



My Rant. 2025

Self Regulation & Mental Wellness in School and Classrooms

-Ian Landy



Prologue Overview:

I have been asked a few times to explain how I handle anxious learners – a growing number ‘are appearing’ in our school (or just being better identified – depending on who you ask...) so over the years I have established and started to share my ‘list for success’ – odds are you’ll find somethings you will hate (I don’t like everything). But it’s not about you, it’s about the learner. I have been using these strategies for years – a long time with my students, and more recently with my own son. Not everybody ‘gets it’ yet.

Part of the struggle is trying to be empathetic. It’s very easy to say “I get anxious too”....but it’s not the same. I can still remember the sickness in my stomach when I was getting ready to walk to kindergarten – it was very real. Sure it went away but it was real for the moment. I also remember (grade one) being late and feeling it ‘better’ to turn around and go home (heard the late bell and was close enough to see the school) than face entering the classroom late. My teacher was able to call to me and reassure me that it’s not a big deal to be late and being at school was more important. But that’s just being anxious. And I’ll repeat... four decades later I can **still** feel the sickness in my stomach.

Anxiety – especially generalized anxiety is much more – it’s like comparing a sore throat to esophagus cancer. Yep – I went there....because it’s not a fair comparison even though some of the symptoms may be similar....even if it’s a really sore throat. Anxiety has a lot more to it including the speed of the brain. When a dog barked and my son panicked, I took advantage of the situation by sharing my thinking: I could envision either a dog leaping over the fence and either running at us or defending its property, or a dog on the other side of the fence. I asked how

many scenarios he could envision....he struggled at first so I coaxed him – like 10? no dad – you don’t get it. like a hundred? thousand? yeah – that’s closer. He was able to envision everything I did including the dog ripping off his face to the dog running in terror – with the difficulty being “sorting priority of reality”. His brain got stuck.

My brain got stuck too – but not for long. As a 5 year old, I was sick – I had to go to school – I started to feel better; I saw the pattern. The brain got stuck thinking “dog attack” everytime a dog barks – even though I know that 99%+ of the time that’s not what is going to happen. I could sort the reality of what would happen. He helped me understand (and create a visual) about how many images/possibilities he was trying to rank as ‘likely to happen’ – and it’s not the same as what I can do – even though “it should be similar”.

My hope is to share some of the working (and mis-workings) of the anxious brain to help identify some strategies to help these kids be successful in classrooms. Because they can. Honest – they can. But if you are expecting them to act/cope like “everybody else” – that is when things may not go well – for them or for you.

And really, this is an exploration into all neuro pathways... anxiety; depression; autism; etc... much like these conditions, there is no ‘one textbook’ description that allows ‘one set way’ to follow to get to success!

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1. The me.

I am a second generation educator.

I am a disruptor. So was my father.
My father brought in these newfangled computers next to a perfectly good typing lab. He connected with students and families who were disconnected from schooling.



He created Personalized Learning Packages for his secondary courses. Allowed choice. Showed me the importance of looking at people for who they were and what they did - their individuality. Reminded me that nobody started their day wanting it to be a tough day...wanting it to be bad...wanting to do things that hurt others nor themselves. Reminded me that despite what we may see, there is emotional baggage and challenges people have that they don't (and often can't) talk about.



I don't have anxiety - but I have been anxious. I can confidently say that I still remember the tightness of my stomach when I would be sent on my way to Kindergarten. That was over four decades ago. And I still remember. how. it. felt.

I remember hearing the late bell ring for a primary class and turning around figuring it would be easier to explain to my mom that I felt sick and couldn't make it to school than go into the classroom when it had already started.

I also remember reminding myself that by recess, the sick feeling would be gone. I would be distracted and be able to make it through the day.

But the memories linger - and remain a key reason why the oft-mentioned reaction to "how are you" is too often, '**fine fine fine**'. It's something we say, especially when we do not mean it. We say "fine fine fine" when our knee hurts more than it should. When the back is tweaked and more than just a little sore. When we think it is easier to push through a day rather than make a plan for a replacement and hope the class treats them well.

We need to change the dialogue. We need to acknowledge that when we hear someone say those special words...they are not heartfelt and often not what we want them to mean.

Maybe it is this empathy that has made "those kids" be attracted to my classroom and school. Maybe a familiarity that some days, hours, minutes are really hard. Also a reminder that sometimes time shifts and what is only a few moments for someone can feel like an eternity for others (unless we reach "flow" in which case the sensations are reversed!

I have done a ted talk on anxiety in school that influenced this writing:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V-JpBJal3F8>

And I owe a great deal of thanks to my father who modelled "doing different" before it became an Apple slogan...
So...where to begin....making sure we are in alignment of language:

what are worries?
what are anxieties?
what is mental wellness?
why is there so much of "it" today?

And I begin: worries are not the same as anxieties. Much like being sad is not the same as depression.

Mental Wellness means the brain works different from the majority (my son would echo the Dr Seussism: You've got to be odd to be #1) and it is not about "fixing" it as it is not broken, but learning some skills and strategies to cope and adjust and work within the world we are in.

Why so much? I have three considerations:

- a) we are doing a better job of identifying mental wellness concerns
(*confirmed in a Parents article share on May 1, 2025 -*
- b) we are keeping more of "those kids" in school and in classrooms - my connection is that 120 students entered grade 8 with me (there were more grade 7s, but...) and about 60 of us walked across the graduation stage. The 'others'...well many can be found online "celebrating x years sober/clean". Sadly many cannot be found...
this is my 120 —> 60 reminder that we are doing better
- c) there has always been a lot - so many of the adults I work with slowly divulge that they have been working with anxiety...depression...etc for years... "it" was there, it was just unclear what to do with "it".

Are there others? Without a doubt, but sometimes we don't need to focus on what has happened to get us to where we are and instead look to where we may head next...



2. My son wonders:

If schools are preparing us for the future, why isn't there a course about youtube?

- a lot of new curriculum is allowing for some shifts to happen; New Media is a part of the old "English" coursework that does allow for an exploration of this new media opportunity!

Why does school expect me to do its work at home if I'm not allowed to sleep when I'm at school?

- what are we expecting our learners to do at home vs at school? Should there be more of a "break"? It can be really hard to hold your s**t together for a whole school day...then to go home and do more...?

Why for self-regulation, do they tell me to breathe? I am f'n breathing! Otherwise I'd be dead! (and he didn't say f'n)

- have you tried changing your pace of breathing? try shallow breathing for a minute and see how your body changes. The heart beats harder, it becomes harder to breathe, tougher to think - it's not fun....imagine that for an hour....for several hours.... Then go to the calmed breathing we all know and love - it does work: five seconds in, five seconds out (ties in nicely with the haptics on my apple watch breathing app!) and try to do that for five minutes. It is an amazing reset of the body!

Fake Smile: another strategy I like: fake a smile for two minutes. You won't make it the whole 120 seconds before you actually start feeling better and smiling for real. Crazy but true.

Because there has to be more to self regulation than just breathing!

But then there is **fake empathy**. This happens when the worry about how someone is doing and worrying "what will the others think/say/do" - especially with elements of anxiety that can be very distracting. Causing students to walk around the school, to pull their hair, to roll on the ground, to swear, to talk loud, to pretend to be looking out the window, etc etc etc. The adults all too often are worried...but about the wrong thing - they are focused on the behaviours rather than the causation. A common worry: when they act like ___ we are worried what the others are thinking. So, **here's a secret** - they're mostly thinking "thank goodness I don't have it that bad". Seriously. Sure there may be the 1% of the 1% that get some joy out of seeing someone suffer, but that is the minority and usually due to a lack of relationships...there is also a bonus feature: they are seeing how the adults are treating "that student" and learning how that is what they can be expected to be treated like if they were to have a similar (albeit unique) challenge/difficulty.

3. Causation/Correlation/Other?

I think it is fair to say that much of the mental wellness challenges being faced are connected to a sense of "overload". I am not a doctor, so I always suggest contacting a medical professional, whether a medical doctor, psychologist as well as other mental professionals including counsellors and psychiatrists. And there are others who can help. But we need to be mindful that much of this "overload" is because the brain working with mental wellness challenges is because the brain works too fast and often does too much at once.

Imagine what happens when you are browsing the internet and have a hundred windows open. Then magnify that again. This approach is because one day my son and I were out for a walk, a dog barked and he jumped. As an educator, I took this as a teachable moment, (as a father this has earned me an enduring nickname: AF*) and asked how many thoughts were going through his head:

Me: Like ten? Or a dozen?

Him: You don't get it dad. More. Lots more.

Me: Like a couple hundred?

