

Insight and Education

 Mary Norris

Insight, both as a process and final product, possesses a tangible sameness among scientists of neurological disciplines. Jonah Lehrer creates one general scope of insight in his article, "The Eureka Hunt," (2008). An explicitly neurological definition of "insight" is a "mental block" being suddenly overcome with an accompanying feeling of overwhelming certainty.

Lehrer discusses how the quest of unraveling the neurological mystery of insight is approached medically and scientifically. Jung-Beeman, is a cognitive neuroscientist at Northwestern University, associated with insight as an aside of his own primary research investigating the purpose and contribution of the right side of the brain. Lehrer explains that the right side assists with "understanding linguistic-nuance" in addition to, "connotation," and, "everything that gets left out of a dictionary definition, such as the emotional charge in a sentence or a metaphor." The left side of the brain recognizes the primary, literal meaning of words, and due to recent studies it will no longer receive all credit for the human capacity for language.

A closer look and application of this research could benefit American students cognitively and creatively in the future. Beeman remarks, "Language is so complex that the brain has to process it in two different ways at the same time." Humans gain understanding of language by considering it literally, and non-literally. Considering recent research, Beeman speculates that aspects of language comprehension, like identifying literary themes or interpretation of figurative language, are "linguistic skills, like insight," which "require the brain to make a set of distant and unprecedented connections." Lengthy dendrite spines connect the right side of the brain to the entire brain creating a network; such wiring presumably makes insightful revelations of inexplicit linguistic-territory possible. This new evidence could lead educators to employ more purposed instruction, cultivating students' capacity for critical reading and language comprehension.

For now, the recent scientific ballyhoo over "insight" suggests what instructional methods may be counter-productive. In addition to developing students' linguistic fluency, American classrooms strive to develop a common appreciation of capital knowledge, while developing students' ability to think creatively and individually. This research does not negate, but raises questions to whether the learning environment provided by public education meets these goals. Stressful, production based environments may stunt creativity or diminish linguistic and literary mastery. "Trying to force an insight can actually prevent the insight. While it's commonly

assumed that the best way to solve a difficult problem is to focus, minimize distractions, and pay attention to only relevant details, this clenched state of mind may inhibit the sort of creative connections that lead to sudden breakthroughs," says Lehrer. External and environmental factors force teachers to pursue a timely, focused and disciplined classroom. A focused classroom ensures a common appreciation of capital knowledge, but considering this new research: do our classrooms serve students' respective potential creative identities as well as they serve students' development of assuming our more shared, conventional identity?

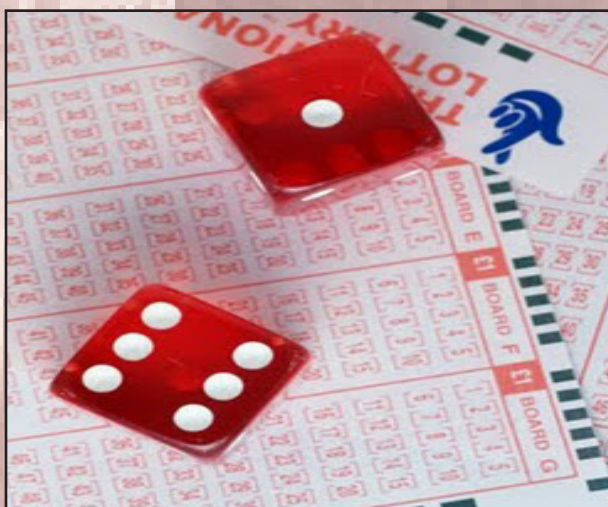


The Lottery

Reynolds Bond

In August of 2005 the legislature signed the North Carolina State Lottery Act into effect. The Act was aimed at increasing the amount of money that goes into the public school system. The Act focuses in and controls every single way in which the money made by the NC Lottery may be spent. It is supposed to be spent this way, as allocated by the NC Lottery website, 58% of revenue is paid out in prizes to continue to encourage the public to play in the lottery. 30% transferred to the Education Lottery Fund to be distributed to educational programs the Lottery works with. The final 12% goes to commissions and administrative costs.

