

OF NOTE

Algorithm's Invisible Hand

The Filter Bubble, by Eli Pariser

Customization is one of the most interesting and complex features of the social web. In this TED talk Eli Pariser summarizes his recently published book about how Google and Facebook filter information for us. The speaker/writer admonishes us to consider how we are being isolated by algorithms that give us the online information gatekeepers think we want. While our searches may yield results that appeal to us, the unintended consequence is that information that challenges or broadens our world view often remains hidden. To what degree and in what context are we teaching our students how information is managed and shaped on the internet? Are we helping them become savvy users of information and citizens capable of reaching beyond their own bubbles to uncomfortable and different points of view? Or have we simply accepted that we have little control over the information sent to us down the electronic pipeline as we sit comfortably googling away?

Charles Vergara, Ethical Culture Fieldston School, NY

TED Talks

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ARTICLES, BLOGS, AND OTHER MEDIA



How to Land Your Kid in Therapy

How to Land Your Kid in Therapy

Psychologist Lori Gottlieb adds this article to the growing conviction that parents' desires to protect their children from failure and to ensure a controlled, consistently pleasurable environment contributes to a distorted understanding of happiness. Children who are cloistered from the full range of human experience are oftentimes incapable of negotiating minor setbacks in their adult lives. Gottlieb identifies several examples from independent and other high performing schools to exemplify her point. She advocates the "good enough" approach to parenting, one that encompasses a more realistic set of expectations for both child and parents, allowing parents to raise children who feel a greater sense of control over their own destiny. Invoking the wisdom of Wendy Mogel, noted psychologist and parenting expert, Gottlieb reminds us "children are not our masterpieces." This is an excellent read for educators interested in the growing body of literature on the importance of learning from failure and mistakes.

Good Enough is not the Enemy of Great in Child Rearing

How to Land Your Kid in Therapy, by Lori Gottlieb

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Gina Siple, Buckley Country Day School, NY

The Atlantic Monthly, July/August 2011



Turning a Traditional Model

Lectures Are Homework in Schools Following Khan Academy Lead, by Sarah D. Sparks

Time-Shifting Instruction: flipped teaching and classrooms

The Flipped Classroom Model: A Full Picture

The flipped classroom model allows teachers to reverse the usual practice of using class time for lectures and homework for practice. Instead, teachers use videos of their own or that exist online to introduce or extend instruction as homework assignment, and class time for in-depth discussion and authentic learning projects. The method is getting press and gaining popularity thanks to the availability of free videos, YouTube, Khan Academy and support from foundations such as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation which funded the Los Angeles School District to test this approach. An advantage is that students are able to control the media to review misunderstood or unclear facets of assignments. Teachers can track students' progress by culling data about which videos and individual exercises students spend the most time watching and the length of time it takes student to correctly solve problems. Two subsequent articles, "Time-Shifting Instruction" and "The Flipped Classroom Model" provide further explanation and critiques of flipped methodology with examples and blogs that may enrich understanding. The model is still in its experimental stages and like all interventions teachers need training in using the model, particularly in how best to use the freed up classroom time.

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Pearl Rock Kane, Klingenstein Center, NY

Education Week, September 28, 2011

Technology with Intention, August 14, 2011

User Generated Education, June 13, 2011



The Fallacy of a Single Lens

The Danger of the Single Story, by Chimamanda Adichie

In this TED Talk, novelist Chimamanda Adichie provides a useful starting point for discussions around diversity, cultural assumptions, and literature. Our lives and our cultures are composed of many overlapping stories. Adichie tells the story of how she found her authentic cultural voice -- and warns that if we hear only a single story about another person or country, we risk a critical misunderstanding. Using examples such as the West's impression of Africa as a catastrophic place or readers' tendencies to judge a culture through the lens of a single novel, she encourages a pluralism of perspective. The talk doesn't assign blame or assumptions, but it puts the responsibility on individuals to understand the importance of *The Danger of the Single Story*. Such a concept can be a very useful way to talk about diversity without talking explicitly about diversity.

