Be a Gardener, Not a Carpenter:
Make Your Class Active Now

Second Edition
For the Smart Learning Conference
in Palestine, March 2017

A Guide for Students and Teachers
With a Link to Neil Postman's
Questions in Arabic

Ahmed Almenei, Mario J. Llorente Leyva
and Steve McCrea (editors)
Contribution by George Couros

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This is the short version of the full workbook (called *Make Your Class Active*).

This version was created for free distribution at the **1st International Conference on Smart Learning for Community Development.**
Here is the description of the conference:
The conference focuses on effective technology-enhanced learning theories, methodologies and tools for a teaching excellence framework in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).
http://dspace.qou.edu/contents/smart/index.html
http://www.conferencealerts.com/show-event?id=179057http://www.conferencealerts.com/show-event?id=179057

Conference
20th March 2017
Ramallah, West Bank, Palestinian Territories

Website:
http://dspace.qou.edu/contents/smart/index.html
Contact person: Mahmoud Hawamdeh

This ebook is a special edition that has been offered for free distribution at the conference. Anyone who registers for the conference is offered this free ebook. The aim is to promote the use of the Postman Questions in higher education.

Look for the Postman Questions at **TINYURL.com/PostmanQuestions**.

Please do what we did:
show the quotes and questions to students and teachers,
build discussions,
then ask for changes in your school.

You can download this electronic book as a PDF at the quick link **TINYURL.com/MakeYourClassActivePalestine**
The format of this short book is 5 x 8.
You can also download the large workbook at **TinyURL.com/MakeYourClassActive**. The format of the large workbook is 8.5 inches by 11 inches
A photo book, 5" by 8", is for students who don't like to read. The quick link is **TinyURL.com/MakeYourClassActiveSTART.**

Instructions: Print or photocopy the pages from the Postman Questions PDF and put those pages on walls or in front of students.

Collect their comments and send the commentaries to ManyPosters@gmail.com
We'll include the commentaries in the next edition of the workbook. You can get the full workbook at **TINYURL.com/MakeYourClassActive**.

The title of this book comes from a talk given by Alison Gopnik about parenting.

Gopnik observes that many parents view their roles as a carpenter, which is to *"shape or mold the child to come out a particular way.* *So your job as a caregiver is to do a bunch of things, acquire a bunch of expertise that will lead to a particular kind of child, which will lead to a particular kind of adult."*

She offers a contrasting example of the gardener, who *"takes care of the garden by creating a meadow which allows a variety of people to flourish."*

"Rather than having a bunch of procedures that let us shape a child to come out a particular way, *what we do when we're taking care of children is* ***to provide a kind of nurturing environment in which lots of different things can happen.*** *If you're a gardener,* ***you know that nothing ever works out the way that you originally planned."***

Gopnik believes that we need this unpredictability to evolve. Her message is aimed at teachers, too. We teachers need to be flexible.

"We need to ***create a system with enough variability and possibility, flexibility, robustness so that when the weather changes or the season changes the garden as a whole will be available to adjust to that kind of change****."*

Gopnik asks us to think about the function of childhood to support evolution. ***"Childhood provides a period of exploration of possibility for human beings so that we can change in the response to changes in our environment. Childhood is about change and caregiving is about providing a safe environment in which that kind of exploration can take place.*** *That's a very different picture than the carpentry kind of parenting or teaching."*

Gopnik's point is that teachers who act as carpenters **try to mold students. These teachers are blocking the evolution of younger people.**

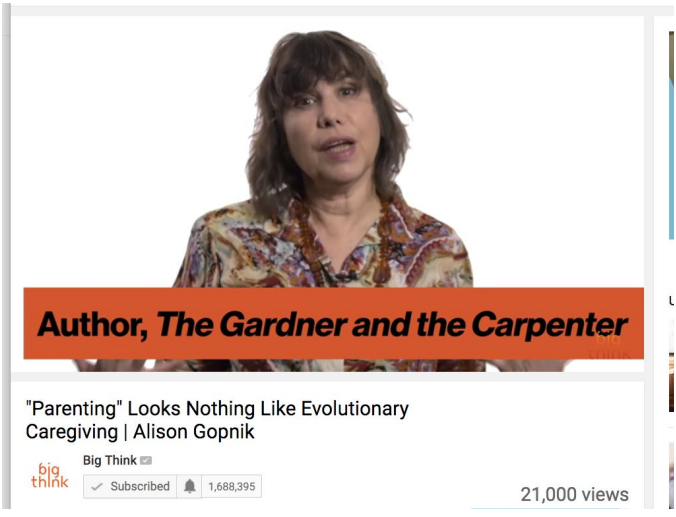
Gopnik warns about the danger of turning the early years of school (before age 7) into "school" (with directed instruction).

"The push to make preschool more like school is really misguided from a scientific perspective. For policy makers it comes because they feel they have to justify their investment in preschool by having school-readiness measures, as if the most important thing about early childhood is how well you're going to do later in school.
The things that come out of play and free exploration, which are things like capacity for creativity and innovation, those are things that we need more than ever in the adult workforce. *It's a bit ironic that we're taking a school system that was designed for 19th-century factory workers to be able to do the same thing over and over again—it was to try to develop human robots.* ***In the 21st century, what we need is innovation and creativity,*** *but we're extending the robot model to younger and younger ages and more and more children."*
-- Alison Gopnik, *Big Think Videos*

Her warning for **"smart learning for community development"** might be *"if you tell students what to study, they might not make the breakthroughs that your community needs to develop new ideas."*

Gopnik concludes, ***"So the gardener picture is more like creating a meadow where there's many, many different kinds of flowers, many different ways of developing. That variety of possibility is what allows the garden to flourish or the meadow to flourish even when things change."***

Search: *"Parenting" Looks Nothing Like Evolutionary Caregiving alison gopnik*



youtube.com/watch?v=eTMpYDqsz2s

The specific recommendation to the Smart Learning for Community Development is **"we need innovation and creativity," so don't be carpenters! Be gardeners and encourage play and free exploration.**

Features of a Good Learner-Centered Approach (LCA) start on page 27.

You can get a free video to guide you:
TinyURL.com/postmanquestionsvideo1
Some of the photos on the next pages show "trees on stone" to suggest the theme of nature overcoming something imposed by people. The natural subversive force can eventually push aside the man-made structures. Perhaps this is an updated image for subversive teaching. Instead of the "apple with the burning wick," seen on the cover of the Postman book, we see the roots pushing through walls and crawling over stones that blocked the growth of the tree.

Photo source: **tinyURL.com/treeonstone**

No more boring classes: We celebrate the anniversary of Neil Postman's book, *Teaching as a Subversive Activity*. We recommend that you start by reading the Wikipedia post at "inquiry education wiki." The core message about "how to make your class active" is printed at the end of this book.

FROM WIKIPEDIA: a teacher adhering to the inquiry method in pedagogy must behave very differently from a traditional teacher. Postman and Weingartner suggest that inquiry teachers have the following characteristics (pp. 34–37):

- They avoid telling students what they "ought to know".
- They talk to students mostly by questioning, and especially by asking divergent questions.
- They do not accept short, simple answers to questions.
- They encourage students to interact directly with one another, and avoid judging what is said in student interactions.
- They do not summarize students' discussion.
- They do not plan the exact direction of their lessons in advance, and allow it to develop in response to students' interests.
- Their lessons pose problems to students.

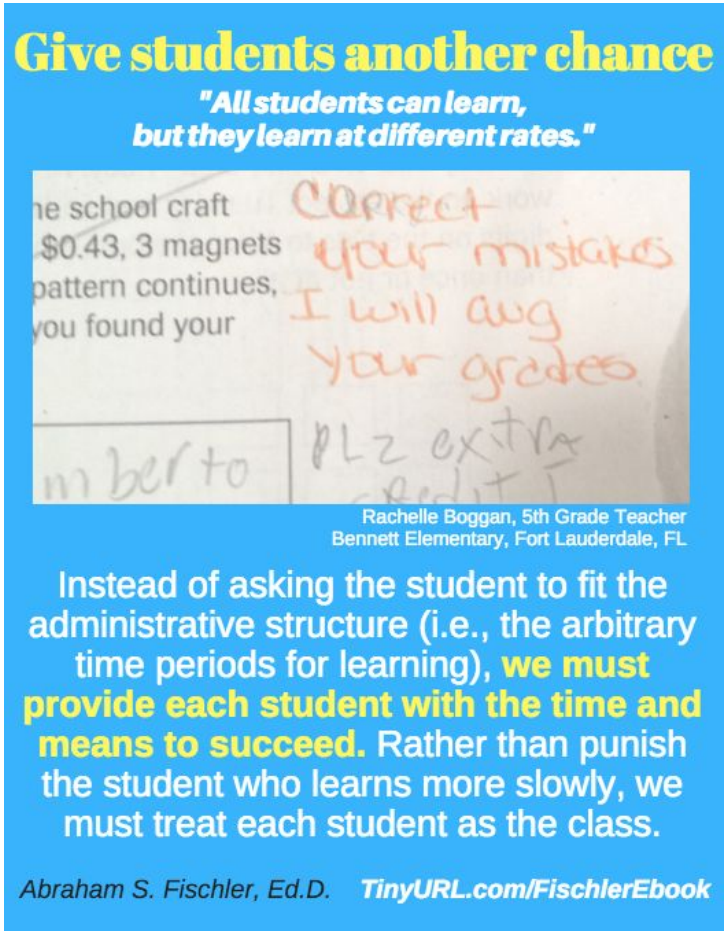
Suggested procedure to update the Postman book: When a student asks a question, invite the student to “google it.”

This image appears in the Wikipedia article on Boredom.