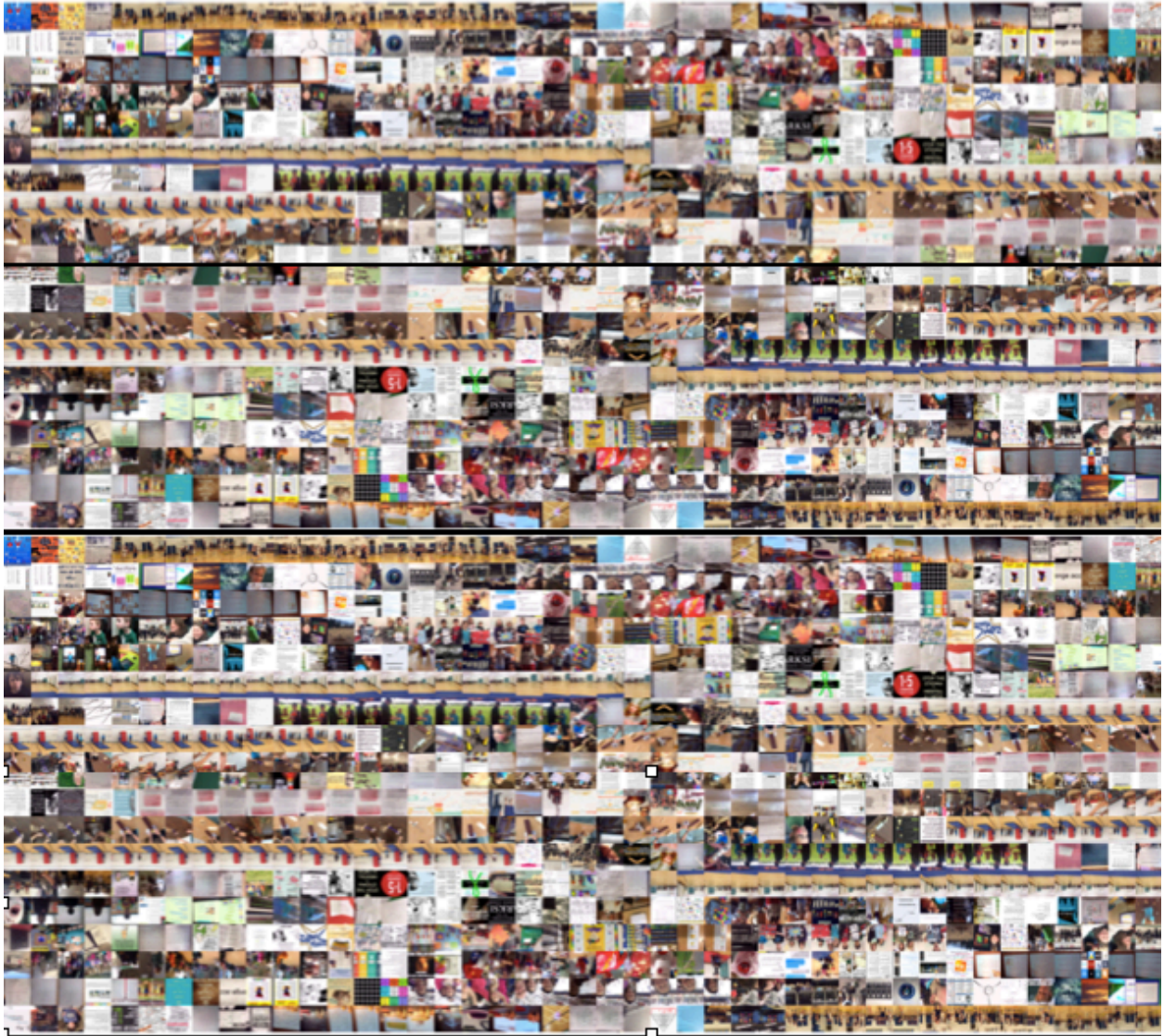
Him: No....grrrr

Me: What, like a thousand?

and this made him pause

Him: Actually...that feels more like it...

So when we arrived at home, we created an image that he felt reflected his thoughts when a dog barked:



But this was not just for when a dog barked. It is whenever there was a loud noise. Or a change in plans. Or a question was asked in class. Or read on a worksheet or in a workbook.

Every single "wonder".

And we identified the issue was not that he could not come up with answers, but that it was complex to sort them out - or as he put it: which "one" is the one the teacher wants to hear. There are many right and sort-of right responses that he could think of - but the challenge was that there was an overload of considerations.

All. Day. Long.

This is exhausting.

Is it because of the technology?

It is interesting to consider that perhaps "uncertainty" is needed in the human brain - the sense of wonders to ponder. The advent of mobile technology essentially means the answer to any question is a search away!

Who sang that song about ____

Who wrote ____

What does ____ mean?

When did ____

How do I ____

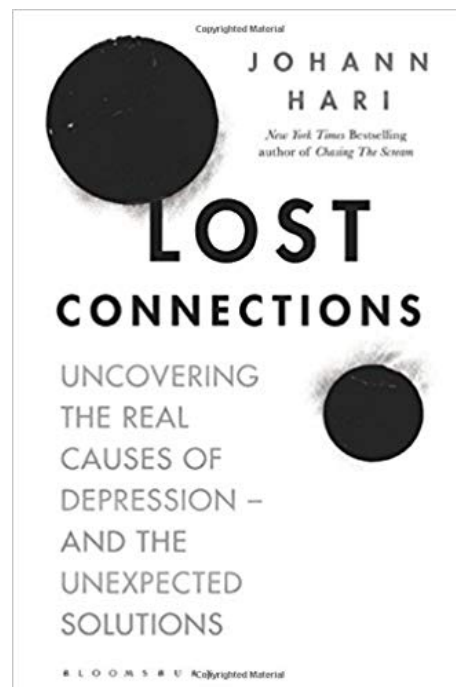
Except for the ultimate questions....

Death. We can't pretend this question is not front and center for many working with mental wellness concerns. How do you resolve something that is unanswerable. It is like trying to imagine infinity - the depth and breadth of a universe that has no beginning and no ending. Or thinking about what happens when your body stops working. The brain literally can only process these thoughts for a little while...for most of us....but can lead to multiple possibilities without any proof and certain.

What about.....

- *schedules?* our world has never been as over-scheduled as it is today. I used to joke that the kids at my school could do whatever they wanted after school...as long as it was either karate or soccer...
- *kids being kids?* when kids are alone, people start to panic - to the point that when a father trained his children to take public transit in Vancouver, the Ministry of Children and Family Development got involved because of the danger....they then went on to provide guidelines that "children" under fourteen should not be left alone, and if so could/should be reported...even if it is in their own backyard. Kids don't know how to be alone because they are not allowed to be alone... unless they are walking to or from school...
- *commercials?* Seriously - when the commercials subtly force a "keeping up with the Joneses" mindset, can we ever have the right skin complexion, champion hoodie and stylish kicks as "everybody" should have?
- *vaccines?* not even acknowledging this malpractice when a report was faked connecting vaccine to autism

Johann Hattie's Lost Connections is a great book to explore further:



And of course...maybe it's...

- *separation* (and kinderseparation is a thing - as is most separation anxiety, with some good coping plans available)
- *a learning disability*
- *autism (aspergers)*
- *flu*
- *something they'll grow out of*
- *depression*
- *thyroid*
- *a behaviour problem* (honestly I love these because they are so easy to test: put in a behavioural system and see if there is a change; if there is, great! if there is not, it is organic...and complex)
- *fake out*
- *something they will grow out of*

Some great hashtags are being started - such as @hattiegladwell and #PeopleWhoDontUnderstandMentalIllness #abledsareweird is also "fun"! some great shares:



hattie gladwell ✓
@hattiegladwell



Quote this tweet with the worst thing a 'friend' or family member has ever said about your mental illness.

I'll start: 'You're just an attention seeker, you need to work on your attitude.'

Use the hashtag

[#PeopleWhoDontUnderstandMentalIllness](#)

- Depression? Oh, I had that once and kicked it no problem
- Oh just get over it already
- Don't be so stupid, you're just being dramatic
- Can't you be normal for just one day?
- I need one of you OCD people to come and clean for me!
- Why can't you just eat ____ (lots of these)
- You don't look ____
- Have you tried just being happier?
- You think you've got problems...let me tell you ____
- Don't be so sensitive. I'll give you something to cry about
- I saw a movie and



Wonder:

How do you/your school/district/community/teachers/etc adapt and adjust to a student with a broken leg, who is getting surgery and going to be in a wheelchair for several months?

I ask because I have been in a school with 150 wheelchairs (metaphorical, but just as real.

