

David Perkins

Narrative Curriculum Vitae

Communications

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Background

David Perkins received his Ph.D. in mathematics and artificial intelligence from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1970.

As a graduate student he also was a founding member of Project Zero at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. This research and development group was initially concerned with the psychology and philosophy of education in the arts, and later broadened greatly to encompass cognitive development and cognitive skills in both humanistic and scientific domains.

David Perkins was Co-Director of Project Zero with his colleague Howard Gardner for more than 25 years and is now Senior Co-director and a member of the Project Zero steering committee.

Since 2000, he has been a senior professor of education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Research interests

David Perkins has conducted long-term programs of research and development in the areas of teaching and learning for understanding, creativity, problem-solving and reasoning in the arts, sciences, and everyday life. He has also studied the role of educational technologies in teaching and learning, and has designed learning structures and strategies in organizations to facilitate personal and organizational understanding and intelligence.

His inquiries reflect a conception of mind that emphasizes the interlocking relationships among thinking, learning, and understanding. The three depend deeply on one another. Meaningful learning aims at understanding and depends on thinking with and about what one is learning. Effective thinking in the subject matters and in general involves understanding the resources of the mind and learning to deploy them sensitively and systematically.

His work has often combined research with collaborations for practical impact, including initiatives in South Africa, Sweden, Australia, Colombia, Venezuela, and other parts of the world.

Authored Books

David Perkins' research on creativity resulted in his first book, *The Mind's Best Work* (Harvard University Press, 1981), a well-received examination of the psychology of creativity.

He is co-author of *The Teaching of Thinking*, a book reviewing comprehensively the state of the art in that area (Nickerson, R., Perkins, D. N., & Smith, E., 1986. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum).

His *Knowledge as Design* was published by Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc. in 1986. This book introduces a framework for making subject matter instruction more accessible and meaningful through an emphasis on reasoning and inventive thinking.

He is co-author of *Teaching Thinking: Issues and Approaches*, a guide for practitioners (Swartz, R., & Perkins, D. N., 1989. Pacific Grove, CA: Midwest Publications).

He is co-author of *Block--Getting Out of Your Own Way: The New Psychology of Counterintentional Behavior in Everyday Life* (Lipson, A., & Perkins, D. N., 1990. New York: Lyle Stuart Press).

His *Smart Schools: From Training Memories to Educating Minds* (The Free Press, 1992) brings together ideas and research from cognitive science and other disciplines to create a new vision of schooling.

His *The Intelligent Eye: Learning to Think by Looking at Art* (The Getty Center for Education in the Arts, 1994), investigates how people can cultivate more thoughtful and insightful ways of looking at art.

He is co-author of *The Thinking Classroom: Learning and Teaching in a Culture of Thinking* (Tishman, S., Perkins, D. N., & Jay, E., 1995. Needham, MA: Allyn & Bacon).

His *Outsmarting IQ: The Emerging Science of Learnable Intelligence* (The Free Press, 1995) explores how contemporary efforts to teach better thinking challenge the traditional concept of IQ.

He returned to a book-length statement on creativity with the 2000 *Archimedes' Bathtub: The Art and Logic of Breakthrough Thinking* (New York: W. W. Norton), published in paperback as *The Eureka Effect*.

His ideas about organizational development saw light in *King Arthur's Round Table: How Collaborative Conversations Create Smart Organizations* (NY: Wiley, 2002) and *Learning at Work: Research Lessons on Leading Learning in the Workplace* (Wilson, D., Perkins, D., Bonnet, D., Miani, C., Unger, C., Cambridge, MA: Harvard Project Zero, 2005).

His latest book is *Making Learning Whole: How Seven Principles of Teaching Can Transform Education* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2008).

Edited Books

David Perkins' first edited book was a collection of articles representing the early work of Project Zero: Perkins, D. N., & Leondar, B. (Eds.) (1977). *The Arts and Cognition*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

He was a co-editor of *Thinking: The Second International Conference*, a book representing the Second International Conference (Perkins, D. N., Lochhead, J., & Bishop, J., Eds., 1987. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.)

He joined Howard Gardner in editing *Art, Mind, and Education*, a collection of articles representing the ideas of Project Zero (Gardner, H., & Perkins, D. N., Eds., 1989. Urbana-Champaign and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.)

With his colleague Robert Swartz, he co-edited *A Practitioner's Series on Teaching Thinking*, a series of three books on the teaching thinking (Swartz, R., & Perkins, D. N., Eds., 1989. Pacific Grove, CA: Midwest Publishers.

His interest in everyday reasoning led to co-editing *Informal Reasoning and Education* (Voss, J., Perkins, D. N., & Segal, J. W., Eds., 1991. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.)

With his colleague Robert Weber, he co-edited *The Inventive Mind: Creativity in Technology*, a collection of articles by contemporary inventors, historians of technology, and cognitive psychologists that discloses insights about the process of invention (Weber, R. & Perkins, D. N., Eds., 1992. NY: Oxford University Press.

He is co-editor of *Software Goes to School: Teaching for Understanding with New Technologies*, a book about the role of technology in education (Perkins, D. N., Schwartz, J. L., West, M., & Wiske, M. S., Eds., 1995. NY: Oxford University Press.

Articles

David Perkins has published about 170 articles in a number of different journals on learning, creativity, thinking, understanding, technology, and related themes.

Conferences and Presentations

David Perkins has participated in many workshops and presentations regarding understanding, thinking, and education in a number of countries in Europe, Central and South America, South Africa, New Zealand and Australia, as well as Canada and the United States.

He has helped to organize a number of conferences, including *The Second International Conference on Thinking* (Harvard University, August 20-23, 1984), the *Conference on Informal Reasoning* (Learning Research and Development Center, University of Pittsburgh, March 26-29, 1987), the *Advisory Conferences on the Teaching of Thinking*, (The MacArthur Foundation, Chicago, IL, May 8-9 and June 5-6, 1988), *The Inventing Mind Conference* (Tulsa, OK, November 2-5, 1989), a series of small conferences on thinking at the Harvard Graduate School of Education in 1990 and 1991, a conference on *Teach-*

ing for Understanding, Harvard Graduate School of Education, October 8-9, 1993, and Lemelson-MIT Program's *Workshop on The Architecture of Invention*, Cambridge, MA, August 21-20 3, 2003.

He is a member of the standing committee for the International Conference on Thinking series. The 13th was held in Norrkoping, Sweden, in June 2007 and the 14th in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in June of 2009. The 15th is scheduled for Belfast, Northern Ireland in June of 2011.

Current Projects

LILA (Learning Innovations Laboratory). This project on organizational learning and development convenes a small group of high-level representatives of major organizations three times a year to share ideas about organizational learning, leadership, creativity, and more. Between meetings, the staff develops research syntheses reflecting the themes. David Perkins has led LILA in collaboration with his colleague Daniel Wilson.

WIDE World (Wide-scale Interactive Development for Educators). This project, tackling the problem of scaling good practice, offers online courses for teachers and school leaders. Educators enroll from all over the world and the program has served many thousands. David Perkins helps to lead this program in collaboration with colleagues Martha Stone Wiske and David Zarowin.

Visible Thinking / Cultures of Thinking. For a number of years, David Perkins and colleagues have conducted research on thinking dispositions, devising ways to transform classrooms into "cultures of thinking" that foster thinking skills and attitudes through the teaching of the disciplines in a thinking-centered way. A number of schools are participating, with the current primary development site for new materials being Bialik College in Melbourne, Australia, an initiative called Cultures of Thinking. Harvard colleagues Ron Ritchhart and Shari Tishman have helped to lead this work.