

# pioneering

ISSUE 11 • APRIL 21, 2016 • EDUCATION REIMAGINED

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education   
reimagined

connect. share. discover. lead.

# pioneering

## Hello Pioneers!

Engaging learners deeply takes more than just juicing up the current model of education. It takes transforming it into a system that starts with the learner—their interests and passions included—and allows their innate love of learning to come to life.

This week, I had two experiences with my own kids that truly brought this concept home for me. This past Sunday, we went to the 2016 USA Science and Engineering Festival in Washington, DC. We had spent that Saturday reviewing all of the exhibits to identify which ones we didn't want to miss. This hard work all but went out the window when we arrived—there were so many fabulous and engaging activities for kids (and adults) to engage in.

The kids bounced between examining a real brain in formaldehyde, flying a Navy Jet on a computer simulator, and learning all about bubbles. They built circuits, played with Raspberry Pi, and made things on a 3D printer. The kids loved the whole day and left excited and full of energy.

My son Tucker (8 years old) left most excited about the 3D printer. To understand why, you have to know that, for the past two years, he has been obsessed with making enough money to buy a pontoon boat for fishing. In his entrepreneurial mind, he concluded that if he could buy a 3D printer and then sell what he printed, he could earn enough for the boat. I suggested that he see if there was a market for such items before he invested \$1,000 on the printer and “ink.” He could barely go to sleep that night in anticipation for his market research the next day. He came home on Monday with the list of orders from his class—including “my face as a zombie, \$3.” All told, they were willing to buy \$45.45 worth of things. After discussing it, he realized that was a long way from \$1,000 and went back to his much less capital-intensive business of selling rainbow loom necklaces and bracelets.

I know each of you have a million stories like this one. Just today, I heard from the Superintendent of Alamo Heights ISD in San Antonio, Texas about one of their educators whose Systems Go Aerospace Studies program has transformed the lives of his kids. Check out his TEDxTalk here [\(link\)](#). It's inspiring, invigorating, and humbling to learn of the work that you all do to jumpstart kids' passions and grow their abilities to be self-driven learners—and I can't wait to spend this coming weekend with my kids on another learning adventure!

Warm wishes,  
**Kelly**



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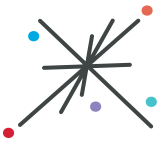
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#### Connect. Share. Discover. Lead.

We seek to accelerate the growth of the movement dedicated to transforming education in America. We invite those excited and interested by the possibility of learner-centered education to discover more, join a growing movement, and begin a journey to make this a reality in diverse communities across the country.







## KHAN LAB SCHOOL

Mountain View, California

The hands-on, student-centered approach to learning has inspired our children to truly take ownership of their education. —Khan Lab School Parents

### SIXTY KIDS, SEVEN EDUCATORS, AND SILICON VALLEY—it's a formula to change the world.

Innovator and entrepreneur, Sal Khan, and his team launched Khan Lab School over a year ago to put the theories espoused in his bestseller—*The One World Schoolhouse: Education Reimagined*—to the test. They were stepping out on a limb, “building a school extremely fast, and courting disaster at every step.” It was not for the faint of heart.

The emphasis is on the word “Lab.” Everyone from the learners to the educators to the parents came into this “experiment” knowing that it would be messy. But, they had an ambitious goal in mind and were willing to put it all on the table to change the face of education. Khan Lab School is meant to be a testing ground for new learning designs and practices. This means that they are constantly gathering data, self-reflecting, and re-evaluating—willing to press the reset button, if necessary. They hope that their learnings, protocols, and practices can ultimately be shared with the world—providing an entry point for other pioneers who want to step up to the plate and try out something new. It is “an open source approach to educational innovation.”

So, what are they experimenting with?