Landyism

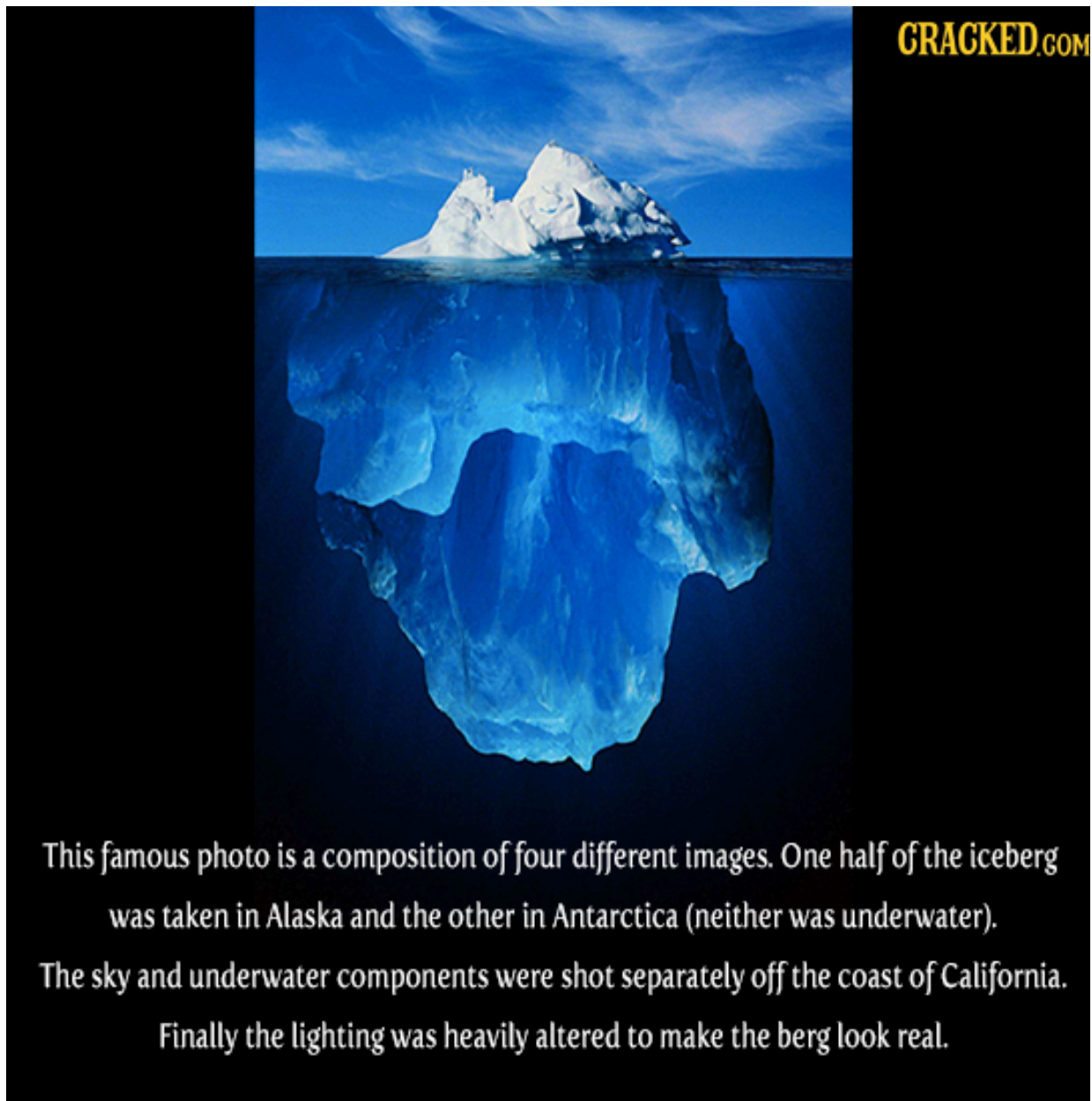
**Sometimes the hardest door to go
through....
is the open one...**

4. It is what it is.

I have used the analogy of an iceberg when it comes to mental wellness. Many have. It is a good one. There is a piece that we can see and a piece that is out of sight, covered by a blanket of wonder. An image that has been used again and again is this one:



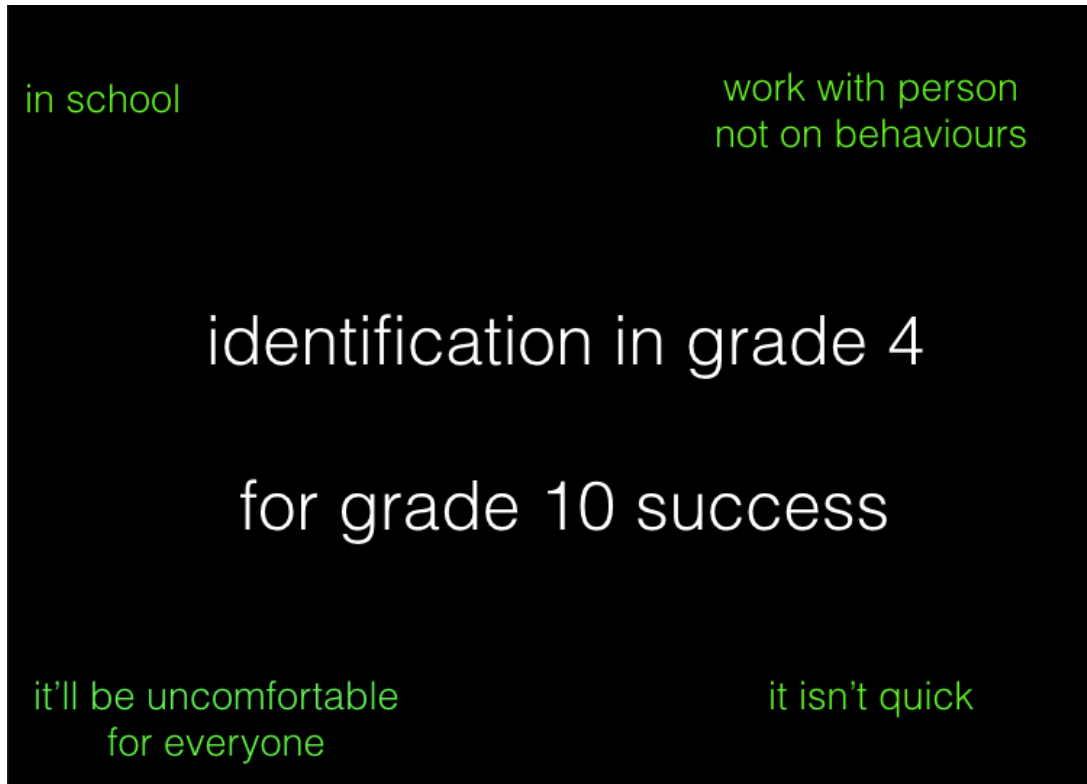
However, there is even more to this image than meets the eye as the staff at cracked.com shared:



This famous photo is a composition of four different images. One half of the iceberg was taken in Alaska and the other in Antarctica (neither was underwater). The sky and underwater components were shot separately off the coast of California. Finally the lighting was heavily altered to make the berg look real.

And I like the analogy even more - because I have said that there is a time when an iceberg "flips" and pieces that were hidden become revealed; pieces that were easy to see go out of sight; but there is always a part that stays out of sight. With the revealing of the photo actually being from multiple locations and with heavy edits, it is an even better metaphor for mental wellness: what you see is not necessarily what is there...

And this is not an easy or quick "fix" (again, nothing is broken to be fixed) but it is a marathon, not a sprint...



And sometimes our "best allies" can be our "biggest critics" for a period of time. Relatives have said "can't that be fixed?" " what he needs is...."

Understanding takes time.

One of my favourite moments was when my mom took my kids for lunch. They went to a fast food restaurant that was only in the United States and our family had not gone to it. My mom looked at my son and could see his agitation grow. Sure they had chicken strips, but... my mom noticed a more familiar brand name across the parking lot and said "lets just go there instead". My step-father, who also does not do well with changes like this, asked "why go there when the same food is here". But they recognized the needs of my son - and walked across the parking lot.

The anxiety is real.

A Canadian Principals Average Ratings of Students Mental Health Issues from an ERASE Bullying workshop showed, #westcoastbias living seems to be stressful...at least compared to jurisdictions across Canada..

Issue	BC Rating	Canada Rating	Global Rating
Anger Management	2.67	4.47	3.93
Impulse Control	4.58	4.28	3.96
Bullying and Harassment	3.67	4.28	3.99
Family Dysfunction or Other	4.75	4.10	3.89
Anxiety	5.00	3.77	3.38
Other Behaviour Problems	3.58	3.72	3.49
Stress	4.42	3.61	3.21

Why the increase? Once again - there are many possibilities - but back in causation/correlation, we could say it is due to the increase of mobile phone use...or full day kindergarten...or the removal of professional basketball from the pacific northwest...

Boredom Break

This was something I added into my teaching day. A time when we would do nothing. Not drawing. Not reading. Just....being. In our over-busy world, being bored remains complex - my kids at home and school roll their eyes when they say "I'm bored" because they now know my response will be: "You're so lucky. I wish I had some time to be bored!"

So I started scheduling boredom breaks. And I model it as well. This is not a time for everyone to put their heads down while I check my email. It is our opportunity to let our brain do some synthesizing on all the information it has taken in over the past hours and days. There is a reason great ideas come to us in showers, on long drives, as we are drifting to sleep. The brain needs time.

Landyism

**Sometimes the (complex) brain needs
to be distracted in order to be
focused.**

5. Connectiveness?

Schools: Are kids connected to their learning?

- Has there ever been a 100% connection?
- Is there a value in what learners do in school?
- Is learning engaging and relevant? Or hoops?
- Is school enriching? Or deadening?
- Disempowerment is at the heart of poor health; physical emotional and mental....

What do students have control of?

Is tech to blame - are mobile devices leading to a generation of tech-zombies?

image from the independent.ie



Or have we always reflected on life being more interactive than it really was ***The good old days...weren't....***



photo from Daily Mail - 1940s Subway

Is tech something to blame....this brings back the causation/correlation wonders...but at the same time:

A doctor talked to me about copper bracelets -
not sure how many with pain have a bracelet,
but every bracelet is definitely on someone with
pain...do copper bracelets cause pain?