The purposes of this guide are:

a. to inspire students to expect classes to be "engaging" (which means that students need to come to class ready to take over parts of the session)
b. to inspire teachers to be flexible, to use an approach that centers on the learner, and to talk less often
c. Use the Rachelle Boggan procedure: **Give students additional chances to improve their work.** "Time is a variable," as Dr. Fischler puts it in TinyURL.com/Fischlerebook
d. to ask more people to look at Postman's book published in 1969.
e. to ask teachers to download the Postman Questions (*Postman suggested 45 questions for teachers to give to their students), which are at TinyURL.com/PostmanQuestions*

TinyURL.com/PostmanQuestionsArabic
for Arabic speakers

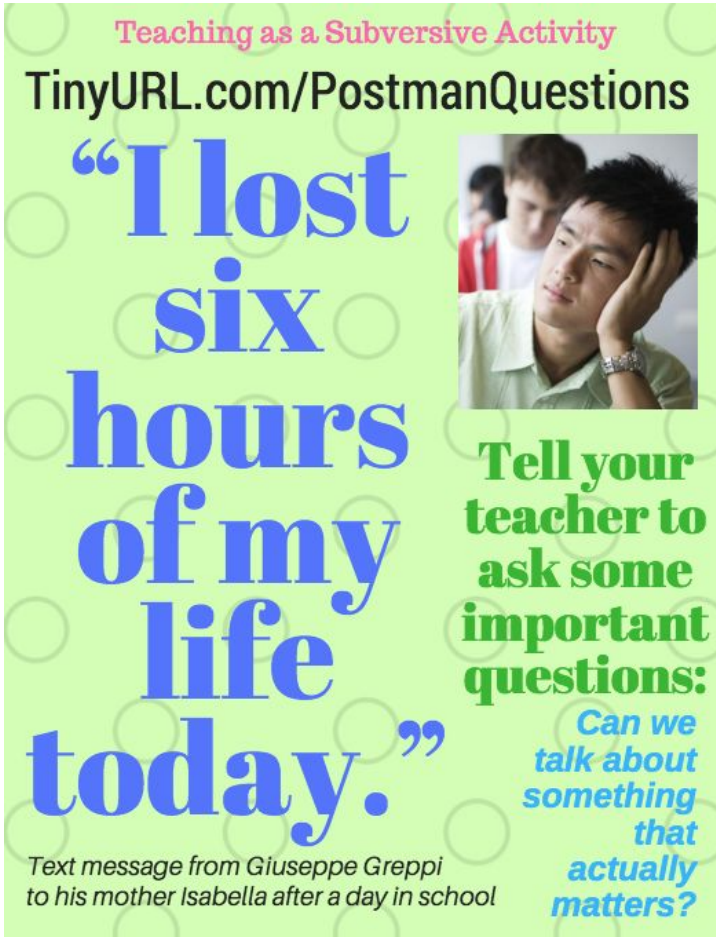


This procedure is used by Rachelle Boggan, a 5th grade teacher in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. The quote comes from Dr. Fischler's ebook (free) at TinyURL.com/Fischlerebook.

No more boring classes

“I lost another 6 hours of my life.”

Text message from Giuseppe Greppi, age 15,
to his mother Isabella after a day in school
(witnessed by Steve in 2012
near Bologna, Italy)



Use Canva.com to create posters.
Use your favorite quotes and ask students to use words from their favorite songs to create posters that you respect. Send photos of posters to ManyPosters@gmail.com and share these posters with other teachers.

Description of the Conference

The Continuing Education Center and Open Education Center at Al-Quds Open University is organizing **The 1st International Conference on "Smart Learning for Community Development."** *The conference will address the use of effective technologies with contemporary teaching methods.*

The two core aims of the conference are:

1. To exchange knowledge and experience in Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) process and bridge the gaps in resources of educational, societal, economic, and demographic sectors.
2. To address the challenges that HEIs face under complicated sociopolitical and economic situations, and to propose Technology

Enhanced Learning (TEL) strategies to resolve these challenges.

Smart learning is built upon critical, reflective and innovative interactions between learners in various environments and contexts. It can be deemed to be a technology-enhanced learning environment, which complies with each learner's need at the right place and time.

The Conference will introduce new teaching theories and research methods, in addition to the new models of Continuous Professional Development (CPD).

The conference welcomes participants with initiatives that highlight the quality aspect in teaching, and promote approaches for effective stimulation to encourage the engagement of students.

By the end of the conference, effective proposals will be discussed, resulting in key strategies that help HEIs deviate from their traditional approach.

TIP TO TEACHERS *who are reading this book:*

*(1) Download the questions at TINYURL.com/PostmanQuestions***

(2) Print the PDF

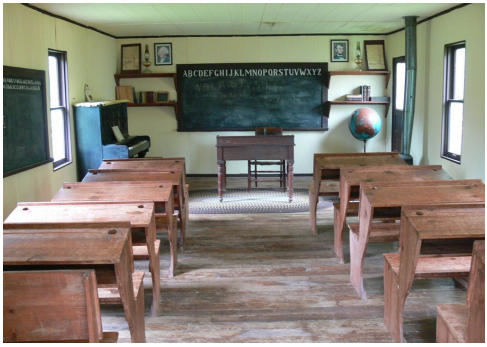
(3) Copy the pages (at least two sets per class)

(4) Leave the pages around your classroom

***Postman suggested 45 questions for teachers to give to their students*

The purpose of teaching is to gradually transfer the responsibility for learning from the teacher to the student.

John Gardner



one-room rural school (with desks, blackboard, books, globe, artwork, stove, piano) in Oklahoma early 20th century
From Wikicommons

Letter to teachers, parents and students

This guide points you to download a collection of quotes and commentaries. Please go now to the Internet and download:
TinyURL.com/PostmanQuestions

You can read this book's chapters in any order. If you want to learn something about the Learner-Centered Approach, start with chapter 4.

If you want to experience the power of Postman's Questions**, start with the procedure in Chapter 8. *(**Postman suggested 45 questions for teachers to give to their students).*

George Couros has some questions (page 43) for teachers to help get you in the mood of "having an open mind." Teachers could start with Chapter 6 and subscribe to George's blog **georgecouros**.ca.
The Principal of Change – Stories of learning and leading **... If we expect everyone to be accountable to the principal or superintendent only, change will take forever….**

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(the list that Ahmed used to evaluate teachers)

What is "LCA"?

About the Authors
Ahmed, Mario, Steve

Letter to the First International Conference on Smart Learning for Community Development

This is the description of the conference's aim: The conference focuses on effective technology-enhanced learning methods for teaching in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

Ahmed, Steve and Mario compiled this short book to describe the "Learner Centered Approach" to students and teachers. Teachers are busy and students generally don't read much. We decided to make a short book so that perhaps some teachers and students might read about an effective approach.

The conference is about "**effective learning theories** that use technology to create excellent teaching." (That's our paraphrasing of the conference's aim.) We propose that the Neil Postman Questions can be translated into Arabic and distributed in schools and universities. This ebook is the first to present a link to an Arabic translation of the Postman Questions.
TinyURL.com/PostmanQuestionsArabic
Please spread the link.

A second version of these questions is available at TinyURL.com/PostmanQuestionsArabic2018 because we hope to publish a revised version of the Postman Questions in Arabic after readers have experiemented with the Postman Questions in schools. Please send your suggestions for additional

questions and for improved translations to ManyPosters@gmail.com.

Thank you for your interest in the Postman Questions and we invite you to look at and participate in the ongoing online conference (blog) about 50 years of Subversive Teaching at **50YearsofSubversiveTeaching.blogspot.com**.

Many thanks to Mahmoud Hawamdeh for arranging for the distribution of the free ebook.

This free ebook is available at the quick link: **TinyURL.com/makeyourclassactivePalestine**

Learn more at tinyurl.com/dspaceedu

THE GOAL

We aim to create a little book that will be translated into Spanish and Arabic.
We hope that the ebook will be shared by students and teachers.

How is technology used in the classroom? Can students search for info on their smartphones?

Source of the Photo: TinyURL.com/treeonstone

1
Gradually transferring responsibility: An Agreement between the Teacher and Students

Let's start by looking at John Gardner's quote.

The ultimate goal of the educational system is **to shift to the individual the burden of pursing his own education.** This will not be a widely shared pursuit until we get over our odd conviction that education is what goes on in school buildings and nowhere else.
John W. Gardner
Read more at:
brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/j/john_w_gardner.html

Do we teachers want to impose this quote on every student? Can we force students to become active (in the way that we sometimes encourage them to participate more)?

We believe the answer is **"No, we can't force people to behave in a certain way."** However, we can reward behavior that we like.

Procedure:

1. Put the posters on the wall. The agreement between the teacher and the students is made through posters.
2. The seating plan is open. There are no rows. It is difficult to tell what is the front of the room. The teacher stands at the back of the room or moves around, sitting in random places.
3. Distribute pens to students. Divide the students into groups of two or three students.
4. Say to each small group, "Let's look at the posters and discuss them in our small groups."
5. "Let's write or discuss our ideas and feelings."
6. To help our discussions of these quotes and questions, let's follow a rule: **Before we add our own thoughts, we can each restate the other person's words so that the previous speaker knows that we understand her.**

2
The Rules of the Class

This is an agreement between students and teacher.

The following points are a summary of the Learner-Centered Approach (LCA)

Teachers talk less. Teaching is listening. Learning is talking.

*(*Dennis Littky, *The Big Picture: Education is Everyone's Business, 2004, page 11)*

The teacher stands at the back of the room or moves around, sitting in random places.

How is technology used in the classroom?

Exercise: look at the photos on the next page.
Which photo shows the teacher as the center?
Which photos show the teacher on the side?
Remedy: Could a student lead the discussion?

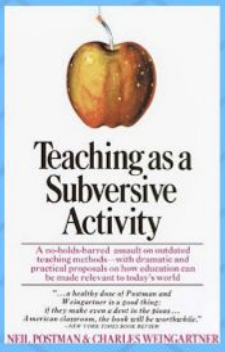
Source: http://melanielinktaylor.mzteachuh.org

Source: http://www.thebetterindia.com/
(it's hard to find the teacher… that's a good sign)

Source: http://studio.eku.edu/

Source: http://theconversation.com/more-technology-doesnt-mean-less-inequality-48180

The challenge to the students is to find out who has produced these facts, how he arrived at them, why they are regarded as important, and by whom.



