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From the Mouths (and Eyes and Ears) of Babies

The Philosophical Baby: What Children's Minds Tell Us about Truth, Love and the Meaning of Life, by Alison Gopnik

Berkeley developmental psychologist Alison Gopnik takes readers on a tour of the childhood mind that is both provocative and astonishing. Her premise that babies learn more, create more, care more and experience more than we have ever known they could, is only the beginning. Gopnik goes on to make the case that the minds of young children hold the keys to life's largest questions: how to discover the truth, how morality develops, the origins of love and how to think. Gathering up the latest scientific discoveries about the development of children's minds, Gopnik makes the case that children are sophisticated long before we expect them to be. An infant's gaze at his mother's face, a toddler's insatiable curiosity, and the preschooler's remarkable imagination are, notes Gopnik, the keys to morality, scientific discovery and invention. This book promotes deeper appreciation for how children learn and what we can learn about ourselves from them. It is a compelling book for parents and educators who suspect that there is a great deal more to know about what's going on in the mind of a child and has direct rapport with what we are learning about styles, as predictive factors, of learning and cognition in K-12.

Elizabeth Morley, Institute of Child Study, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
Toronto, Canada

Farrar, Straus and Giroux, August 2009

ARTICLES, BLOGS, AND OTHER MEDIA



A Deeper Look at a Key Role in Schools

Revitalize the Advising Program-Revitalize the School, by Stephen Valentine

Stephen Valentine, the assistant head of the Upper School at Montclair Kimberley Academy, has written a practical and inspiring article in this fall's Independent School, about how to jumpstart an existing advising program. Rather than a prescriptive description of the best kinds of advising programs, Valentine offers a reasonable framework and set of questions through which a school could study and improve its own advising system according to its particular mission, student body, and community. In tough economic times, advising is one of the aspects of school life that sets independent schools apart from public schools, and Valentine's observations have come at an opportune moment when many schools may need to call attention to what makes their schools unusually nurturing and student-centered communities. Valentine is a Klingenstein alum and has also just written a very practical and helpful book, *Everything by Teaching*.

Stephanie Lipkowitz, Albuquerque Academy, NM

Independent School, 2009



Is the Price of Standards Mere Standardization?

Debunking the Case for National Standards, by Alfie Kohn

In response to a growing trend of states climbing on board the national standards cruise ship (an issue highlighted in last month's Brief) Alfie Kohn takes a predictable but powerful stance. In an acerbic and passionate commentary, Kohn tries to demonstrate how standards are confused with standardization, that international statistics do not bear out proof of standards' efficacy, that such standards inevitably degrade teaching and learning because they are designed by power-brokers remote from the concerns of educators and children. Kohn fans and skeptics alike will appreciate this perspective on a long discussed issue that may now really gain traction.

Peter Herzberg, Brearley School, NY

Education Week, 2010



Game Theory Goes to School

Using Games to Enhance Student Achievement, by Robert J. Marzano

Students are captivated by games on their computers and cell phones but less frequently in their classrooms. Marzano's research documents that academic games have the potential to increase student achievement but only when teachers use them purposely and thoughtfully. Incorporating four practices in the use of games has been found to increase learning: rewards of winning have low stakes -- the intent is fun and not part of a grade; the content is academic -- most efficiently organized around terms and phrases; the debrief following the game is "the lesson;" and students are given time to revise their notes immediately afterwards to incorporate what they learned. This article helps to apply pre-existing research on game theory (some of which is Marzano's own work) and its potential in education to a useful, pedagogical framework. These guidelines would enhance the use of games in any classroom kindergarten through high school.

Pearl Rock Kane, Klingenstein Center, NY

Educational Leadership, February 2010, pp.71-72



The Chinese Language Bandwagon: A Critique

Foreign Languages Fade in Class - Except Chinese

Will Americans Really Learn Chinese?

This *New York Times* article details the rapid growth of Chinese language instruction in school curriculum at a time when teaching foreign languages other than Spanish has dramatically decreased. While this growth has been relatively rapid over the last decade, the overall adoption of Chinese language courses in America's middle and high schools has grown from one percent to a still-modest four percent. The article also details the efforts of the Chinese government to subsidize the salary of Mandarin "guest teachers" in American Schools, and ascribes the rising interest in Chinese to a universal recognition of China's emergence as an economic superpower and the belief that fluency in Mandarin will open opportunities for students.

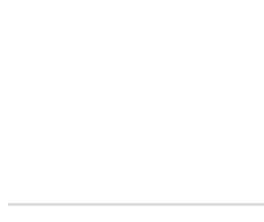
This article is the impetus for a "Room for Debate" blog that poses the question: *Will Americans Really Learn Chinese?* Over the last three decades we have seen similar pushes for American schools to teach Russian, Japanese, and Arabic, and each of these initiatives have faded away. Why is this time different?

The resulting essays are important reading for educators who are working towards creating "global citizens" as they speak to some fundamental aspects of the American psyche that must be acknowledged and addressed if we are truly going to move this work forward.

Chris Lauricella, The Park School, NY

The New York Times Article & Blog, January 20 and February 7, 2010

BOOKS



Got Hope?

Sowing the Seeds of Character: The Moral Education of Adolescents in Public and Private Schools, by Judd Kruger Levingston

In an era of standards and demoralizing statistics, *Sowing the Seeds of Character* is a thoughtful and serious reflection on those qualitative, interpersonal, environmental factors that are so often overlooked in self-studies and assessments. Drawing on his own diverse experience as an educator, Levingston collects data on intangibles - impressions of entering a school and the relationships that exist, observations of teaching styles and the ways teachers empower their students to engage difficult questions, and even-handed comparisons of individual and collective approaches to the question of identity - to discern where and how moral education is happening in schools. Weaving observations together, Levingston, a Klingenstein Center alumnus, offers a profound glimpse of the hidden curricula that shape schools. While the author develops new categories to describe schools' approaches to moral education and makes an original and compelling pitch to revisit the role of "play" in developing character, the book's most valuable contribution is its modeling of substantive, hope-filled reflection on what it means to shape students not only as academics or members of a community but as citizens of an increasingly pluralistic world.