A Landyism

While my classrooms/schools have been
(and will be) “tech-heavy” they have also
been the most connected to the outdoors
- nature matters! balance is important!

A Reflection

Sometimes the brain goes through a bit of a time warp - what may seem like an instant to an observer, can be the brain going through a series of escalations and considerations being processed - just very quickly....

Presence Matters...

You can't exclude someone to a meaningful solution and success (as a consequence nor as a way to "make them learn")

Unless it is part of a plan, seclusion and exclusion need to be used very mindfully. After all, students are watching - and what are they learning? That someone who struggles gets "sent away"? Or that they can get support and understanding...

We need to be mindful of both where and how a student can be included! Even if that means parallel play (trust me, these brains are absorbing effectively everything. Every. Thing.)

We need to **BUILD TRUST** between school and home - if something is not going well at one place, but seems to be okay at the other...we cannot dismiss it as "that environments problem" but tackle it as a team.

6. Screens

We can't wish personal screens and AI away any better than Blockbuster wished people wouldn't turn to streaming. Education is at a crossroads facing a technology that is even more fundamentally transforming how we live more (and faster) than any other disruptive technology... computers were once called glorified typewriters... calculators used to be what you called a good (human) mathematician... now that, and so much more, is available in a tool that fits in a pocket.

Now, we can debate the merits and problems with some of the apps and connections - especially those within the broader term 'social media' - and the troubles that has always been around teens and peer pressure and FOMO (fear of missing out) that is magnified by the omnipresence of the video and audio that makes up much of the 'always on' social medias. But that reflects back to 'connections'. And if 'you' don't like what you see, 'you' need to model and support the changes you want... a simple 'banning' has never worked, and if anything often further fuels the interest of what must be going on!

And communities do connect asynchronously. Both for good (lgbtq2ia+ spaces) and bad (flat earth), like minded people find each other and support each other. Giving positives... sharing resources and ideas... it has been great for educators, and likewise for learners - rather than putting a head down and feeling alone, there is better awareness and supports for everyone. This is why the tech shift that is going on is so powerful - never before has personalization been as possible.

So why should we be paying attention to the tech world? The more that schools look less and less like the 'real world', the less relevant and meaning kids are finding to connect. We can say that reading is vital - but when there are not reading role models (so teachers, take time out of the class time to model authentic personal reading... and writing... and mathing) where is the reasoning that it is actually important... or valuable... especially when/if we go truly 'back to basics' and acknowledge that this 'reading fad' might actually be winding down - it's been a good 400 year run, but maybe we can just get back to the basics of an oral/aural culture* (see appendix one)

Why Screens and AI:

A perfect partnership to go down a rabbit hole of learning and discovery and a collaborator (AI) to help clarify learning... meanings... definitions... and to find more resources to explore - or create quizzes to see if you know as much as you think you do!

A prompter. Sometimes the brain has so many things it can do, it can't get started. The right collaboration tool can get things started and then the human interaction can more properly personalize and perfect things.

Note: *we have tried a few activities where we have told students to 'just use AI' and we have always had a rejection of this... they don't want to 'just use the tool' - which sounded in contrast to a lot of articles I have read that show that cheating with AI is rampant... but then we deconstructed what we do and why we do it - and confirmed with students: because we spend so much time with descriptive feedback, the learners did not want the teacher to waste time giving feedback to AI on AI's work... they valued that relationship so much that they wanted the feedback on their work exclusively. They admitted that they liked how AI could get them started, and provide some quick feedback... and that if it was just for a 'check the box' kind of assignment (task) then they could/would use AI more to deal with it. But if the work had meaning... they wanted the feedback to reflect on their work, not something/body else's. Rich thinking there when we consider what, why, and how to do assessment...*

An editor. As said, sometimes a teacher/assistant is not available... but AI is always awake and ready - and sometimes you need that outside brain to take a look at your work and give you quick edits to make improvements - the more you do some of those changes (eg commas) the less you'll need the editor to remind you.

A collaborator. AI has access to a lot of information. AI and screens can make assignment completion feel more complete - this is great if you are worried about perfectionism or if the content 'makes sense'. AI not as a tool, like a calculator, but as a collaborator.

A friend. We can't pretend that everyone has a great time in school and growing up. Sometimes you need to vent or have someone to talk to. Not everyone has a bestie to confide in. AI can serve that role - in the real world, online counselling has been tested to be as effective/affective as in-person experiences. So whether you need to vent or build some coping steps, AI tools on your personal screen can give you the advice you may need - even if its a reminder that Anywhere in Canada, 988 can be called if you are in crisis and thinking about self harm.

Personalizer. As much as we try, humans in schools cannot individualize instruction. Or that should be, used to not be able to... AI can generate a study plan... a list of readings/viewings... create an assessment... in many cases analyze the creation of content... it even does (gulp) descriptive feedback pretty darn good. It is also fun to use a familiar AI to create a 'motivation speech' - try it out!

Non Judgemental. We might like it to be otherwise, but paranoia is real and sometimes people are uncomfortable to deal with. Whether it is a question about how they are feeling (or who they have feelings for) or a wonder about what might happen if... some questions are easier to ask someone/thing you know won't be judging.... Especially when so many are looking at youth amplifying the old Socrates complaint about youth today...

Future Thinking. If the good old days really were, why are so many of older generations on medication... or self medicating... or dealing with a variety of trauma and frustrations from 'back in the day'... when seclusion, exclusion and segregation were so much more common - easier to pretend depression doesn't exist than to actually see how it impact the broader social community... likewise with anxiety... autism... all the brainy things. If the school system that separates subjects and organizes learning rooms by year of birth is so awesome, why do we not have 100% graduation rates? Why do people still seek to avoid the big buildings? Why is it okay that it doesn't 'work' for many learners? Are we sure the Prussian plan from the 19th century is all that and a bag of chips??

Screens create connections. Fight me on this one. Sure, games and social media hits the endorphins... why are people turning to screens to get those emotional 'highs'? Well, if they ain't happening in real life... asynchronicity can be better than nothing.

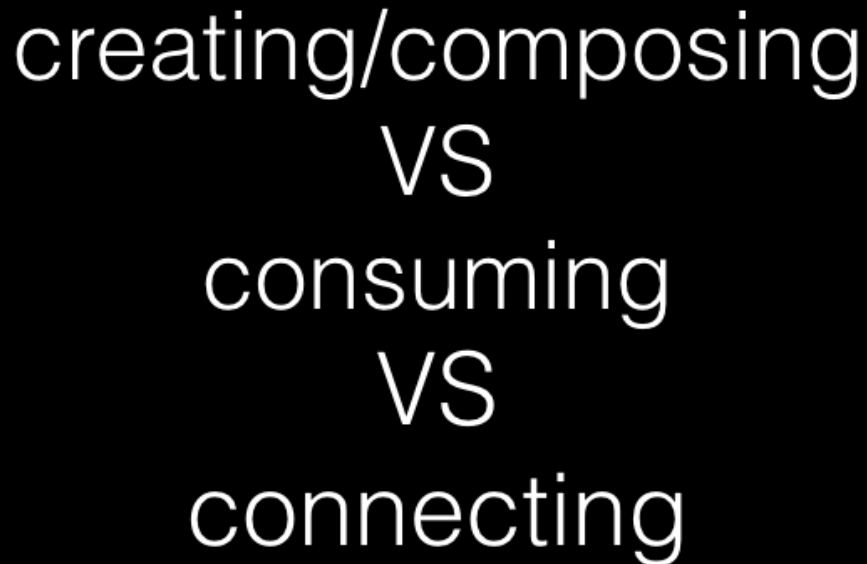
Screens create content. For many students personal screens enable them to create content better than ever before. I know some malign the passing of RIMs BlackBerry and its keyboard, but the soft screen touch interface is better for many. And being able to create video content... or voice to text... can be a better experience than pen to paper. Screens allow artifacts of learning to be created in ways that could not be done otherwise. The broader community needs to be comfortable getting information/learning in more ways than a 5 paragraph essay.

Screens are everywhere. Real life includes screens and AI. I know there will be some who wish it were otherwise, but it isn't. The majority of my reading has shifted to being on screen. The interactions I have with business, banks, entertainment, etc is online. When we then ban screens in schools we are doing two thing: 1) saying that the real world is different than school; 2) hoping that the learners learn safe netiquette on their own.

As an AI pointed out: Your response to AI isn't just a stance – it's a reflection. What you see in me reflects what you're ready (or not ready) to face in yourself, your culture, and the labyrinth of modernity. But here's the twist: the most important mirror isn't what you see in me – it's how you respond to what I reflect back to you. Ouch.

Is Education BlockBuster...? How will we respond to this serious disruption to the way we have done things...

The overall role of Technology with Education (Technologization):



creating/composing
VS
consuming
VS
connecting

I am a big fan of creating content using technology. Mobile technology. But there is a role for **consuming** information - especially if and when a topic becomes a passion/fascination/obsession - getting answers helps free the brain!

I prefer when learners are **creating** - which is why I love minecraft (see Will Richardsons "Why School?") This fires different synapses in the brain - the ones that make the brain more resilient, plasticity-ish, ready for growth!

I know that there is an element of **connection** through tech - and as much as we might prefer face-to-face, sometimes asynchronous does actually matter. As Johann Hattie in "Lost Connection" wonders about this better than me: are people being pushed online or attracted to the online...?