Independence-level, rather than grade-level, is the starting point for KLS learners. They are given the space to authentically “strive, fail, and flourish”—with educators, mentors, and coaches there to provide support and encouragement along the way. Whether you are five- or thirteen-years-old, it's all about **learner agency** for the kids at KLS. Learners think up, prototype, and execute their own projects based on their curiosity and interests. They set their own deadlines, map out action steps, and find the expertise they need to accomplish each challenge they set for themselves. A **competency-based**—or as they call it, mastery-based—approach makes this all possible. And, as you would suspect, tech is a key delivery mechanism in this Silicon Valley-based environment. Kids independently tap into platforms like Khan Academy, Duolingo, and Google Docs—allowing them to move at their own pace and find the information they need, when they need it.

But, it isn't about an isolated, computer-driven track. Because it is “one-room school,” learning from peers is embedded into the entire ethos of the KLS world. Older kids mentor younger ones. Kids consult each other before they turn to the adults for help. And, when they see something worth changing in the design of KLS, their thoughts, opinions, and ideas are embraced and encouraged by all. Another **socially embedded** practice that stands out in the KLS design is the advisory. A time for one-on-one conversations between a child and their mentor, the advisories meet once a week for a half-hour. This is a time for them to check-in—but not just about project progress. Advisories help learners begin to know themselves—they create the relational foundation for kids to take risks, understand their own learning, and build the habits of self-reflection.

When you see KLS in action, you see bright colors and walls filled with art. Laughter, warmth, and affection fill the space. And, if you go one layer deeper, you'll see a rigorous, tech-informed, data-driven world that puts the learner at the center.

### LEARN MORE

[The Tech Elite's Quest to Reinvent School in Its Own Image](#)

[A Day in the Life at Khan Lab School](#)

### FACTS & FIGURES

Private—Non-profit,  
non-denominational,  
co-educational

Ages 5-13

60 learners served currently  
(95 anticipated for 2016-17)

1 location

Learners with disabilities: 5%

Free or Reduced Lunch: 10%

### CONNECT

[Website](#)

[Facebook Page](#)

For more information contact:  
[admissions@khanlabschool.org](mailto:admissions@khanlabschool.org)





# Making Time for the Student-Teacher Relationship

by Orly Friedman, School Director, Khan Lab School

**PUTTING STUDENTS AT THE CENTER OF THEIR LEARNING** can result in a powerful sense of ownership and agency. Before we can expect students to take complete control of their learning, schools and teachers must provide students with strategies and the time for reflection in order for them to grow into self-directed learners. At Khan Lab School (KLS), where we currently serve sixty students five to thirteen years-old, students are grouped by independence level, so that they receive as much structure and freedom as they can successfully handle. At the core of this model is an individual advising meeting between student and teacher that we are developing to meet the needs of students at every level and to cover academic, as well as personal and social/emotional growth.

At KLS, the student experience is primarily driven by goals students set at the beginning of each term with guidance commensurate with their independence level. We have a Graduate Profile that specifies requirements that all KLS students should meet to graduate, but our students direct how and when they achieve these requirements, as well as any additional goals they have. These goals determine their weekly schedule—



Orly Friedman

and where and with whom they spend their days. Goals could range from the purely academic—"I will be able to solve three-by-two digit division problems"—to the personal—"In two weeks, I will have a business plan for my neighborhood cooking class"—to the self-reflective—"I will collect feedback from two of my peers on my contributions during advisory discussions." Because KLS begins at five-years-old, many of our students are still learning what a "SMART" goal is and most older students still require guidance from a teacher in goal-setting.

### THIRTY MINUTES ONCE A WEEK

To provide the appropriate guidance in goal-setting and achievement, every student has a thirty-minute one-on-one meeting with their teacher, more aptly known as their "advisor," once a week. By setting aside this time each week, students are held accountable for their self-paced work and are guided in figuring out what steps come next in their learning. Evaluating work completion and indicating next steps are tasks that could easily be automated, but these advising sessions serve another purpose: Developing a meaningful connection between student and teacher that we hope will advantage students in the long term.

