

New Trends in Learning Discovery Documents

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Brain Rules

By Dr. John Medina, molecular biologist

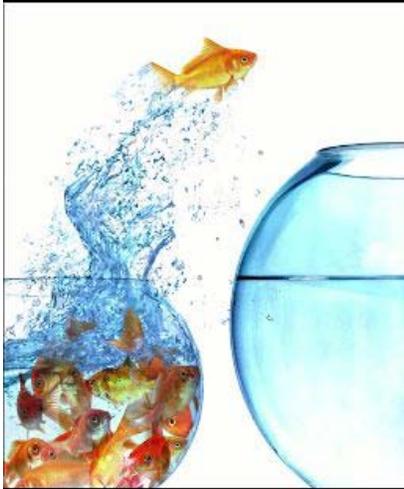
What's a Brain Rule? It's one thing scientists know for sure about how our brains work. Dr. John Medina investigates 12 rules and how they apply to our daily lives, especially at work and school. Here are 3 of them.

Rule #4: We don't pay attention to boring things.

- What we pay attention to is profoundly influenced by memory. Our previous experience predicts where we should pay attention. Culture matters too. Whether in school or in business, these differences can greatly affect how an audience perceives a given presentation.
- We pay attention to things like emotions, threats and sex. Regardless of who you are, the brain pays a great deal of attention to these questions: Can I eat it? Will it eat me? Can I mate with it? Will it mate with me? Have I seen it before?
- The brain is not capable of multi-tasking. We can talk and breathe, but when it comes to higher level tasks, we just can't do it.
- Driving while talking on a cell phone is like driving drunk. The brain is a sequential processor and large fractions of a second are consumed every time the brain switches tasks. This is why cell-phone talkers are a half-second slower to hit the brakes and get in more wrecks.
- Workplaces and schools actually encourage this type of multi-tasking. Walk into any office and you'll see people sending e-mail, answering their phones, Instant Messaging, and on MySpace—all at the same time. Research shows your error rate goes up 50% and it takes you twice as long to do things.
- When you're always online you're always distracted. So the always online organization is the always unproductive organization.
- The 10-minute rule: Audience attention drops precipitously at about 10-minute intervals. You must do something emotionally relevant at least every 10 minutes to regain attention.
- The brain pays attention to patterns. Remembering things we've seen before (like, say, quicksand) is a useful evolutionary trait. Chunk content to emphasize the patterns.



Rule #10: Vision trumps all other senses.



- We are incredible at remembering pictures. Hear a piece of information, and three days later you'll remember 10% of it. Add a picture and you'll remember 65%.
- Pictures beat text as well, in part because reading is so inefficient for us. Our brain sees words as lots of tiny pictures, and we have to identify certain features in the letters to be able to read them. That takes time.
- Why is vision such a big deal to us? Perhaps because it's how we've always apprehended major threats, food supplies and reproductive opportunity.
- Toss your PowerPoint presentations. It's text-based (nearly 40 words per slide), with six hierarchical levels of chapters and subheads—all words. Professionals everywhere need to know about the incredible inefficiency of text-based information and the incredible effects of images. Burn your current PowerPoint presentations and make new ones.

Rule #12: We are powerful and natural explorers.

- The desire to explore never leaves us despite the classrooms and cubicles we are stuffed into. Babies are the model of how we learn—not by passive reaction to the environment but by active testing through observation, hypothesis, experiment, and conclusion. Babies methodically do experiments on objects, for example, to see what they will do.
- The method we use to explore our world? Hypothesis testing. You did it last time you lost your keys. You hypothesized that you'd left them on your dresser, you tested the hypothesis by checking there, and you came to a conclusion. Clever!
- Google takes to heart the power of exploration. For 20 percent of their time, employees may go where their mind asks them to go. The proof is in the bottom line: fully 50 percent of new products, including Gmail and Google News, came from "20 percent time."

Source: Brain Rules website: <http://brainrules.net/>

Drive: the Surprising Truth about What Motivates Us

by Daniel Pink

Myth: If you reward something, you get more of the behavior you want. If you punish something, you get less of the behavior you don't want.

