

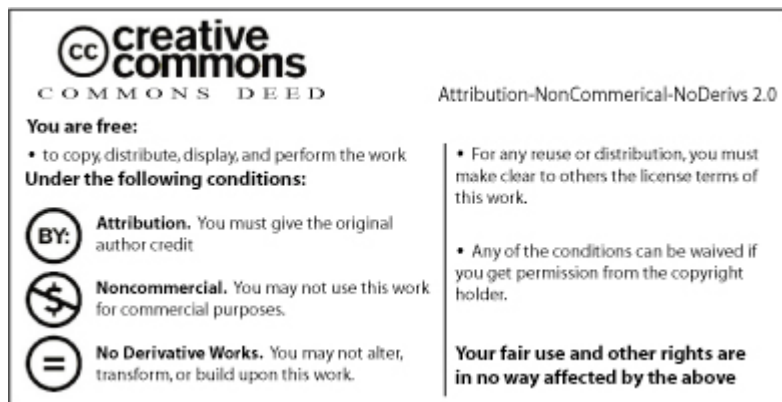
Elliott Masie's
LEARNING2009

Malcolm Gladwell
Outliers

Learning 2009 Keynote – Most Memorable Teacher

November 9th, 2009

Transcription of Video Segment Available at:
<http://www.learning2010.com/gladwell>



The MASIE Center & Learning CONSORTIUM present a series of Video and audio/PodCasts with text transcripts on key issues related to the world of Learning and Training. These segments are provided to our field under the CreativeCommons License.

Learning 2010 will be held from October 24-27 in Orlando, Florida.

Elliott Masie: [Tell us about] one of your favorite most powerful teachers that had an impact on you in your life.

Malcolm Gladwell: Oh wow! I had so many good ones, I can't even tell you [about them all]. My seventh grade teacher, a man named Jim DeBock, was really the one who got me interested in writing, and he wanted all of us to write. I think we actually did writing in his class at the expense of every other subject, which is why I can't do math, as you saw earlier.

He was just somebody - what was really lovely about the way he taught us about writing was that his end goal was to make us better writers, but that wasn't the issue when he was teaching us. His primary goal when he was teaching us writing and having us write was that we find it meaningful, that we understood what a joy it was, that we understood the particular pleasure with expressing ourselves. I realize now, he inverted the kind of learning order. To him, the whole issue of, was this piece of writing better than that piece of writing was absurd. It didn't even enter his [mind].

I remember those classes so vividly. He just wanted us to understand what a beautiful and joyful thing it was, and he never once passed judgment - because some of us were good and some of us weren't good - and that just wasn't even part of the equation.

I remember even the way he graded. He graded on the kind of quality of your enthusiasm and to the extent to which you expressed some interesting idea; not on whether it worked as a piece of writing, because, correctly, we were seventh graders. Who cares whether it works as a piece of writing? We are 20 years from having to write something [that works].

In retrospect, I realize that was the beginning. I mean, that was the thing that made me want to do this, and it was more than a skill that I learned. It was something that could bring meaning and pleasure to my life.

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