Here is the problem. A recent study came out from the North Carolina Justice Center about what is really happening right now, with our money. The NC Lottery has begun to pay out larger prizes trying to increase the number of people who play, but because of those larger prizes, that 58% has grown, while the amount of money paid out to the public schools has shrunk. Now only about 25% of revenue goes to the schools, and out of percentage because of the change in how lottery money can be broken down, this year schools are only getting 24%. (The change lawmakers signed in breakdown policies this year.) This is a major problem. Generally when you discuss school funding with non-education majors you get responses about how the lottery is already funding it, why do we need to pay higher taxes. With this new study, showcasing how far the lottery money does not go is highly significant to us as future teachers. We need to be aware of where the money funding public education is coming from and what is being done with it.



Shacking Up: Shack-a-Thon and Homelessness

Jon Johnson

If you are reading this, you are a Teaching Fellow or involved with our program, so odds are good that you spent at least some time in this year's shack for Habitat for Humanity's annual Shack-a-Thon. Maybe you signed up for a day shift, to avoid missing sleep and having to stay in the shack at night. Perhaps you did get a night shift, but got some shut eye. I did not. I could not. I stayed awake for the entirety of my 3-hour shift, from 3 to 6 AM Friday morning. It was raining, and the ceiling leaked. It occurred to me, sitting there, shivering under my hoodie that doubled as both a blanket and pillow, that at least some students in public schools all across the state, indeed, the nation, must face the same thing every day.

According to a study of the 2008 - 2009 by National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHYC), close to 100,000 homeless children were enrolled in public schools across the nation. That is a good number of children that come into the classroom every day who may not have slept at all the night before, or who may not have eaten since lunch the previous day.

We will, most likely, at some point in our teaching careers, instruct homeless students, or abused students, or who knows what else. It is important to remember that we have no true idea of what happens when a student leaves our classroom, and we must plan and teach accordingly. Be aware. Be compassionate. Think. Act if it is advisable. To all of your students. To all people.



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Corporal Punishment in Schools



Sean Hines

We've all heard the "well, back in my day..." stories from our parents and other adults proclaiming the strictness of school during their youthful years. Most of the time school discipline is what starts these long drawn out conversations. They say that students who receive "in school suspension" or "lunch detention" have it a lot easier compared to the spankings they used to receive. But believe it or not you could have been saved from these speeches if you went to school in one of the twenty states that still allows paddling to be used as a form of punishment.

North Carolina is one of those states. Though it is banned, sixty-nine of the 115 school districts in the 2008-2009 school year 1,400 students were reported to receive physical punishment. "Why," is the question that many people are asking. One teacher said that it is a cost effective way to keep a class in order. Cost effective because no money is spent hitting a student with a wooden paddle. Thoughts like these are common among teachers of districts that lack resources and proper training. Corporal punishment might seem cost effective to many educators who practice it but is it to the students? The aftermath of many incidents include blood clots, muscle injury, and whip lashes. Not to mention the emotional effects that students have to deal with, leaving them to question if going to school is even worth it if they have to deal with such a violent atmosphere, which is supposed to be safe.

The surprising factor is whom corporal punishment is being practiced on. The law does not protect students with disabilities from corporal punishment. They too can receive physical punishment and on a national survey they get hit twice as much as the regular population of students. Neither the federal government nor the state government has passed any law protecting students from the abuse. One well-known court case is Baker vs. Owen in 1975. In this case a mother instructed school officials that she did not want her sixth grade son to ever receive corporal punishment. One day her son misbehaved, and was taken to administration where he did receive corporal punishment. The school was sued saying that the punishment was cruel and unusual meaning that it went against the amendments. The court ruled that two hits with a paddle were not cruel or unusual, and later stated that no corporal punishment in school, no matter how harsh it may seem, applied to the cruel or unusual clause.

Twenty states in America allow corporal punishment. Forty-six school districts in North Carolina allow it. What happened to schools being a safe place to learn?



Facebook Teacher Scandal 'Cross the Pond'



Kaitlyn Jones

Victoria Jones, 23, taught in the Ringland Primary School Nursery. She has recently been banned from the classroom for two years. Her crime? Nothing that she did deal with her job as an educator. No, it was in her personal life on FACEBOOK.