Only through this kind of scrutiny will the students learn how facts and truth change, depending on the circumstances under which they were produced and described.
Svein Østerud

Join the discussion:
an online conference blog
to celebrate this book

<<<<< Get the ebook
TinyURL.com/50TAASA

50YearsofSubversiveTeaching.blogspot.com

3

A Short Presentation about "The Learner-Centered Approach (LCA)"

What happens when we ask teachers to become "guides on the side" and put the learners in the center of the room?

By Ahmed Almenei

Definition of "Learner Centered" (McCombs & Whisler, 1997)
The perspective that couples **a focus on individual learners** (their heredity, experiences, perspectives, backgrounds, talents, interests, capacities, and needs) with **a focus on learning** (the best available knowledge about learning and how it occurs and about teaching practices that are most effective in promoting the highest levels of motivation, learning, and achievement for all learners).

Definition of Learner-Centered Education (Arizona Faculties Council (AFC))

Learner-centered education places the student at the center of education. It begins with understanding the educational contexts from which a student comes. It continues with the instructor evaluating the student's progress towards learning objectives. By helping the student acquire the basic skills to learn, it ultimately provides a basis for learning throughout life. It therefore places the responsibility for learning on the student, while the instructor assumes responsibility for facilitating the student's education. This approach strives to be individualistic, flexible, competency-based, varied in methodology and not always constrained by time or place.

The goal is to gradually transfer responsibility for learning to the student.

John Gardner

Observations about LCA

How can we apply LCA in our classes?

I'm trying to apply the Learner-Centered Approach as much as I can. To tell the truth, I can't apply it 100% for some reasons:

1. The students need to hold their responsibilities and should be aware about their learning objectives (this needs time).
2. **The content should come from the social context** (that's why we need to transfer knowledge to real situations).
3. Students should be engaged in curriculum development. Students should say, ***"This is what we want to study."***
4. The pacing doesn't consider learners fluctuant ability and readiness.

If we had full power over pacing schedule, we'd pace based on objectives, not number of pages or activities that must be covered in a specific period of time. We'd consider the learner's ability and readiness, too.

Here's how we can apply LCA in our classes:

1. **Students prepare the lesson** prior to class and come to class fully aware about their objectives and expect similar objectives from the teacher.
2. Start the lesson by **asking student to write** in "The Objectives Notebook" **their goals** that they

want to achieve by the end of the lesson. This needs previous preparation by apprentices.
3. When dealing with vocabulary, **teachers don't give the meaning directly to learners.** It is better to let learners guess the meaning from context and then use the dictionary or each other. The last resort is the teacher. **Teachers are the "problem poser" rather than the "problem solver."**
4. Make learners personalize activities. **Be ready to change the context to meet their culture.** Transfer the knowledge and information to real life (i.e. changing information into practical situations).
5. **All learners should be actively involved** in all activities.
6. Be willing to **make changes** if/when things don't go well.
7. Expand knowledge from learners' experiences and knowledge. **Start with the students**, not the textbook.
8. Ask students: **"How did this activity affect your learning?"** "What does it need to change so that if we do it again, we will learn more?"
9. Use questions like **"How much did you learn from this activity?"** (not *"Did you like this activity?"*)
10. Ask, **"What do you remember from this lesson?"**
11. Ask students to write in "The Objectives Notebook" what they want to learn next time.
12. **Students assess themselves** by the end of the lesson using the objectives. They assess themselves again after reaching the end of every

chapter. This will help to achieve objectives and to diagnose their future needs.

Source: TinyURL.com/treeonstone

4
What are the features of a good "Learner Centered Approach"

The Wikipedia Article
From the Wikipedia article associated with *Teaching as a Subversive Activity*

Inquiry education (sometimes known as the **inquiry method**) is a student-centered method of education focused on asking questions. Students are encouraged to ask questions which are meaningful to them, and which do not necessarily have easy answers; teachers are encouraged to avoid giving answers when this is possible, and in any case to avoid giving direct answers in favor of asking more questions. The method was advocated by Neil Postman and Charles Weingartner in their book *Teaching as a Subversive Activity*.

The inquiry method is motivated by Postman and Weingartner's recognition that good learners and sound reasoners center their attention and activity on the dynamic process of inquiry itself, not merely on the end product of static knowledge. They write that certain characteristics are common to all good learners (Postman and Weingartner, 31–33), saying that all good learners have:

- Self-confidence in their learning ability

- Pleasure in problem solving
- A keen sense of relevance
- Reliance on their own judgment over other people's or society's
- No fear of being wrong
- No haste in answering
- Flexibility in point of view
- Respect for facts, and the ability to distinguish between fact and opinion
- No need for final answers to all questions, and comfort in not knowing an answer to difficult questions rather than settling for a simplistic answer

Students asked questions and their teacher, Mario Llorente, refused to answer questions. He kept saying, "Google it." One of the students called him "Mr. GI" and drew this poster.

In an attempt to instill students with these qualities and behaviors, a teacher adhering to the inquiry method in pedagogy must behave very differently from a traditional teacher. Postman and Weingartner suggest that inquiry teachers have the following characteristics (pp. 34–37):

- They avoid telling students what they "ought to know".
- They talk to students mostly by questioning, and especially by asking divergent questions.
- They do not accept short, simple answers to questions.
- They encourage students to interact directly with one another, and avoid judging what is said in student interactions.
- They do not summarize students' discussion.
- They do not plan the exact direction of their lessons in advance, and allow it to develop in response to students' interests.
- Their lessons pose problems to students.
- They gauge their success by change in students' inquiry behaviors (with the above characteristics of "good learners" as a goal).

Features of a Good Learner-Centered Approach (LCA)

- ***Teachers talk less.***
- ***Teaching is listening. Learning is talking.*** *(Dennis Littky)*

- ***The teacher asks, "How is technology used in the classroom? Can students search for info on their smartphones?"***

5
The students are active in their learning.
It's as if the teacher does not exist

This is a short chapter. The purpose of this chapter is to capture the reader's attention.

How do you define an approach that is centered on the learners in the room?

Take two minutes now to answer these two questions:
What is a learner-centered approach to teaching?
What procedures will you see in a classroom that puts the learners in the center of the action?

There are checklists at the end of the book. You can look at the Wikipedia article in the previous chapter. This book claims to be about "putting the learner at the center of the action" How about you, the reader? Where are you? **Are you passively looking at these words?** Or did you find a pen and are you now making a list of the ***"actions that a teacher should take to put the learner in the center of the classroom's activity"?***

What are you thinking about right now?

The seating plan is open.
There are no rows.

It is difficult to tell what is the front of the room.

Source of the Photo: tinyurl.com/sundesks

Part 2: How do we apply these ideas?

The teacher stands at the back of the room or moves around, sitting in random places.

Where's the teacher?

The Learner-Centered Approach

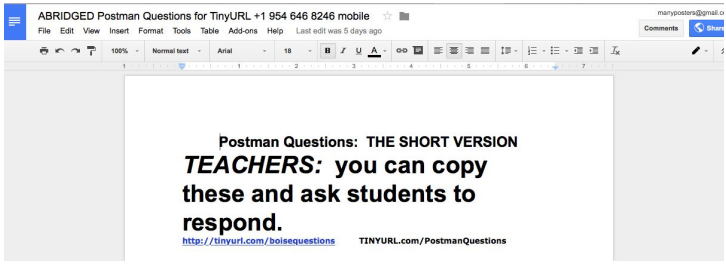
Source of the Photo: TinyURL.com/treeonstone

Print these posters at tinyurl.com/suncanva

6
Download the Postman Questions

TinyURL.com/PostmanQuestions

Did you download the Postman questions?



Did you print the questions and prepare to distribute these questions to students?

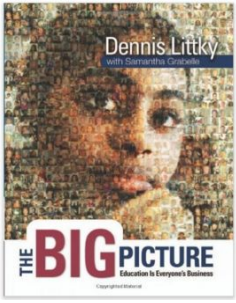
To build the right atmosphere in the classroom, put the following quotes on the wall.

Teachers talk less.

Source: BetterIndia.com

Teaching is listening.
Learning is talking.

(Dennis Littky, *The Big Picture: Education is Everyone's Business*, 2004, page 11)



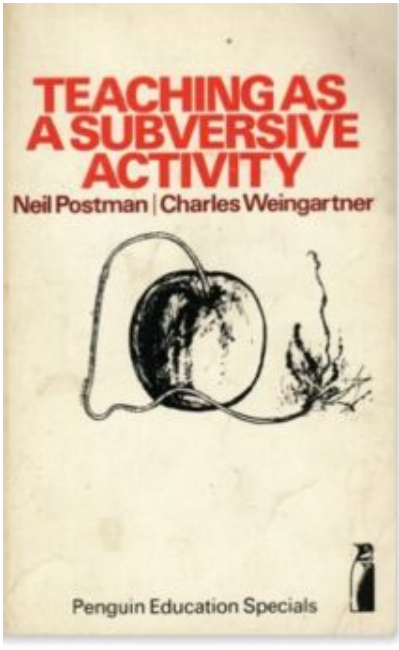
The Big Picture

By Dennis Littky

"The best way to create a positive school culture, with a supportive, nurturing atmosphere, is to start by creating a small school. The research has shown over and over again that ***students in small schools perform better in math and science*** *and have better attitudes towards learning, lower dropout rates, better attendance"* *(page 66).*

