

OF NOTE

[Beyond the Frenetic: Being Deliberate and Sensible About Child Development](#)

*Red Flags or Red Herrings? Predicting Who Your Child Will Become, by Susan Engel*

Your office door opens to parents who have experienced a crisis of confidence in their child's performance, ability to make friends or show her intelligence. As a Head or teacher, you are eager to support the parents to adopt a calmer, more informed, more realistic and compassionate view. You would like to help the parents discern when a child's behaviors and proclivities are truly red flags calling for further exploration and when these are red herrings, pulling attention away from the strengths of the growing child who is developing within the normal range, albeit in ways a parent may not recognize or have anticipated. This is a book to address the rollercoaster of parental anxiety by providing information and children's life stories. Its title is catchy and accurate. Its subtitle is somewhat unfulfilled, since predicting who your child will become is less the message of the book than accepting who your child is becoming. The book reassures us that we may not be able to change children - and may be misguided in our attempts to do so - but we can change their path through acceptance and awareness of when and how to respond to the red flags and how to sidestep the red herrings.

Elizabeth Morley, Dr. Eric Jackman Institute, University of Toronto, CA

Simon and Schuster, 2011

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ARTICLES, BLOGS, AND OTHER MEDIA



[PD Credits for Tweeting?](#)

*Twitter "Saturday School" for Teachers, Michel Martin, Host*

Every Saturday morning, over two hundred educators from around the world join a moderated Twitter conversation called #satchat. Created by two New Jersey administrators, Scott Rocco and Brad Currie, #satchat unites educators as far afield as Australia, Thailand, and Hong Kong. Discussions cover everything from global leadership to school safety. Though the NPR piece itself isn't mind-bending, it effectively champions Twitter as an environment for effective Professional Development. But tweets are too short to prompt any depth, critics might say, but their very concision becomes their virtue in moderated online spaces; they can link interested observers to in-depth resources; and they can lead to tangible progress offline. Rocco's districts used Twitter to promote transparency as a committee tried to make a decision about classroom observations. Rocco himself learned about QR codes on Twitter, shaping his future interactions with potential hires. One #satchat tweet from Alberta, Canada, sums up some people's experience with the moderated chat, and more generally, Twitter itself: the participant learned more on Twitter in a year and a half than he had in his entire career.

Stephen J. Valentine, Montclair Kimberley Academy, NJ

2012 National Public Radio, October 23, 2012



[A Triad of Evaluation Pros Weigh In](#)

*Teacher Evaluation: What's Fair? What's Effective?, by multiple authors*

The issue is available for \$7.00 (800.933.2723). Article abstracts are available at <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/current-issue.aspx>

Most independent school teachers agree that they should be evaluated, but finding a teacher evaluation system that is fair, practical and leads to improvement is a challenge. The authors in this issue of *Education Leadership*, the nation's leading thinkers on teacher evaluation, point to design flaws in conventional teacher evaluation that rely on a once a year classroom observation; they offer different approaches to evaluation that warrant consideration. Marshall's measures include brief unannounced classroom visits followed by prompt feedback, measures of student achievement gains on assessments chosen by teaching teams and student feedback on carefully constructed surveys. Danielson argues that, to start, each school must develop a clear and accepted definition of good teaching so that observers know what to look for and teachers know how they are to be evaluated. Danielson provides a research based and empirically validated instrument for assessing teachers on factors that predict higher levels of student learning, including classroom observations, since classroom performance is the heart of the matter. Paul Bambrick-Santoya advocates an ongoing coaching model reliant on concrete actions to improve student learning. This structured approach is based on short, weekly classroom visits and weekly goal oriented coaching sessions. The authors agree that teaching improves when teachers are clear about steps they must take to improve their practice.