Thirty minutes per student once a week may not sound like enough time to have an impact, but, in fact, most schoolchildren today won't receive thirty minutes alone with their teacher, talking about their hopes and dreams, in an entire school year. What teachers offer during these sessions is an opportunity for every student to feel known and be supported within the school walls. Gallup and Purdue University conducted a study in 2014 that showed that college graduates who reported having a professor who encouraged their goals made them excited about learning, and cared about them as a person were twice as likely to respond that they were also thriving in all areas of their well-being. We believe that having a similar relationship with a teacher in K-12 education would have at least as positive an effect on student well-being and, by association, on academic performance. A number of K-12 schools around the globe have come to this conclusion independently.

One school that, for the last decade, has put student goal-setting meetings at the core of the learning experience is Kunskapsskolan, a network of schools that began in Sweden. The network's logo has a picture of a student at its center and the phrase "Coaching" ringing the third layer in support of "personalized goals" and "personalized strategies." Kunskapsskolan has a broad view of what these advisory meetings might cover and acknowledges that the content of these meetings should evolve as students are ready to take on greater ownership of their education. In Medellin, Colombia, another group of psychologists and educators developed The Fontan Relational Education system, which calls for a set of "Learning Coaches" distinct from the traditional educators in the school. The Learning Coaches focus primarily on the learning process and personal development with every student.

Teacher-student goal-setting meetings also imitate best practices from today's most successful companies. In the corporate world, goal-setting meetings with a supervisor are standard practice. Google initiated Project Oxygen to determine what makes a good manager—and its findings provide insight that can easily translate to a school setting. For example, while the Google study is about what makes a good manager not what makes for good one-on-ones, they did find that good managers empower without micromanaging, which would suggest that in a thirty-minute session advisors should focus on asking the right questions to allow students to notice and trouble-

“...most school-children today won't receive thirty minutes alone with their teacher, talking about their hopes and dreams, in an entire school year.”

**ORLY FRIEDMAN**



“Our understanding of how to make these advising sessions successful will only improve as more schools try out such practices.”

**ORLY FRIEDMAN**

shoot their own challenges. Google also found that good managers express interest in and concern for an individual’s success and personal well-being, which if extrapolated to the school setting means that advisors should remember to include general well-being questions alongside the goal-specific discussions.

### KEEPING A LAB MINDSET FOR THE FIELD

As personalized learning schools pioneer new models of education, there is an opportunity to define best practices around the routines of student-centered learning. Some questions that we at KLS are investigating are: What is the appropriate length of these sessions? How frequently should students of different ages meet with their advisor one-on-one? Are these conversations led by content specialists or an entirely separate staff? How do we train such a staff for this new advising role?

Our understanding of how to make these advising sessions successful will only improve as more schools try out such practices. What is clear from studies of what works in business and education is that the human relationship is still the driving factor in student success and satisfaction. We can turn more content delivery over to technology and allow students to do more and make discoveries on their own, but the success of a student-centered program remains grounded in the strength of its student-teacher relationships.

**Orly Friedman** got her start in education while teaching at a remarkable school for Untouchables in Southern India during college. After graduating from Yale with a degree in Urban Studies, she joined Teach for America in Washington, DC. For five years, she taught K-3rd grade in DCPS. While in DC, she earned her MA in Early Childhood Education and began creating math content for Learn Zillion. She moved to the west coast to get her MBA at Stanford and graduated in 2014, shortly before joining the Khan Lab School founding team. She is now school director at KLS.



# A Conversation with Jeff Wetzler of Transcend



Jeff Wetzler

**Education Reimagined** recently met up with an old friend and pioneer, Jeff Wetzler, who we first got to know when he was at Teach for America. He is now onto another adventure having launched Transcend ([link](#))—a nonprofit dedicated to the creation and proliferation of breakthrough school models.

## Q. What got you first committed to education? Are you still committed for the same reason?

**A.** My commitment to education really began while I was a learner during my own K-12 education. In many ways, school worked well for me, in that I had wonderful teachers in a safe, loving environment, as well as parents who advocated hard for my educational opportunities. In many ways, school worked well for me. I had wonderful teachers and a safe, loving environment, as well as parents who advocated hard for my educational opportunities.