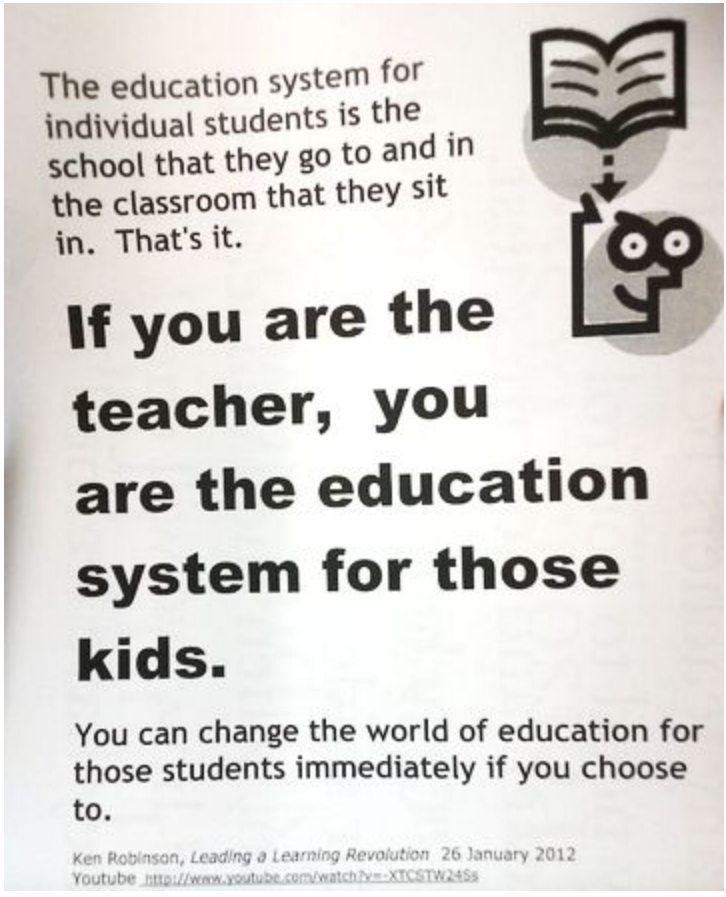
Teaching as a Subversive Activity

by Neil Postman



“Try listening to your students for a day or two. We do not mean reacting to what they say. We mean listening. If you are like most teachers, your training has probably not included learning how to listen.

The principal reason for your learning how to listen to students is that you may increase your understanding of what the students perceive as relevant. **The only way to know where a kid is 'at' is to listen to what he is saying.** You can't do this if you are talking.” (Chapter 12, page 168).



From a video message by Ken Robinson (who has a TED talk with 41 million views in November 2016)

Some responses

When the Postman Questions were unveiled at a school in Miami in October 2016, one of the students said, "I want to write about something else." The teacher agreed and this is the essay that the student produced.

What separates our generations? Standardized testing

By Cariann E. Fay, 12th Grade at a public school in Southeast Florida.

Up until 5th grade, everyone should learn the same thing, with one or two exceptions such as foreign languages and a specialization for arts, such as orchestra or painting or dance. By this point, students should be able to pick and choose what type of specialized school they would like to attend: A science-based school, an arts school, a linguist school or veterinarian school, for example. Until the eighth grade, this school is not a permanent choice and can be easily changed. When high school is reached, the student works for some type of degree and schools can be

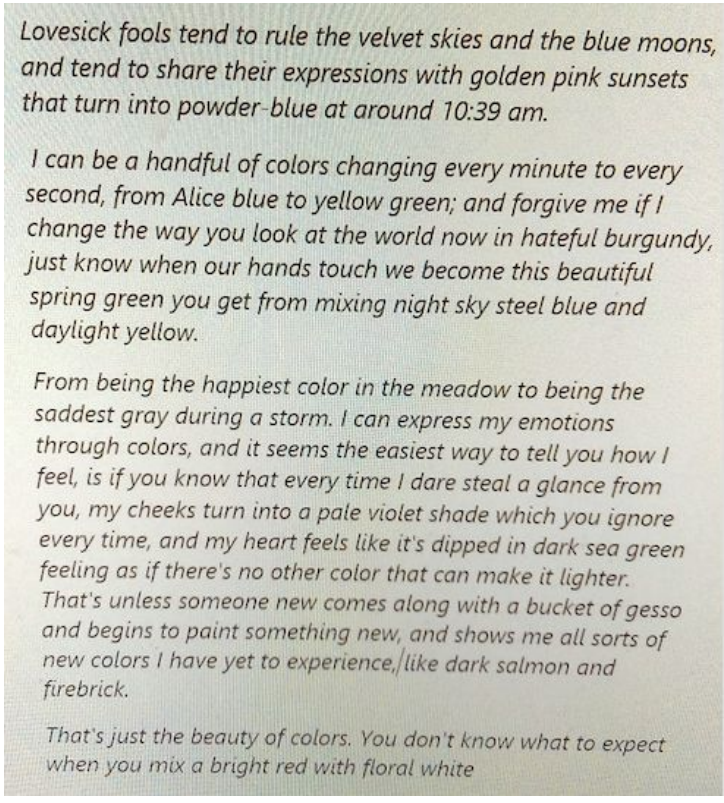
changed, but students must audition to get in rather than be simply accepted. In this way, school is specialized for each student and each individual will be able to truly discern what they believe is worthwhile for their studies.

The thing that separates our generation from all others is the educational focus on standardized tests, which the inventor of said, *"These tests are too crude to use and should be abandoned."* These tests are made to memorize the answers and give a textbook response. That is no education. **Education is truly understanding the material and being able to discern what you think is the right answer from a vast sea of knowledge.**

This opinion was posted on a blog.
http://voicesthatwewonthear.blogspot.com/2016/10/heres-what-separates-our-generations.html

You can read more responses at **VoicesThatWeWontHear.blogspot.com**

Here is a creative piece that was turned in because this project was started. "You asked me to write about my thoughts. Here is what came to me."



Lovesick fools tend to rule the velvet skies and the blue moons, and tend to share their expressions with golden pink sunsets that turn into powder-blue at around 10:39 am.

I can be a handful of colors changing every minute to every second, from Alice blue to yellow green; and forgive me if I change the way you look at the world now in hateful burgundy, just know when our hands touch we become this beautiful spring green you get from mixing night sky steel blue and daylight yellow.

From being the happiest color in the meadow to being the saddest gray during a storm. I can express my emotions through colors, and it seems the easiest way to tell you how I feel, is if you know that every time I dare steal a glance from you, my cheeks turn into a pale violet shade which you ignore every time, and my heart feels like it's dipped in dark sea green feeling as if there's no other color that can make it lighter. That's unless someone new comes along with a bucket of gesso and begins to paint something new, and shows me all sorts of new colors I have yet to experience, like dark salmon and firebrick.

That's just the beauty of colors. You don't know what to expect when you mix a bright red with floral white

Daniela R. Espinoza
Bridgeport Charter School, Miami, Fla.

7
Questions for Teachers

A Contribution by George Couros, blogger at The Principal of Change – Stories of learning and leading **georgecouros**.ca/
I originally posted "5 Critical Questions for the Innovative Educator" in September of 2014. Here are the original five questions that I still think are crucial:

Would I want to be a learner in my own classroom?
What is best for this student?
What is this student's passion?
What are some ways that we can create a true learning community?
How did this work for our students?

As I have learned a lot in the past few years on this topic, here are some other questions that I think are crucial to innovation in education:

1. How can we be innovative given the constraints that we have to work within? The best way to deal constraints is to first identify that they are there. Yes, you have to teach a curriculum. Yes, you will be limited in money. No, the walls in your building will not be shifted. Identify the constraints and then think how you can work within them. The curriculum can be brought to life and what you teach can go way beyond what static documents will tell you. When you are thinking of constraints, I always use the Vine example. A lot of people looked at the video service Vine and they asked, "What could you possibly do with 6 seconds?" where others said, "You should see what I can do with 6 seconds." Same constraint, different thinking.

2. Is this better than what we have had before? As you evaluate what you are doing in class, it is essential to identify whether this is actually better than what has been done before. If not, it is not innovation, it is simply change for the sake of change. Has your thinking created something that is

creating better learning and opportunities for those you serve? What measures are you using to identify this (please go beyond test scores)? We can't really identify if it was innovative or not unless we identify if it is better than what we are doing before.

3. How do we share this with others?
Now if what you are doing is better than what you had before (see question 2), shouldn't others know about it? Not just in your own school, but around the world. The power of sharing is that it not only benefits the students, but it benefits the "sharer." If I know that anyone in the world can see my stuff, it makes me think a lot deeper about what I am sharing. Make great learning go viral.

Innovation always starts with questions, not answers. Do these questions lead you to move forward, or fall behind?

From the blog by George Couros

http://georgecouros.ca/blog/archives/4789

THE POWER OF ONE CLICK: Please post this link to your Facebook page.

>> http://georgecouros.ca/blog/archives/4789

Quicklink: **TinyURL.com/teachgeorge**

The story behind these questions: The editors found the blog by George Couros and wrote to him:

Dear George,

The Postman questions come from Neil Postman's book. Some additional quotes have been added to ask for students to respond. We'd like to add your questions to the list. is that okay?

His reply:

No problem :)

Sincerely,
George Couros
Georgecouros.ca The Innovator"s Mindset (The Book)

8
The Procedure

The procedure used by Mario Llorente to distribute the Postman Questions in September 2016.

DO NOT announce the project to the whole class. *The purpose is for the students to discuss. This is a "whisper campaign." Let the students know individually that their responses to these questions is VERY IMPORTANT and you are planning to put their answers into a book and on websites, either with their names or anonymously, whatever they want, or their responses can be kept off the Internet. But you can whisper that "this is very important."*

Start by downloading the Postman Questions.

www.TINYURL.com/postmanquestions

Step 1: Print the questions. For a class of 20-30 students, make two copies of each question.

