methods, the school sites, and the participants. We also shared my analysis with Philip Woods, one of the authors of the Degrees of Democracy Framework, for peer editing.

Findings

Overall, the NT schools demonstrated evidence of all four features of holistic democracy including holistic meaning, power sharing, transforming dialogue, and holistic well-being. Within these findings, we have attempted to provide adequate evidence from observations and interviews to demonstrate the ways that the schools embodied features of holistic democracy as measured through the Degrees of Democracy Framework (Woods & Woods, 2012). We have organized the findings into four themes, each describing evidence of one of the four "ways of being and acting." Within each theme, we have detailed the evidence of each variable from the Framework.

Table 4 Code Examples

Codes	Associated Degrees of Democracy Variable	Data Example
Emphasis on standardized tests	Knowledge goal	Interview: "We are constantly looking at the data to see who is doing well and who is not doing well . . . [to] figure out where our problems lie."
Community partners	Knowledge goal	Observation: Students work on binding the children's books they wrote/illustrated about bullying; partner is a nearby elementary school.
Resistance to PBL	Method of teaching and creating knowledge	Interview: "Unfortunately, a lot of it in my area is drill, drill, drill . . . I don't think the kids can figure it out on their own . . . You can't just research a foreign language." (Teacher believes PBL is only about students doing independent research.)
Real-world topics	Mode of learning	Observation: Students are working in small groups to create a vegan and vegetarian menu to be used by a local restaurant; they are discussing which protein source would be best for a vegan pizza
Student account-ability	Authority structure	Observation: A student is annoyed with his group members because they are off-task. He tells them, "You guys need to do your work. We are way behind everyone else."
School culture	Authority structure	Observation: A student sitting in a nearby group tells her classmate to stop talking during a workshop, saying, "That's disrespectful."
Teacher collabora-tion	Spaces for participation	Interview: "We can share our concerns or make decisions together [and] we have protocols in place that help us to say things that we might feel uncomfortable saying in other settings."
Student advisory groups	Communication flows	Interview: "We're always looking for ideas, so we invite [students] into our meetings . . . [which is] another way to build culture too, giving them a voice and [letting] them come up with ideas."
Student feedback	Key purpose of dialogue	Observation: Students are providing feedback to the teachers about a project they just completed. They are most concerned about the deadlines for specific parts of the project. A boy explains that they needed more time to create a media presentation; his group was frustrated because they ran out of time before the final presentation to the community partner. A girl says her group could also have used more time.
Rewards	Engagement	Interview: "It's crazy stuff, but it's things that students love . . . We have what's called a 'signature circle' [where] all the students at [the school] line the hallways and the [students] being recognized will do a run through the hallway and we cheer them on and support them as they go."
Students support-ing each other	Community	Observation: Teacher asks for another volunteer to answer the choral response questions. One group volunteers a girl in their group. She looks down, hesitates; after a brief silence, a boy in her group whispers to her, "You got this." Another group member smiles at her when she glances up. She offers an answer, still looking at the table and in a small voice. Her group members clap, and cheer for her: "Good job!" "We knew you had it!"

Holistic Meaning

Holistic meaning embodies the idea that education is about more than learning content or applying skills. It is also about finding our purpose in life, and developing ourselves fully. We are not simply cognitive beings who are satisfied to know or do more, but individuals who seek meaning and strive to feel wholly alive. The Framework describes four variables associated with holistic meaning. Evidence of each of these is shared in this theme.

Principal organizational purpose. Most of the NT schools utilized formal assessments to measure students' knowledge and skills. Teachers carefully tracked traditional student assessment data including performance on state-mandated and high-stakes assessments. A teacher reported "constantly looking at the data to see who is doing well and who is not doing well . . . [to] figure out where our problems lie." However, teachers used data to guide instruction and assure they were meeting students' needs. For example, teachers reported analyzing students' performance so that they are "able to create workshops and learning opportunities for the kids based upon that data." Teachers viewed this work as progressive. In addition, a few teachers reported feeling pressed for time in trying to teach all of the state standards. They worried that their students were behind, and would not be prepared once they reached college:

> I know for a fact that one of my teacher friends is using the same book we are . . . [and] they're ahead of us. I know some of it is because we spend time elsewhere . . . [So] I'm anxious to see what these kids are like as seniors and hear when they come back to visit from college.

