



## ***Timeless Learning* by Ira Socol, Pam Moran & Chad Ratliff**

### **Think you might want to read this book?**

Socol, Moran, and Ratliff's book [\*Timeless Learning: How Imagination, Observation and Zero-Based Thinking Change Schools\*](#) takes a look at outdated American public schools and how they are currently failing students. The authors first push their readers to be better at seeing children. They then suggest processes designed to develop, support, and reinforce students' abilities and honor their voices and choices. Reinventing public schools (over a full range of socio-economic circumstances) through the implementation of innovative and proven practices (such as project-based learning, maker learning, student design learning, and digital learning etc.), they now see students who struggled in traditional classrooms exceeding expectations. Teachers model by co-planning and co-teaching, and are first and foremost relationship builders. School leaders and educators wishing to create change will appreciate this book for inspiration and for ideas on how and where to start.

### **What would Socrates ask?**

- What if we had the will to challenge educational assumptions that have existed for decades?
- What are the implications of abandoning national and state control of education and localizing curriculum and assessment in a school?
- How might schools today be re-conceptualized to leverage the resources we have – especially time, networks, relationships, and the ability to democratize, access to the tools of creative production – to develop a healthy sense of self, community, and positive social impact?
- What is the role of the teacher in setting the stage for children to have a sense of ownership in and power over their learning?
- How does every learning opportunity in school become a real experience in developing knowledge and competencies for life, not just for a class or course?
- Who gets challenged with interesting questions that push their thinking and emotion?
- How do we build learning opportunities that learners want and need?

### **Research**

- The 2016 annual Gallup student survey of over 1 million learners and young people tell us that the level of engagement, sense of hope, and experiences of interest and fun in school drop significantly over the years they spent in school.

### **Concepts**

- We must make changes not just to the utility and purpose of school, moving school from a culture of compliance in learning and behavior, to one in which a diversity of ideas and

solutions is valued, and behavior is less focused on compliance norms and more focused on responsiveness to community norms.

- Zero-based design means you start with nothing that exists today in schools, from bricks and mortar to schedules to staffing to curriculum.
- When children create, think, make, explore novel ideas, engineer, build, and figure out problems in their own world that are worth solving, they make meaning of their own learning and their own preferences for how they like to learn. In doing so they develop mindfulness about when they need to work together or to work alone. This kind of learning provides a context for life readiness – as family and community members, thoughtful citizens, flexible, competent workforce members, and learners for life.
- Human learning is timeless and continuous. Kids learn best when they are free from the constraints of time, lost in the freedom of discovery. When learning becomes timeless, it becomes authentically human, owned by the learners. It is then that educators set the stage for kids to grow into successful adults, prepared to enter a future none of us can really predict. No place is that any more important than in the middle school grades.
- Test-bedding ideas in the summer allows schools to bring in teachers to co-facilitate activities and in doing so to learn along with children. Teachers have time to stop, process, and reflect on how they can take back and use what they learn during the school year.

#### **Quotes from the author**

- “Schools have to change, and that starts with valuing each child, trusting in them, and not treating them as if mistakes are a life sentence.”
- “Authentic opportunities for learners to create, design, build, engineer and compose cannot truly coexist within the standardization model. That’s why tinkering around the edges, adding a “genius hour” to an unchanged school day, accomplishes nothing except to highlight all that’s wrong.”
- “Learning becomes timeless when we trust in children and relinquish control. If we let them lead, they explore wildly! The curiosities take them places that most adults no longer envision in the random clutter of curriculum, designed to be taught and tested in isolation of the child as a full participant rather than just a recipient of learning.”
- “We believe that when you place more constraints on a school by policy or procedure, you’ll see less creativity and risk-taking. And the more constraints a teacher adds to the project, the more it becomes the teacher’s project.”

#### **Quotes from others**

- “When time slows, concentration increases and the result is joy, creativity, the process of total involvement with life” - Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi

#### **Implement tomorrow?**

- **Seek out others who are life learners as aspirational peers.** Notice what they do, listen, ask questions, participate in Twitter chats, ask them what’s on their podcast list. Build a professional learning network. Take charge of your own learning.

#### **Organizations/schools working on answers**

- [Workspace Education](#)
- [High Tech High](#)
- [Big Picture Learning](#)

**Gateways to further learning**

- [SpeEdChange](#)
- [Partnership for Twenty-First Century Skills](#)
- [EdLeader21](#)

**Referenced books with the potential to impact leading and learning**

Author(s) Last Name	Title
Robinson & Aronica	<a href="#">The Element: How Finding Your Passion Changes Everything</a>
Postman & Weingartner	<a href="#">Teaching as a Subversive Activity</a>
Zhao	<a href="#">World Class Learners: Educating Creative and Entrepreneurial Students</a>
Csikszentmihalyi	<a href="#">Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience</a>
Dougherty & Conrad	<a href="#">Free to Make: How the Maker Movement is Changing Our Schools, Our Jobs, and Our Minds</a>
Wheatly & Frieze	<a href="#">Walk Out Walk On: A Learning Journey into Communities Daring to Live in the Future Now</a>

The applicability of this book to education is ....



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