Step 2: Find the sheet that reads ***"Rules for Replying to the Postman Questions"***

The sheet has these points:

[1] You can decide to do this now, or you can wait until later next week.
[2] You can write now or you can take the question home with you.
[3] If you want, you can look at the internet to get some more ideas before you start replying.
[4] I can send you the full list of questions if you want to see them.
[5] If you want to do this, please take your time and there is no time limit.

Step 3: Spread the questions on a desk. Assign classwork so that the students are occupied. Ideally, you already use projects in your class and the students *are working as if you don't exist* (Maria Montessori's goal). Call one student at a time to your desk and speak quietly. Inform each student with the following message:

"This is an optional activity. you don't have to do it. If you put effort into your answer, I'll give you academic credit. The purpose is to introduce you to questions that a great teacher asked me to give to you. You can decide to do this now, or you can wait until later next week. You can write now or you can take the question home with you. If you want, you can look at the internet to get some more ideas before you start replying. I can send you the full list of questions if you want to see them. If you want to do this, please take your time and there is no time limit. If you don't see something that you want to write about, you can write about anything that you want to write about. I'll give you academic credit for your essay."

Step 4: When the students submit their answers, then you take photos of each piece and insert the answers in a book. Collect the answers and create a book of **"Responses to the Neil Postman Questions."** You can see examples of the first edition with writings by Mario's students by going to **TinyURL.com/BoiseWorkbook2**.

This procedure was first described in the blog 50YearsofSubversiveTeaching.blogspot.com

For teachers in Higher Education institutions, The impulse is to lecture. After all, that's why teachers were hired: to convey information.

However, the word "education" = ***e + ducare*** "out" and "leading" or "leading out."

Dennis Littky bigpicture.org

Part 3: More Information

Source: TinyURL.com/treeonstone

The following form can be used by students to evaluate their teachers.

Teachers can record themselves and evaluate their performance.

The Checklist

Classroom Observation Form

Observer:
Teacher:
Number of students:

Date and Time:
Class/Level of Students:
___ M ___F

Major focus of observation (collaborative/formative supervision)
Area of strength:

Area where suggestions would be welcome:

On Board:

Seating Chart and Student Participation:
(Mark following next to each student who participates:
A - Answered; AG – Answered with extended language; VA – Volunteered A
Q – Asked question; VQ – Volunteered Q

(Draw a layout of the desks here)

_____ Number of students who talked
_____ Number of students who volunteered
_____ Number of students who asked questions
_____ Number of students who generated language

Examples of Questions teacher asked:

Recall

Comprehension

Summary

Opinion/Evaluation

Examples of Answers students provided:

One word or brief

Repetition or paraphrase

Student-generated with examples, reasons, etc.

Examples of Student Volunteered Questions:

Examples of Student Volunteered Answers:

Pair or small group work - how often and approximate time:

Student engagement/participation

Activities that include the following skills:
Listening:

Speaking:

Reading:

Writing:

Lesson Progression (Mark all 1-5, with 5 being excellent, or N/A)

Introduction						
Reviewed previous class	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Provided lesson objectives	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Provided overall schedule/agenda	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Comments:						
Presentation						
Introduced topic and materials	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Previewed vocabulary	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Checked background knowledge	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Explained new concepts	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Responded to students' questions	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Checked students' comprehension	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Comments:						
Practice						
Gave clear directions	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Modeled practice activities	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Used variety of grouping patterns	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Monitored students during group work	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Used variety of activities	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Comments:						
Application						
Provided time for students to apply what they learned	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Gave students time to share work	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Comments:						
Evaluation						
Provided some student evaluation	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Gave students opportunity to evaluate	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Comments:						

Closing

Reviewed class/Used closing activity	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Offered students opportunity to ask Qs	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Provided materials for review	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Assigned task for further development	1	2	3	4	5	NA

Comments:

Overall

Used effective classroom management	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Used variety of activities	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Used variety of materials	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Integrated 4 skills: L, S, R, and W	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Used board/technology effectively	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Provided student feedback	1	2	3	4	5	NA

Direct correction Examples:

Indirect modeling Examples:

Missed opportunities Examples:

Other Comments:

Crandall, 2009: Adapted from Young, S. with Marshall, B. (2008). *Observing and providing feedback to teachers of adults learning English*. Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics.

How to use the form on the previous pages

Students: This is how to evaluate your teacher
Teacher: This is how to evaluate yourself.
Are you in fact an "inquiry teacher"
(as defined in the wikipedia article)?

Academic Observation Form

Teacher :	
Observer:	
Observation Date:	

PREPARATION AND CONTENT ORGANIZATION		
1	**Started class on time**	
2	**Took attendance at the start of class period**	
3	**Wrote objectives, date, textbook, lesson #, page#, level #, and group # on the board**	
4	**E-learning materials and audio-visual aids were prepared before class started**	
5	**Had a lesson plan**	
Comments		

WARM UP, PRESENTATION

1	Stated lesson objectives clearly	
2	Started with an appropriate warm-up procedure	
Comments		

PRACTICE, PRODUCTION, INTERACTION

1	Enhanced Learner-centeredness by maintaining a suitable ratio of Student Talk Time (STT) (50+) vs Teacher Talk Time (TTT)	
2	Used English correctly (fluency, grammar, pronunciation)	
3	Kept all participants actively and equally involved	
4	Modeled effectively and students repeated for practice	
5	Checked participants' comprehension	
6	Used class time effectively	
7	Showed all steps in solutions to problems	
8	Presented material at a level appropriate for the students and used understandable language	
9	Observed cultural appropriateness	
10	Conducted pair/group work activities properly	
11	Encouraged self and peer-correction	
12	Corrected studentsâ€™ errors effectively	
13	Reinforced studentsâ€™ correct responses	

14	Allowed time for studentsâ€™ questions	
15	Made clear and easily understood sketches and drawings (math, science, clerical, computer training, and safety)	
16	Used non-verbal communication/body language appropriately	
17	Maintained appropriate eye contact with students	
18	Diagrams, equations, exercises were written clearly on board (math and science)	
19	Used pertinent handouts and flash cards in an easy way to follow	
20	Used examples (oral/written) of his/her own	
21	Used sequential instruction	
22	Boosted students' interest by using motivational techniques	
23	Oriented exercises and activities to the course objectives	
24	Followed-up on students' work in SDL and showed evidence	
25	Used and encouraged students to use English all through class	
26	Clearly stated directions for collaborative activities	
27	Displayed, reviewed and reinforced objectives for lesson and collaborative activities	

28	Used balanced classroom interaction techniques, particularly questioning,	
	personalizing, summarizing, comprehension checks, repetition, modeling, and help	
Comments		

CLASS MANAGEMENT AND POLICIES

1	Maintained discipline	
2	Maintained attendance and performance records	
Comments		

CLOSURE/FOLLOW UP

1	Concluded lesson on time	
2	Summarized and got feedback from students	
3	Assigned and checked homework	
Comments		

USE OF TECHNOLOGY

1	Used technology appropriately (e-books, LCD projector, interactive white board/Smartboard (e-board), PowerPoint slide show, video recording, smartphones, apps, etc)	
2	Checked and followed up on students' work	
3	Used the interactive board effectively	

4	**Used the classroom computer and LCD projector effectively**	
5	**Students used classroom/CAI computers effectively for group work**	
6	**CAI class was conducted effectively and appropriately**	
Comments		

SAFETY

1	**Ensured classroom was tidy and clean**	
2	**Reinforced safety rules, regulations, and work procedures as appropriate**	
3	**Used classroom equipment safely and effectively**	
Comments		

Observer's Comments:

Recommendation for Professional Development:

Discussion:

Teacher's Comments:

What is LCA? The Learner-Centered Approach

by Ahmed Almenei

DEFINITIONS, REASONS, & PREMISES

Definition of "Learner Centered Approach" (McCombs & Whisler, 1997)
The perspective that couples a focus on individual learners (their heredity, experiences, perspectives, backgrounds, talents, interests, capacities, and needs) with a focus on learning (the best available knowledge about learning and how it occurs and about teaching practices that are most effective in promoting the highest levels of motivation, learning, and achievement for all learners). This dual focus then informs and drives educational decision making. The learner-centered perspective is a reflection of the twelve learner-centered psychological principles in the programs, practices, policies, and people that support learning for all.

Definition of Learner-Centered Education (Arizona Faculties Council (AFC))
Learner-centered education places the student at the center of education. It begins with understanding the educational contexts from which a student comes. It continues with the instructor evaluating the student's progress towards learning objectives. By helping the student acquire the basic skills to learn, it ultimately provides a basis for learning throughout life. It therefore places the responsibility for learning on the student, while the instructor assumes responsibility for facilitating the student's education. This approach strives to be individualistic, flexible, competency-based, varied in methodology and not always constrained by time or place.

What is the Difference between "Student Centered" and "Learner Centered"?
It depends -- on perspective and timing. Both terms have been used during the 1990s but there seems to be a shift to "learner" from "student." We are all learners (student, faculty, citizen) and the term is more inclusive. Some say student centered focuses more on the support services (e.g., getting enrolled, getting advised) and learner centered focuses more on the actual learning processes and class activities. Both cover all aspects and allow for much broader definitions of the learning environment.

Why learner centered? (McCombs & Whisler, 1997)
The evidence is abundant and accumulating that motivation, learning, and achievement
are enhanced where learner-centered principles and practices are in place — practices that address the personal domain, which is often ignored.
The benefits of learner-centered practice extend to students, teachers, administrators, parents, and all other participants in the educational system.
The changes in our society necessitate a change in the role and function of schools so that they better meet the needs of the learner as a whole person, whether that person is a student, teacher, administrator, or parent. Change itself requires a transformation in thinking (and thus a process of learning); this transformation can be facilitated by an understanding of basic principles about learning and learners.

Premises of the Learner-Centered Model (McCombs & Whisler, 1997)
1. Learners are distinct and unique. Their distinctiveness and uniqueness must be attended to and taken into account if learners are to engage in and take responsibility for their own learning.
2. Learners' unique differences include their emotional states of mind, learning rates, learning styles, stages of development, abilities, talents, feelings of efficacy, and other academic and nonacademic attributes and needs. These must be

taken into account if all learners are to be provided with the necessary challenges and opportunities for learning and self-development.

