

E. D. Hirsch, Jr. The Knowledge Deficit

Houghton Mifflin
Company
New York, 2006

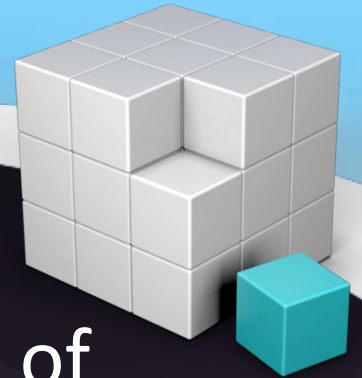


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Comprehension skill cannot be automatically transferred from one text to another, because the skill of comprehension is basically the skill of filling in enough of what has been left unsaid – that is, filling in enough of the blanks – to make sense of the text. The ability to fill in these blanks depends entirely on whether children know what is to be filled in.

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A content-neutral, skills-oriented concept of education has the unintended effect of depressing reading scores and diminishing the shared content we need for communication and solidarity within the nation as a whole.

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For students, the vagueness of the local guidelines produces an educational experience that is sparse, repetitious, incoherent, and fragmented. For teachers, the incoherence process an intensely unsatisfactory professional experience, which induces a large percentage of them to leave the profession each year.

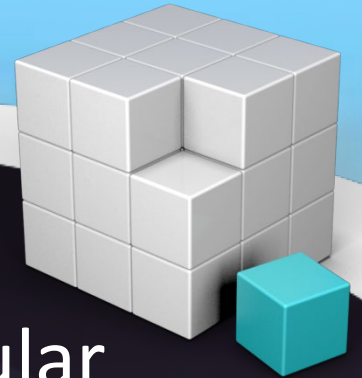
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Stevenson and Stigler found that teachers have a much greater job satisfaction when they can depend on one another in a supportive chain over the grade levels.

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The unparalleled vagueness of our curricular guides makes our system the most chaotic and unfair in the world.

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