Studies at places like MIT, University of Chicago and Carnegie Mellon have shown that the typical motivation schemes within organizations do not work. The idea of offering incrementally greater rewards for increasingly better performance may work to incentivize mechanical skills and simple straightforward tasks, but once the task calls for even rudimentary cognitive skill, *a larger reward leads to poorer performance*. This finding has been replicated over and over, by psychologists, sociologists, economists, in other countries, across different industries and different economies.



An incentive designed to clarify thinking and sharpen creativity ended up clouding thinking and dulling creativity. Why? Rewards, by their very nature, narrow our focus.

True Motivation

There are three key ingredients of genuine motivation— *autonomy*, *mastery*, and *purpose*. Neglecting these limits what each of us can achieve.

Autonomy: the desire to be self-directed

Traditional management is about compliance. For true engagement on the part of employees, self-direction is better. It requires resisting the temptation to control people — and instead doing everything we can to reawaken their deep-seated sense of autonomy.

- Example: Once every three months, Atlassian, an Australian software company, tells its developers to work on anything they want for the next 24 hours. The only ask is to show results to the company at the end of the allotted time. There is often beer, cake, and fun involved as people work together. This one day of undiluted autonomy has led to a whole array of new product ideas and fixes to existing software problems. Instead of offering a big “innovation bonus” (I’ll give you \$2500 if you do something cool and amazing), they’re saying, “let us just get our your way” so you can do what you’re already inclined to do on your own.

Mastery: urge to get better at something

People pursue hobbies to gain mastery; they play musical instruments, excel at sports, build things not necessarily for fame or fortune—why? Because it’s fun and it’s satisfying to get better at something. Positive feedback can have an enhancing effect on intrinsic motivation.

- Example: Linux was developed by hundreds of people (many who are technically sophisticated, highly skilled people who have paying jobs) volunteering thousands of personal hours to create a product that they give away free. Linux is now powering 1 out of 4 corporate servers in the Fortune 500 companies; Apache is powering the majority of web servers. To an economist, it sounds like a crazy business model but it worked.



Purpose: making a contribution to something

Related to mastery, people want to do things that make a difference. People are natural “purpose maximizers, not only profit maximizers.” When the profit motive becomes unhitched from the purpose motive, service goes down the drain and products become crappy. Profit-driven companies become uninspiring places to work and people do not do great things. The companies that flourish are animated by purpose.

- Example: the founder of Skype wanted to be a bit disruptive in the cause of making the world a better place by eliminating phone bills and connecting people around the globe.

The big takeaway here is that if we start treating people like people and not assuming that they’re simply like horses responding to carrots and sticks, if we can get past this ideology and look at the science, we can actually build organizations and work lives that make us better off. We should focus our efforts on creating environments for our innate psychological needs to flourish.

We also have the promise of making our world just a little bit better.

This summary of Drive was compiled from the following resources:

- Dan Pink’s TED talk: http://www.ted.com/talks/dan_pink_on_motivation.html
- RSA Animate version: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u6XAPnuFjJc&feature=player_embedded
- 19 Top Ideas for Education in Drive by Daniel Pink: <http://connectedprincipals.com/archives/2202>

Teaching Adults Anything

By Sharon Bowman

- Adults remember what *they* write better than what the instructor writes.
- You will remember what you write better than what you read.
- Connections are the key to adult learning.

Step #1: Get learners connected.

At the start of the process, make these important connections:

1. To prior learning
2. To each individual's learning goal
3. To each other

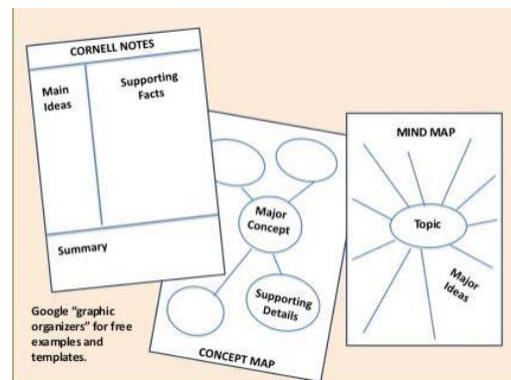
Connection exercises:

- Quick-write: learners write a sentence describing what you want to learn and then tell your table group what you wrote.
- Pair-share: each person introduces his/herself to one other person and tells him or her three facts they already know about the topic.
- Mark-ups: learners read the list of learning objectives and circle the one most important to them; they tell the table group which one was circled and why.