Teachers focused on content as defined by state standards, as well as college and career readiness as defined by state policy.

Knowledge goal. Every school partnered with community organizations and local industries for at least a few projects, and some collaborated with partners for almost all of their projects. For example, students were observed collecting and testing water samples from local water sources with their community partner, Sycamore Land Trust, a conservation nonprofit. At another school, students wrote petitions to local businesses asking for permission to perform "green audits" of their facilities. Yet another group of students partnered with a local elementary school to write and illustrate children's books about bullying; the students also learned how to bind the books so that they could produce the books in hardback for the school. These partnerships presented multiple perspectives on issues of importance in the "real" world. In order to measure skills learned with community partners, teachers used rubrics to grade 21st-century skills such as collaboration, oral and written communication, technology use, and problem solving.

Most schools used several other ways to communicate their knowledge goals to students. For example, in multiple schools, walls in the main hallway displayed students' college acceptance letters. Other school-level celebrations took the form of special lunches, award ceremonies and honor lists.

Method of teaching and creating knowledge. Classes observed at most of the NT schools integrated multiple content areas. For example, at one school, students in a World Studies class integrated English, history, and geography skills to map the setting of a novel they were reading. Similarly, students in an algebra II/physics class utilized math and science concepts to predict the trajectory of a pulley car. Students in an English 10/world history class conducted surveys and interviews for a needs assessment, created designs using Google SketchUp, and presented to loan officers from local banks to plan a neighborhood coffee shop. When individual classes were not integrated, some schools implemented schoolwide, cross-curricular projects. For example, one school implemented a project that required students in several classes to plan a Veteran's Day program. The English 10/U.S. history class interviewed local veterans and combined excerpts from those interviews with pictures on a slideshow. Meanwhile, the chemistry I/food science class planned a menu and prepared breakfast for the program. For the most part, these projects were designed to include students in the creation of knowledge.

The NT model also incorporates the use of project-based learning (PBL) as the primary instructional approach. Many NT teachers utilized PBL as their primary instructional approach. They organized projects around solving real-world problems or posing critical questions through which students would feel "driven" to learn both content and skills. One teacher noted that organizing "creative" projects in the PBL format required additional work, but she found it valuable because students are able to apply what they have learned. During observations, teachers were observed providing support to small groups of students though workshops that taught or reviewed content and/or skills through discussion or direct instruction. Teachers commented that workshops were based not only on students' content-level "need to knows" but also on skill development that teachers thought would help students complete their projects.

However, some teachers rejected the use of PBL in favor of continuing to use traditional instructional methods. For example, a teacher reported refraining from putting students into collaborative groups until he had used direct instruction to present content, and quizzes to determine that students had learned the content. This differed from a PBL approach, where the teacher would challenge students to learn the content in the context of the project. Other teachers reported that the PBL approach did not suit their content areas: "Unfortunately, a lot of it in my area is drill, drill, drill . . . I don't think the kids can figure it out on their own . . . You can't just research a foreign language." Similar sentiments toward PBL were particularly evident among math teachers, who reported struggling to find projects that incorporated all the state standards they needed to cover to assure student success on high-stakes state assessments: "There are some areas where you need instruction; you need a lot of intensive instruction in math."

Mode of learning. NT teachers often related students' work to real-world topics. For instance, in an "orientation to life" class, students were asked to use what they had learned about saturated and unsaturated fats, plant structures and protein to develop vegan and vegetarian menus for a local restaurant. At other schools, students participated in projects that entailed building awareness of various social issues or brainstorming solutions to environmental problems like landfill seepage, energy conservation, and recycling.