3. Learning is a constructive process that occurs best when what is being learned is relevant and meaningful to the learner and when the learner is actively engaged in creating his or her own knowledge and understanding by connecting what is being learned with prior knowledge and experience.

4. Learning occurs best in a positive environment, one that contains positive interpersonal relationships and interactions, that contains comfort and order, and in which the learner feels appreciated, acknowledged, respected, and validated.

5. Learning is a fundamentally natural process; learners are naturally curious and basically interested in learning about and mastering their world. Although negative thoughts and feelings sometimes interfere with this natural inclination and must be dealt with, the learner does not require "fixing."

From Teaching to Learning—A New Paradigm for Undergraduate Education (excerpts) by Robert B. Barr & John Tagg. Change, November/December 1995, pp. 13-25.

The Instruction Paradigm—Mission and Purposes	**The Learning Paradigm—Mission and Purposes**
• Provide/deliver instruction • Transfer knowledge from faculty to students • Offer courses and programs • Improve the quality of instruction • Achieve access for diverse students	• Produce learning • Elicit student discovery and construction of knowledge • Create powerful learning environments • Improve the quality of learning • Achieve success for diverse students
The Instruction Paradigm—Teaching/Learning Structures	**The Learning Paradigm—Teaching/Learning Structures**
• Atomistic; parts prior to whole • Time held constant, learning varies • 50 minute lecture, 3-unit course • Classes start/end at same time • One teacher, one classroom • Independent disciplines, departments • Covering material • End-of-course assessment • Grading within classes by instructors • Private assessment • Degree equals accumulated credit hours	• Holistic; whole prior to parts • Learning held constant, time varies • Learning environments • Environment ready when student is • Whatever learning experience works • Cross discipline/department collaboration • Specific learning results • Pre/during/post assessments • External evaluations of learning • Public assessment • Degree equals demonstrated knowledge and skills
The Instruction Paradigm—Learning Theory	**The Learning Paradigm—Learning Theory**
• Knowledge exists "out there" • Knowledge comes in "chunks" and "bits" delivered by instructors • Learning is cumulative and linear • Fits the storehouse of knowledge metaphor • Learning is teacher centered and controlled • "Live" teacher, "live" students required • The classroom and learning are competitive and individualistic	• Knowledge exists in each person's mind and is shaped by individual experiences • Knowledge is constructed, created, and "gotten" • Learning is a nesting and interacting of frameworks • Fits learning how to ride a bicycle metaphor • Learning is student centered and controlled • "Active" learner is required, but not "live" teacher
• Talent and ability are rare	• Learning environments and learning are cooperative, collaborative, and supportive • Talent and ability are abundant
The Instruction Paradigm—Nature of Roles	**The Learning Paradigm— Nature of Roles**
• Faculty are primarily lecturers • Faculty and students act independently and in isolation • Teachers classify and sort students • Staff serve/support faculty and the process of instruction • Any expert can teach • Line governance; independent actors	• Faculty are primarily designers of learning methods and environments • Faculty and students work in teams with each other and other staff • Teachers develop every student's competencies and talents • All staff are educators who produce student learning and success • Empowering learning is challenging and complex • Shared governance; teamwork

Comparison of Conventional and Learner-Centered School Level Characteristics (McCombs & Whisler, 1997)

Non-Learner-Centered (Conventional) Focus	Learner-Centered Focus
Relationships are hierarchical, blaming, controlling.	**Relationships** are caring and promote positive expectations and participation.
Curriculum is fragmented, nonexperiential, limited, and exclusive of multiple perspectives.	**Curriculum** is thematic, experiential, challenging, comprehensive, and inclusive of multiple perspectives.
Instruction focuses on a narrow range of learning styles, builds from perceptions of student deficits, and is authoritarian.	**Instruction** focuses on a broad range of learning styles; builds from perceptions of student strengths, interests, and experiences; and is participatory and facilitative.
Grouping is tracked by perceptions of ability; promotes individual competition and a sense of alienation.	**Grouping** is not tracked by perceptions of ability; promotes cooperation, shared responsibility, and a sense of belonging.
Evaluation focuses on a limited range of intelligences, utilizes only standardized tests, and assumes only one correct answer.	**Evaluation** focuses on multiple intelligences, utilizes authentic assessments, and fosters self-reflection.

33 Ways to Make Your Classroom More Learner-Centered (Weimer, 2002)

The KEY questions to ask yourself: What is it my students need to know and be able to do during their professional lives? What skills and knowledge will stand the test of time, given the dynamic nature of knowledge and information?

The Syllabus

• Allow students to have input into entire syllabus. Students interview each other about what they want to learn and teacher puts that information on the board/newsprint. Teacher brings a DRAFT syllabus to the class and distributes. Given all this, how should the course be revised?

• Give a quiz on the syllabus, individually and then in pairs and then the whole class. Don't count the quiz as part of the student's grade.

• Introduce assignments by having students get out syllabus and read it.

The First Day & Week of Class

• Discuss classroom climate the first day of class. Have students talk about a class in which they learned a lot and one where they didn't learn much. Have them free write on the conditions that

could create a good learning climate. Have students complete sentence stems relating to climate written on newsprint and placed around the room. Revisit whatever principles are developed and assess their presence, absence, and quality of the condition.

• Have students decide which assignments they will complete--teacher may make some mandatory, provides specifics about the assignments, including due dates.

• Have students write a short paper at the beginning of the term/semester outlining why they are taking the course and what they want to learn and the content that might help them accomplish these learning goals. Share in small groups and then prioritize a list of topics.

• Develop and prioritize a list of skills and awarenesses that students need to be successful with the content of this course

Class Structure

• Use the class content to cover learning skills and to promote a self-awareness of learning.

• Use short activities routinely.

• Utilize learning center staff.

• Use supplementary materials -- note taking, learning style inventories, etc.

• Teach students how to read the texts.

• Let students learn how to summarize--don't do it for them--by writing short summaries or possible test questions at the end of class.

• With small groups, have them think and write about successful/unsuccessful groups of which they've been members. Best and worst experiences studying in groups. What gifts and liabilities do they bring to a group? Use an inventory to assess students' attitudes about working in a group.
• Have students provide the illustrations/examples, not the teacher.
• Write concepts on the board that arise during discussion and have students make connections while you draw arrows between.
• Use matrices and concept mapping. You'll need to take the time to teach students how to do both of these.

Assignments
• Have students discuss the details of an assignment.
• Have students self assess own work before submitting it.
• Allow time for students to discuss how their projects are going, while they are in the midst of doing them.
• Allow time for students to debrief their experiences--exams, projects, and papers--and write their own suggestions for next time.

Assessments
• Have students determine the content of the review sessions--topics and specific questions.

• Have students develop a plan for studying for the upcoming exam -- with a timeline and list of activities.
• Leave one question blank on the exam. Have students write a question that was anticipated but not asked and answer it.
• Have students process "what can I learn from my exam results?" -- What questions from lecture, book, etc.; which ones did they miss; why? Do a free write for themselves about what they should remember when preparing for the next exam. Begin the review session for the next test by having them read what they've written.
• Ask students to meet individually with you if they do poorly on the exam. Use the meeting to have students do self-analysis about what worked and didn't work.
• Debrief the exam in ways that promote learning -- "show me why you think that answer was correct" -- discuss/debate it; maybe give some points.
• Have students self-assess their level of participation in the class.

Feedback
• Solicit feedback early and often. Don't wait until the end of the term.
• Have students complete a "start", "stop", "and continue" feedback sheet on the class.
• Use questions like "talk to me about how much and how well you learned from this activity?" not "did you like this activity?"

• Ask students, "What do you remember from this course?" (or from yesterday's or last week's class)
• Ask students: "how did this activity affect your learning?" "What about it needs to change so that if we do it again, you will learn more?"

The Balance of Power (Weimer, 2002)
• Students have input into selection of textbook -- for example, teacher selects five possibilities from which a group of students makes a recommendation.
• Students decide which assignments they will complete -- teacher may make some mandatory, provides specifics about the assignments, including due dates.
• Students set due dates and deadlines for major group projects. Students identify the major steps that need to be completed and when they need to be done in order to complete the assignment. They also include the parts of the assignment about which they would like formal feedback with associated dates. Students identify penalties if deadlines are missed.
• Students, at first working in small groups, establish participation policy for the course.
• Students determine the content of the review sessions--topics and specific questions.
• Teacher does not lecture on content covered in the text -- uses class as a discussion section.
• Students make significant decisions about what content will be covered in the class--teacher

provides a list of possible topics from which students select.

• Students write a short paper at the beginning of the term/semester outlining why they are taking the course and what they want to learn and the content that might help them accomplish these learning goals. Share in small groups and then prioritize a list of topics.

• Students have input into entire syllabus. Students interview each other about what they want to learn and teacher puts that information on the board/newsprint. Teacher brings a DRAFT syllabus to the class and distributes. Given all this, how should the course be revised?

• Students develop a plan for studying for the upcoming exam--with a timeline and list of activities.

• Students grade each other's work using templates.

Implementing the Learner-Centered Approach (Weimer, 2002)

• Talk about why you are teaching this way. Focus on how the teacher and students want the same thing -- a course worth the money they've paid for.

• Use questions like "talk to me about how much and how well you learned from this activity?" not "did you like this activity?"

• Be encouraging. This approach will cause some students (and teachers) to be frustrated.

