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### [Trials and Tribulations in a French Classroom](#)

*The Class, a film (dir. Laurent Cantet, Screenplay Laurent Cantet, Francois Begeaudeau, Sept. 2008; in French with English subtitles) Based on the novel Entre Les Murs by Francois Begeaudeau*

This Palme D'Or winner and Academy Award nominee in the foreign film category is squarely in the genre of film posing as documentary. The novelist upon whose experience the film is based stars as a beleaguered 8th grade teacher of a racially mixed, suburban Paris middle school in a neighborhood of immigrants. A glorious and riveting study of teaching, of the challenges of diversity and assimilation, of the conflict between empowering students and exerting authority, this is one of the most subtle and unsentimental films about teaching ever made. The fact that it is French and the challenges more akin to most American public schools makes it even more worth seeing for us—as a comparison of approaches to teaching and as a study of how the subtle “contracts” between teacher and student can go awry. Highly recommended as a catalyst for beginning or end of year meetings. The film should be released in video soon, but is still in theaters in most major cities. The Sony link will provide trailers, background, and reviews.

Peter Herzberg, Coordinating Editor, KlingBrief

## ARTICLES, BLOGS, AND OTHER MEDIA



### [An Important Conversation about Formative Assessment](#)

*Carnegie Conversations: Assessing How Students Learn, Bill Cerbin.*

Bill Cerbin, a University of Wisconsin professor and former Carnegie Scholar participating in the Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, is the author of the March 2009 Carnegie Perspectives. He makes the case for assessment, by and for teachers, that reveals how students learn, not only what they have learned. This is an invitation to observe deeply, to identify key differences in the way that successful students learn, and to get a close up view of students' thinking. Though he teaches at the college level, his article would be helpful to Heads and teachers at any level who want to go beyond scores when assessing learning. Readers are invited to join the conversation at Carnegie Conversations online.

Elizabeth Morley, Institute of Child Study Lab School, Ontario, Canada

March 5, 2009



### [A Stalwart Dilemma in Curriculum Reconsidered](#)

*Kaleidoscopic Learning: An Overview of Integrated Studies, Douglas Cruickshank*

From the George Lucas Foundation's Edutopia website comes this recent article overview in support of current theory and practice in interdisciplinary education—a longtime catchword in educational practice. Citing such advocates as Sir Ken Robinson and Heidi Jacobs, this relatively brief, catchy article is good as a quick review of current practice, with several good examples for those still struggling with the wherefores and how-to's of integrating curriculum. While it will not overwhelm veterans of the issue with new research, it will remind us that we are still struggling with a good rationale for integrating curriculum.

Peter Herzberg, Coordinating Editor, KlingBrief

October 2008



### [Steal These Rubrics! and Strengthen Your Toolkit](#)

*Authentic Assessment with Rubrics – some website recommendations*

- 1) <http://www.uwstout.edu/soe/profdev/rubrics.shtml>
- 2) [http://teach-nology.com/web\\_tools/rubrics/rubricoutline.html](http://teach-nology.com/web_tools/rubrics/rubricoutline.html)

It is currently considered best practice to identify and share learning goals with students. Assuming we know something about backward, the question becomes how do we know when learning has occurred and evaluate the learning accordingly? Establishing and measuring these elements can be accomplished with well designed rubrics that make students aware of the important elements of the learning and the range of expertise to fully master it. Consequently, there is less tension about the mystery of mastery. The parameters can easily encompass both intellectual curiosity and creativity. This contributor's favorites include:

- 1) Sponsored by the University of Wisconsin School of Education—free with registration. A very handy site with a rubric generator. (Includes: Teamwork Rubric for Cooperative Learning, Research Process/Report, PowerPoint/Podcast, Oral Presentation, Web Page and ePortfolio, Math, Art, Science, Video and Multimedia Project).
- 2) Rubistar by 4Teachers.org has some free examples and an annual subscription (\$29.99 or so) for unlimited rubrics, worksheets... a treasure trove. Topics include: Oral Projects, Products such as brochures, games, maps, posters, Multimedia, Science, Research & Writing and Work Skills

Carol Ann O'Connor, The Park School, OR



### [An Elder from the Pre-digital World Meditates on his Digital Native Students](#)

*Dwelling in Possibilities, Mark Edmundson, The Chronicle Review, March 14, 2008*

This article is a moving meditation on the challenges of teaching students who are “digital natives” and who see the world and its possibilities much differently than their teachers who grew up without the internet, the cell phone, and the infinite possibilities offered by various media. The author also frames the aims of a liberal arts education in a post 9/11 world in a new and inspiring way. Edmundson, a professor at the University of Virginia who has published a book on Sigmund Freud, admires his students and their new ways of seeing the world (though he is concerned by their vulnerability) but also reminds teachers of how vital our roles are as advisers and presenters of ideas that pose alternatives to the mediated world in which our students live.

Stephanie Lipkowitz, Albuquerque Academy, NM

The Chronicle Review, March 14, 2008



### [New Choices for Transgender Students](#)

*A Boy's Life in The Atlantic Monthly, Hanna Rosen*

This contributor's school is seeking to find good ways to accommodate the needs of its first transgender student. In uncharted territory, the school is seeking to educate itself quickly. This article is helpful in laying out in poignant detail the decisions faced by parents who now have medical options available to their transgender children before they even reach puberty. This extensive article, both anecdotal and well researched, gives a fair hearing to both sides of the scientific debate about the nature of gender and provides unusual scope to an issue that is often on the sidelines.