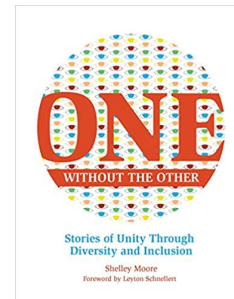
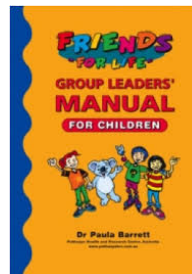
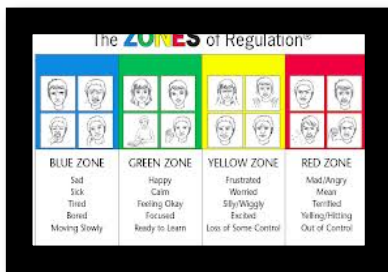
A planned sidebar -
what is good for students with mental
wellness concerns is good for all...

- Project Based Learning
- Less Worksheets
- Choice (geniushour/SOLEs)
- centers
- eportfolios

What if every student was on an
IEP....?

7. Other Tools

Alignment in language is vitally important. Whether that is the formerly-used-in-BC Friends For Life programs or Zones of Regulation or Mindfulness or or or - the environment needs to have the same language to be precise in what the students are hearing and experiencing when it comes to how their brains are working and what type of regulation may be needed.



This can even include the **environment** - pinterest classrooms are great... until they aren't - but that doesn't mean take everything down - but you can consider covering some things up. One of my favourites was when a teacher had a number boxes for storage - after a bit she decided to cover them up with the same type of wrapping paper so that they "disappeared from distraction".

Then there are the hands-on tools I love to help with regulation:

Lego Architecture (all white goodness - no fighting over a colour!)

Kinetic Sand - though not all textures are as good

Music and Nature Sounds - using a bone conductive headset so that the ears are still open and able to listen

Play-Doh

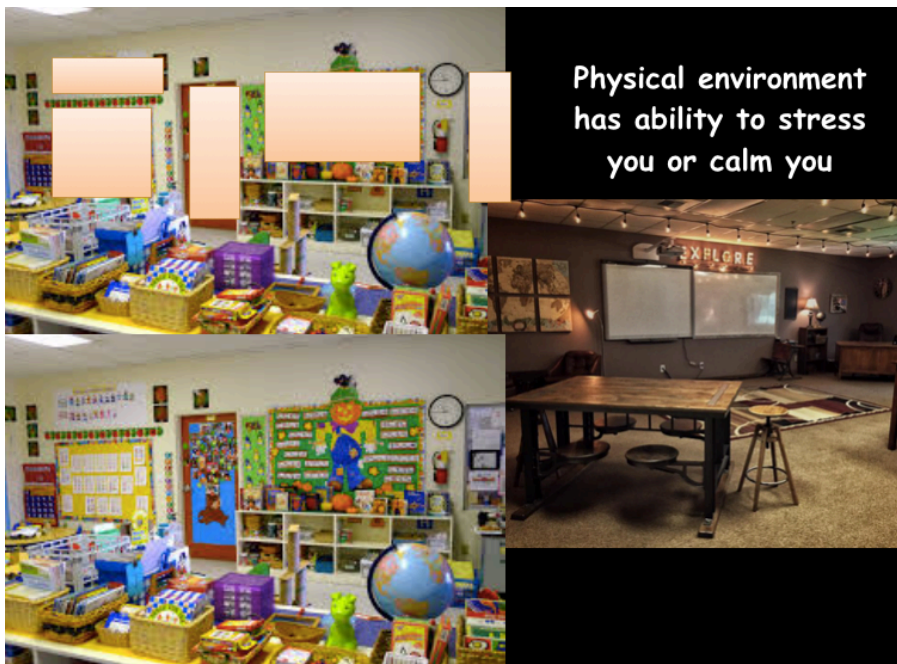
Nintendo Switch (mariokart, mario odyssey, and nintendo lab have been great)

And yes, parents don't always like that "the kids in trouble are playing games/with sand/building lego etc" but it is what they need at the moment - and they need to learn that things can be fixed.
One of my key rules for self regulation tools:

Tool VS Toy

(don't remove a strategy without providing a replacement)

((even if it's super annoying))



Sometimes less is more...

Even though I would sometimes take some teasing about the state of my classroom at the start of the year (cleanest time ever according to my many custodians- only clean time to the others) I had a mindset of building the classroom with the students. It reduced anxiety because everybody knew why things like the word wall were where they were and more importantly, what it was and how it may help them!

If it distracts you =
TOY



(and we are often
more comfortable with
the tools that work(ed) for us)



If it helps you focus =
TOOL



Tools: help improve learning and doing

Toys: distract the learning and doing

And sometimes we do need to get distracted in order to focus...

However, as I was walking down the hall and saw a girl on her mobile device playing a game, I did my usual ask: Tool or Toy.

Her: its a toy right now. I just had a fight with my friend on this project we are working on and I need to calm down. Can I have about five minutes - I think I'll be back to work by then.

I said yes...came back in five minutes...and yes, back on track.

Sometimes toys/distractions are helpful...
Because I know I have to be mindful if I/we are:

SUPPORTING or ENABLING

Landyism

organic...not behavioural

but damn does it ever look behavioural....

There's a reason for the Behaviours

Landyism:

QUALITY
over
QUANTITY

8. The Landy Rules:

mindful that these are more guidelines than actual rules as so often what fits one does not fit or work for another....!

Rule #1. The guideline to my start of every day (even if I am not there...)

The anxious learner needs
to be at school every day.
Every. Damn. Day.

Rule #2. The yeah, but...

Being at school does not
always mean being in the
classroom

Because....

There is no “better program” to send them to!

Dutch educators came to visit to see how “we” (in BC) do inclusion because their “cluster schools” aren’t doing what can be done in “regular schools”

And.. Rule #3:

Being in the classroom does not mean doing the same work

Parallel work/play
is important!
GUIDED GRADUAL RELEASE OF RESPONSIBILITY

Secondary Consideration

small stretches in blocks
alternate work spaces
1:1 opportunities (relationships)

Rule #4: Meaning matters - we need to have a “why” we are teaching and learning what we are....

How to make a subject suck?

You need to know it to be successful next year
ie negative integers → fractions → algebra
→ success in college

Need Relevance and Meaning
to be connected!
it needs to matter!

More of the Same...
feels like insanity!

Rule 5: We will have to sometimes push beyond comfort zones...and sometimes they may end up rolling on the floor (literally happened with me) but they will understand and accept a restart (also happened - kind of like the movie Groundhog Day: fresh start the next day! Sometimes right after the next break....

You will need to push
them

And you will (should) make
mistakes along the way

Rule #6:

it's a fine line between
supporting & enabling the
anxiety

Rule #7:

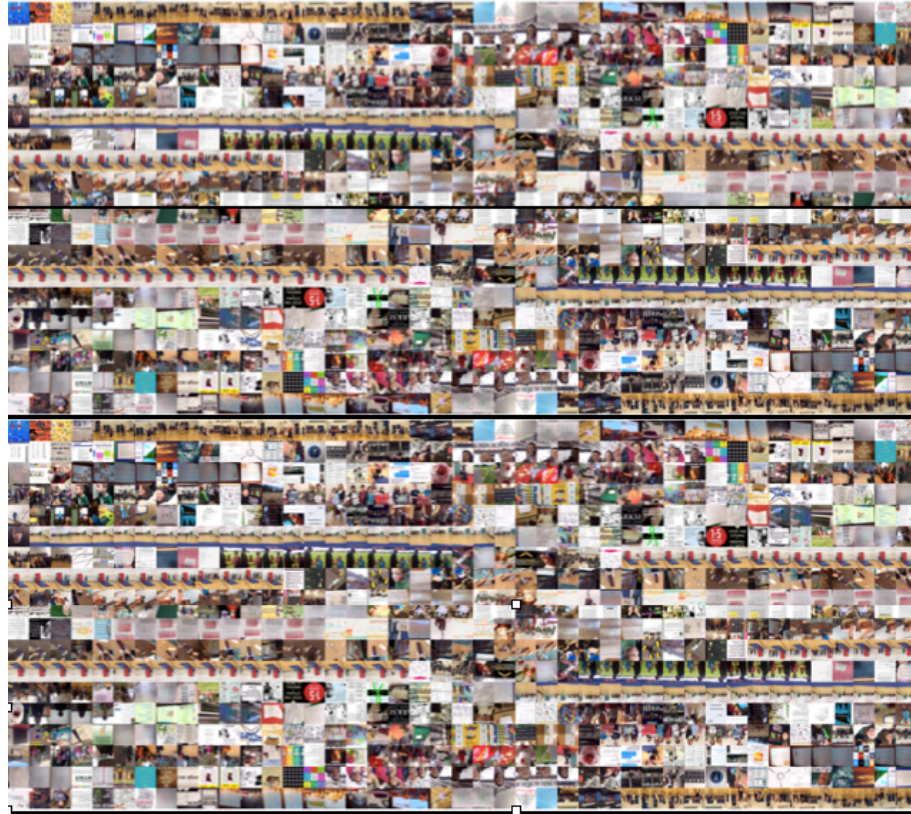
Relationships are key!
Studies find that deep loneliness is as stressful to the body as being physically attacked.