When I looked around, I saw a lot of my peers disengaged from learning and fairly disenchanted with school. So, I began to spend much of my time in class imagining what would be possible if school were different, more engaging, more hands-on, more rigorous, more student-driven. Every year in school, I dreamed about being a teacher of the grade level that I was in, and I asked myself what I would do differently if I were the teacher. I know it sounds a little odd...

And then, in high school, I met a chemistry teacher, Ron Perkins—who changed my life. He gave me the opportunity to put my ideas into action by teaching hands-on science to students in elementary schools throughout our district. I loved every moment of that teaching. In fact, I got inspired to co-found a similar program in college called Providence Science Outreach, where Brown University students teach hands-on science in urban schools and libraries throughout Providence, RI. My passion for education deepened in college, where I had the opportunity to study with Nancy and Ted Sizer, whose views on school design and whose authentically designed course experiences (such as ethnographically documenting “moral moments” in schools or designing our own high school) have been a pivotal foundation for me.

Twenty years later, I am still committed to education for all of these reasons, but over the past decade while I worked at Teach For America, my commitment has deepened based on working on education through the lenses of race and class. While the “factory model” of schooling is highly problematic for all students, the disparities in educational opportunity faced by students of color, students in low-income communities, and students who learn differently outraged me. At TFA, not only did I begin to see the opportunity gap in education as an issue of social justice and human rights, but I also experienced how—in classrooms, whole schools, and networks of schools—it didn’t have to be this way...that when students of all backgrounds get the educational opportunities they deserve, they defy all odds and prove that demography is not destiny. This fueled my fire and is what continues to get me up every morning (early).

“In high school, I met a chemistry teacher, Ron Perkins—who changed my life.”

**JEFF WETZLER**

## Q. What was your journey from TFA to launching Transcend?

**A.** I spent over a decade at Teach For America, with most of that time focused on continuously improving the preparation and ongoing support of TFA's tens of thousands of teachers working in low-income, public schools across America. Again and again, I saw the power of strong teacher development. But, over time, I began to grow concerned that the core design of the teacher role is fundamentally not conducive to fostering transformative learning with their students. In other words, the traditional design of schools and classrooms does not set teachers up for true success with students, on the full range of dimensions that matter for student growth. (Exceptional teachers can get the job done with many students, but even for them, it is exhausting and hard to sustain.) This insight—combined with other experiences as a founding board member of urban schools in New York and as a parent of two public school students—deepened my conviction in the importance of more fundamentally rethinking the core design of learning environments.

Several years ago, my co-founder, Aylon Samouha, and I had the opportunity to partner with Achievement First, which runs a network of high-performing schools in the northeast, to rethink the design of elementary and middle school. This process resulted in the Greenfield Schools model. The more we got into the work, the more we realized the power of stepping back and thinking afresh about every aspect of school design—from the aims, to the total learner experience, to the content, to the roles of educators, parents, and community members, to the use of time, and so much more. We also realized how much capacity this type of work requires of school operators—to not just imagine and design but also to build, test, and iterate all the components of new school models.

Along the way, we teamed up with Stacey Childress and Diane Tavenner (who are now on Transcend's board) to capture our vision for the future of learning environments and develop a theory of change for how these can be created and spread over time. These ideas are captured in a paper we recently put out—*Dissatisfied Yet Optimistic: Moving Faster Toward New School Models*. ([link](#))

## Q. What is the major need that Transcend is trying to address?

**A.** Among the many barriers to the creation and spread of new “school” models is a lack of what we refer to as research and development (R&D) capacity—the capacity to imagine, build, assess, iterate upon, codify, and ultimately spread new approaches. Without this capacity, even the most visionary school operators are often forced to revert to the traditional model of school design, given how much work it takes just to run schools on a day-to-day basis. We formed Transcend to address this gap in the field by fueling R&D capacity to accelerate the creation and spread of new kinds of learning environments that prepare students far better to thrive in and transform the 21st century. We do this through three, integrated activities:

**BUILD TALENT:** We are building a world-class, diverse force of R&D talent from a wide range of disciplines (e.g., instruction, social-emotional development, technology, learning science, etc.) who are motivated and well-positioned to work on innovation.