Pearl Rock Kane, The Klingenstein Center, NY

Education Leadership, November 2012 (ASCD)



[Antidotes to a World of GPS and Fearful Reckoning](#)

*Single Handing it: Finding Our Way in An Age of Fear, by Stuart Grauer*

In this ruminative essay, the writer, author of a new book, *Real Teachers* (due out this January and from which this chapter is excerpted) uses the analogy of sailing to explore teaching in an age of fear. In this mixed genre narrative, which combines a good sea yarn with researched allusion and analysis of teaching's challenges, Grauer disaggregates a set of sailing skills to show how specific characteristics of our era hinder our capacity to teach students to apply discrete skills in an unpredictable world. Is multi-tasking really better than "single handling"? What about perseverance, and the charting and tracking of intentions ("dead reckoning," in sailing lingo)? What about peripheral vision and broad perspective? We have all read, discussed, and traded such concerns in recent years, and the ideas are not new. But this writer finds a particularly compelling way through story-telling and analogy to amalgamate these concerns and in so doing build a rich critique of how education responds to the more constrained and pinched outlook of the current era. His writing may also reflect his work as the leader of The Coalition of Small Preparatory Schools ([http://smallschoolscoalition.com/?page\\_id=611](http://smallschoolscoalition.com/?page_id=611)). How many teachers, he asks at one point-not quite tongue in cheek-will be willing to risk their jobs to have a single, great, openhearted conversation? How many will reply affirmatively?

Peter Herzberg, The Brearley School, New York

Community Works Journal, The Community Works Institute, November, 2012



[The Diversity Issue Least Traveled: Interfaith Dialogue](#)

*The Holiness of Common Ground, by Eboo Patel, an interfaith talk to the College of St. Scholastica*

In this captivating talk at the College of St. Scholastica, Eboo Patel, a national leader on interfaith collaboration and founder of the Interfaith Youth Core, and one of President Obama's advisors, discusses how cooperation among faiths rather than suspicion and misinformation can form a more perfect union. In his skilled way of uniting an audience around the experience of the common human condition, Patel stresses the relationship between interfaith collaboration and pluralism. Interfaith literacy is essential to our understanding of diversity in our increasingly pluralistic nation. Teaching students how to engage in interfaith dialogue is an important skill that educators do not reinforce enough. Patel advocates raising our future students as leaders of a fiercely pluralistic country, people who will understand what it means to cooperate with others. He alludes to stories of exceptional leaders from American history that we can learn from, as well as moments in our history when the forces of prejudice almost -but did not- win the day. More information and resources for educators, including an interfaith literacy quiz, can be found at <http://www.ifyc.org/>.

Sheila Kanchwala, Ed.M. Candidate

The Klingenstein Center, Teachers College, Columbia University, NY

College of St. Scholastica website, 2012



[A Less Emotional Way to Consider Affirmative Action](#)

*A College Counselor's View of Affirmative Action, by Rafael S. Figueroa*

As the country waits to hear the decision of the Roberts' court with regard to the legality of Affirmative Action in college admission, a recent article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, offers a clear and incisive description of how affirmative action actually works, and does not work, in that process. Rafael Figueroa, writing as a guest contributor, offers a framework for understanding that affirmative action is not about repairing wrongs from the past nor is it giving advantages to the disadvantaged; rather, it is about seeing each applicant as a complete individual with all kinds of special characteristics and talents, including race and ethnicity, that will help an admission officer see that applicant fully and build a diverse and vibrant class within which all members of the community will thrive. Given how emotionally charged any discussion of race, especially in college admission, can be, and how easy it is to oversimplify the various arguments for and against, Figueroa's clarity and sensible insight will be helpful to students, parents and teachers as they seek to educate themselves to have more nuanced and reasoned points of view.

Stephanie Lipkowitz, Albuquerque Academy, NM

The Chronicle of Higher Education, October 9, 2012



[Malleable IQ? A Reconsideration.](#)

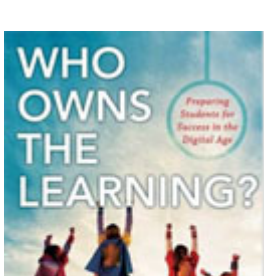
*The Brain Trainers, by Dan Hurley*

In Mr. Hurley's provocative dip into the cognitive science industry, the author asks many questions about whether intelligence can truly be changed through practice and how we can trust the claims that "smarts" can be taught. By highlighting some of the work of these companies, as well as noting the lack of large controlled studies to ascertain the efficacy of that work, the author demonstrates that educators are left with more questions than answers when confronted with the classic question of whether IQ is malleable. From the exercises described in the article, it is difficult to tell if increased performance is a result of effort - as detailed in the work of Dweck and others - or the result of teaching students how to think. The topic is central to the work we do in schools as we seek to balance mastery of content with cognitive skills. Hurley's article reminds us that the jury is still out, even though the marketing and financial backing for cognitive skill improvement companies have already left the station.

