

“Children do not live outside of the context of their families.” – Carla Thompson,

About Education

The **Washington Post** dated July 10, 2014, reported on a lunch meeting organized by the President of the United States for four teachers; the teachers are reported to have told the President:

1. “There’s nothing wrong with the kids;
2. Responsibility and delight can coexist;
3. It’s not about good and bad teachers, it’s about good and bad teaching;
4. If we want students to innovate, collaborate and solve real-world problems, we need to make it possible for teachers to do the same things.”

The Internet article that you will find at

<https://learningshore.edublogs.org/2010/10/24/on-school-reform-a-history-of-resistance-to-change/>, points out that the best way to reform the school system is to “provide teachers with a large measure of autonomy and then get out of their way.”

The **New Zealand Herald** dated June 23, 2015, reports that “Half of New Zealand kids are not adequately prepared for school”. The study of 100 schools and 374 early childhood centres was carried out by the Education Review Office and criticized poorly performing schools “for having rigid systems where the child ‘had to be ready for the school’ rather than the school adjusting to suit the child”. According to the article, the key to a successful “jump” to formal schooling is the nature and extent of communication between parents and teachers.

Around PEI

Autonomy – The educational literature points to the importance of teacher and school autonomy as a way of encouraging innovation in our school system; the decision to move positions from the English Language School Board to the Department of Education is contrary to this view.

Communications – We have witnessed a significant increase in discussions about education in the recent months, which is a good thing. Unfortunately, few of these discussions included both educators and the public they serve. As long as educators and the general public will not begin to talk to each other, little change is anticipated in the system.

School organization – Many years ago, one of my professors had his students read Kant and prepare an organization chart for a new university; the exercise proved useful in the career that followed. Since many of our graduate and post-graduate students become principals and educational administrators, let me suggest that, instead of reading Kant, each graduate student team up with a school principal and develop an organizational chart for a “greenfield” school. It’s just an idea!

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