

MSSM Student Welfare Committee “book report”

Creative Schools: The Grassroots Revolution That’s Transforming Education

By Ken Robinson and Lou Aronica

Report by David M. Coit

About the book (by Amazon Books)

Ken Robinson is one of the world's most influential voices in education, and his 2006 TED Talk on the subject is the most viewed in the organization's history. Now, the internationally recognized leader on creativity and human potential focuses on one of the most critical issues of our time: how to transform the nation's troubled educational system.

At a time when standardized testing businesses are raking in huge profits, when many schools are struggling, and students and educators everywhere are suffering under the strain, Robinson points the way forward. He argues for an end to our outmoded industrial educational system and proposes a highly personalized, organic approach that draws on today's unprecedented technological and professional resources to engage all students, develop their love of learning, and enable them to face the real challenges of the 21st century.

Filled with anecdotes, case histories, and groundbreaking research, *Creative Schools* will inspire teachers, parents, and policy makers alike to rethink the real nature and purpose of education.

Thoughts provoked for MSSM

The book talks a lot about individualizing education and responding to each student’s unique interests. Robinson makes the case that we lock up a LOT of natural student creativity in our “industrial” approach to education and that we don’t provide enough opportunity for interdisciplinary learning. The constant drumbeat of testing just adds to the tension and stress that motivated high school students feel, diminishing the wonders and excitement that they might unlock if they were freer to pursue interests that they themselves identified.

One way to address many of these issues would be to establish an optional Independent Studies Program (“IPS”) for interested students during the spring of their senior year. Assuming each student remained responsible for meeting the academic requirements for graduation, they would be freed up from attending regular classes to work on their ISP project. Projects would not be graded but would be eligible for school prizes at graduation. Criteria for project selection would include their multi-disciplinary content and originality. Projects could be applied for individually, but multi-member projects would also be encouraged.

Note: The objective of this and other Student Welfare Committee “book reports” is to help members of the MSSM community access relevant books, articles, research reports and videos to inform the conversation about our education model. There are a host of innovative new ideas in high school education that have been practiced around the world, some of which have applicability to our unique school and to our highly motivated students. We hope that studying some of these through research will help advance our discussion for the benefit of our students.