Eric Temple, Lick-Wilmerding High School, CA

The New York Times, November 4, 2012

BOOKS



[Why Teaching is More Important than Technology](#)

*Who Owns the Learning: Preparing Students for Success in the Digital Age?, by Alan November*

When educators discuss technology, they often focus on what technology to choose. Alan November is not interested in what. He is interested in how. To him, the device is not as important as the pedagogy. In his latest book, *Who Owns the Learning: Preparing Students for Success in the Digital Age* (Solution Tree Press 2012), he expands on his 2008 article, "The Digital Learning Farm," and explores how a student-centered approach to technology integration is more effective. Specifically, November differentiates between the traditional classroom and the digital farm model while advocating that students take on four different role: tutorial designer, scribe, researcher, and global communicator/collaborator. November builds on the work of Daniel Pink and argues that in each of these roles students find true intrinsic motivation. Once inspired in these roles, students can use technology to accomplish more than expected and share those accomplishments with others around the globe. In addition to the powerful accounts of student success, November also includes technical guidance that can help teachers take the first steps to enhance their use of any device. Throughout the book, November displays that his faith in technology is complemented by his deeper faith in teaching.

Josh Cobb, Graland Country Day School, CO

Solution Tree Press, 2012



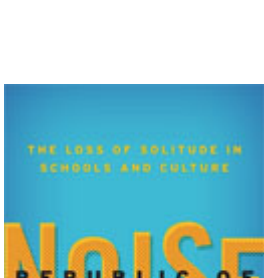
[Tagging Exemplars of Innovation](#)

*Creating Innovators: The Making of Young People Who Will Change the World, by Tony Wagner*

Play, passion, and purpose - these are the three elements that Wagner states are integral to learning how to innovate. Analyzing patterns in educational experiences from young people who have made important changes to the world, this book leaves the reader with questions about the nature of teachers' relationships to their students as well as their institutions. It is not that we haven't read numerous articles on the prerequisites of creative thinking in a post-manufacturing society. What Wagner adds to the discussion is a way of highlighting examples of teachers who work outside the proverbial box in order to inspire and cultivate innovation in their students. The question is: can there be more than small pockets of innovation in a school? What would happen if the fringe elements became the norm and moved to the center? As if to support its own claims, the text itself includes an innovation-tags that allow to reader a link to videos through the use of smart devices - rendering the book a truly multi-media experience and an active exemplar of its own argument.

Susan Matthews, Georgetown Day School, Washington, DC

Scribner (a division of Simon & Schuster), April 17, 2012



[A Modern Antigone Challenges Cultural Trends](#)

*Republic of Noise: The Loss of Solitude in Schools and Culture, by Diana Senechal*

Drawing upon her experience as a New York public school teacher, Senechal contemplates how current educational trends and practices stifle reflection. While students may enjoy using technology, she questions if students have time to reflect upon their discoveries. While teaching skills enables students to perform well on standardized tests, she questions whether the great works of literature are overlooked as a result. And while we seem addicted to staying connected all the time, she questions whether the loss of solitude will render us unable to confront ourselves. Not surprisingly, Senechal argues for a common literature curriculum, suggesting that such a curriculum lends itself to student reflection while also allowing for diversity of thought. To illustrate this, she uses her own experience teaching *Antigone* to ESL 8th graders. The difficulty of the text did not hinder student learning, but sparked passionate debate and fueled requests for additional essays. Like *Antigone*, Senechal invites us to join her in resisting easy and seductive norms. She argues that both productivity and reflection are important in the life of the individual and in the life of any community; students, too often pushed to produce without reflecting, should experience both in the classroom setting. Educators wondering about the extent to which schools should mirror our culture and the extent to which should schools counter our culture would enjoy this book.

Ashley Chandler, Ed. M Candidate

The Klingenstein Center, Teachers College, Columbia University, NY

Rowman & Littlefield, 2012

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