Teachers also brought in presenters to speak about career opportunities in their subject areas to help students connect learning to embodied outcomes. Additionally, students were encouraged to engage with others collaboratively during the learning process, which certainly moved schools toward holistic knowledge goals, cocreation of knowledge, and embodied modes of learning:

> [At] a traditional school, it would have been easy for [some students] to hide in the back and not be noticed and be pushed aside . . . [but] here they can't do that because they are working in groups.

Further, teachers' efforts to support students' learning included rewards for participation, state academic standards posted on the wall, student performance data, and modeling the "right" ways or outcomes.

Power Sharing

Power sharing emphasizes the importance of broad participation in the most important aspects of the school. When power is shared, all members of the school community are invited to contribute to conversations about the school's mission and vision. They are also full participants in the decision-making process. The framework describes three variables associated with power sharing. Evidence of each of these is described in this theme.

Authority Structure. Teachers and students at many of the NT schools shared leadership with directors, and held each other accountable. Distributive leadership practices were a hallmark of the professional culture at most schools. For instance, a teacher shared that the director at her school "gives us a lot of autonomy . . . [and] he trusts our judgment." As such, teachers felt they had a bigger impact on school-wide decision making and outcomes:

> [Teachers] discuss real issues, and we [can] discuss leadership things. We come up with proposals and we are listened to, and many of the things going on in the school [are] because the teachers . . . developed it and it was not directed [from an administrator].

In general, teachers' attributed much success at their schools to the increased participation and trust facilitated through inclusive spaces: "One of the things that make[s] [our] New Tech so successful is . . . [teacher] freedom and autonomy."

Students also influenced and shaped the values of their NT schools by holding each other accountable in various ways. Observations showed students holding each other to high standards of behavior. For instance, a student was observed asking his classmate to stop swearing and making negative comments during class. Another student told her classmate to stop talking during a workshop because "that's disrespectful." Some students also corrected themselves, promptly apologizing to the teacher when they realized they had said or done something that did not align to the school's values. In addition, students held each other accountable for their work ethic. They were observed reminding one another to stay on-task: "You guys need to do your work. We are way behind everyone else." Another student told a group member who was off task, "This is your project too." Even when completing individual

responsibilities, they exhibited concern for each other's progress. For example, one student was observed asking a classmate if watching a YouTube video was more important than homework, saying, "No pressure, but you don't have a lot of time to get that done. How far are you?" However, a few efforts to hold students accountable emphasized hierarchical authority structures among students. For instance, some teachers required students to report to "accountability partners" or use group contracts to hold each other accountable for their work.

Spaces for participation. NT schools demonstrated several spaces for student and teacher participation. At most schools, students had opportunities to serve as student ambassadors, or formal representatives of the school during school tours and panel discussions. According to one director, over 20% of students at his school applied for the positions, signifying what he felt was a high level of participation. Another director reported that 31% of students had volunteered to speak at student/parent meetings and that 55% of students had led tours, student panels, or lunch groups over the course of the year. Student councils, student advisory groups, and so-called culture task forces also were established at many schools to give students a voice in the school by enabling them to engage administrators and teachers in formal meetings about school culture and behavioral norms:

> Kids will come to me and . . . [say] "do this and this," so I tell them to take the lead, get a group of kids, . . . [explain] why you think it's going to work, and then we'll have a meeting and discuss it and talk about our next steps.

At some schools, members of the student advisory group also participated in staff meetings: "We're always looking for ideas, so we invite [students] into our meetings . . . [which is] another way to build culture too, giving them a voice and [letting] them come up with ideas." In addition, students were allowed to take a limited role in the interview process for new teachers to ensure candidates understood the type of instructional and cultural standards they were expected to meet.

NT schools also demonstrated many spaces for broader teacher participation. These spaces took many forms, including co-teaching, having common preparation periods, networking among NT teachers across the state, attending regularly scheduled staff meetings and professional development workshops, implementing the Critical Friends protocol, and sharing leadership roles within the schools.

