From Publishing House to School House:  
*Reading List for Educational Planning and School Design*

What does it take to go from good to great in educational planning and school design? Experience from designing many schools over the years; an understanding of how to interview educators and bring out what is really important; being a good listener. Sure, it’s all of these, but it is also deep knowledge of how the human brain works; Multiple Intelligences; differentiated learning and learning styles, how technology is effectively integrated into school curriculum and the learning environment, how to use the entire school and the campus for teaching and learning—not just classrooms, bullying, and so on. Reading on all of these subjects and more have, been an integral part of my evolution as a school architect and educational planner.

For architects, reading about educational architecture in and of itself is not enough. We must go beyond our own sometimes parochial world view and tap the best current theory in education, whether it comes from academia or “the trenches” of public schools. There are a lot of books and a lot of great thinking out there, and here I propose to present my current reading list, highlighting below the ones I feel are a “must read.”

Conference speakers often quote from or recommend books on educational subjects. I took to writing them down and reading what I could. That started my Reading List. Lately, I have been adding to the list faster than I can keep up. Once I printed it and started giving it out, I quickly found it in demand. I give it out and often forward it by email to anyone interested. My only request is that if you have a title you think should be added, I ask it be forward it to me. (Author’s note: it is always interesting to read bibliographies, giving you access to many more book titles.)

The list needn’t be daunting. Start with the titles that pique your interest, and then move onto the next. So here are my suggestions on where to start:
Multiple Intelligences, New Horizons  
*Howard Gardner, Basic Books, 2006*

As a leader of contemporary learning theory, Gardner should be first on your list. He is the author of 26 books and countless articles on brain research, Multiple Intelligence (MI), learning and education. Anyone involved in education or the design of schools is at least somewhat familiar with Gardner’s Theory of Multiple Intelligences. His theory was first published in 1983: *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligence*. In this book, he reviews, updates clarifies and adds Intelligences.

Understanding MI enables us to understand that each of us is different, and to question the many assumptions we’ve had for centuries about what constitutes academic success. The fact is we all learn differently using varying combinations of intelligences. We need to think about how the learning environment contributes to differentiated learning and learning modalities, enhancing opportunities for all students.

The Global Achievement Gap: Why Even Our Best Schools Don’t Teach the New Survival Skills Our Children Need—And What We Can Do About It  
*Tony Wagner, Basic Books, 2008*

This book should be high on your list. Many of the topics are ones that as an educational planner and architect, I deal with on a daily basis. Here are some highlights:

- Many of his “Seven Survival Skills” can be nurtured by having the right type of learning environment
- Discussion of Curriculum – a dialogue I have at the start of and throughout every project. I find it amazing how influential we can be on this
- Attacking the dropout rate – curriculum and curriculum delivery can make a significant impact. The type, adjacencies and appointments of spaces can reinforce student-centric and project-based environments that engage students
- Growing Up Digital – How students’ natural affinity for technology can translate into academic achievement.
- Schools that are making a difference – a detailed discussion of schools around the country that are meeting the needs of education today, how and why

A must read!
Breaking the Mold of School Instruction and Organization: Innovative and Successful Practices for the Twenty-First Century
Edited by Andrea Honigsfeld and Audrey Cohan, Rowman & Littlefield Education, 2010

Contains 34 chapters, each written by individuals or small teams of “boots-on-the-ground” educators, architects and educational planners (including Ch. 29 by this author), organized into five areas:

1. Classroom Innovations
2. Positive (unconventional) School Leadership
3. School and District-wide Initiatives
4. Community Involvement and Support
5. Building and facility design

These are 21st Century real-world success stories

Smart Moves: Why Learning is Not All in Your Head
Carla Hannaford, Ph.D., Great River Books, 2005

A biologist and educator, Carla Hannaford presents the body’s role in thinking and learning. It is all about brain research, complete with diagrams of how parts of the brain work. It can get pretty technical (especially for an architect), but by the end of each chapter the research is tied to teaching and learning. Among the book’s topics:

- A new paradigm of body / mind unity – how the body grows the brain through movement
- Movement leads to learning – how to develop a sensory learning environment
- Lots to learn about Autism and students on the spectrum, an area that we are asked to design for but understand so little

This subject is important for all, but especially for children in pre-school through the elementary grades when so much development is taking place.

A Whole New Mind: Why Right-Brainers Will Rule the Future
Daniel Pink, Riverhead Trade, 2006

The author has written five books about the changing world of work (and learning). Described as a guidebook for survival, and joy, this is one of those books that is difficult to connect to the built environment but is so relevant to understanding about learning.

Pink believes the days of left-brain dominance, that yielded lawyers, accountants and software engineers, are numbered. He foresees a future of right-brain thinkers, a different kind of person who is creative and empathetic. This in turn will yield designers, inventors, teachers and storytellers who make their mark on society and a world of success. In the process, Pink introduces you to what he calls his Six Senses (fundamental human attributes): Design, Story, Symphony, Empathy, Play and Meaning
Disrupting Class: How Disruptive Innovation Will Change the Way the World Learns
Clayton Christensen, Curtis W. Johnson, Michael B. Horn, McGraw-Hill, 2008

Christensen and this co-authors apply their significant business background, looking at public education as an industry. The business examples seem very relevant to the process of teaching and the environments needed.

From the book’s Acknowledgements – “The Harvard Business School is an extraordinary place for teachers to learn because in the case method of instruction, the teacher asks the questions and the students do the teaching.” This is a great starting point since few public schools today function this way. Let’s start disrupting with the flipped classroom.