Put the welcome, introductions, announcements, learning objectives, and anything else AFTER the connection activity.

Step #2: Content—chunk, show and tell

- Provide content in small “chunks” of 10-20 minute segments. Insert quick 1-minute activities between longer content segments.
- Use visual aids and tell stories to teach content
 - Visual aids include photos, props, icons, cartoons, videos, graphics, demonstrations, and skits.
 - Telling includes stories, case studies, analogies, and metaphors.
- Provide graphic organizers for learners to take notes.
- Follow each content chunk with a 1-minute review.



Review exercises:

- Each person writes and then shares a one-sentence summary of the main ideas presented so far.
- Learners pair up and ask each other a content-related question; discuss their answers.
- Each person writes a content-related question on an index card, then passes the card to another learner who writes the answer for a later group discussion.

Step #3: Let them do it.

Adult learners need to actively review content or actively practice skills at least six times and in six different ways (6X by 6W).

6X6W exercises:

- Pair teach-back: learners divide into pairs or triads and take turns explaining concepts or demonstrating skills they've learned in the class.
- Table teach-back: each table group chooses a concept or skill to demonstrate or explain to the rest of the class.
- Class teach-back: the class divides in half. Each half teaches or demonstrates a concept or skill to the other half.
- Skill skits: groups of learners create and act out a skit that demonstrates a concept or skill.
- Job-shadowing is also an effective way to practice new learning.

Step #4: Create an action plan.

An action plan is a commitment by the learner to use what has been learned or practiced. It allows learners time to evaluate what they've learned and think about how it applies to their work.

Concluding exercises:

- In pairs or triads, learners walk around the room discussing the most important concepts they learned and what they plan to do with this knowledge back on the job.
- Table groups write and perform short raps, poems or songs as content summaries.

Source: Teach it Quick and Make it Stick, <http://www.bowperson.com/articles.htm>

How the Flipped Classroom Is Radically Transforming Learning

by Jonathan Bergmann, Dan Spencer, Deb Wolf, and Aaron Sams

What it is

The traditional definition of a flipped class is:

- Videos take the place of direct instruction;
- Students get individual time in class to work with their teacher on key learning activities.

It is called the flipped class because what used to be classwork (the "lecture") is done at home via teacher-created videos, and what used to be homework (assigned problems) is now done in class.

The Flipped Classroom is:

- A means to INCREASE interaction and personalized contact time between students and teachers.
- An environment where students take responsibility for their own learning.
- A classroom where the teacher is not the "sage on the stage," but the "guide on the side."
- A blending of direct instruction with constructivist learning.
- A classroom where students who are absent due to illness or extra-curricular activities such as athletics or field-trips, don't get left behind.
- A class where content is permanently archived for review or remediation.
- A class where all students are engaged in their learning.
- A place where all students can get a personalized education.



Flipping Increases Student Interaction

Flipping the classroom has transformed our teaching practice. We no longer stand in front of our students and talk at them for thirty to sixty minutes at a time. This radical change has allowed us to take on a different role with our students. One of the greatest benefits of flipping is that overall interaction increases: Teacher to student and student to student. Since the role of the teacher has changed from presenter of content to learning coach, we spend our time talking to kids and observing how they interact with each other. We are answering questions, working with small groups, and guiding the learning of each student individually.

When students are working on an assignment and we notice a group of students who are struggling with the same thing, we automatically organize the students into a tutorial group. We often conduct mini-lectures with groups of students who are struggling with the same content. The beauty of these mini-lectures is we are delivering "just in time" instruction when the students are ready for learning. We also notice the students developing their own collaborative groups. Students are helping each other learn

instead of relying on the teacher as the sole disseminator of knowledge. It truly is magical to observe. We are often in awe of how well our students work together and learn from each other.

Some might ask how we developed a culture of learning. We think the key is for students to identify learning as their goal, instead of striving for the completion of assignments. We have purposely tried to make our classes places where students carry out meaningful activities instead of completing busy work. When we respect our students in this way, they usually respond. They begin to realize, and for some it takes time, that we are here to guide them in their learning instead of being the authoritative pedagogue. Our goal is for them to be the best learner possible, and to truly understand the content in our classes. When our students grasp the concept that we are on their side, they respond by doing their best.