Scope of participation. Across the NT schools, teachers and students reported taking on responsibilities beyond what is typical at most schools. As described above, students were invited to participate in policymaking through spaces such as councils and advisory groups. According to one teacher:

> Everything we do is really driven by student voice . . . [We] make decisions by . . . the consensus model of decision-making that says that the people who make the decisions are [those who are] most affected by the decision. We all have equal votes.

This meant that students participated in forming policies affecting their freedom to move throughout the school, their use of technology and learning spaces, and the development of behavior management systems. For example, students at one school prepared a proposal to the school board asking for permission to lift the ban on some websites they wished to use including YouTube. This occurred after lengthy discussions with teachers and the director about why students needed access to YouTube for research.

Additionally, teachers reported having greater scope of participation outside their classrooms. They met often to share ideas and solve problems:

> *You're making decisions that directly impact what you're doing. Our teams meet two times a week . . . We discuss real issues and we discuss leadership things. We come up with proposals and we are listened to and many of the things going on in the school [are] because the teachers . . . developed it.*

Nevertheless, the scope of participation at NT schools was sometimes limited. One teacher explained how excluding teachers in the decision to adopt the NT model made them feel that their perspectives were not valued:

> *We needed more buy-in from the beginning. It just happened so quickly and without the total support, or the staff feeling like they were involved in that decision. It created resentment not only with the staff, but with the community, as well.*

The adoption process at several of the NT schools negatively affected teacher commitment to the model. In these cases, district administrators had typically heard about the model, and decided to pursue it with the blessing of school board members and school administrators. However, they had failed to include teachers or community members such as parents in the decision to adopt the model. As a result, a few NT schools faced resistance to the model from teachers, parents, and students.

Transforming Dialogue

Transforming dialogue encourages the interchange of ideas and commitment to working through disagreements to reach understanding and respect. This takes place through collaboration, and through listening intently and respectfully to others. The framework describes three variables associated with transforming dialogue. Evidence of each of these is described in this theme.

Communication flows. Both students and teachers were included in decision-making processes, as described in the power-sharing theme. In addition, teachers reported that their relationships have changed as a result of the NT model. More than one teacher shared that teachers "get along well and work together" and that collaboration is "thorough and complete." One teacher explained how collaboration activities enable teachers to share ideas and feelings they might have kept to themselves in past: "We can share our concerns or make decisions together [and] we have protocols in place that help us to say things that we might feel uncomfortable saying in other settings." Teachers felt free to share their viewpoints and anxieties with each other and their directors.

Key purpose of dialogue. In order to further engage students, teachers solicited feedback from students about their experiences in the classroom. Across the schools, teachers asked students for feedback about what went well and what did not go well at the end of each project. Some teachers used the Critical Friends protocol, asking students to express "I Likes," "I Wonders," and "Next Steps." Using students' suggestions helped teachers improve their teaching. One director described student feedback in evaluating projects as "one of the most beneficial ways students participate in . . . decision making at the school." Through the feedback process, students were able to observe how their comments made a difference in the teaching and learning process. In addition, as described above, students contributed to decision-making at the school level through dialogue. For example, a director described how a group of upperclassmen organized a series of activities to facilitate the transition process for incoming students. They believed that acclimating new students to the cultural norms and expectations at their school would decrease the occurrence of behavioral issues among these students.

Engagement. Several NT schools implemented ways to acknowledge the special gifts of students and teachers. The "key program" was one example. For this program, the student advisory group selected a student who had demonstrated one of the "keys," which included trust, respect, compassion, and initiative, among others. The key was awarded to the student during the all-school assembly held at the end of the week. When all the keys had been awarded, a ceremony was held after school so that those students could pass the keys on to other students or teachers who also had exhibited that characteristic. A teacher shared that the ceremony had become an important way of honoring individual gifts:

> *There is a large percentage of the students that do look forward to [the keys] and it means a lot. What's nice about it is that there are students being recognized that perhaps are not recognized in other venues. Because they are solid "citizens," their peers are the ones recognizing them. I think it's important to those students.*

Another school celebrated students through a "signature circle," during which students lined up along the hallways so that the student being celebrated could "do a run through the hallway and we cheer them on and support them as they go."