Stephanie Lipkowitz, Albuquerque Academy, NM

November 2008



### [In Memoriam: Sleep and Memory](#)

*A deficit in the ability to form new human memories without sleep  
 Seung-Schik Yoo, Peter Hu, Ninad Gujar, Ferenc Jolesz & Matthew Walker*

Although this article is two years old, given the ongoing debate about how we are scheduling our youth, the research remains timely. It is a commonly held understanding that sleep deprivation produces many adverse effects such as a delayed reaction, irritability and loss of recall of prior learning. While research has looked at the effects of sleep deprivation on the recall of prior learning, little has been done to look at the effects of sleep deprivation on future learning. The authors found that a single night of sleep deprivation results in a lower retention and recall of new information presented the following day (an almost 20% decrease in performance)—which puts many of our adolescents at a serious disadvantage in the classroom, on the playing field, and/or in an extracurricular activity. The link will whet the appetite by leading to a more scientific abstract, but the whole article must be purchased or found in a library. Those of you craving some authentic science data (and language) to support a change in school schedules will find this useful.

Ara Carlos Brown, The Williston Northampton School MA

Nature, Vol. 10, No. 3, March, 2007

## BOOKS



### [Coming to Terms with the Social Network Revolution](#)

*Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing Without Organizations, Clay Shirky.*

Shirky, a writer and expert on telecommunications and social networks who teaches at NYU, is fascinated by social networking technologies, but he doesn't get bogged down explaining what the programs do. Instead, he provides an accessible chronicle of this social revolution and he explores the principles behind the software that induce success or failure. Shirky's background straddles the arts, writing and technology, and he illustrates his points with one accessible story after another: from flash mobs to Flickr. The book will spark ideas about professional development, school hierarchies, and institutional advancement. Most importantly it connects what at first might seem alien (to a generation raised on books) to previous innovations and technologies.

Benedict Chant, The Berkeley Carroll School, NY

The Penguin Press, 2008, ISBN 978-1-59420-153-0.



### [What Can We Learn from a Study of Excellent Teachers in Higher Education?](#)

*What the Best College Teachers Do, Ken Bain.*

As Director of the Center for Teaching Excellence at NYU, Ken Bain has devoted more than fifteen years to examining the practices and thinking of hundreds of college professors. Choosing nearly three dozen among this group, each of whom had been recognized by students over many years as inspirational, motivating, and passionate about teaching and learning, Bain presents a concise primer on the qualities of teaching excellence across disciplines and in a variety of university settings. If one were to read only the chapter, “What Do They Expect of Their Students?” it would enable the reader to enter his or her classroom with a changed set of priorities. Excellent teaching, according to Bain, begins and ends with wonder. This book may help contribute to a long overdue dialogue about teaching between secondary and higher education.

Peter Schmidt, Gill St. Bernard's School, NJ

Harvard University Press, 2004 ISBN 0-674-01235-5



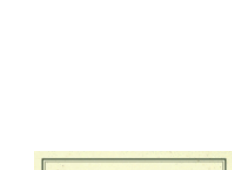
### [From the Rice Paddy to Your Classroom](#)

*Rice Paddies and Math Tests, in Outliers: Malcolm Gladwell.*

This chapter in Gladwell's 2008 book gathers information on why Asians seem to succeed so readily in math and posits a theory about it. The engaging style is no surprise to Gladwell readers and while you are inside this book, you will weave your way through ideas about opportunity and luck, nature and nurture, The Beatles and Bill Gates. The collection of facts, research and opinion stimulate thinking—even if one cannot wholly accept Gladwell's premise about the link between rice paddies and math success—making this one of the most challenging yet intriguing chapters in the book. The website noted is a link to an interview with Gladwell on the text.

Elizabeth Morley, Principal, Institute of Child Study Lab School, Ontario, Canada

Little Brown and Company, November 2008



### [Strengthening the Connection: How Parents and Teachers Go Back to School](#)

*The Essential Conversation: What Parents and Teachers Can Learn from Each other, Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot.*

A self-described “token” student brought up in predominantly white schools, Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot recounts how her parents, whom she describes as “activists”, felt powerless at times within the confines of the school building. After interviewing dozens of teachers, she chooses the stories of ten of these teachers to tell in their own words how their experiences as students have informed their practice. Although five years old now, this book remains relevant as a reminder that when parents and teachers step into classrooms, they come with the experiences from their own schooling— a classic reminder of our need to empathize with parents, especially those with whom we don't share a common background. (For a cross-reference, note scenes with parents in The Class, our “of note” choice this month). In this era of financial stress, we may need to pay more attention to building these connections.

Adam Dube, Vail Mountain School, CO

Copyright 2004, Random House ISBN: 978-0-345-47580-0

*Correction:* The article by Robert Evans in last month's Klingbrief was originally published in the Elementary School Heads Association, not in Independent School Magazine as noted. It will appear in ISM in the fall of 2009.

To submit comments or suggestions, or to unsubscribe from this newsletter contact  
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