• Allow time for students to discuss how their projects are going, while they are in the midst of doing them.
• Allow time for students to debrief their experiences--exams, projects, and papers--and write their own suggestions for next time.
• Be willing to make changes if/when things don't go well.
• Ask, "What do you remember from this course?"
• Sequence educational activities in an order that facilitates growth.
• Use matrices and concept mapping. You'll need to take the time to teach students how to do both of these.
• Use matrices to help students break large tasks into steps, sequence the steps (with approximate time needed to complete the step), and assign to individuals with specifics about what is to be done (if it's a small group project).
• Be aware -- write a one-page paper describing how you teach -- try to make be sure that is neutral and self-descriptive. You will find that you can't separate out the emotional aspect of teaching.
• Devise your own feedback mechanisms.
• Solicit feedback early and often. Don't wait until the end of the term.
• Ask students: "How did this activity affect your learning?" "What about it needs to change so that if we do it again, you will learn more?"
• Pick your instructional peer collaborators carefully.

References

Learner Centered Education Links

Background Reading

Learner-Centered Psychological Principles: A Framework for School Reform and Redesign Website created by the American Psychological Association. apa.org/ed/lcp2/

The Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education Developed by Arthur W. Chickering and Zelda F. Gamson.
http://ag.arizona.edu/azlearners/aahe-7principles.html

Powerful Partnerships: A Shared Responsibility for Learning A joint report by the American Association for Higher Education, the American College Personnel Association, and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators http://www.aahe.org/teaching/tsk_frce.htm

Navigating the Bumpy Road to Student-Centered Instruction Richard M. Felder, Department of Chemical Engineering, North Carolina State University Rebecca Brent, School of Education, East Carolina University http://www2.ncsu.edu/unity/lockers/users/f/felder/public/Papers/Resist.html

"Guiding" Students to Learning from ACADEMIC PROGRAMS by the Office of the Associate Dean Vol. 5 No. 3 http://w3.aces.uiuc.edu/Acad-Prog/mar01.shtml

How Much Content? Are We Asking The Wrong Question? by Mary L. Beaudry, Director, Faculty Teaching Center, University of Massachusetts Lowell from the National Teaching & Learning Forum Vol 9, no. 4 http://ctl.stanford.edu/teach/NTLF/v9n4/content.htm

Examples from Other Institutions

Arizona Learner Centered Education http://ag.arizona.edu/azlearners/

Comprehensive site with links to what the three public universities in Arizona are doing with learner centered education.
Toward Becoming a Learner-Centered College System Article by Paul A. Elsner describing the transformation of the Maricopa Community College District to a learning organization.
http://www.dist.maricopa.edu/users/elsner/Chapter.html
Transforming Higher Education: Excellence Within a Culture of Innovation Article by Kathryn Holleque describing reform efforts at Valley City State University.
http://community.vcsu.edu/facultypages/kathryn_holleque/LS99_files/LSR.htm
The Seven Principles of Good Practice: What is being done at Winona State University to make the Seven Principles happen. http://www.winona.msus.edu/president/seven.htm
Learner-Centered Teaching from the Instructional Guide for University Faculty at Northern Illinois University http://www3.niu.edu/facdev/resources/guide/GuideC.pdf (downloads as a PDF)

Books

Grunert, J. (2000). The course syllabus: A learning-centered approach. Bolton, MA: Anchor Publishing.
Huba, M. E. & Freed, J. (2000). Learner-centered assessment on college campuses: Shifting the focus from teaching to learning. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
McCombs, B. L., & Whisler, J. S. (1997). The learner-centered classroom and school: Strategies for increasing student motivation and achievement. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
O'Banion, T. (1997). A learning college for the 21st Century. Phoenix: ACE/Oryx Press.
Weimer, M. G. (2002). Learner-centered teaching: Five key changes to practice. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Articles

Barr, R. B., & Tagg, J. (1995). From teaching to learning—A new paradigm for undergraduate education. Change, 27 (6), 13-25. (Abridged version available in Learning from Change:

Landmarks in teaching and learning in higher education from Change magazine 1969-1999 edited by Deborah DeZure)

About the Authors

Ahmed served as a director of the teaching unit in Aramco. He supervised 37 teachers for two years and guided them to follow the Aramco methods of active learning.

"I believe that if more schools could follow the Aramco list of suggestions for teachers, then learning would be more active."

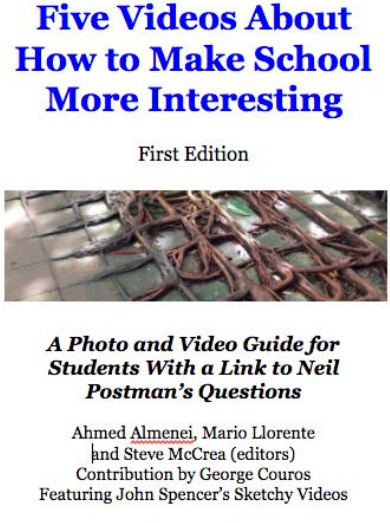
Mario translated Dennis Littky's 2004 book and built the robust Facebook discussion page *La Educacion Littky* at:

fb.com/LaEducacionLittky

"You have to challenge students because they will be living in the future. In many schools, teachers spend 80% of their time meeting the expectations (extensive lesson plans, documentation of standards and bulletin boards). When do you teach kids? When do you have time to listen to kids? We spend much of our time informing students about something that already appears on wikipedia. The students come last."

He is the author of dozens of texts including *How to Teach Spanish with a Smart Phone.*

Steve teaches students how to make digital portfolios. His workbook *Show Your Work!* has been used in schools and by parents to guide students to build free websites (using procedures that resemble the system that High Tech High school students)
He founded the Free Website Project and manages FreeWebsiteProject.blogspot.com.

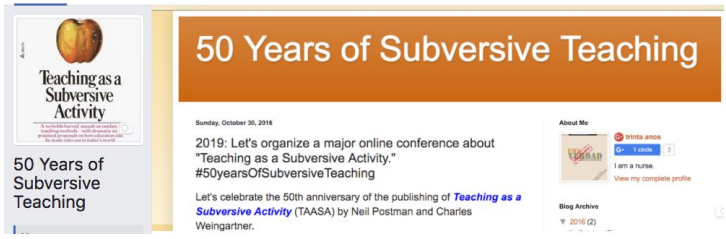


You can get a shorter book (with more photos) for students who don't want to read this book.

Go to **TinyURL.com/MakeYourClassActiveSTART**

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:

See the Facebook page
https://www.facebook.com/50-Years-of-Subversive-Teaching-1137702036305376/



WIKIPEDIA article for "Inquiry Education" https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inquiry_education

Engage students with a REAL-WORLD activity like "Dragon's Den"

Here's an activity that George Couros mentioned in one of his blog posts. He quotes a business education teacher, Joti Jando:

I recently saw educator Joti Jando share an article about her business students taking part in a "Dragon's Den" activity, which went way beyond "creating something" and becoming engaged in the classroom, but giving them real world skills and understanding of the opportunities that exist: Students presented their business ideas – including a breakdown on strengths, weaknesses,

opportunities, threats, competition, management and operations, related government regulations and financial analysis – for assessment by the panelists. ***This type of real-world exercise raises the level of student engagement,*** *Jando has found. Textbook and theoretical lessons don't generate the same kind of enthusiasm or practical experience, she (Jando) suggested. Furthermore, an opportunity to meet and network with successful business people and entrepreneurs may hold as much value as this project-based learning.*

Dragon's Den is a TV show where contestants attempt to win support from investors.

From the Wikipedia article associated with *Teaching as a Subversive Activity*

Inquiry education (sometimes known as the **inquiry method**) is a student-centered method of education focused on asking questions. Students are encouraged to ask questions which are meaningful to them, and which do not necessarily have easy answers; teachers are encouraged to avoid giving answers when this is possible, and in any case to avoid giving direct answers in favor of asking more questions. The method was advocated by Neil Postman and Charles Weingartner in their book *Teaching as a Subversive Activity*.

The inquiry method is motivated by Postman and Weingartner's recognition that good learners and sound reasoners center their attention and activity on the dynamic process of inquiry itself, not merely on the end product of static knowledge. They write that certain characteristics are common to all good learners (Postman and Weingartner, 31–33), saying that all good learners have:

- Self-confidence in their learning ability
- Pleasure in problem solving
- A keen sense of relevance
- Reliance on their own judgment over other people's or society's
- No fear of being wrong
- No haste in answering

- Flexibility in point of view
- Respect for facts, and the ability to distinguish between fact and opinion
- No need for final answers to all questions, and comfort in not knowing an answer to difficult questions rather than settling for a simplistic answer

In an attempt to instill students with these qualities and behaviors, a teacher adhering to the inquiry method in pedagogy must behave very differently from a traditional teacher. Postman and Weingartner suggest that inquiry teachers have the following characteristics (pp. 34–37):

- They avoid telling students what they "ought to know".
- They talk to students mostly by questioning, and especially by asking divergent questions.
- They do not accept short, simple answers to questions.
- They encourage students to interact directly with one another, and avoid judging what is said in student interactions.
- They do not summarize students' discussion.
- They do not plan the exact direction of their lessons in advance, and allow it to develop

in response to students' interests.

- Their lessons pose problems to students.
- They gauge their success by change in students' inquiry behaviors (with the above characteristics of "good learners" as a goal).

Suggested procedure: When a student asks a question, invite the student to “google it.” Teachers can avoid answering by using this phrase. The phrase “google it” was used so often by Mr. Llorente that the students called him “Google it.”

Mr. Llorente also posts
three questions on a wall:

What do you want to discuss today?

What do you want to learn today?

What do you want to talk about today?