In addition, several schools had a reward system, which enabled students to earn privileges for academic success and other achievements. Although these systems encouraged and recognized students, some teachers and students found them frustrating. For example, one reward was that the student could choose their own group members. This led go high-achieving students working together, leaving other students struggling to form groups. Students also disliked this situation. In one class, a student shouted, "Yeah, all the smart people want to group together." Another reward system used by some schools was the "trust card," which offered students who had demonstrated "good" behavior greater

freedom within the school. These students could move more freely than others.

Holistic Well-Being

Holistic well-being is the sense that each member of the school is valued and important. Such well-being means that individuals feel they would be missed if they were not present. The framework describes three variables associated with holistic well-being. Evidence of each of these is described in this theme.

Community. The NT culture of "trust, respect, and responsibility" was strongly emphasized at all of the schools. In order to develop a sense of trust and respect for diversity, several schools hosted "family time," or assemblies where all members of the school community gathered to discuss school issues and celebrate accomplishments. A teacher explained how this close-knit environment enabled more positive and relaxed interactions among students and teachers: "I can talk to students [about] what they want to be in life, what their goals are and get to know them as people." As a result, teachers found that students were less likely to "fall through the cracks." In addition, strong student relationships were observed. For example, when a group of students volunteered their classmate to answer choral response questions, they did so in a manner that was reassuring. Although she hesitated and showed uncertainty, her group members clapped for her and cheered her on to help her face the challenge.

However, the type of NT implementation (i.e., whole school, small learning community, or autonomous) sometimes influenced how the culture of a school developed. As a director at one school explained, in a small learning community implementation, "it's hard to build the culture that we want when you share it with 1,300 other students that aren't being trained up in the culture." Fluctuations in the student population also influenced the culture at NT schools. In addition, teachers and students at several schools reported that their culture seemed to "fall" temporarily at the beginning of each year as a result of incoming freshmen unfamiliar with the model: "As the teacher, you remember where your freshmen ended and you expect them to come in at that starting point, and it doesn't happen. It's difficult for the teacher having to start all over again." Nevertheless, schools found ways to address this issue. At one school, students took the initiative to form an advisory group of upperclassmen who took the lead in introducing new students to the school's cultural norms.

New teachers also affected the sense of community at NT schools. For example, when teachers at one school were riffed and replaced by teachers from a recently closed alternative program, both teachers and students doubted the new teachers' commitment to the model, resulting in difficulty relating to them.

Personal. Most teachers engaged in a "style of interaction [that] floats somewhere between formal interaction and informal [interaction]." For example, teachers were observed joking with students, reprimanding them without having to be overly stern or authoritarian, and calmly encouraging them to work when they were disengaged. Further, students were able to call teachers for help without raising their hands, and often used endearing nicknames. This light atmosphere enabled teachers to be more understanding and considerate toward students. For instance, one teacher reported giving her students small breaks to compose themselves instead of just reprimanding them when they were upset:

> *Yesterday, I had a senior make a comment in class about some frustrations she was having. Rather than react to her in a disciplinary way, I just pulled [her] over to my area [and] . . . asked her if there was anything I could do to help make it a better situation for her or improve my class.*

During an observation at another school, a teacher exhibited concern about helping a student whose classmates had reported that she appeared sad lately. In this environment, teachers observed that students felt more "safe" and "valued." Therefore, they were more comfortable talking with teachers and asking for help since they could "open up and be themselves."