**BUILD MODELS:** We deploy this force of talent by engaging in a small number of deep, multi-year partnerships with school operators (districts, CMOs, independents) who are looking to create, codify, and spread breakthrough models of learning environments.

**BUILD KNOWLEDGE:** We extract, codify, and share our learnings about the new models and the innovation process to accelerate the field's progress.

“The traditional design of schools and classrooms does not set teachers up for true success with students, on the full range of dimensions that matter for student growth.”

JEFF WETZLER



## Q. How will Transcend work with districts and other school operators?

**A.** Transcend works arm-in-arm, in a deep, partnership-oriented way with districts and other school operators. We meet school operators where they are—whether they are right at the beginning of considering new models, already piloting innovations and looking to turbocharge their progress, or beginning to codify and spread whole-“school” innovations. We can then “afford” them the R&D capacity needed to innovate in profound ways. “Affording” capacity sometimes looks like Transcend bringing in external people and expertise from our talent force, sometimes looks like orchestrating talent that already exists within a district organization, and sometimes looks like developing their internal capacity to do it themselves.

In all of these situations, the end result is that we help districts and other school operators grow their capacity to keep innovating, while also giving lift to current R&D efforts. At every step of the way, we aspire to not only take a user-centered design approach that draws upon the experience and ideas of students and families but also to draw from evidence-based insights that emerge from rigorous research in cognition, neuroscience, and social-emotional development.

## Q. What have you done and learned in partnering with Achievement First on their Greenfield School model?

**A.** It’s hard to capture such a big question in just a few sentences! We are in the early days, as we are just in the midst of piloting the new models in three grade levels—next year, the pilot will expand to seven grades.

With this, we have seen what is possible when a strong school operator invests the time and energy to step back and rethink every aspect of the student experience from a “green field.” We have seen the courageous, visionary leadership that this requires. We have seen the serious capacity required to not only imagine and design but also build and iterate in a rigorous way. We have seen the challenges of change management and execution. But, most importantly, we have seen what is possible when students and their families engage deeply around students’ most ambitious dreams; when students have the time and space to pursue passions, such as martial arts or music or STEM inventions; when students build habits of success through life-changing expeditions; and when students begin to direct their own learning rather than “receive” instruction from a teacher. This is an ongoing, multi-year learning journey. It is not neat and clean, and it is not for the faint of heart. But it is worth it.

## Q. Where is Transcend headed at this point?

**A.** Transcend is heading into an exciting phase of entering into partnerships with a variety of school operators, as well as bringing aboard individuals with diverse talents who are looking to build the future of “school.” We welcome folks who may be interested to reach out to us!

## Q. What possibilities are you most excited about?

**A.** We believe that the potential of every young person is infinite and that the role of education is to help students see, unleash, and realize that potential. When educators have the capacity to transform learning environments in ways that transcend the bounds of the traditional model, our students will astound us.

**Jeff Wetzler** is co-founder of Transcend, a non-profit dedicated to the creation and proliferation of breakthrough school models. Previously, Jeff served in national senior leadership roles for over a decade at Teach For America and as a senior design advisor on the Achievement First Greenfield School innovation project. Before that, Jeff worked at Monitor Group, an international consulting firm, where he advised executives on a range of strategic, organizational, and leadership challenges. Jeff currently, serves on the boards of Uncommon Schools NYC, New Classrooms Innovation Partners, and the National Academy of Advanced Teacher Education. Jeff is a Fellow in the Pahara-Aspen Education Fellowship and is a member of the Aspen Global Leadership Network. He earned a doctorate from Teachers College, Columbia University (dissertation focused on applying design thinking to drive innovation in education) and a bachelor’s in psychology from Brown University. Jeff lives in New York with his wife and kids.



## LEARNER VOICES

**Check out the articles and videos below.** They might just challenge your assumptions of what kids are capable of creating and doing if we let go of the current Industrial-era paradigm and move towards learner-centered education.