Bill Hulseman, Ed.M candidate, Teachers College, Columbia University, NY

Praeger, 2009



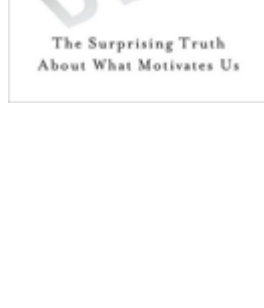
Stasis and Relevancy in Higher Education

The Marketplace of Ideas: Reform and Resistance in the American University, by Louis Menand

Contending that the American university system has evolved very little structurally since the First World War, the Pulitzer Prize-winning Harvard English professor and *New Yorker* writer, Louis Menand, examines the extent to which liberal education is achieving its aims. He writes, "The academic's job in a free society is to serve the public culture by asking the questions the public does not want to ask, by investigating the subjects it cannot or will not investigate, by accommodating the voices it fails or refuses to accommodate." And, it must do these things while being relevant. According to Menand, for academics to be pertinent today, colleges and universities must engage with the broader culture and design its research in view of actual social and cultural life. As he shows again with this book, Menand leads his life with one foot in the academy and one foot out of it, thereby reinforcing the work of the other. It is always useful for independent school leaders to stay current on the state of higher education. There cannot be a better sherpa than Menand with whom to climb the Ivory tower.

Duncan Lyon, Bentley School, CA

W.W. Norton & Company, 2010



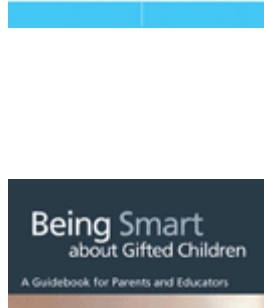
Toss out the Carrots and the Sticks

DRiVE: The Surprising Truth about What Motivates Us, by Daniel Pink

Autonomy, mastery and purpose are three words that pack a lot of punch in Pink's new book. He upends the twentieth century notion of carrot and stick to explore how we are motivated these days in the workplace and in schools. We need a sense of relevance. While the first intended audience of this book is business, the relevance for education is unmistakable. This book has so many implications for independent schools where the traditional purpose of education still lingers: to acquire a body of knowledge and a skill set that would define one as "educated." Of the three concepts, autonomy, mastery and purpose, autonomy is the one that could substantially change the way of doing business in schools. While we have always had "autonomy of curriculum," (some would call it personality-driven curriculum with excess autonomy), the autonomy to which Pink refers is different; he would like business (and by extension, schools) to look at how they create job flexibility for faculty and staff; how they allow for the dueling needs of employees (teachers and students) to be met in such a way that the ultimate productivity is possible: job shares, flexible hours, collaborative and iterative work, telecommuting and working from home or the road. As school leaders, what would it be like to define autonomy for our faculty, staff or students? Pink keeps us on our toes as we rethink what we offer our students, our workplace and our world.

Kathleen McNamara, Marin Country Day School, CA

Riverhead Books, Penguin Publishing 2009



More Open Secrets from Robert Evans

Seven Secrets of the Savvy School Leader: A Guide to Surviving and Thriving, by Robert Evans

Many read *When You Go to See the Wizard, Take Toto* as it appeared in *Independent School, Spring 2009*. That article was the first installment of Evans' new book, published this month by Jossey-Bass. With his usual practical approach using theory, anecdote, and humor, Rob Evans offers seven (not so secret) principles. In short, they are: beware of false prophets and promises; it's not fair to expect others to understand; help those who are to implement change move from loss to commitment; combine reach and realism with clarity and focus; leverage your strengths and use your power; foster authentic recognition, both top-down and lateral; and care for self in order to care for others. Heads and other leaders will find this a helpful and affirming read.

Claudia M. Daggett, Elementary School Heads Association (ESHA), MA

Jossey-Bass, February 2010



Addressing More Myths about Gifted Learners

Being Smart about Gifted Education: A Guidebook for Educators and Parents, by Dona Matthews and Joanne Foster

This book works on many levels to address giftedness and how educators' attitudes can support gifted-level achievement. The authors use Carol Dweck's *Mindsets* work to situate, and to challenge, traditional approaches to gifted education by exploring contemporary, research-based alternatives. Matthews and Foster see the belief that intelligence is "innate, unchanging and stable - a view that has long characterized educational theory - as what Dweck calls a "fixed mindset". The authors support adopting Dweck's "growth mindset" model as a more accurate way of seeing intellectual capacity. They make the case that one IQ test, or the label that follows it, does not a lifetime of giftedness make. Rather, they see intelligence as something that develops over time, and in specific domains, enhanced by scaffolded opportunities to learn. The myths about giftedness, often probed by parents anxious to maximize their child's experience are all here, but are set into a growth context which suggests that persistence, effort, hard work and engagement are all vital factors for high achievement and that these can be supported and taught. This is the book to reach for if parents are asking about how a school's program meets the needs of the gifted. It is a resource for thinking differently about giftedness and a welcome and scholarly contribution to the literature on high achievement.

Elizabeth Morley, Institute of Child Study, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Toronto, Canada

Great Potential Press, 2009

To submit comments or suggestions, or to request that the newsletter be sent to a colleague, contact Adele Tonge, Communications Manager at klingbrief@tc.columbia.edu.

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