Begin with the end in mind

A good teacher always knows where they're headed, and that is never more important than with the flipped classroom and for Mastery Learning. Ask yourself exactly what do you want your students to know and be able to do. What are the essential objectives that your students MUST master? What will "mastery" of that objective look like? It may be that some of these decisions are already made for you. But, you absolutely must begin by first deciding what the end product looks like.

If content is delivered outside of class time, it is up to the teacher to provide the students with opportunities in class to *place the content they learned into context*. Many teachers struggle with the "extra" class time that is created by removing direct instruction from the classroom, and do not know exactly what to do with their students. These in-class "activities" (for lack of a better term) must:

1. help support the student understanding of the stated learning objectives;
2. be designed to help students process what they have learned and place the learning into the context of the world in which they live;
3. be engaging to the students, yet flexible enough to allow students the ability to process and produce in a way that is meaningful to them.

Possible in-class work could include:

- student created content
- independent problem solving
- inquiry-based activities
- Project Based Learning

Compiled from the following articles:

- How The Flipped Classroom is Radically Transforming Learning: <http://www.thedailyriff.com/articles/how-the-flipped-classroom-is-radically-transforming-learning-536.php>
- Are You Ready to Flip?: <http://www.thedailyriff.com/articles/are-you-ready-to-flip-691.php>
- The Flipped Class: What it is and What it is Not: <http://www.thedailyriff.com/articles/the-flipped-class-conversation-689.php>

Find the Intrinsic Game



Gamification is the application of game-thinking and game mechanics to non-game contexts in order to engage users and solve problems. For Jane McGonigal, who staged the 2011 all-night *Find the Future* game at the New York Public Library, gaming is about provoking positive emotions, strengthening social connections, and building up players' ability to tackle tougher and tougher challenges without giving up.

Gamification techniques applied to learning materials can arouse learner curiosity and drive motivation. Many have attempted to apply game-thinking to education.

Unfortunately, as video game expert Jordan Shapiro writes,

“Most attempts at educational gaming I’ve seen take a pretty mundane approach. They are basically glorified quizzes with bells and whistles. They add the digital equivalent of smiley face stickers and gold stars: sound effects, animations, points. Not only are these games boring, they also seem to ignore the plethora of studies that have shown that over reliance on extrinsic motivations in learning can have negative long-term effects.”

There is a large body of research showing that when you give people rewards for doing something (extrinsic), it undermines their “intrinsic” or internal motivation for doing it. The trick with effective gamification is to find the intrinsic game in a subject and bring it to life. Noted instructional designer Kathy Sierra recommends eliminating the word “game” and using the formula: “find the intrinsic [reward/experience/beauty, etc.] in [topic/domain/job/activity] and bring it to life.” In other words, find the bridge that enables people to discover and achieve for themselves.

Shapiro raves about the game *DragonBox*, which has unlocked the game nature of algebra in a way that tricks kids into thinking it’s fun. “Algebra is the primordial puzzle game.” Algebraic equations try to solve for the missing “X”—how game-like is that? *DragonBox* is a multiplatform game that uses drag and drop mechanics to teach the basics of algebra. Without relying on text, it covers the rules of algebra step-by-step, teaching players only what they need to know to execute the immediate task at hand and get to the next level. Shapiro’s 7-year-old son was solving junior high level equations after an hour and half of play.

The level of technical sophistication in something like *DragonBox* is a barrier for most trainers and instructional designers, causing them to give up on gamification. However, simple games can be compelling and motivating, and there are ways to embed game-like qualities in learning.

Mary-Scott Hunter of Allen Interactions considers these game constructs to be achievable:

- **Timer**
You can answer that customer question utilizing existing resources, but can you do it in three minutes? When the performance requires a certain measure of unconscious competence (learners must perform tasks quickly or with rote proficiency), integrate a timer into the e-learning. Stage the first few practice activities for learners to complete without a timer, which gives them a chance to master the skill and receive feedback to guide performance. Then challenge them to beat the clock.
- **Collaboration**
Collaboration is often overlooked as an element of game play. Design situations where collaborators supply hints and clues, but do not give away the full answer. Or maybe each person holds one dimension to the solution. Even better: design a situation where learners have to earn collaboration from co-workers. You answer questions for them and they become available to assist you.
- **Unlock New Worlds**
As a gamer, one of the greatest thrills comes from earning the right to explore something which was locked away a moment ago. Earning the right to cross a bridge, to access a secret passage, to open mysterious rooms, are the types of rewards that keep me coming back again and again. And yet I can almost see you crossing your arms right now, thinking, “Well, we don’t have secret passages in our work environment.”
Allow learners the possibility of ‘unlocking a filing cabinet’ where the better solutions are stored. After successfully dealing with three difficult customer scenarios, grant access to ‘the secret room’ where they get the great customers, the ones who are appreciative and fun to work with. Trust me, it will feel like accessing a different world.
- **The Boss Challenge**
Games are often leveled so that the last challenge the gamer encounters is The Boss. The Boss Challenge is the ultimate challenge, the culmination of every skill acquired along the way. Let the learner know it’s coming. Give them chances to practice. We want the learners to win, but the challenge should *feel* hard. If the learner has truly mastered the skill, they will beat The Boss Challenge. Winning really means something when it is hard to achieve.

Sources:

- Finding the Intrinsic Game in Learning: <http://anniemurphypaul.com/2012/12/finding-the-intrinsic-game-in-learning/>
- Can Video Games Make Your Kid Smarter?: <http://www.forbes.com/sites/jordanshapiro/2012/12/11/can-video-games-make-your-kids-smarter/>
- DragonBox: Algebra Beats Angry Birds (with an explanation of how it works): <http://www.wired.com/geekdad/2012/06/dragonbox/all/>
- Jane McGonigal and NYPL present Find the Future: The Game: <http://www.nypl.org/blog/2011/04/01/jane-mcgonigal-and-nypl-present-find-future-game>
- Game-Like Qualities: <http://info.alleninteractions.com/bid/92049/Game-Like-Qualities>

Learner-Centered Teaching

By Terry Doyle, Ferris State University



“Although it may irritate the teacher, one of the most intelligent questions a student can ask is, ‘Why do we have to do this?’”—
Robert Sylwester

The Rationale for Learner-Centered Teaching

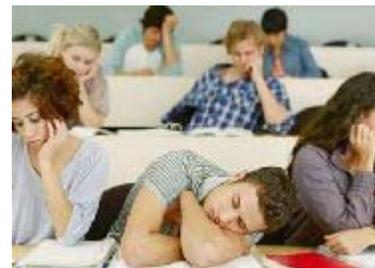
New discoveries about how the human brain learns and the subsequent recommendations for how to teach in harmony with these discoveries have guided the learner-centered approach to teaching. We know from neuroscience research that the dendrites of our brain cells only grow when the brain is actively engaged and the neuron-networks formed in our brains only stay connected when they are used repeatedly (Ratey, 2002, p. 19). We want students to do more firsthand learning, group learning, practicing, reflecting, presenting and teaching of others, because all of these learning activities require active learner engagement.

We put students into small groups not only to promote a deeper level of learning but because learning to talk with or listen to others is, perhaps, the single most important skill needed to be successful in any career field. A rationale for asking students to make presentations before the whole class is that learning to speak in front of others is crucial to career success. Students are being asked to take on more responsibility for their own learning because they will be responsible for it the rest of their lives. If we don't prepare them to be lifelong learners, capable of independent, self-motivated learning, then we have done less than a satisfactory job with their education.

Why We Love to Lecture

There are many tried-and-true reasons for resorting to traditional lecture format:

- Lecture is expedient.
- We worked very hard to learn the subject(s).
- We know our students don't know most of what we have to tell them.
- We went into teaching to help students learn our subject areas.
- We feel powerful when sharing our knowledge—we like to show off.
- We remain in control of the learning process



Then, what are the drawbacks?

- Lecture is often uni-sensory which makes it a much less effective way to learn than many other learning approaches.
- Requires extended attention for the learner.
- Students' brains will begin to habituate the sound of our voice especially if it is unmodulated.
- Lecture doesn't cause the learners to do much work (except multitask).

Sharing Power with Students

We have been so conditioned by a teacher-centered approach that we must be the authority and control all of the aspects of the learning process that moving away from that idea makes many of us uncomfortable. It is this uncomfortableness that our students also feel when we ask them to take more control over their learning by making choices that increase their responsibilities for what and how they learn.

When we share power with our students by offering learning choices, the message is:

- we trust their judgment;
- we trust them to act in ways that are in their best interest;
- and we believe they will make decisions that are mature and reasonable

Trust is empowering and most students will rise to the occasion.