Chapters explore:
– Every student learns in a different way – most schools today are set up for standardization. You only need to look at the endless double loaded corridors
– A shift to a student-centric approach – an active learner requires an environment that enables those activities
– Student-centric technologies and computer based learning – research, prototyping, maker, documentation activities that require different types of spaces
– School leadership and supporting teams – adjacencies for people to work in teams, distribution of leadership, collaboration space

Their bottom line is that for substantive change, actions need to be dramatic; tweaking does not really change outcomes.

Surpassing Shanghai: An Agenda for American Education Built on the World’s Leading Systems
Marc S. Tucker (editor) and Linda Darling-Hammond (foreword), 2011

This book should be read immediately following Disrupting Class. Surpassing Shanghai takes as case studies five of the world’s leading school systems and describes how each was reinvented in order to achieve its current prominence:
– Shanghai – reinvented following the death of Mao Zedong in 1976, an event that marked the death of the Cultural Revolution
– Finland – A focus on teachers and elevating them to professional status, in fact the most popular profession; a change from rural to urban culture; full service schools including hot meals, health and dental services and a policy of intervention
– Japan – 94% high school completion; a new focus on creativity and innovation; and values including: its children and educational system are the key to the country’s future; incentives for students; spending of available resources matters, and many others
– Singapore – reinvented itself following their independence from Great Britain in 1965. From small and poor, to one of the world leaders
– Canada / Ontario – a lot like the US but with: Canadian culture; a welfare state, teacher selectivity, equalized funding and provincial curricula

And Part Two: How the United States Can Match The Best Performers – you have to read it for yourself

If “Disrupting Class” were not written before “Surpassing Shanghai”, you would swear Christensen wrote his book with these stories in mind.
Evidence-Based Design of Elementary and Secondary Schools: A Responsive Approach to Creating Learning Environments

Peter C. Lippman, John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 2010

A great resource for design options for rethinking and creating learning environments. The book is full of diagrams and illustrations of concepts and ideas. In addition, Lippman uses many case studies of recent schools by leading architects, identifying the Guiding Framework pedagogy for each school and illustrating how it was accomplished.

Remember, these are only eight of many books on my list. I merely call these out because they are a good place to start.

The old adage about doctors, “Physician, heal thyself,” has its corollary in educational planning and design. We must “teach ourselves,” tapping into the best minds, following the latest trends, all the while cognizant of the real, measurable impacts we can have.

Some of the books have a direct and obvious connection to school design but not all. The point is, we need to know as much as possible about all aspects that relate to education: How does the brain work / how do people learn? How can change happen? How do we learn from other success stories? Technology? Bullying? School Security? Knowing how to lead open-ended discussions on many fronts of education with users and clients will make them better clients.

And it will enable us to design more responsive learning environments.

Click here to view my complete current Reading List.

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### 21st Century Teaching and Learning: Reading List

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<td>Becoming a “Wiz” at Brain-Based Teaching: How to Make Every Year Your Best Year</td>
<td>Marilee Sprenger, Corwin Press Inc., 2002</td>
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<td>Boys and Girls Learn Differently</td>
<td>Michael Gurian, Wiley &amp; Sons, 2002</td>
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<td>Brain Gym, Simple Activities for Whole Brain Learning</td>
<td>Paul &amp; Gail Dennison, Edu-Kinesthetics, Inc., 1992</td>
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<td>Differentiated Assessment: How to Assess the Learning Potential of Every Student (Grades 6-12)</td>
<td>Evangeline Harris Stefanakis, John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 2010</td>
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<td>Disrupting Class: How Disruptive Innovation Will Change the Way the World Learns</td>
<td>Clayton Christensen, Curtis W. Johnson, Michael B. Horn, McGraw-Hill, 2008</td>
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<td>Experimental Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development</td>
<td>David Kolb, Prentice Hall, 1984</td>
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<td>Leading 21st Century Schools: Harnessing Technology for Engagement and Achievement, Lynne M. Schrum</td>
<td>Barbara B. Levin, Corwin, a Sage Company, 2009</td>
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<td>Rewired: Understanding the iGeneration and the Way They Learn</td>
<td>Larry Rosen, Ph.D., Palgrave MacMillan, 2010</td>
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The Shame of a Nation: The Restoration of Apartheid Schooling in America | Jonathan Kozol, Three Rivers Press, 2005

Shift: How to Reinvent Your Business, Your Career, and Your Personal Brand | Peter Arnell, Broadway Books, 2010

Smart Moves: Why Learning is Not All in Your Head | Carla Hannaford, Ph.D., Great River Books, 2005


A Teacher’s Window into the Child’s Mind | Sally Goddard, Fern Ridge Press, 1996

Teaching for Tomorrow: Teaching Content and Problem-Solving Skills | Ted McCain, Corwin Press, 2005


The Third Teacher: 79 Ways You Can Use Design to Transform Teaching and Learning | A collaborative project: OWP/P Architects + VS Furniture + Bruce Mau Design, Abrams, 2010


A Whole New Mind: Why Right-Brainers Will Rule the Future | Daniel Pink, Riverhead Trade, 2006

Window on the Future: Education in the Age of Technology | Ian Jukes, Corwin Press, 2000


From Gutenberg to Zuckerberg: What You Really Need to Know about the Internet | John Naughton, Quercus, 2012

Where Good Ideas Come From | Steven Johnson, Riverhead, 2010

Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap... and Others Don’t | Jim Collins, HarperBusiness, 2001


Teaching 2030: What We Must Do for Our Students and Our Public Schools—Now and in the Future | Barnett Berry Teachers College Press, 2011


Learning Spaces | Diana G. Oblinger, Editor, EDUCAUSE e-Book, 2006. This is available as an e-book for free, go to: www.educause.edu/learningspaces