In a paper in 2005 celebrating the work of Neil Postman, a professor in Oslo wrote:

> *The challenge to the students is* ***to find out who has produced these facts, how he arrived at them, why they are regarded as important, and by whom.*** *Only through this kind of scrutiny will the students learn how facts and truth change, depending on the circumstances under which they were produced and described.*
>
> *"The end [or goal] of education", as Postman sees it, is to* ***develop the students´ critical scepticism****, thereby enabling them to participate in a competent way to the reproduction of our culture, or – to use Postman´s own words – to be part of the Great Conversation. In this book, Postman gives the concept of literacy a communicative dimension which – ironically enough – makes it well-suited to embark on a fresh and unbiased analysis of the cultural significance of the media. Svein Østerud*

You can see more of professor Østerud's article by searching "2005 neil postman norway." The document was at home.hib.no/mediesenter/kul/**Postman**.doc

Blog:
50YearsofsubversiveTeaching.blogspot.com

https://50yearsofsubversiveteaching.blogspot.com/2016/11/the-last-paragraph-of-2005-article.html
quicklink **tinyurl.com/postmannorway**

From the editor of the First Edition:

The Purpose of this book
This edition was assembled quickly. Reflection will come when readers respond with their answers to the questions posed by Neil Postman. The purposes of this edition are to
(a) get the phrase "Learner Centered Approach LCA" into the mouths of many students. *"Excuse me, sir, do you use a learner-centered approach in this course?"*
(b) get the Postman Questions distributed to teachers and put in front of students. The aim is to get the responses from students into writing (so that the contributors can have their names placed

on the Internet using the Createspace program) and
(c) to introduce teachers to the Postman book *Teaching as a Subversive Activity* (TAASA). The tag **#50yearsofSubversiveTeaching** and the Facebook page of **"50 Years of Subversive Teaching"** are attempts to get more teachers to read the book and put the Postman questions in front of students. This GUIDE TO THE POSTMAN QUESTIONS makes it easy: Photocopy the worksheets, post them or distribute them to students, and wait for responses.

"Children are not things to be molded. Rather, they are ***people to be unfolded.***" **Jess Lair**

What happened in Miami in October 2016?
A teacher used this learner-centered approach in a class of students in Miami. One of the students said, *"Mr. Llorente, I have learned more in your class in one week than I learned during all of last year."*
Another student observed that he liked the discussion. He asked, *"Can I bring you more questions tomorrow?"*
Two students asked Mr. Llorente if they could continue a discussion, with Mr. Llorente as the moderator, during their lunch break. Mr. Llorente took his lunch break in his classroom to allow the students to have a quiet place to meet.

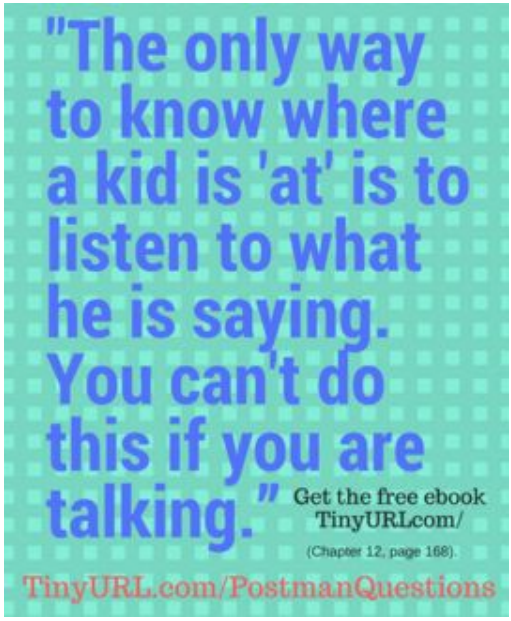
If you have an idea about how to celebrate and distribute the Postman questions, please call (954) 646 8246 or write to **manyposters@gmail.com**.

The editor first heard about Postman's book in 1994 when Dennis Yuzenas quoted from the book. Dennis learned about the book from John Millington, director of student teachers, University of Michigan. Who told Millington to read TAASA?

Extend the chain. Millington → Yuzenas → Editor → Mr. Llorente → you → ??

Tools
When I needed to rotate a photo, I use lunapic.com

Posters were made with canva.com



Students:

You are invited to create posters

Write your replies

Your posters will go into a new edition
Send them to ManyPosters@gmail.com

DESCRIPTION for the ebook

This book is a guide to the Postman Questions and to the Learner-Centered Approach, abbreviated LCA. You are asked to download the questions at TINYURL.com/PostmanQuestions. You can also get the free ebook from our OneDrive account. The digital version of this book, called a guide, is located at the following quicklink: **TINYURL.com/MakeYourClassActiveGUIDE.**

There is a longer version of this book (with a workbook showing the Postman Questions)
TinyURL.com/MakeYourClassActive
(long version)

Letter to teachers, parents and students
This guidebook helps you prepare to look at a collection of quotes and commentaries. We collected quotes and made this guide for students and parents and teachers to use. Have fun and send us your comments so we can add your commentaries to our next edition.

>> Download the Postman Questions <<

Put the questions and quotes in front of students. Invite students to make comments about the quotes.

Then type the commentaries into a book. Distribute the book to the district supervisor and wait for changes in your school.

Quote from Neil Postman

> *Now, what is it that students do in the classroom? Well, mostly they sit and listen to the teacher. Mostly, they are required to believe in authorities, or at least pretend to such belief when they take tests. Mostly they are required to remember.*
>
> *They are almost never required to make observations, formulate definitions, or perform any intellectual operations that go beyond repeating what someone else says is true. They are rarely encouraged to ask substantive questions.*
>
> Neil Postman
> *Teaching as a Subversive Activity* (1969)

Send your comments to ManyPosters@gmail.com

Share this guide by sending friends this quick link:
tinyurl.com/MakeYourClassActivePalestine

This version of the ebook was designed for distribution as an ebook to anyone who has heard about "The 1st International Conference on "Smart Learning for Community Development".

If you purchase a copy of this edition on Amazon, the price includes $1 which will be donated to UNICEF programs to aid refugees in the Middle East. See the following receipt which covers the donation of the first 20 copies.

Dear Stephan,

Thank you for your online donation to the U.S. Fund for UNICEF and for joining UNICEF's fight for child survival.

Your generosity will help provide children around the world with health care, clean water, sound nutrition, education, protection from abuse and exploitation, and emergency assistance in times of crisis.

© UNICEF MENA/2015/-00021/Yurtsever CFS Saricam camp, Turkey

Before going to the Child Friendly Space in Saricam camp (Turkey), Halime, from Syria, felt like she was in prison. Now there is a place where she can play if she wishes.

If you bought this book, you supported the donation of $1 to help the organization that posted these photos.

I obtained this information from this UNICEF website **unicef.org/appeals/syrianrefugees.html**

Recommended Videos

Neil Postman interview - education as cure for stupidity - pt. 1

http://tinyurl.com/postmanremedy
youtube.com/watch?v=J5RJ0XtN-2o

Neil Postman interview - education as cure for stupidity - pt. 2

http://tinyurl.com/postmanremedy2
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UvUsSgDuZR4

If their sentences are not being effective and are not producing the desired results, we can identify why this is so. What would happen if teachers thought of themselves as people whom others come to for a remedy the way that people go to a doctor? That's why I called the article "Education as a Painkiller." The remedy is how not to be stupid. -- *Neil Postman*

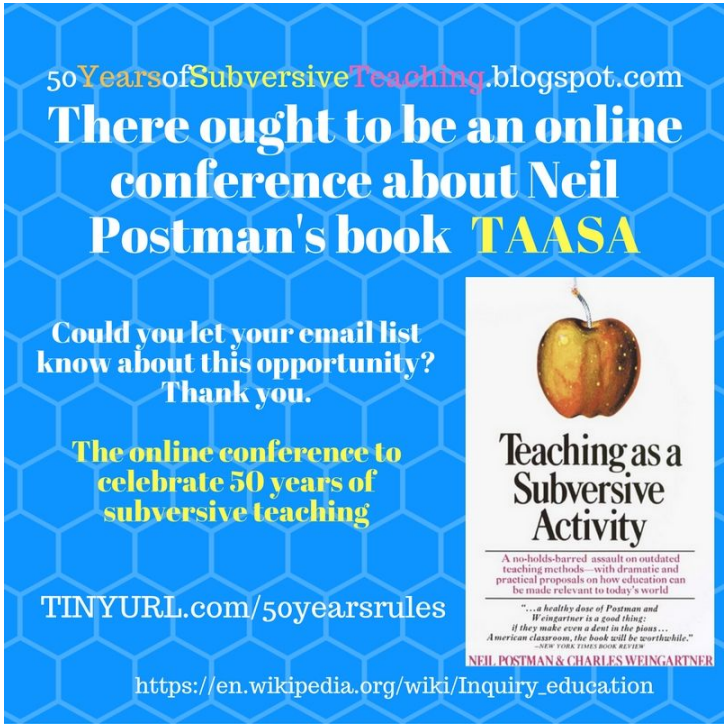
Note: *This is a valuable clip for students, teachers and parents. It is difficult to find a video clip of the author of "teaching as a subversive activity" talking about elements from that book. This is the first video clip that I've found that isn't focused on media or "amusing ourselves to death." THANK YOU. This clip will help the online conference to celebrate "50YearsofSubversiveTeaching." The focus is on "curing stupidity."* ***"Let's learn from doctors and teach students how to cure stupidity."***

Let's put four zeros on this number of views. How about 60 million views before Jan. 2019?

You have the power of "one click."

You can be part of the celebration of Neil Postman's book. Teaching as a Subversive Activity was published in 1969. Before 2019 (the 50th anniversary), let's work together to get more hits on YouTube videos showing Dr. Postman.

Please spread the announcement on the next page.



You can participate in the online conference to celebrate 50 Years of Subversive Teaching.
Visit www.50YearsofSubversiveTeaching.blogspot.com

SUMMARY of this book

*Recommendations for **Smart Learning for Community Development***

Teaching methods are more important than technology.

Listen to students.

Create projects that are connected to the real world.

Distribute the Postman Questions.

No more boring classes.

Use the Rachelle Boggan procedure: *Give students another chance* *(see page 12).*

Carpenters mold students.

Gardeners create a meadow, which allows a variety of people to flourish.

Let's be gardeners

This book is found at
TinyURL.com/MakeYourClassActivePalestine