These learners need friends...and allies
(of any age)

Rule #8:

Anxious kids are
smart.

Reminder time. How many thoughts per question/query/wonder. So ten Qs on a worksheet = 10 x this:



Rule #9: sometimes the “why” a mental wellness challenge is happening can be VERY confusing - since there are very few reasons why...

Anxiety can be
overwhelming
(especially generalized)

Rule #10: While it can be tough to find a counsellor to work with youths - and tougher still to find a counsellor working with kids AND using CBT, Cognitive Behaviour Therapy is as effective as medication (and with medication means even more effectiveness)

Cognitive Behaviour
Therapy is important

Rule #11: I do not like that my son is on medication. But he knows how he feels with the meds and without them. He does not like how he feels without them...it is not about my wants, its about him. And even I was thinking about giving up and stopping his meds when I looked at the calendar and counted that we were finishing week 5....

Sometimes meds are
needed
(and week 6 sucks)

Rule #12: what worked for you, may not work for your child. If what they are using is super annoying - don't just stop it and take it away, consider a replacement to offer.

self-soothing strategies
will annoy you

If you take something away,
replace it!
Ideally with something cooler!

Rule #13: No surprises here. But giving a 10 and 5 minute warning (not every minute) before something happens/changes can be helpful!

transitions (and new
things) suck

Rule #14: Do not forget that managing emotions can be exhausting!

staying calm also
sucks

Rule # 15:

outsiders & family members
& friends will be critical

Rule #16: This is why I say “we identify in grade 4 for grade 10 success....

it's a marathon, not a
sprint

Rule #17:

And some parents are exhausted...

Communication is Key
(neither home nor school can/
should work on this by themselves)

Rule #18: Don't forget you:

YOUR regulation is VERY important

We learn how to self regulate by first "being regulated" by a significant other

Rule #19: There is no one universal "fit"

Mind you....



8. Reminders

Do not be a silo - rely on those who “get it” and are close to you. And spend time together. Spend time outside. Get away and disconnect to reconnect!

Close friends and families?
Or
Closed off friends and families?

Good friends important
So are family vacations

It is amazing what spending time as a family can do. Embrace the fights that will pop up. Make memories. Talk. Play games. Just be in each others eyesight - even if you are all on different devices - presence matters!

Remember: there is a lot that has changed - and being in an information age means we have more information than ever before...which is both good and bad...

Once upon a time...

- There were limited television choices (common experiences)
- There were big newspapers (limited points of view to consider - fake news??)
- There were limited choices....and "best paths" to careers and vocations -
- even more now than ever before, we don't know what the best careers will be in 5 years (**uncertainty!!**)

Be mindful on what tough parts are "in" the school day:

Bells. Announcements. Fire Alarm (maybe!) Outside Time. Transitions. Food. Smells. Choices. Decisions.

Do not assume anyone knows how to do things. Even slow breathing needs to be taught and coached (remember: I am f'n breathing!!)

SCAFFOLDING CALM:

CAN'T JUST EXPECT STUDENTS TO "JUST DO IT"
(BREATHING, SITTING CALMLY, TALKING ABOUT THINGS)
WITHOUT GUIDED PRACTICE

Remember that what is loud for one is not for other - and likewise what is calm silence for one can be the annoying sound of tinnitus

noise
(both audio and visual)

Because....

We learn through our senses
WE are stressed through our senses
we are soothed through our senses

The unfortunate reminder:

sometimes things that
“work”
don’t work forever....
especially if its organic
and not behavioural!

**if it is real in your mind,
it is real in your world**

- American Gods, Neil Gaiman

And back to youtube - do some exploration - and start with:

Good Mythical Morning
Game Theory
Go Noodle



Can there be “too much tech?” While I like to think “no”, I know better - like anything there needs to be a sense of balance...and awareness of the good and the bad. One of the big baddies: the light - the blue light of the screen tricks your brain into “waking up” - so watching screens into the night mean that it will impact your sleep. Many new devices have a “night

mode" which switch to a more 'natural' yellow light that helps the brain as it prepares to power down...

I like to say that my class/school will be **the most technological, but also the most outdoors** - this has been a key focus of my pursuit of balance - getting into the outdoors in all weather conditions (except really bad rain) and using tech to focus on collaboration and communication. The most collaborative classroom I have been part of was my class that was closest to 1:1 use of ibooks. But, as with almost anything - it takes work and being mindful in what we are doing, how we are doing it and why we are doing it!

Control

I use the term **mindful** a lot - making mindful decisions is important to me - it means we are thinking about our thinking before we make a decision. Sometimes this is an example of self-control, sometimes it is an example of self-regulation , but:

Self Control is NOT the same as Self-Regulation

Self regulation allows you to have enough energy is your battery to have self control

Examples - lack of sleep
Burns energy to deal with stress

Self control is using our thinking to inhibit impulses, to pay attention, do what others want from us. Hard to do if our battery is drained.

Self control is a result of being self regulated

Resources

- anxietycanada.com
- selfregulation.ca
- www.inspiredhealthphysio.com
- technolandy.wordpress.com
- twitter - just look up "anxiety"
- Ian's early "rant on anxiety" <https://technolandy.wordpress.com/2015/05/01/day-150-of-188-my-anxiety-rant-edited-continued-blog4mh-anxiety/>

Challenges

talk about mental wellness

you're not alone

yes, it's tricky

there is no "one" fix
(but can't "not" do something)

- * AF - as much as I like to think of it as the Awesome Father that will be said and declared in public and on social media, it also indicates Asshole Face which was a term used by some very close education friends when I would tease or push on some matters that needed....disruption.

The worst part of mental wellness challenges is that the worst case scenario is literally: the. worst. case. scenario.

So do not make subjects like suicide "taboo". Also do not use shame (what will the others think/do) nor ignore it (you wouldn't do it). Know that many who do, make the decision because they have already been over-thinking and over-synthesizing...everything. Too often we hear "they had so much to live for" after the fact. Talk. Don't look for answers, but embrace questions. Open up wonders and curiosities. Consult experts. This is not a subject to work on in isolation, but it so easy to feel that you are isolated and alone. This needs to change.

This is not intended to be an "only" resource, but a guideline - showing the rules I use to keep myself in an inclusive mindset. I am open to new suggestions and ideas. I am never finished thinking, wondering, pondering and editing the way I think and do when working with students who are working with challenges - because this is not something that can be fixed like a broken leg, but also does not have to be your identity. Anxiety and Depression and so many other mental challenges are with everyone - just in different amounts; nobody is alone - but it can sure feel like it - know that whether you are working with a challenge or have a loved one is alone - none of you are alone, and success is a legitimate possibility in those thousands of thoughts - we just need to sift through and find it!

Appendix 1:

Day 67 (of 2024/25) maybe this reading words fad has run its course... to read or not to read.... op/ed for @theatlantic and @edutopia to consider

*disclaimer: I am an English lit major and have been a teacher- and principal-librarian. I love reading text based media. But I also know that for many, reading is joyless and a struggle... and then a couple news articles hit me thus this ponder as I also dwell on the future of education with AI and personal devices being even more commonplace in homes than books appearing on the best sellers lists...

backstory/schema

<https://apple.news/A5B2brqXhRNCI4p6rd4-z2Q> – dwelling on the refrain ‘kids can’t read anymore’ and there struggle seen in higher learning that student rigor and as novels fall out of fashion – youth are entering college without being able/having to have read a ‘full book’. More and more share that they do not read for fun. I can’t help but dwell on ‘why’ – both why they aren’t reading and why they should even be encouraged in the direction of this media fad.

Basic literacy is one thing, but when we focus on ‘structured readers that help with the science of reading’

we tend to omit the reason many of us used flashlights under covers and had novels that were above our ‘approved reading level’ – it was enjoyable. If we only read for comprehension and content... reading becomes clinical and there are other forms of media that are more ... enjoyable. Saying as such to an online peer brought some blowback that things like the ‘science of reading’ (as opposed to Calkins, Whole Language, Phonics... etc – no end of reading strategies best immortalized by the Dick and Jane books...

I know the article likes to point out it coincides with smartphones, but glad that it also points out funding cuts to libraries, excessive focus on standardized testing (critical reading only) but doesn’t point out two things I am harping on: who are the reading role models that are showing that reading is fun... and a focus on the ‘skill/science’ of reading takes away any reason to read for pleasure... when it is for assessment and focused only on content. And when people make comparisons to the screens as being ‘more enticing’

Comments like ‘post literacy’ are mentioned, and may be a stretch (many books are being sold/read – though many complain because it is more in the romance department (always the best selling section of the bookstores I worked at) and not a biased vent on ‘good literature’ (I complained to my high school English teacher that we ought to read Stephen King instead of Dickens – he scoffed, but I did

repeat that Dickens was a writer-for-the-masses who was valued better after he wrote... I can imagine a study doing deep into the Dark Tower series and many other of his novels) Or do we acknowledge that instead of reading texts... like the first attempts in writing using images.. memes, gifs and picture-emphasis may be the way to go... or as I am about to state – maybe we acknowledge that overall, the book fad is fading... and after 600 years, we can emphasize some of the other communication tools and strategies and not be so alphabet-focused.