Here's the story: Miss Jones created a scandalous fictitious life for herself. Her ex boyfriend, Daniel Barberini, was the victim of this lie. After the couple broke up, Miss Jones contacted Mr. Barberini to tell him that she was the mother of his child, who she called Keira. In her rather large web of lies, she also said there was another child, a twin of Keira's, a boy named Harrison who had died shortly after birth. Miss Jones explained to Mr. Barberini that he could not see his daughter because she was now living in Australia.

The plot thickens: Miss Jones used pictures of a friend's daughter (Aliyah, daughter of Sarah Jensen, also 23) that she took from Facebook to show to her Mr. Barberini and claim as her own child. This lie went on for almost two years. The pictures that Miss Jones used showed the child after she was born, at Christmas, her birthday, and around the house.

The lie was finally given away when a friend of Mr. Barberini recognized the child as Sarah Jensen's.

The police officers involved ruled she had done nothing against the law. But the teaching disciplinary hearing said Miss Jones used the pictures in an unprofessional way, and though they happened in her personal life, they compromised her position of trust. Panel chairman John Collins said, "Although acts were conducted in her private life, the consequences impacted adversely in her standing as a teacher as well as bringing the profession into disrepute."

Miss Jones admitted to using the photos but claims that they have no impact on her professional life. She will be able to reapply for a position after two years, but it is said that it is unlikely she will do so.

Ms. Jensen attended the hearing but said that this had impacted their lives forever. She said, "It was a relief that something was finally being done, as it felt like nobody would do anything." We are just trying to put it behind us now." Her and Aliyah's father moved out of Abercarn, Caerphilly in the UK, where the hoax had began. They were scared to even let Aliyah play outside.

Colin Adkins, a NASUWT representative, said, "I believe through evidence supplied by [head teacher of Ringland Primary] Miss Bowden and a letter which Miss Jones sent to the GTCW that she has shown insight into her actions and she is truly sorry."

Gangs and Violence in Schools



Zachary Parrish

Over the past few decades, education has made several drastic reforms. The entire system has adapted changes within our society. Racial boundaries were broken down with

important mile markers such as Brown v. Board of Education. Gender discrimination has been just as gradually declining with laws passed such as Title IX. Although our public education systems have been making great steps toward becoming better for the millions of children that they serve, the past decades have brought turmoil in the form of gang violence created by adolescents and young adults.

The two biggest questions to ask are: what exactly are gangs, and why are they formed? First of all, a gang is a group of people who share something in common. It may be certain mannerisms or some shared goal that each individual is related to. Some features of gangs are that the individuals meet on frequent occasions, are often and intentionally involved in illegal activities that are violent or destructive in nature, share a common collective identity, more often than not adopt certain methods of identification such as wearing a certain color, wearing a certain pair of shoes, etc.; and claim "control" over a certain area. Kids often join gangs because of a multitude of specific pressures. Perhaps it is the peer pressure created from those around them; perhaps it is the feeling of safety in a group, the feeling of power, status, friendship, a replacement of feeling like part of a family where there is none at home; perhaps it is the feeling of belonging; it may even just be that the individual is alone a violent person and is trying to find a pathway to release anger. In any case, the proliferation of gangs and the negative effects caused by said gangs have been on the rise for years, and will continue to do so without some sort of intervention made by the school systems.

Although "gangs" are generally recognized to reside and come from large cities with prior high crime rates, in actuality they are everywhere. Even in small towns across the state of North Carolina, gangs form from any of the reasons aforementioned. Gangs are typically between young men that go to the same or neighboring schools, and so there is a lot that can be done to diminish the number of gangs by the schools themselves. School administrators and officials use many of the tell signs, such as their common collective identity, graffiti, or any other M.O. of the gang, and enforce policies that deride or decimate the ability for the gang to function. Many schools ban anything that can be considered "gang attire" in schools and at afterschool functions. This can include anything stated before such as specific shirts, bandanas, masks, etc. Schools also crack down on graffiti painting or any other activities carried on by gangs. They go through great measures to make sure there are no weapons on campus and that staff and parents are all on the same page in regards to the methods of dealing with the gangs. All in all, there is a lot that educators can, have, and will be doing in the process of gang development, and the first step is recognizing the problem as it stands.