Four tenets of yielding power to learners:

1. Our students cannot improve their abilities to be more responsible for their learning without being given greater responsibility for it.
2. The more control our students take and the more choices we can offer them the greater their desire and willingness to engage in the learning.
3. When students make a choice, they also must learn to live with that choice. This is a very powerful life lesson.
4. When a student has some control over how they learn, they can also discover their strengths and weakness as a learner, a vital meta-cognitive skill they will use the rest of their life.

Facilitating Learning

The facilitator's job is to support everyone in doing his or her best thinking and practice. It involves supporting learning by providing an environment for engagement, initiating activities that get the full participation of learners, and cultivating shared responsibility for the learning between the teacher and the students. It is a learned skill.

Giving meaningful feedback to learners is one of the greatest skills of an effective facilitator of learning. Good feedback is the key to improved learning. Rather than being the sole domain of the teacher, the feedback process works best when both students and teachers are actively involved. Give feedback that focuses more on instruction rather than correction. The message is how to improve.

Compiled from the following sources:

- A Clear Rationale for Learner-Centered Teaching: <http://learnercenteredteaching.wordpress.com/articles-and-books/the-learner-centered-classroom/>
- How to Share Power with Students: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/12701319/How-to-Share-Power-With-Students-to-Promote-Learning>
- Learner-Centered Teaching Resources: <http://learnercenteredteaching.wordpress.com/learner-centered-teaching-resources/>

Self-Directed Achievement

Despite the fact that libraries are in the business of creating a culture of lifelong learning in our communities, we often find it next to impossible to make time for our own learning, especially in a climate of constant change. But if we don't make time to learn and increase our professional capacity, we—and ultimately our patrons—lose out.

So, what if your library made continual learning a professional expectation? What would that do for you? What would it do for the culture of your library? What impact would that make on your community?

Jami Carter (director), Rachel Gull and Steve Peay changed the paradigm at Tooele Public Library in Utah by creating an approach to staff development that is learner-initiated, learner-activated, learner-constructed—the Self-Directed Achievement program.

The **concept** is simple:

Each person who works in the library (*no exceptions*) identifies **one goal** each week that can be accomplished in **one hour** and finds a resource to achieve the goal.

Goals should:

- be knowledge-based, not task-based
- be achievable in one-hour; if more ambitious, broken into weekly chunks
- be specific, not vague
- use the formula “I will use (tool/resource) to (goal statement).”

For example:

- I will use a tutorial to learn how to use Google Drive.
- I will use one of the library's e-readers and learn how to download an ebook.
- I will use an Excel tutorial to better understand how to create budget spreadsheets.

To overcome the natural hesitation at the onset, the Tooele team began by asking everyone to prepare 5 goals and then share those goals at a staff meeting. Some people initially said they couldn't think of any goals, but by the end of the meeting, everyone had at least 25 as a result of sharing and brainstorming.

The **process** is straightforward:

Every week, the staff member meets with his/her supervisor for 15 minutes.

The supervisor asks 3 questions:

1. Did you accomplish your goal last week?
2. If not, what got in your way?
3. What is your goal this week?

The staff member:

Self Directed Achievement

“A culture of **lifelong learning** ...begins with me.”



1 goal
1 hour
every week
= culture change

- communicates his/her SDA goal for the week;
- has next week's SDA hour scheduled by the supervisor;
- uses his/her SDA hour, knowing their learning won't be interrupted;
- records his/her learning in their training log.

The process requires staff members to come to their meetings prepared, communicate successes and challenges honestly, and remain accountable for their own learning. It also requires that supervisors actively listen, remove barriers, and find ways to encourage and guide their staff.

"Literally, it was weeks that we started to see an internal culture change. Now our whole organization is about improving ourselves, which spills over into improving each other." — Jami Carter, director

"The biggest way SDA has affected me is that it has changed my expectations that I have for myself. I realize that if there is something that I want to learn or change about myself, there is usually a way to incorporate that into an SDA goal. That is an empowering feeling." – Tooele staff member

Of course, there will be resisters, or as Jami refers to them, "showstoppers." They may report week after week that they have not set or achieved any goals. Jami's wise advice?