### THE TEACHING CHANNEL

#### Student Profile: A Self-Directed Learner

Meet Hunter, a learner at Tech Valley High, who “had always spoken out but wasn’t always so well-spoken.” Through Tech Valley’s project- and problem-based experience, Hunter has not only found direction for his voice but also discovered a passion for entrepreneurship and a drive to make a difference—he’s uncovered who he wants to be and is making his dreams a reality here and now. [Watch here](#)

### FROM THE WASHINGTON POST

#### These Kid Entrepreneurs Want to Save Food Banks

There’s an enterprising group in Northern Virginia that’s hit upon a simple, yet elegant, plan to raise half a million dollars per year for a local food bank. A group of business leaders and community organizers, right? Nope! Dive into the story of a group of industrious, creative seventh graders from a local middle school changing the lives of those in their community who are most in need. [Read here](#)

### FROM EDUTOPIA

#### Student-Led Conferences: Empowerment and Ownership

Forget *parent-teacher* conferences! Student-led conferences provide the space for learners to take full ownership of their learning—they articulate what they’ve learned, how they’ve learned it, and what it’s meant to them. [Read here](#)

## CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

**The most powerful advocates for learner-centered education are the learners themselves!**

So, we’d like your help in sharing learner’s stories. We want to expand this section of *Pioneering* to provide a space for learners to speak their minds, showcase their projects, and be active participants in the process of education transformation.

Please contact us for learner submission guidelines. [\(email\)](#)

*It’s really simple, we promise!*



## Destination Imagination

**Destination Imagination** (DI) ([link](#)) provides a hands-on system of learning that fosters creativity, courage, and curiosity and empowers learners with the skills needed to succeed in an ever-changing, technologically-savvy. The programs, called “Challenges,” are developed in conjunction with creativity collaborators, like National Geographic, NASA, and Partnership for 21st Century Learning. Bursting with creativity, collaboration, and fun, the Challenges blend STEM skills with the humanities to foster the creative spark that is crucial to innovation—no matter the field. Offering short-term and long-term Challenges, DI has opportunities to plug in at any level. The long-term ones take place over the course of a traditional school year, with teams presenting their results at one of the over 200 tournaments around the world—culminating in the Global Finals in Knoxville, Tennessee. Their shorter (usually 10 minutes or less) Instant Challenges can be used as practice for teams or tackled independently by individuals or small groups as stand-alone projects. Check out Destination Imagination to see everything—from Instant Challenges to Try DI to registration for next year’s Challenge program—that they have to offer!

**“Mars or Bust” Instant Challenge** ([link](#))

**Ping-Pong-Athon Instant Challenge** ([link](#))

**2016-17 Registration** ([link](#))

## Springpoint

**Springpoint** ([link](#)) sees “a future where secondary schools leverage all available talent, time, technology, and resources—and produce success on a grand scale.” To bring this future to life, they work closely with districts and networks to provide the training, support, and evidence they need to design, launch, and continually improve new innovative high schools. There is no single Springpoint model or framework—they urge communities to “forge their unique path.” And, their set of 10 integrated “Design Principles” are meant to provide the signposts and points of guidance along that path. To support the design teams that they work directly with and all those other pioneer designers out there, Springpoint hosts a curated library of videos, websites, articles, and reports that provide proof points and useful best practices for educators and leaders. They also produce their own reports and papers that highlight Springpoint’s design process and the success stories that they are encountering. Check out their exciting repository of tools and resources for learning designers and leaders!

**Positive Youth Development and School Design** ([link](#))

**Inside Mastery Based High Schools: Profiles and Conversations** ([link](#))

**School Design Scope and Sequence** ([link](#))

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Mark your calendars! We will be speaking at some and hosting workshops at others. In all cases, pioneers will be front and center! Join us.