The Godfather of All Game Nights

Jessica Anstead

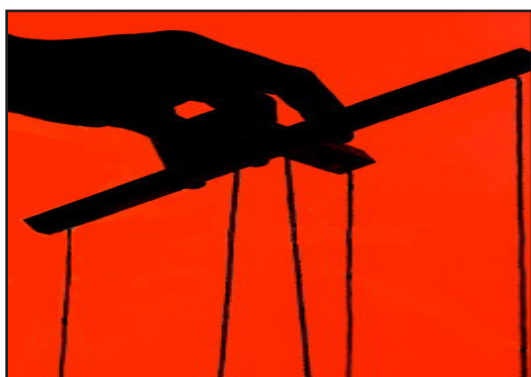
It's a typical Tuesday night in Syme Residence Hall, echoes of laughter, rooms welcomingly open, and a crowd of Teaching Fellows in a circle with their eyes shut... Wait, What? What set this ordinary Tuesday night into a night full of suspense and brings together a crowd of eager gamers? You've guessed it... Mafia Night! On Tuesday, September 20th, the Teaching Fellows Big Sib/Lil Sib committee hosted a Mafia Night in the Syme Lounge. Mafia is a game where a crowd of people sit in a circle and draw from a deck of cards. If you draw a Jack you're the sheriff, Queen you're the town nurse, King you're the Mafia, and all the rest are the townspeople. Directed by a storyteller, all the townspeople are instructed to go to sleep. One by one the storyteller calls for the sheriff, nurse, and mafia to wake up. Asking them one question, for the sheriff, who do you want to accuse, for the nurse, who do you want to save, and for the mafia, who do you want to kill. Without saying a word, each one points to the person of their choice and goes back to sleep. Afterwards, all the townspeople are asked to wake up, and then the story begins of how one unsuspecting townspeople has been in a tragic accident, with only the hope that the town nurse has saved them. The townspeople are then allowed to nominate who they think is the Mafia. For the accused townspeople, they are then allowed a few seconds to plead their case. Why should you believe that I am not the mafia. After irrational or very careful decisions, with a show of hands, the townspeople attempt to kill off who they think is the mafia.

"The best part about Mafia is the suspenseful moment when the town determines who dies next or who the mafia is," stated Secondary Science Education major, freshman Nicholas Peaks.

The object to winning Mafia is to make smart choices as to who you suspect is the mafia, staying alive, and taking out the mafia. Or in the mafia's case, staying alive and taking out everyone else. On Tuesday, however the mafia won. Elementary Education major, sophomore Matt Cabral was clever and shifty enough to argue his innocence to the townspeople, which allowed him to prevail in the game and take out all of them.

"My strategy was to not make it obvious. I needed to think ahead and figure out the other players' connections to each other and how they would react," proclaimed Cabral.

A game of true wits, gaining trust, and full of suspense, right? Hey townspeople...wake up.



NC State v Presbyterian 9/20

Ryon Barton

The men of Presbyterian College traveled from Clinton, South Carolina September 20th to challenge the Wolfpack on their home field. The teams were evenly matched with respect to skill, but State had several advantages, and used them to beat the Blue Hose.

The first half saw only one goal, made 20 minutes in by State player Mat Ingram. The second half, in comparison, was filled with goals. Moritz Steidten, Nazmi Albadawi, and Danny DiPrima joined Mat on the list of State players with goals, all within ten minutes of each other near the end of the match. Each was assisted by a melee of players (from both teams) obscuring the vision of the Blue Hose goalie. Without that screen, State players made 20 unsuccessful shots. In comparison, the Presbyterians were only able to make 6. However, the Blue Hoses were able to make a lucky save. The Presbyterian goalie abandoned his box in a bid to block the State player with possession of the ball, but a skillful pass made him helpless to defend his goal from another player. However, his teammates came to the rescue, gaining possession of the ball and sending it to the other side of the field.

It was during the first half that one of the high points of the game occurred. Players from both teams collaborated to keep the ball in the air using 4 consecutive headers. The feat remained unmatched during the remaining play, though several attempts were made and a few came close, with three consecutive headers.