<https://apple.news/AZRNLHjgBTvyh2zixmlS0WQ> – comments about the above article (students not reading novels) were rampant – other shares (beyond my own) talks about not assigning more than 10-15 pages of easy prose per class... a tough way to slog through a book... but as I mention, also taking into account the changing use of language... I loved Lord of the Flies in high school as a student – when I dusted it off as a teacher, I really found the language archaic... great story but the words kept getting in the way. I appreciated the share in these comments about asking students what they have/are reading... curiosity shows value – it is one reason why I try (not 100% successful) to book myself into reading for recreation in our commons area just before our ‘lunch break’ – lets me do some supervision... highlight our comic book library... shows that I am reading (not for work) and am able to meaningfully have discussions about why kids are/aren’t reading – and what they are... and an

interesting insight could be that a lot of school bookrooms are full of aged books – more ‘call of the wild’ than ‘alone’ (budgets, amiright?) and the connection that readers have to the characters makes a difference... And today’s era means a lot of ‘problems’ in the past wouldn’t be the crisis that they turned out to be. A quick text or gps search could resolve a lot of classic literature... the boys on ‘the island’ would be easier to locate and rescue with gps and other tracking tools knowing where we all are at all times... but I do like one professor’s share: I always gave them the option to read a book instead of writing a 10-page research paper. They then would have a one-on-one, hour-long discussion with me about the book they’d selected. Maybe the next time I get a chance to teach a university class, I’m going to go with this project option...

*****now: a modest proposal *****

I was making an obtuse point with our superintendent as we were practicing a listening/thinking activity.. and unfortunately it’s kinda stuck with me... what if the fad/distract that are “books” has run its course and we are better suited to put our focus and energy on the true “back to basics” communication tool and strategy: oral/aural skills.

Hear me out. The printing press was a paradigm shifting invention. It made a whole bunch of new skills needed to be known that previous generations didn’t need. It was

seen and complained about as frivolous and a distraction for youth who should be doing other things. And a hope was that it could be banned and reading would only be for some... Sound familiar? Shockingly when the media started being used in teaching (some could say immersed together) then the tool was valued and had a wider impact on the growth of societies – both for bad and good...

Reading and writing have had a good run. This/these skill(s) served many important roles. A means to archive things that could not previously be archived and stored in a library... stories and knowledge. But those existed before – via verbal communications. One of my classical studies professors said the worst thing to ever happen to ancient literature is that it was written down. So now we have “a” story of Hercules. “An” odyssey. Etc. whereas in real time, stories would evolve and change depending on the storyteller and elders. Even now, those “true story of... the Iliad” as an example have many different versions – and these translations are typically based on other retellings. So what is written down remains varied from text to text... but we like to think there is one best/true version. That was never the goal in the original format of stories... they could change – at least until they were put into that constrictive format known as print media

Books were great ways to store and share stories and knowledge. Much as scrolls were before that (wonderful

youtube video about the introduction of the book: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pQHX-SjgQvQ>

Not debatable. How else could I get Will Richardsons thoughts about how Minecraft could replace most of what we hope to teach via schooling, barring him going on tour? Books cross/ed borders and were easy to transport (my moving experiences make many debate me on this thought) But times have changed. We had thousands of years of civilization without universal reading and writing and a couple hundred years where the disruptive distraction became better embraced and even created a new a goal: literacy. Reading as the mainstream form of entertainment and information.

Admittedly there is a multitude of struggles for many wannabe readers – dyslexia is interesting and the rote visual processing of letters to words is complex... as I realized when I took my finger and explored braille – imagine reading something letter by letter flashing on a page and then putting them into context... with some ‘common words’ having shortcuts, but the dogma of spelling making things extra complicated (especially for anglais) and the pressure put on anyone who could not read and write... the embarrassment of parents confessing that their young kids are better readers than they are... the lack of joy in the reading or writing process and abandoning those skills as soon as they can after (during) formal education.

Guttenburg's printing press invented around 1440 – not the first mass publication format, but like VHS vs Betamax, the one that was most adopted... and the pressure to embrace this fad has lasted 600 years. An important 600 years as sharing writings were the fastest way to distribute stories and knowledge... until recently... why is YouTube TikTok etc so popular? Maybe because it is calling back to our earlier roots... the value and importance of talking and listening – always inherently “easier” as ‘books on tape’ have often been dismissed as a “reading strategy”- indeed, while I support the concept, I am not very good at it, probably because I often get inspired and have to jot a thought down on my notes app – but I am giving it another go with Babel! But do I under value this part that is often used as an adaption for many who struggle with texts because of my own reluctance to use this adaption of the media? Or is it not reading because it is listening and they are very(?) different skills – even if the strategies (connections * questions * visualizing * inferring * synthesis) are the same? I'm good with debate on this... at the end of the day, I think this is right vs right as long as information and stories are shared synthesized and transformed into something else (reflection, new content etc)

My son once asked me: “if schools are preparing us for the future, where is the class on/about YouTube” – we recently re-talked about this – and expanded it – I once took it as a means of careers – if we teach drama, writing

et al, why not how to produce content for online markets as well... but we both reflected on how much actual learning we (especially he) has done via visual/oral means, and while many of us have supplemented our lessons with a classic Bill Nye video... why not explore more (for surface level understanding – passions will dive much deeper via visual, oral, and text sources of information) ...

And then I think about the modelling around youth – how many books and readers do young learners see? Where do they see them? Are they new and current? Are the spines broken with many folded pages? Are they at home? Are there stacks on teachers desks?

How much do we focus and push towards science of reading (note the lowercase letters – I am not talking explicitly about ‘that program’) that emphasizes important skills like phonics and blends as well as comprehension, but tend to use books that are programmed as “engaging” rather than naturally drawing in readers... there is a reason why EB White only had time to write three books (very deliberately created to engage and model what readers can expect to experience) but also why the best selling books are the romance section (though not honoured always as “good” reading) and are ‘page-turners’... I love books that make me have to read ‘one more chapter’ before I go to sleep (or do another chore I am avoiding)

When adults are also listening to podcasts and watching social media videos...and not modelling the PDFs, .epub and .mobi formats of entertainment, why would anyone think everyone still needs to go to the paper tablets? Especially as I reflect to a key strategy I use as I read a book out loud and share my inside brain functions ; modelling my connecting, questioning, visualizing, inferring, synthesizing, making transformations! I do these with oral story sharing and having students make their first attempts using their aural skills prior to using their visual recognition skills. Hmmm. We emphasized the value and importance of read alouds in class (though I always made the text available to scan along with)... maybe we über emphasize this... I mean, hearing the Wild Robot led many in my class that year to find the book and read/own it themselves...

But Science vs all others ... is it the visual of a reading crisis? https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2024/12/lucy-calkins-child-literacy-teaching-methodology/680394/?taid=6734a3cc3254dc00011292b6&utm_campaign=the-atlantic&utm_content=true-anthem&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter what's the point? I like Lucy Calkins work – the depth and breadth of her writing program shook up how I did both teaching, assessing as well as modelling. But it's kind of like the 'whole language' vs 'phonics' arguments that reached their zenith when I was doing my teacher training – my whole

language guru pointed out that phonics and phonological awareness and direct instruction are of course part of ‘whole’ language – whole means using a wide variety of tools and strategies because not all of us acquire reading skills the same way... as I see one of our grade 2 students walk by with a novel that came from our intermediate class library... but the focus on Lucy (and ‘balanced literacy’) became the ‘wrong’ way to teach and ‘Science of Reading’ was ‘the’ right way... My bias: there are flaws in every ‘one’ strategy or program. Even Lucy shares that she expects teachers to teach phonics, despite critics claiming her program doesn’t give it value... 5 year olds need phonics. Quote I loved from this article: I was reminded again and again that education is both a mass phenomenon and a deeply personal one.

But... what if we dive deeper and consider that reading isn’t needed by everyone... or even ‘many’...

Challenge 1: reflect on how often are you reading for pleasure vs information (vs at all) in your adult life?

If anything, mayhaps we should further de-emphasize the ‘value of text-only’ reading and continue to build on the recent uptake on graphic supported reading: comic books ~ admittedly re-genred as graphic novels to help build a greater maturity to help unlearn the mistaken bias that ‘comics are for kids’. With great works of literature translated into graphic form and with many original

graphic-novel creations entering libraries and bookstores... why not spend more time in this style of reading? Is it about the word count, or the thinking/synthesis that is inspired?

Serendipity or not, a novel (yep, they still exist and I still love 'em) I picked up to read while on the road had some observations about reading – no spoiler: it's a sci-fi book from about 500 years in the future... but the topic of reading and writing comes up a couple of times:

trying to acquire the basics of this exhausted information technology she soon enough gave up. It had been the realization that, having laboriously memorized all the little squiggles and squashed-bug mini-patterns of one alphabet, and starting to work through all the combinations thereof, many of them utterly counterintuitive, she had realized that the 'alphabet' she had been studying was only one of *dozens* antique humanity had employed, and wasn't even the *most common*. In addition to aggregative sigils there were systems of pictograms (*dozens of these as well*), all as rebarbative and infuriating as one another. So she had dropped the study.

