Moving Beyond Facts, Skills, and Right Answers
though, teachers who start that way rarely give up control and create a democratic environment later on (see Kohn...nality. Until they've developed sufficient maturity, they have to just do what they're told. Unfortunately, the

Kids who are variously called "at-risk," "low-achievers," or "slow learners" usually "suffer most from a narrow...en. If I don't understand how to do something, making me do it repeatedly isn't going to help; it's just going to make me

The real flaw of narrow standard-setting, however, runs even deeper than this. It concerns the basic model of...and dates, announces that this is what all kids ought to know, and specifies how much of it they ought to know at

When I was teaching, it never dawned on me to question this view. There was a stretch of seven years, for example, ...looking forward to the next year when I could teach it again — rather as one might tinker with a new car in the garage

Here we have one more example of how a defining doctrine of traditional education not only persists in American...lecture at us year after year, so we naturally think that's what teaching is all about. Second, there's a kind of

That rumbling you hear in the distance is the right wing readying its invocation of the dreaded charge of relativism. ...and again, no. What I am saying is if we want kids to be thinkers, we have to encourage them (and help them) to think –

In the face of such a view of schooling, it is refreshing and a little startling to recall a recent comment by Harold..."They should be as vague as possible," Howe replied.[3] His point was that the more precise the requirements are

Many of us, once we think about it, will be uncomfortable with the first premise – that is, the implicit assumption that...school; it's something else to dictate that every student must be able to do such-and-such by the end of second grade.

As though it were not a sufficient indictment to say that understanding is undermined and even the facts are not...and again, no.  What I am saying is if we want kids to be thinkers, we have to encourage them (and help them) to think –

(1) The most distinctive feature of American education is the expectation that a great many things will be "covered"...be knowledgeable. Teaching sometimes resembles a caricature of American tourists in Europe: there are only

one more example of how a defining doctrine of traditional education not only persists in American...lumbing to a reading for understanding. Precisely the same thing may be said of math: wise educators don't teach addition and subtraction as prerequisites for pursuing interesting problems; they teach these skills

It was written, how it was received, why it...condemned to repeat it. Or make their children repeat it.) The reasonable reply, it seems to me, is that nothing could...than the staples of a traditional education,[21] including having to learn skills outside of a practical context.

This is true regardless of age and regardless of whether we are quick or slow to understand things. On the latter point, Perkins (1992, p. 14) declared that "thoughtful learning is just as important for slow learners as anyone else."