Mindset. NT teachers showed that they are committed to students. According to one director, he and the teachers at their school made it their mission to put the students first: "They know that the teachers care more about them than they do about what they're teaching." Another director shared that teachers consistently stay after school to tutor students, supervise extracurricular activities, or just do extra work in their classrooms. During an observation, a student said to a teacher, "You [sic] always here! Go home! It's like he lives here!" Moreover, when teachers saw students struggling, whether with course content or personal issues, they made sure to take time out to help them. For example, when a frustrated student said he was "done with math" during an algebra lesson, instead of getting angry and reprimanding him for the outburst, his teacher took the time to explain that he could not be done with it because he uses it in his everyday life. Then, the teacher patiently guided him through the problem. In addition, teachers were willing to do what was best for their students no matter how much work it created for them: "We're a little more headstrong." As one teacher explained, the school has "really become a place where kids come for resources beyond what you would normally ask a teacher for."

In addition, most NT teachers agreed that professional development and collaboration time was used for the purpose of looking beyond "small-picture," day-to-day issues to really focus on the bigger picture:

> *We spend a lot of time reassessing the way we do things, reshaping the way we do things, [and] being flexible about the design of our classroom and the design of the school. We all feel like we have [truly] made this progress and developed something here with our students.*

Further, as described above, teachers engaged students in the collaborative process in order to make sure that all members of the school community were aligned. At several schools, students and teachers cocreated "norms" for interaction. These were revised as needed through the year; as one director explained, students "have a lot to say in what they think the norms should be."

Discussion
Holistic Meaning
The co-teaching of content within integrated courses demonstrated movement towards a more holistic method of teaching and creating knowledge. When teachers collaborated to plan, teach, and assess integrated content, they cocreated knowledge across the traditional boundaries of high school subject departments. Additionally, teachers' use of PBL provided further opportunities for students to create knowledge. PBL encompasses a number of holistic features, including giving students voice in the direction of projects, engaging them by offering multiple ways to contribute to projects, allowing students to collaborate with others, offering them opportunities to reflect on their growth, and providing real-world purpose to learning. However, when some teachers refused to use PBL, they placed boundaries on their instruction, as well as student learning. Further, despite that PBL lends itself well to the use of alternative assessments to measure student learning, most teachers at NT schools utilized many formal assessments. Portfolios, presentations, and products would allow teachers to measure non-content learning, including affective and social development, collaboration skills, and higher-order thinking. However, teachers continued to use many quizzes, textbook tests, and standardized assessments to measure student growth. These focus on competitive performance rather than common values and goals. It is understandable that teachers felt they should use data to inform their instruction, as this is a common practice within many schools. However, alternative assessments can be used to inform instruction just as effectively as traditional tests, and they allow teachers to broaden the learning outcomes they hope to accomplish.

When schools partnered with community organizations and industries to design, implement, and assess projects, students learned that there was more to learning than what could be found on a state-mandated graduation exam. Partners included a variety groups connected to various understandings of social, emotional, ethical, spiritual, aesthetic, and intellectual ideas. Students learned that there needs to be a balance between economic growth and environmental protection. They learned that there is beauty in the "old-fashioned" way of doing things. They learned how to solve problems as adults do when they negotiate and compromise. Partnerships also created opportunities for embodied learning as students developed noncognitive skills. However, teachers' use of rubrics to measure and grade this noncognitive learning (i.e., 21st-century skills such as collaboration, problem solving, oral and written communication, etc.) could certainly be interpreted as framing this learning in a cognitive-technical way. In addition, the focus on traditional cognitive successes, such as college acceptance and high grades, emphasized cognitive-technical knowledge goals rather than holistic ones. Moreover, the strong presence of state standards posted in classrooms and academic performance rewards were elements linked to cognitive rather than embodied modes of learning.

Power sharing
In a holistic democracy, flat authority structures allow members of the school community to develop ownership through participation. When members are engaged in decision making, they feel a greater sense of responsibility for behaving in ways that align with expectations they cocreated. For the most part, NT directors worked to engage students and teachers in decision making, and the data indicated that this led to higher levels of accountability among students and teachers. However, on a few occasions, teachers implemented external accountability structures that were less supportive and more controlling such as assigning "accountability partners." In addition, although there were multiple spaces for teacher and student participation, there were few spaces where parents could contribute. This may be because by the time students enter high school, parents have largely handed over the charge for their learning to the school. However, in an HD school, the focus on noncognitive skills requires a higher level of parent participation. Because spiritual and ethical learning are very personal, and are often driven by family norms and values, it is essential for parents to be included. Further, teachers and administrators are obliged to invite parents and create spaces for their meaningful participation because some parents are unlikely to feel comfortable participating in decision-making and strategic planning at the school.