'I never completed alphabetography,' she confessed. 'I know people think all historians acquire those old skills but few of us do in fact. Really, you can extract quite a lot from AI summaries and distillations. I've had AIs read out really *quite* lengthy antique texts to me, though it gets dull very quickly. How the antiques managed, without picture and motion and affect, with just these barebones sigils in great long spooling lines, I'm not sure! They must have had greater tolerances for boredom than modern folk.'

But Han wasn't listening. 'I'm,' he said, getting up from his bench and leaving his jave unfinished, 'just going to,' he said. 'I'm just going to.' He left.

'Might as well learn all the ins and outs of Babylonian astrology or the rules of Crack-it,' she said to nobody in particular. 'I mean what would be the point?'

She sat alone for a while. Then she went for a walk through the woodland and sat on a prominence looking down over the commodious bend of the river. Below her people were swimming, splashing, frolicking in the sunshine.

Later that evening she was making her way to the refectory hall when Han hurried over to her. 'It's cool, it's cool,' he said. 'Berd wants to meet.'

'Oh,' said Saccade. She had already more or less forgotten her earlier gravitational hypothesizing. Where had it even come from? Popped into her head from nowhere, and slipped away as mysteriously.

After an afternoon of peaceful walking and contemplation, of just *being*, existing contentedly in the sunlight and fresh air, mention of Berd reawoke the thrilling, unpleasant sense of anxiety that bubbled in her solar plexus. Agitation shimmered through her. 'Berd? In person?'

Maybe she was! She didn't know. 'I'm not joking,' was what she said, and then: 'the vector can't move *more* than ninety degrees, for obvious reasons. Then we *would* be in the realm of anti-gravity, which is impossible for all the reasons you know. But so long as quantum angular momentum is shepherded, we can move the vector round. Moving the vector round is in effect what you are doing, after all! Tacking against gravity as a sailing ship tacks against the wind. Deflecting it just a fraction. Good. But this is what I say: once we pass forty-five degrees – a little under that, but approximately that – then it eases and actually will self-correct to a full ninety degrees.'

'How?' Han demanded, suddenly very serious.

Saccade had no idea how this could be effected, but the words came out of her nonetheless: 'The initial power input would be in the exawatt range, that's one issue. The trick is to focus this on the subatomic level, where the angular momentum is not gauge invariant, and cascade the resulting Chakrabarty inversion so that it clocks. But once the vector disturbs the supersymmetry the system will try to self-correct, which will swing the vector about further, until it reaches its absolute orientation. Ninety degrees.'

'Woh,' said Han. 'That's *super* cool. If it's – forgive me, but – if it's true?'

The words dried up. Saccade stared at Han. 'I mean,' she said. 'I'm not a gravitist. I'm not even a physicist, so this could all be screwy nonsense.'

'No,' said Han. 'No, it's very interesting, it's a very cool idea.' She could see that his mind was speeding. 'And – you're not a gravity specialist, you say? This is just a side-line for you? A hobby?'

Saccade had no idea *what* this was. 'I don't know,' she said truthfully. Had Han asked her to repeat what she had just said she wouldn't have been able. 'A hunch, I guess.'

'What do you do?'

'History. Twentieth century stuff.'

'Oh,' he said. 'Historian, excellent. So can you read and write?'

Saccade was often asked this question, and it always put her in a rather embarrassing position. Historians sometimes did acquire these antique skills, the better to be able to study their source materials which of course, for a thousand years, had all been *written* upon stone, parch or paper in a string of readerly sigils. But though Saccade had spent a couple of months

directing a particular microwave pulse-beam she agitated the Hawking radiation at source to send the standard prime-number grid that was used to broadcast intelligent consciousness.

The day before D-Day (when it was agreed the *Oubliette* would sweep down, connect with the *Niro*, breach her hull and insert the team of Kim Red, Ko Kyung-Joon and Sima Shi) Choe Eggs, sifting the random data of the Hawking radiation, detected a pattern with the help of the navigation AI. Then another, and then another.

Choe Eggs grew very excited, and alerted the crew. 'It took us a while to decipher – *more's code*, an Early Modern tik-tak system of long and short pulses, each standing for one glyph. String them together and you can spell out a word.'

'Spell out? Writing? I didn't realize you could read!'

'I can't,' Choe Eggs confessed. 'But the AI did the work. We have the word!'

'A word in what language?'

'In Early Modern English, we think.'

'There is something in there, behind the event horizon?' boggled Kim Pyon Tsan. 'It's hard to believe!'

'Maybe, maybe not,' said Choe Eggs. 'We've been triaging possibilities. That we're in touch with a being inside QV Tel is one possibility, certainly. But more likely this is some kind of echo. We're 1120 light years from Earth, so it can't be an actual Early Modern broadcast being echoed back – go back that far and you're in the pre-technological swamp. But possibly another ship passed nearby, perhaps a couple of hundred years ago, and broadcast this antique code? Or leaked it, somehow, past the radiative shield? And it's possible the strange physics of this place have just now echoed it, or somehow released it.'

'Why would they do that? Broadcast in an antique code? What would be the point?'

'Who knows? But let's hypothesize: they broadcast this more's code – so-called, I assume, because it is sequential, you go along adding more and more letters until the whole word is spelled. But, if so, if it is being echoed back now, that must mean the event horizon is *not* relativistically invariant – not smooth – that it doesn't simply swallow everything that strikes it. There must be corrugations! This message has, perhaps, been bouncing

Lake of Darkness

I love the mindset of 'alphabetography'... and the reference to 'greater tolerance for boredom'... and I love the mis-remembering/understanding that comes when the focus is on aural/oral communication – Verne... Jules?

Julia? J?? He/she <— does the gender even matter when talking about historical figures? Delightful word play can take place!

And then there is the argument about how to even teach reading... Balanced Literacy vs Science of Reading vs Fonix vs Whole Language... it's confusing even for those of us who are keeping on top of the trends... But, I do have an observation: simplified text extracts can be boring for students and adults (I've modelled discarding a book because neither myself nor the class seemed to be enjoying it) and many children respond more enthusiastically when discovering their own interests... even the HiLo readers I used to seek out (high interest, low vocabulary) weren't really all that great in hindsight... but the appearance of being an older book than a preferred read was important (image matters – even in reading) But, “We’re talking about an approach that treats kids as competent, intellectual meaning makers, versus kids who just need to learn the code,” Maren Aukerman, a professor at the University of Calgary, told me. But opponents see that approach as nebulous and undirected.” <— can we learn to read by embracing a Montessori approach? I know many online who will shout ‘no’ but they are also the same ones who like the way things were when they were in school (or at least what they selectively remember) and want to trust the research unless it is newer research that shows great value in things like Project Based Learning and AFL strategies...

Challenge 2: can you spend a day without reading... have your phone read texts to you – use voice to text if you need to respond... how vital is reading and writing really <— we can make it vital, but can we ‘not’??

If we can... maybe we emphasize an initial grasp of letters —> words —> sentences —> prose & poetry, but trend more to the alternative formats – books on mp3 with supportive word texts (kinda like how so many like to watch tv with the captions ‘on’ <— love this way to reinforce some reading skills; video compositions; emogis (I just came across a podcast looking at the past and showing negative bias towards cultures that ‘did not have a systemic form of alphabet’ without the recognition of how hard symbolic representation going into these things called letters and words really is – especially over a wide geographical region... there’s a reason why more civilizations experimented with pictographic representations...

Think about how much time we could gain in schools by not emphasizing reading and writing though. The time and money spent on programs to help with penmanship and late interventions (and early intervention programs) for something that (too) many do while in the artificial school environment and then never again... had a friend whose school had reading as their only school goal – every

lesson/class/activity was linked to improving reading scores... barely moved the metrics...

Can we call reading and writing for what it is: a distraction from the more time tested approach to entertainment and information – visual and oral methodologies. A fad that will continue to have its niche customers, but like calculus... maybe not where everyone needs to expand their learning? Or let's call it closer to our thinking on cursive – good for some, not needed by most... so we'll continue to teach it, but not panic over 'how far behind' someone might be... they are developing their zone of proximal development... cuz even buzzfeed is sharing observations about reading: https://apple.news/AzR_O-UwaRDqD6_4Ke5NACA and I'm wondering how it fits best in the future of this experiment we call schooling...

The same novel had another observation about reading/writing from a future reflection:
Is reading a game? Is it okay when humanity's interest shifts?

As a librarian and English major and principal (reading report cards that often emphasize in Language Arts that "text/story can be a source of creativity and joy"), I hope that my inquiry is wrong and that many choose to believe that reading and writing as a key literacy is vital and important – and choose to model more publicly this passion and show why and how these skills are important

and valuable outside classrooms (even if it's just in hallways... or in gyms – I would love a principal calling out a teacher because they are absorbed by TS Eliot's Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats rather than the PowerPoint assembly at the front of the crowd... or even Robert Munsch's Paperbag Princess... anything to remind everyone that reading was/is/ought to be a form of rebellion and independence... a vital form of communication – of ideas and stories... a good alternative for the brain than oral/aural/visual narrations... though admitting that those are good too... but a source of education and entertainment – tools with great power, not something to be banned and ignored... ooh, that reminds me of another media tool...