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[A Taxonomy with Direct Impact on Practice](#)

Teach Like a Champion: 49 Techniques That Put Students on the Path to College, by Doug Lemov

To make engaged classroom participation an expectation, use cold call, one of the 49 techniques author Doug Lemov advocates in this extraordinary collection of practical approaches to increase student learning. Lemov, who started as an independent school teacher, has spent most of his career teaching and leading in the Uncommon Schools charter network that predominantly serves children who grow up in poverty. His passion is studying the techniques of teachers who get remarkable results in working with these students. Through meticulous observation and assessment, Lemov has succeeded in isolating practices that lead to increased academic achievement. The outcome of his studies is a taxonomy of well-described practices documented in a DVD of 30 second video clips that come with the book. The techniques hold the promise of increasing learning for all students. Lemov was featured in an article in the [New York Times Magazine](#) described in last month's issue of Klingbrief.

Pearl Rock Kane, Klingenstein Center, NY

Jossey-Bass, 2010

ARTICLES, BLOGS, AND OTHER MEDIA



[21st Century Skills: A Fad by Any Other Name?](#)

The Most Daring Education Reform of All, by Diane Senechal

In this quietly passionate and eloquently argued article in the April 2010 *American Educator*, Diane Senechal writes an incisive critique of the "21st century" skills movement that has taken hold in current educational circles. In their rush to throw out the whole of traditional schooling, many of these adherents have much in common with earlier reform movements which have not sought to conserve the best of the American liberal arts tradition. Senechal sees the similarities between the sometimes faddish reform initiatives over the last one hundred years and the 21st century skills movement. She points out that many of these have faded from view and never really made a significant impact on the ways we do school. Senechal makes a compelling case for the need for schools to sometimes be "out of step" with their times so that educators can ensure that in their efforts to keep up with technology, to embrace innovation, and to cope with massive and unrelenting change, they don't lose sight of the content and traditional ways of learning and teaching that are the bedrock of our best secondary schools and universities. A blend of thoughtful innovation and conservation of the best of past practices may actually be the "most daring education reform of all."

Stephanie Lipkowitz, Albuquerque Academy, NM

American Educator, April 2010



[A Rich Resource for Teaching and Discussing Ethics](#)

In Character: A Journal of Everyday Virtues
Boardroom Lions, Humble Hounds, and Servant Leaders

After a run of more than six years in print, *In Character: A Journal of Everyday Virtues* is going online. Previously, the journal had been published quarterly, devoting entire issues to core virtues or character traits such as courage, compassion, wisdom, and justice. Their new online format enables the publication to keep more current and topical, for the website is more interactive, with new material being posted weekly. The site offers feature articles, reviews, several blogs, and pro/con debates on a range of what the editors call Big Questions.

Columnist David Brooks cited a piece from their latest issue "on humility" in a recent [New York Times Op-Ed](#). In *Character's* quick response to the (early April) David Brooks column highlights the advantages and timeliness of the online format. Brooks's piece has already prompted an interesting new post from *In Character's* editor, Charlotte Hays, on types of leadership. (see site, above) Such postings also invite reader comments. Tracking this continuing virtual conversation on exemplary leadership and ethics may offer a valuable teaching tool as well as a resource for school leadership, since independent schools share so many of the questions addressed in this journal.

Mike Pardee, The Kinkaid School, TX

The John Templeton Foundation



[A Fork in the Road](#)

Education: The Case for Making it Personal, by Ron Wolk
National Education Standards: To Be or Not to Be, by Paul E. Barton
Are National Standards the Right Move, by Deborah Meier, William H. Schmidt, Chester E. Finn Jr., Phil Schlechty

[Common Core Standards Initiative](#)

The theme of the April issue of *Educational Leadership* is "Reimagining School," and the three articles above provide the reader with a real sense of a philosophical "fork in the road" regarding educational reform. Ron Wolk argues for school reform that seeks to personalize learning as a way of closing achievement gaps, rather than using high stakes standards, assessments, and accountability. He highlights three school's different approaches to personalization, and argues that this approach to education shapes every aspect of a school's culture and meets the "enormous diversity of today's students." These approaches will be very recognizable to most independent school educators. Paul Barton's article documents the country's long flirtation with national standards, and lays out both the perceived strengths and weaknesses of such a program as a means of reform. Sidebar articles from the five policy - level educators listed above provide a glimpse of the politics and practices of implementing curricular standards. For those interested in learning more about the proposed national standards, the CCSI website provides the standards in depth. Independent school educators may want to take interest in this to be aware of what may become national curriculum standards.

Chris Lauricella, The Park School, NY

Educational Leadership, April 2010



[Teenage Literacy](#)

I Was a Teenage Illiterate, by Cathleen Schine

The essay in which author Cathleen Schine tells her readers that she came late...some would say very late... to an appreciation of great literature is an inspiration for those of us who wonder what the impact of teenage reading experiences will be. She reminds us of Italo Calvino's assertion in *Why Read the Classics?* that a work read at a young age and forgotten "leaves its seed in us." Though Schine's definition of an illiterate is not everyone's - she calls herself a "a literally inclined illiterate"- her lack of interest in or appreciation of the full canon of available literature shifts in her twenties. This essay, and her successful writing career, are a call to reflection for high school English teachers and for anyone who seeks the deepest definition of literacy.

