



Prepared by Diane Tavenner

Think you might want to read this book?

Prepared could have just as accurately been titled, How Summit Public Schools Were Started. Diane Tavenner relays her journey to create a school (and then school system) where real-world problems, self-direction, reflection, and collaboration are the foundation of the learning experience. She is honest about the emotions, set-backs, and joys of the experience and as a result has produced a book that

would be helpful for anyone in the design phase of starting a new school or thinking about a major pivot for student learning.

What would Socrates ask?

- How many real-world projects should every high school graduate be expected to complete?
- What if your school reported out on persistence?
- In what ways do you ensure that student experiences are precisely at the student's area of proximal growth?
- What if your school identified universal skills for students and worked on those each and every year?
- What if "What would be best for our students?" was a problem solving mantra at your school?

Research

- Research has shown that when students learn through projects, they retain what they've learned for longer, and they understand it more deeply.
- The project approach doesn't compromise test scores, either; on high-stakes tests like the APs, PBL students perform as well as traditionally taught students – or better.
- Grades offer little in the way of objectivity, as two-thirds of teachers acknowledge their grading reflects progress, effort, and participation in class. Grades offer little consistency, as grading rigor varies from teacher to teacher and from school to school. And grades offer little in the way of specificity; most parents and some students don't know the reasoning behind a letter grade.
- Evidence clearly shows that when a person teaches someone else something, they gain greater mastery.
- The science of learning has consistently shown a correlation between kids' familiarity with a subject and their performance and skill.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends each family create a media-use plan that designates media-free times (such as dinner) and locations (such as bedrooms), as well as defining reasonable limits to use so sleep, exercise, and social activity aren't replaced by screen time.

Concepts

- Five Power Behaviors:
 1. Strategy-shifting
 2. Challenge-seeking
 3. Persistence
 4. Responding to setbacks
 5. Appropriate help-seeking
- Expeditions- students have opportunities to more deeply pursue what they really start to get excited about.
- The Summer Melt- a national phenomenon of what happens to as many as 40 percent of kids who graduate high school each year intending to start a four-year or community college in the fall, but who don't.

Quotes from the author

- "Since our goal at Summit is for kids to develop the skills and habits they need to be successful in life, our learning is designed to be focused on the real world every single day. Well-designed projects are the most effective learning approach to achieving this goal, so this is how we've organized everyday learning."
- "Projects begin with a problem, question, or challenge that is relevant to the student and his community and life. They end with the student performing a task that directly addresses the problem, answers the question, or meets the challenge. As the student moves toward a solution, he gets timely and actionable feedback, so he improves as he goes."
- "I find it ironic, because the purpose of standardized tests is to show how students perform and how prepared they are, and yet these tests get in the way of the best way to prepare them. Even more ironic is the fact that PBL kids do well on standardized tests."
- "Parents ground themselves in what is familiar, their own experience, and can often be heard saying, 'I turned out fine, so it must be okay for my child.' Even if they acknowledge their school experience was substandard in some way, they believe 'it built character.' That may be true. But if we can piece apart the nostalgia around football games and the bonding experience of commiserating with classmates about boredom in math class, what is there? It's difficult, if you're generally happy with your life, to think, 'What if my education had been better?'"
- By asking him to focus on his "ings," his mentor was helping David to figure out all of the little interests that are unique to him that ultimately add up to who he is and what he cares about, which can lead him to understanding the type of work that will be purposeful and meaningful to him.
- I never ask, "What do you want to be?" or "What is your favorite subject?" Rather, I ask, "What do you like doing?" "What parts of that do you like most?" And in the course of our conversation we come up with a list of what we call the "ing" words. In experience after experience, he has accumulated more and more "ings" and is beginning to see a pattern.

- Today, the idea of homework has given way to simply the learning each student needs to do in order to develop and master the skills and knowledge they need. It doesn't matter much where it's done.
- Why bother to learn things like historical dates, definitions of words, formulas, and grammar rules? Most of us spent a significant portion of our school years committing such information to memory, providing we knew it on tests, and then forgetting it soon thereafter. Do our kids need to do the same thing today? The answer is no. But knowledge still matters, a lot, and so they need to do something different.

Gateways to further learning

- [Summit Learning](#)

Referenced books with the potential to impact leading and learning in education

Author(s) Last Name	Title
Pink	<i>Drive</i>
Shapiro	<i>The New Childhood</i>

The applicability of this book to education is



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