Transforming dialogue
The multitude of spaces for participation and the broad scope for participation both led to the type of transforming dialogue that is necessary for a holistic democracy. There were many examples of multidirectional communication flows at NT schools. Not only did teachers co-teach and co-plan but they also participated collectively in the whole life of the school. They described the ways that school directors included them as equals when solving problems or creating goals. Communication was also multidirectional between students and adults. Teachers and directors listened to students' perspectives even when they conflicted with what the adults had decided would be best for students. Teachers acknowledged that they had room to grow as instructors and were willing to listen to and act upon students' feedback. And when students were too direct or critical, teachers supported their growth by teaching them how to use the Critical Friends Protocol that they themselves used to communicate positively with each other. These practices shifted the purpose of dialogue, as well as the way that community members engaged in dialogue. Through the celebration of individual talents and skills, the NT schools invited students and teachers to engage in holistic ways. The celebratory rituals allowed the school community to commend individual's contributions to the school and encouraged each person to contribute as their true self. However, some school reward systems, such as "trust cards," motivated students to perform in order to earn specific rewards. Although these seem a positive way to encourage and compensate desirable behaviors, they privilege students with specific gifts, as well as motivating students to act on balance of rewards they will receive.

Holistic well-being
The NT culture of "trust, respect, and responsibility" demonstrated an emphasis on holistic community. Teachers and directors tried to

create a family atmosphere where every member felt valued and respected and where all members showed that they appreciated each other. The connection that directors, teachers, and students felt to their school was strengthened through the organic, or natural, feeling of unconditional commitment that occurs within families. However, two circumstances negatively affected the holistic well-being felt at some schools. First, when NT schools were one small learning community within large, comprehensive high schools, it was more difficult to maintain a sense of organic community and personal connectedness. Second, sometimes district politics disrupted the sense of connectedness that some teachers felt. This happened at the NT school when teachers from another school, which had closed, were transferred to the NT school while the most recent hires at the NT school lost their jobs. The director, teachers, and students at that school all struggled to rebuild a sense of holistic well-being within their school in the face of distrust, resentment, and sadness. Nevertheless, most NT teachers demonstrated a strong commitment to caring for their students. They also focused their energy on the big picture, modeling a democratic consciousness that supports holistic well-being.

Conclusion

This study applied the Degrees of Democracy Framework to eight New Tech schools in one Midwestern state. These schools were different from those that Woods and Woods (2012) tested their framework with in England. The English schools were independent of each other and self-identified as democratic schools. Conversely, the NT schools in this study were part of a network of schools that benefitted from a variety of common implementation supports. These allowed them to learn from each other and to quickly scale up practices that were successful in one school so that the schools looked more alike than different compared to the English schools that Woods and Woods examined. If, as Dewey (1916) claimed, democracy is a "mode of associated living," then it makes sense that the

use of networking among the NT schools increased or improved the degree of holistic democracy we found within the NT model.

The framework provided a way of measuring the extent to which the NT schools exhibited degrees of holistic democracy. As a metric, it was relatively easy to use. However, the framework could not be used on its own, without Woods and Woods's 2012 article, in which they defined and described holistic democracy. It would need to be expanded considerably in order to be used on its own. Nevertheless, the framework meets Dewey's insistence on developing metrics with which to examine models of social living within the context of schools. The framework should certainly be used by researchers to examine other school models that claim to be democratic, or that have democratic features. In addition, it could be used by school leaders, teachers, students, parents, and members of the external community as a self-assessment tool. However, if used in this way, researchers should examine the ways that school members use the framework so that it can be refined and modified accordingly.

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