Elizabeth Morley, Institute of Child Study Laboratory School
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
University of Toronto

The New York Times, February 26, 2010



[Extending the Boundaries of the College Application](#)

Video Essays Play as Auditions for College, by Ian Quillen

In this recent *Education Week* article, easily overlooked as a side note, the writer describes the arguments for and against making video self-portraits a part of the college application process. Do such video portraits give an unfair advantage to the tech and performance savvy or do those submissions offer applicants an opportunity to use a tool organic to anyone under a certain age and/or to those who don't come across as well in other media? Given the prevalence and synergy between social and video media, the reader of this piece is left asking whether the time has come to "mix it up" in the application process, adding to test scores and the ubiquitous essay the more time-consuming but revealing autobiographical video portrait.

Peter Herzberg, Brearley School, NY

Education Week, April 2010

[Why Does Educational Research Get Little Traction?](#)

Meeting Teachers Half Way: Making Educational Research Relevant to Teachers, by Shazia Rafiullah Miller, Karen Drill, and Ellen Behrstock

Although readers of Klingbrief may have to purchase this brief article from Kappan - it is only available in an abstract - this research done in Chicago area schools seeks to show why educational research does not communicate well across a divide. Teachers want research that is contextual, relevant, local, and time-friendly, and they find what they need from trusted colleagues, from accessible sources, and because a finding addresses an urgent, time sensitive struggle in a classroom. If researchers have a "build it and they will come" attitude, they will undermine the very purpose for which they do research. In other words, those who do research will have to account for the factors that induce interest, context that may seem limiting in scope and less innately exciting.

Peter Herzberg, Brearley School, NY

Phi Delta Kappan, Vol. 91, No. 7 (April 2010); also by way of *The Marshall Report*, April, 2010

BOOKS



[To Stick or Not to Stick: Teaching so that Students Remember](#)

Made to Stick, by Chip and Dan Heath

Dan Heath was the keynote speaker at last year's NAIS conference, at which he discussed the book he wrote with his brother, Chip, called *Made to Stick: Why some ideas survive and others die*. It is a fascinating read that should be of particular interest to educators since so many of us are in the business of trying to help ideas and skills "stick" in the minds of students in a world which often attacks the memory with clutter. The authors give teachers a new lens through which to present material and offer helpful examples of their principles at work. The style is witty, colloquial, and often narrative-written with the general public in mind as opposed to a text geared solely to the practitioner.

John (Muddy) Waters, The Pike School, MA

Random House, 2007



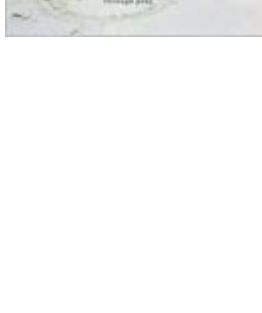
[Ways To Ruin or Inspire Children](#)

The Genius in All of Us, David Shenk

The title has the feel of a publisher's bright idea to garner more attention on the self-help shelves at Barnes and Noble, but the book needs no such puffery. Shenk has written a book that broadens Dweck's ideas of malleable intelligence and deepens Gladwell's take on what it takes to be successful in *Outliers*. Shenk's argument is that it's wrong to think that environmental influences are the icing on top of whatever genetic gifts and deficits children inherit. Instead, we should think of the genes as being the base material that the environment and force of will can mold as it wants. In short he writes, it's not nature + nurture, it's nature x nurture. This is, of course, a message of hope for any teacher: the children in our care are more than the sum of their parents' DNA. It's a forceful rebuttal to Murray's The Bell Curve, but also a challenge: if the environment does make a significant difference in how a child develops, what are we doing about it? There are interesting chapters on identical twins (actually they don't turn out the same), ethnicity and sports (we do what our culture values), and four ways to "ruin (or inspire)" a child all interwoven with anecdotes and discussions of studies. The book is structured by offering 129 pages of argument followed by 138 pages of evidence. A flawed structure, perhaps, but if that separation is what it takes to popularize this rethinking of the nature/nurture paradigm then it is worth living with.

Ben Chant, Berkeley Carroll School, NY

Doubleday Press, 2010



[The Genius of Children at Play](#)

The Boy on the Beach, by Vivian Paley
The Classrooms All Young Children Need, by Patricia Cooper

Two new books bring us the welcome voice and the inspiration of Vivian Paley, a teacher's teacher, and long time advocate for listening and observing deeply to truly learn from the children we teach. Paley's most recent book, published this year, continues and extends her 50 year exploration of young children's play, teaching us that the fantasy world of early childhood contains all the questions and many of the answers about what they are thinking, feeling, creating, and learning. Paley's shaping work from her classroom at the University of Chicago's Laboratory School kindergarten is well known through her foundational books including *Wally's Stories*, *You Can't Say You Can't Play* and *White Teacher*. Now she brings us *The Boy on The Beach*, which follows two children through their kindergarten year, capturing a rich tribute to the imagination, language, and genius of children at play. New York University Professor Patricia Cooper's new book, *The Classrooms All Young Children Need: Lessons in Teaching from Vivian Paley* is a helpful companion to Paley's own writing. Cooper's is a comprehensive analysis of Paley's work, identifying two complementary principles in Paley's thinking: a curriculum that promotes play, and the concept of classrooms as safe, fair places for children of all dispositions, races, colors and learning styles. With reduction of time for play in early childhood classrooms under continual debate, this book adds an academic exploration of one unforgettable voice that has made a difference to children and their teachers across time and culture.

Elizabeth Morley, Institute of Child Study Laboratory School
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
University of Toronto

University of Chicago Press, 2010, 2009, respectively

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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