SIDES Book Club Notes
June 1/17

Books:  How We Learn by Benedict Carey
       Creative Schools by Ken Robinson

For How We Learn:
• People seemed to like both books. Surprised by some comments and other were re-affirmed.
• Liked the sense of humour in  How We Learn. Also good that it was evidence based.
• Surprised by how testing helps kids learn. If students do the pre-test then the actual test, it's a good strategy.
• Comments on sleep were interesting.
• Sometimes doing the all-nighters was good, then sleep in late. Depends on sleep patterns and what is being tested.
• Interesting on learning in your sleep. Deep sleep reinforces vocab. Lighter focuses on creativity and motor skills.
• People seemed to want to have a copy of the graph about this.
• Explains re fitbits – tracking sleep patterns.
• It's also important to have a gap of time to consolidate thinking. Ie course development/part time versus full time doing this.
• Gives time to process ideas while doing other things.
• Can think about this in terms of structuring courses/reflection at the end of each piece – will this help with an Inquiry project?
• Illusion – but I thought I knew it all. Just going over notes is not creating something new. Need to recite it, test yourself.
• Brain tricks itself into thinking you know something.
• Shorter focus/more times versus cramming and need to retain long term.
• People liked how he didn't spend 40% of the time name dropping in the book.
• Interesting research tied in.
• liked the important questions summary as well.

For Creative Schools:
• people who read this also liked it.
• Focused on grad rates a lot, which makes sense.
• Need to have schools that community, learners, parents, staff see as working for that place.
• Liked how there was a focus on not being specialized, ie Academies
• need a balanced curriculum.
• Equal status and resources to Arts, Humanities, Language Arts, Math, PE and Science.
• Really liked the idea of Arts taken seriously.
• Curriculum that is connected, shared and planned.
• Liked the idea of teachers being valued/enticed by good, stable jobs and high expectations.
• Connections with home and school.
• To transform a school you need leadership from the principal, faculty willing to engage in change and quality professional development.
• Scary seeing the US and UK – right wing movement to break up and commercialize education.
• Capitalism versus education.
• Nothing better than well supported public schools.

SIDES:
• how can we make this work?
• Staff usually on the same page.
• More inter-departmental collaboration than in some other places.
• Need to be okay with change.
• Challenges include diverse backgrounds of students.
• Look for gaps in student’s education, and try to fill those in.
• our courses, some take them one at a time; flies in the face of some of the studies. Depends on the student?
• Addresses idea of student being in the right mood to come in and do the test/work they need.
• Sleep – need this to do well. Mental and physical health is important.
• And courses generally address different ways of learning, ie videos, written, etc.