The Wrong Emphasis:
Kids learn what adults teach

The importance of knowing what we want our kids to be:

- Talented and Accomplished
  AP – AYP – ACT - Who’s Who Students - All-State Participants – Division 1 Scholarships
  - What if our daily problems truly consisted of Troy Bolton battling between a basketball scholarship and a secret desire to perform in the high school musical?

- Busy and Productive
  - One of the best kept secrets within our profession is the reality that our most productive students are seldom bored.

- Good
  Volunteers – Babysitters – Role Models – Mentors – And a Healthy Dosage of Youthful Innocence
  - We are sadly mistaken if we believe “good” kids are a result of good fortune.
The importance of knowing what to emphasize:

1. Home

   Ineffective

   Effective

2. School

   Ineffective

   Effective

Short-Term versus Long-Term Educating:

What can we do about the non-accomplished, unproductive, often morally challenged students when it seems as though we are the only people who notice? The mistake we make with these kids, ironically, is the same mistake we make with our most blessed and talented – we focus our energy on the finish line (AYP and All State) instead of on the process...

...And we forget that the reason our “best” students are talented, accomplished, busy, productive, and wholesome is because they have been made to work their tails off before they are rewarded, they have been made to be respectful before demanding respect, and they have been made to understand they are far from a finished product - regardless of their successes and accolades.
Great Habits of the Unwritten Curriculum

1. Age-Appropriate Thinking Skills

   This is our purpose, right?

   *Something is lost when we teach our young people that the value of learning is held in the “proof” that something was learned. AYP? ACT? GPA? Sure, these are useful scales for us… and these often serve as necessary incentives… But in the end, learning amounts to what we have done with it! Any other message is a lie to ourselves and our students.*

2. Age-Appropriate People and Communication Skills

   - Eye Contact
   - Voice
   - Conversation
   - Proximity
   - Gestures
   - Affection
   - Hygiene
   - Clothing

   *Think about the 22 year-old college graduate who, despite a glowing GPA and associated academic prowess, cannot land a job because he offers a “dead fish” handshake and cannot look someone in the eyes while he talks (or mumbles)*...

3. Timeliness and Attendance

   What does “on time” mean for successful people?

   *Do we reinforce the need for our students to be where they should be when they should be there? Or, is casually late accepted in school? There are tremendous consequences either way*...
4. Work Ethic and Dedication

There is nothing more common, nor more pathetic, than grown men and women described as having potential.

*Nothing we can teach is more important than the tenacity to work hard. We must remember two realities within our profession: One – work ethic leads to academic growth. Two – only work ethic can overcome academic struggles.*

5. Respect, Decency, and Humility

Unfortunately, this has become our job/Fortunately, this can be our job

*This may be the most difficult habit to teach the children of others... This is more than punishing poor behavior; we are called to require respect and decency from our students. What do we expect? What will we not tolerate? Who gets noticed in our schools?*

6. Responsibility and Teamwork

Again, this has somehow become our job.

*Who is to be responsible for able-bodied, able-minded citizens? Our nation needs a generation both willing to carry their own water when capable and the buckets of others when necessary.*
7. Perspective

The most successful of our citizens, children or adults, are capable of seeing a bigger picture.

One of the greatest gifts we could give a high school graduate is the feeling that he or she knows next to nothing... and a willingness to embrace this reality as a challenge.

The Power and Necessity of Autonomy

Who are the experts in education?

What works? What does not?

Why in the world do we continue to pretend a commitment to an ideology very few of us find effective or realistic?

Assessment is here forever.... Test scores will remain important... Will we be the out-of-shape man who blames the scale and buys new, baggy pants? - Or are we going to eat less better and exercise?

Success. How does it happen?