There was much frustration during the game, both for the players and the fans. There were four yellow cards in total, three going to the Hoses and one going to State player Chandler Know, who shoved a Presbyterian player as he bent to pick up the ball for an out of bounds kick. The crowd roared in approval, though the referees protested. State players were so impatient for the ball to get into the Blue Hose goal that they committed seven offside infractions. The Presbyterian goalie greatly aggravated the State students in the bleachers by moving forward to kick the ball. At one point he was half-way down the pitch. On one of his kicks, the ball went out of bounds and a student fan behind him screamed, "That's what happens when you cheat!" The same fan later harassed those Presbyterian players who received yellow flags, to much applause from the audience.

Another way that the frustration escaped the players was screaming. There was very little communication, but much yelling. As future educators and team players, we know that when you only have a 1 in 5 success rate, you have to communicate and figure out what's going wrong. The players weren't able to do so, and so were unable to improve their play until near the end of the game. If they could have done so, perhaps the team would have been more effective.

Interview With A Teacher

Grey Mangum

As prospective teachers, it's important for us to talk to other teachers and learn a bit about what it's like behind the teacher desk. Here is one such story.

I interviewed a teacher who has been teaching for many years in North Carolina. The first question that I asked dealt with diversity and I was pleased to hear in her explanation that she considered diversity to be very central to learning. In her class, there are many more thoughts going through her head than simply a lesson in mathematics. She spoke about formative and summative assessments as a way for her to gauge students learning in diverse settings. "One of my jobs is to assess students formally and informally and if they are uncomfortable in front of the class I try to do that more one-on-one or in a small groups." This comment shows how careful we must be as teachers about ensuring that all of our students are comfortable in class. All students are not like we are so we must work hard to ensure they are comfortable. The second question that the expert teacher fielded was a very lengthy one. I asked her what kinds of changes she has seen in her teaching style over the years. I then asked her why she entered the field of teaching in the first place. In her answer, she explained that she began tutoring and fell in love with teaching but after only one semester of teaching full time, she quit. It was later explained that she simply was not prepared for all of the emotions and personalities that are present in a classroom. As a prospective teacher, this answer was not something that I was expecting. I was expecting her to say that the grading and lesson planning was too tough or the administration was bad but instead she blamed it on her lack of ability to handle the emotions. In college, we are taught the content and how to teach it to our students but we often miss the lessons on dealing with the personal emotions that teaching sometimes brings.

One of the final and more comical questions asked dealt with the balance of personal and professional life. When asked, she paused and replied "It's very difficult and I have to tell you I don't have an answer for that actually." She later had this to say: "I heard another teacher say in a meeting: 'It's not a job it's a lifestyle.' and I said that's it. I don't know anything else. It is my personal life." Although this topic is very serious to many teachers, the answer was very honest and open. As we have seen in our classes, teachers are "on the clock" even when they are off school campus. This statement, along with the response to the question proves that teaching is a lifestyle and cannot be left in an office or on a job site. Teaching is a lifelong occupation and calling.

As we continue our education here at N.C. State we must take time to remember those teachers who have helped get us to where we are today. Take some time to talk to those teachers. They are always willing to share many of their failures and successes for all of us to learn.

October/November

Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday

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|---|---|-----------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| 23 NC State Fair | 24 Freshman Forum: Tai Chi (Social/Cultural) | 25 | 26 Cultural: The Silent Killer @ 4:30 om Cultural-Pipes and Drums @ 7p | 27 | 28 | 29 |
| 30 Cultural-Raleigh Civic Chamber Orchestra @4pm | 31 Sophomore Forum | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 TF/SAY Fall Fling 8:00 pm Social | 5 |
| 6 | 7 Junior Forum | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 Ronald McDonald House Community Relations 10:00am |
| 13 | 14 American Ed Week/Homecoming | 15 American Ed Week/Homecoming | 16 American Ed Week/Homecoming | 17 American Ed Week/Homecoming | 18 American Ed Week/Homecoming | 19 Homecoming Game |
| 20 | 21 All Fellows Forum | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |

Resources:

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Insight- Lehrer, Jonah. "The Eureka Hunt." The New Yorker 28 Jul. 2008: 40-45. Print.
Lottery: http://www.nc-educationlottery.org/about_where-the-money-goes.aspx
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Corporal Punishment: <http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1915820,00.html>
http://www.mountainx.com/blogwire/2010/corporal_punishment_alive_but_not_well_in_nc_public_schools
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Go Pack!