- Spend your energy cultivating the early adopters and the champions.
- Communicate the expectation clearly, regularly and patiently. Use accountability and reward accordingly.
- As a supervisor, listen, listen, listen to uncover hidden barriers.
- When a showstopper decides to change, just get out of their way.

Jami describes the ripple effect, beginning with the excitement and achievements of the early adopters and extending over time to everyone on staff. Like everyone else, a showstopper wants to be valued and included. With the evidence all around them, the resisters eventually joined the energetic culture of learning at Tooele.

"SDA is nowhere near as scary as I thought it would be. Now I really like SDA...Especially as I get to do more goals and learn more things and expand the ways I can help others."-Library Staff Member

Source:

- Self-Directed Achievement: If you give library staff an hour...
http://www.webjunction.org/events/webjunction/Self_Directed_Achievement.html
 - Includes archived recording of the webinar
 - Links to supporting resources, like the SDA Tracking Template and the slide presentation Jami delivered to her staff to launch the program

Very Pinteresting!

The hot social network is taking educators by storm

By Kate Messner

Everyone's buzzing about Pinterest, a new social media tool that connects people through the things they like—but for a growing number of users in classrooms and media centers, it's fast becoming a powerful resource where teachers and students share images, store lesson plans, read about current events, watch video clips, and collect their favorite apps. Pinterest bills itself as a virtual pinboard that helps users “organize and share all the beautiful things you find on the web.”

Last January, Sarah Ludwig, a tech coordinator at Hamden Hall Country Day School outside New Haven, CT, started using Pinterest to create boards for her racially and economically diverse group of about 560 pre-K to 12th graders. “I use it to mostly promote books and reading,” says Ludwig. “I pin favorite books, book trailers, new books, and upcoming books we plan to buy. I also have one board for research tools and technology resources, and one board that I call ‘things to love’ that just has cute or funny things that I think our students will like.”

Screen shot of one small segment of Ludwig's Research Tools Pinboard:



Her boards include an illustrated guide to the Dewey Decimal system, examples of how to use Glogster for an assignment, a tutorial on keyboard shortcuts, and a tip sheet on correct punctuation use. She also offers Book Trailers, Programming Ideas, and Booktalking: Spring 2012, so students can have quick access to book-talked titles.

High school media specialist Nikki Robertson, who started using Pinterest about seven months ago, is drawn to its visual appeal and uses it mainly as a way to curate resources for colleagues, parents, and the 1,400 students at Auburn High School, an International Baccalaureate/AP school in the university town of Auburn, AL. So far, the response has been positive.

Robertson gives her boards subject headings with links to math, science, social studies, and technology sites. There's even a "Copyright & Fair Use Resources" board, which she uses to help students find appropriate sites for research projects and images. Last February, Robertson introduced Pinterest to her colleagues at an informal professional development coffee gathering that she hosts at school each month. "Our teachers responded enthusiastically," says Robertson, explaining that her special education department has started pinning resources for parents and students to its own board.

Pinterest also creates a new dimension for online book study guides, offering classes and book groups access to discussion questions as well as images, videos, and websites related to books—all on a single board. My Pinterest board for Marty McGuire Digs Worms! (Scholastic, 2012), for instance, includes links to Earth Day activities, articles on composting, and directions for how to set up a worm composting bin, while the resource board for my weather thriller, Eye of the Storm (Walker, 2012), links to tornado videos, discussion questions, articles about weather manipulation, and features on climate change.

Section of the Eye of the Storm Pinterest study guide:

The image shows a section of a Pinterest board for the book "Eye of the Storm". At the top, there are navigation buttons for "Repin", "Like", and "Comment". The board contains several pins:

- Pin 1:** A book cover for "Eye of the Storm" by Kate Messner. The description reads: "Kate Messner's Eye of the Storm is set in a near-term (~2050) future America in which frequent, dangerous storms have changed the way people live." The source is jkrbooks.typepad.com.
- Pin 2:** A photo of a woman speaking at a TED talk. The description is: "Building Dark Worlds to Make a Better One - my TED talk on futuristic fiction, world-building, and imagination." It has 5 repins and the source is blog.ted.com.
- Pin 3:** A photo of a dark, stormy sky. The description is: "NY Times: Poll shows Americans believe there's a link between climate change & extreme weather." The source is nytimes.com.
- Pin 4:** A photo of a landscape with a large, dark storm cloud. The description is: "Weather Modification Incorporated: A real-life company working on weather modification projects around the world. (Click under the globe to see some examples!)" It has 1 repin and the source is weathermodification.com.
- Pin 5:** A photo of a tornado. The description is: "How Tornadoes Work (from How Stuff Works)". It has 2 likes and 7 repins. The source is science.howstuffworks.com.
- Pin 6:** A video thumbnail showing a large, dark storm cloud. The description is: "Tornadoes - Nature's Fury from National Geographic". There is a "CLICK TO ENLARGE" button.
- Pin 7:** A partial view of a pin showing a photo of a storm.