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Marcus Chang, Greenwich Country Day School, CT

TED Talks



The Homework Dilemma

The Trouble with Homework, by HabibYazdi and Javier Pabon

In this incisive article on homework, Annie Murphy Paul outlines new research that links certain pedagogical strategies to substantial gains in student learning and retention. The quantity of a student's homework is much less important than its quality, she argues; despite an increase in hours of homework in this country over the last three decades, American students remain stuck in the middle of international academic rankings. A new study, coming in the *Economics of Education Review*, indicates that homework in science, English, and history has "little to no impact" on test scores. Teachers should look to structure their homework assignments differently and with the following innovations in mind: "Spaced repetition," "retrieval practice," and "interleaving." The article is a terrific summary and explanation of the brain science behind these techniques and would be useful to both parents and teachers.

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Stephanie Lipkowitz, Albuquerque Academy, NM

New York Times, September, 2011



Independent School Veterans and a Social Media Website

Website: "edSocialMedia"

edSocialMedia, run by a group of mostly independent school veterans, is a website in which selected contributors post information relevant to the growing role of social media in the lives of teachers, administrators, and students. Since its inception in 2008, it has become a "destination for people writing and reading about the role of social media in education, particularly in independent schools and colleges." In addition to blog categories such as "Admission", "Best Practices", and "Podcasts", the site hosts general social media as well as Facebook "bootcamps," or workshops, around the country. Social media is an inevitable component of today's schools; students tweet about their school lives or learn about what's going on at other schools via Facebook. For those who are tasked with addressing the role of social media in their schools, as well as those who are interested in tracking the trends of this fascinating aspect of 21st century education, edSocialMedia is a central resource.

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Mark Schindler, Mercersburg Academy, PA

www.edsocialmedia.com

BOOKS



The Kinesthetics of Learning

Spark: The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and the Brain by John Ratey with Eric Hagerman

John Ratey, whose earlier work with Ned Hallowell did groundbreaking work on attention deficit, does an intriguing job of mixing anecdotes and hard science in this book about the value of exercise. In it he explores the impact of our assumption that we must take stress for granted, the fallout of our more sedentary lives, and the relation between physical activity and neurological development. Schools which reduce recess and PE to gain more time for "real academics" have it backward. He describes Naperville Central High School, west of Chicago, that swam against the tide by mandating more time for a PE program that emphasized fitness and in so doing documented the link between that decision and an amazing rise in the test scores of the students. Our children need to move in order to learn.

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Muddy Waters, The Pike School, MA

Little Brown and Company, 2008



The Composition of Grit

Willpower, by Roy F. Baumeister and John Tierney

If the "grit" scale is more predictive of performance than IQ, how can we make our students grittier? Calling "self-regulation failure" the major social pathology of our time, these authors make the case for the leading role that willpower plays in life at all ages. Through numerous research studies, Baumeister and Tierney offer a physiological explanation of self-regulation and delayed gratification (it's linked to glucose levels in the brain), and they provide chapter after chapter of practical suggestions to best employ our small reserves of mental energy and manage our emotions, cravings, and stressors. The authors shed new light on the key factors of performance that we often point out to our students: the importance of diet, sleep, rewards, goal setting, organization, community support, and the dangers of procrastination. *Willpower* is a treasure trove of key insights and good advice, and it's written in a Gladwell-esque style, making it a lively and entertaining read.

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[A link to Steven Pinker's review in the New York Times](#)

Mike Wilper, The Pacific Ridge School, Carlsbad CA

The Penguin Press, New York, 2011



Beyond Adolescent Stereotypes

The Good Teen, by Richard Lerner

Teens are often portrayed as unfailingly difficult to handle, with liabilities that rarely support family events and often work counter to school and home norms. They are often ridiculed on television sitcoms, news reports, and by a host of comedians from late night talk shows to daytime court hearing and call-in programs to media-psychologists. Tufts University Professor and expert in adolescent development, Richard Lerner, Ph.D., urges us to avoid the "deficit" model of adolescence, emphasizing reinforcement of the "five C's": competence, confidence, connection, character and caring." When these five characteristics are properly nurtured and blended, according to Lerner, a young person is more able to make a contribution to society, to school, to family, and to self. Beginning with a reference to two famous fictional teens, Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn, Lerner argues that teens are not merely immature or incomplete adults but partners in a quest for adulthood as well as an untapped resource. Our stereotypes prevent us from engaging them as fully as we should.

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F. Richard Marracino, Commonwealth-Parkville School, Puerto Rico

Random House/Three Rivers Press, 2008

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