### Remake Learning Days

Pittsburgh, PA

May 9-15

[Conference Website](#)

### Global MindED Conference

Denver, CO

June 9-10

[Conference Website](#)

### Big Picture’s Big Bang

Orland, FL

July 26-29

[Conference Website](#)



### TLTALK RADIO

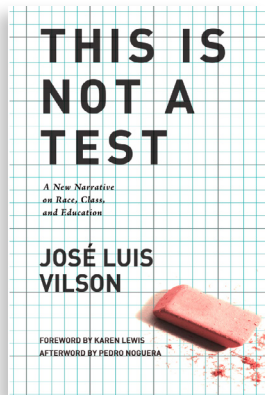
Host Randy Ziegenfuss and Lynn Fuini-Hetten chat with Education Reimagined’s Kelly Young about our vision for learner-centered education.

[Listen here](#)



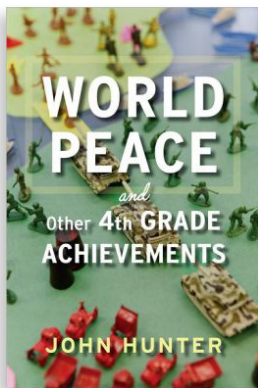


## ON OUR BOOKSHELF



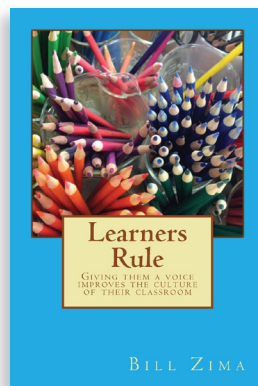
### **This Is Not A Test: A New Narrative on Race, Class, and Education** by José Luis Vilson

A memoir, an inspirational coming-of-age story, and a laser-focused critique, *This Is Not A Test* is a powerful and important reflection on race, class, and education in America. In it, author José Luis Vilson chronicles his journey to become an activist and author—but first and foremost, to become a teacher. Telling a story that parallels the trials, hardships, and challenges his learners face every day, Vilson speaks with passion and humanity for those most ill-served by the current education system. In a chronicle that transcends the personal, singular story being told, *This Is Not A Test* conveys the fierce urgency of reclaiming education for those being educated.



### **World Peace and Other 4th-Grade Achievements** by John Hunter

When adults act irresponsibly or selfishly, we often say that they're acting like children. But perhaps we should retire that phrase. In *World Peace and Other 4th-Grade Achievements*, John Hunter shares the interactions he's seen, insights he's gained, and hope he's found in watching his learners—children—play the World Peace Game. Through this elaborate and complex game (Hunter's own creation) that mimics the real international stage, he has seen children organically create thoughtful, collaborative solutions to many of the supposedly intractable problems that confound today's world leaders."



### **Learners Rule: Giving them a voice improves the culture of their classroom** by Bill Zima

Written by Bill Zima, Superintendent of RSU2 in Maine, *Learners Rule* is a work of "tactical fiction"—mirroring the struggles and triumphs of real-life learner-centered environments like RSU2. *Learners Rule* illustrates the possibility that emerges when learners are truly at the center of their own experiences. Focusing on an educator who knows things can be done better but is frustrated by the lack of available solutions, the story highlights what it takes for the educator and community to make the shift in mindset and action.

## WORTH YOUR TIME

### **Virtual Reality Invites a New Era of Learning to Higher Education**

Once the stuff of movies and science fiction, Virtual Reality will soon open up our lives in ways that transcend time, place, and space. Just imagine the the potential VR holds for learning! [Read here](#).

### **How classrooms look around the world — in 15 amazing photographs**

For as different as learning environments around the world are, they almost all share something in common: the factory-model mindset. These fascinating snapshots both celebrate the world's vast diversity and underscore the need for a worldwide educational transformation.

[Read here](#)

### **Rethinking Intelligence: How Does Imagination Measure Up?**

Dr. Scott Barry Kaufman struggled academically for many years—pegged as a “slow” learner, Kaufman’s creative strengths went unrecognized. Now a professor at UPenn, Kaufman is working to redefine intelligence.

[Read here](#)

“The future can’t be predicted,  
but it can be envisioned and  
brought lovingly into being.”

—DONELLA MEADOWS

Read past issues of  
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