Source: Very Pinteresting! The hot social network is taking educators by storm, <http://www.thedigitalshift.com/2012/07/social-media/very-pinteresting-the-hot-social-network-thats-a-virtual-bulletin-board-is-taking-educators-by-storm/>

The Mobile Effect

By RJ Jacquez

Lesson 1: The Future is Mobile and Mobile Learning



When Apple announced the first iPhone and later the App Store in 2007, we actually began to see the potential and impact mobile would have on our generation. Since then mobile devices and Apps have only gotten better, faster and more innovative, and if there's something the App development community has shown us, time and time again, is that mobile offers new possibilities never possible on PCs. And this precisely how we should think about mLearning as compared to eLearning.

Lesson 2: We are just getting started with mobile and mLearning

We are just barely scratching the surface of what's to come. Amazing right? This is why I'm so excited about what the next few years will bring us and you should be too. This is why if you are an Instructional Designer and you haven't paid much attention to mLearning, you need to start now. Mobile is the future and we must be part of it. For starters, you need to become a mobile user if you aren't already, you need to understand the mobile experience before you can start thinking about delivering the next generation of learning experiences through mobile devices.

Lesson 4: mLearning has vastly more potential than eLearning

I am fully convinced that when you couple the mobility and physicality of mobile, with all the other sensor superpowers inherent in mobile devices (i.e. digital compass, gyroscope, audio, dual cameras, bluetooth, proximity, etc), we will actually create better learning experiences on mobile as compared to what we have today through desktop eLearning. I recommend you hold weekly brainstorming sessions with your teams, where you start to re-imagine your learning on mobile devices.

Lesson 5: Thinking Mobile-first forces you to focus and prioritize

This is an important lesson for all of us transitioning from eLearning, where we have big desktop screens, over to designing for the smaller mobile screens, where screen real estate is at a premium. When you have a limited Canvas to work with, you prioritize and get down to what's really important for your learners and there's no room for all the extra fancy stuff you currently have in your eLearning courses today. I personally think that one of the biggest challenges we will have in this transition will be embracing simplicity, and letting go of all those bells and whistles we have in our eLearning courses today.

Lesson 7: Avoid thinking Desktop-first and Mobile-second

The problem I see with this backward way of thinking is that we will end up adopting HTML5 conversion tools, that promise to simply 'shrink' our eLearning in order to make it available on the iPad. This is simply wrong for so many reasons. Mobile offers an opportunity for all of us to think different, to hit the reset-button if you will.

Lesson 9: Don't wait until you're ready for mLearning, think mobile-first now

My point is that you shouldn't wait until your boss comes to you and says we need a mobile learning strategy, start thinking mobile-first now and become a mobile user yourself now. By doing so, your desktop eLearning will also improve.

Lesson 10: Embrace mobile constraints

And last but certainly not least, in my opinion, Mobile represents the biggest paradigm shift in the history of computing and as such, the transition is not going to be an easy one for any industry, including ours. There are lots of constraints we will need to deal with, but these shortcomings "force us to find new ways of developing learning experiences for mobile users, as well as to embrace new technologies, such as HTML5 and new principles, such as Responsive Web Design and thinking mobile-first." In other words, this change will get us out of our comfort zone and in a way force us to innovate, and that's a great thing.

In closing, here's one of my favorite quotes from Luke's book (Mobile First, Luke Wroblewski):

"Designing for mobile isn't just about embracing limitations, it's also about extending what you can do."

Excerpted from:

10 mLearning Lessons I Learned from Reading Mobile First by Luke Wroblewski [Book Review], <http://rjacquez.com/10-mlearning-lessons-i-learned-from-reading-mobile-first-by-luke-wroblewski-book-review/>