

Some Best General Books and Articles on Era 3 Educational Excellence*

Bellanca, Jim and Brandt, Ron, editors. (2010). *21st Century Skills: Rethinking How Students Learn*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press.

An edited book of readings about 21st century teaching and learning from some of the leading experts in the field.

Berger, Ron. (2003). *An Ethic of Excellence: Building a Culture of Craftsmanship with Students*. Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Heinemann Press.

This excellent and thought provoking book by an elementary school teacher suggests an educational “paradigm shift” to an embrace of an “ethic of excellence”, and promotes authentic, project based learning and elaborated student work.

Boyer, Ernest. (1995). *The Basic School: A Community for Learning*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers. A wonderful book that has not lost its timeliness. Among other things, Boyer suggests that elementary schools foster communities of learners, and that the curriculum primarily revolve around the centrality of language and eight “core commonalities” – among them, the Life Cycle, The Use of Symbols, Membership in Groups, A Sense of Time and Space, and Response to the Aesthetic. This classic book has not gotten the wide readership it deserves.

Bransford, John et. al. (2000) *How People Learn: Brain, Mind, Experience, and School*. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press.

Summarizes some of the latest research on cognitive learning and instruction, and the implications of this research. Most of this research supports a different approach to education than that which is found in *No Child Left Behind* and some of the other outdated views of educational excellence.

Brooks, Jacqueline Grennon and Brooks, Martin G. (1999). *In Search of Understanding: The Case For Constructivist Classrooms*. Alexandria, Virginia: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. Sensibly advocates for a constructivist, understanding based view of teaching and learning.

Conley, David T. (2010). *College and Career Ready: Helping All Students Succeed Beyond High School*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Provides a framework for helping prepare students for college and careers, with significant implications for K-12 education today.

Darling-Hammond, Linda. (December 4, 2007) *No Child Left Behind: Changing the Way We Think About Learning*.

This wonderful, short article examines why we are falling behind in achievement, based on the way many other countries with high achievement levels measure and attain success. Raises a host of questions about our

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educational approaches. Can be downloaded at:

<http://www.forumforeducation.org/blogs/linda-darling-hammond>

Erickson, H. Lynn. (2001, second edition). *Stirring the Head, Heart, and Soul: Redefining Curriculum, Instruction, and Concept-Based Learning*.

Focuses on how to develop a conceptual, understanding based curriculum. She has also published another book with a similar theme, *Concept-Based Curriculum and Instruction*.

Ginsberg, Alice E (2012). *Embracing Risk in Urban Education*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Education.

Alice Ginsberg argues that, instead of eliminating risk from schools by “regulating, standardizing, scripting, and quantifying” what we do in schools, we should try to develop schools that embrace risk by enabling students to “...experiment, disagree, ... assert their individuality, test assumptions and question data”, essential qualities for a 21st century world and a democratic society (p. 3). The book provides case studies of four Philadelphia urban schools and teaching examples that, in her view, “make space for children to explore the unknown” (p. 4), teach children how to inquire and collaborate; teach them how to foster social justice; and help them build patience, sustained commitment, and cooperative, responsible leadership (p. 10).

Jackson, Anthony and Davis, Gayle. (2000). *Turning Points, 2000: Educating Adolescents in the 21st Century*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Explores middle school educational approaches from a constructivist, understanding based perspective.

Litky, Dennis (2004). *The Big Picture: Education is Everybody's Business*. Alexandria, Virginia: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

This excellent and timely book provides a different paradigm for thinking about educational practice. Over 90 schools across the country have adopted its principles, with great success.

The *Partnership for 21st Century Learning* focuses on the outcomes necessary for students to learn in a 21st century world, and works to provide the means for these goals to be implemented in America's schools.

Multiple readings from the Partnership for 21st Century Learning and be found in the publications section of <http://www.p21.org>

Newmann, Fred & Associates. (1996). *Authentic Achievement: Restructuring Schools for Intellectual Quality*. San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Describes a different way of thinking about educational excellence, with a major focus on authentic teaching and learning. An excellent companion book that's also worth examining is by Newmann, Fred, and Associates (1995). *A Guide to Authentic Instruction and Assessment: Vision, Standards and Scoring*. Madison, Wisconsin: Wisconsin Center for Educational Research.

Perkins, David. *Teaching For Understanding*, in *American Educator, The Professional Journal of the American Federation of Teachers, Volume 17, Number 3, Fall, 1993, pp. 8, 28-35*. Can be downloaded at http://www.newhorizons.org/strategies/understanding/front_understanding.htm

Provides an excellent and thoughtful overview of the teaching for understanding approach to schooling.

Richardson, Will. *Why School?*

This book is only available as an e-read for \$1.99 (as my young nephew once said to my wife: “It’s a new world, my friend”). Provides an excellent discussion of what schooling should be about and how schools should be different in this new 21st century age we live in, with information abundance, new forms of communication, etc. Both an easy read and full of quotes and information that make the read insightful, thought-provoking, entertaining, and challenging.

Ritchhart, Ron.(2002). *Developing Intellectual Character: What it is, Why it Matters, and How to Get it*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

An excellent, readable account of what intellectual skills we should expect from students in a 21st century world.

Robinson, Ken (2009). *The Element: How Finding Your Passion Changes Everything*. New York, NY: Penguin Group.

This book focuses on the how to create schools and educational experiences that nurture varied forms of talent, interests, intelligence and creativity that need to be developed within each of us. An excellent and easy read, with lots of examples and humor. A companion book is *Finding Your Element: How To Discover Your Talents and Passions and Transform Your Life*.

Schmoker, Mike (2011). *Focus: Elevating the Essentials to Radically Improve Student Learning*. Alexandria, Virginia: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

This book cuts through much of the clutter in today’s focus on complex standards and standardized testing, in order to focus on a few key education essentials, such as a streamlined curriculum, a focus on reading and writing, interactive teaching and learning, a close reading of real books and textbooks, and discussion and debate. Although the book doesn’t provide a more advanced focus on Era 3 teaching and learning outcomes, it does provide an important focus on some essential and basic ingredients leading to a powerful and lasting education.

Tough, Paul (2012). *How Children Succeed: Grit, Curiosity and the Hidden Power of Character*. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Co.

Paul Tough believes that we don’t place enough emphasis in schools on developing “character traits”, such as perseverance, resilience, curiosity, optimism, self-control. He makes a very strong case that, in the long run, these traits are as significant as, and perhaps more significant than academic skills. His solutions are novel, including significant forms of early intervention in the lives of some children.

Wagner, Tony. (2008). *The Global Achievement Gap*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

This outstanding book provides a powerful overview of what it means to educate students in an Era 3, 21st century world, and illustrates how some schools are models for the future of education.

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Wiggins, Grant and McTighe, Jay. (2007). *Schooling By Design*. Alexandria, Virginia: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

An excellent overview of a different way to thinking about curriculum, assessment and instruction, and how schools should develop ways to implement this approach.