



Holding On to Good Ideas in a Time of Bad Ones: Six Literacy Principles Worth Fighting For

Thomas Newkirk

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Tom's new chapter, Speaking Back to the Common Core, is NOW AVAILABLE! Click here to read.

"Holding On to Good Ideas in a Time of Bad Ones is my new favorite book about how to live as a teacher. Finishing it, I experienced what I can only describe as a state of grace-moved, renewed, and grateful that a mind like Tom Newkirk's has been intrigued by classroom matters for almost forty years now."

-Nancie Atwell

Author of In the Middle, Second Edition

"Classic Newkirk: direct, incisive, and brimming with wisdom."

-Harvey "Smokey" Daniels

Coauthor of Comprehension & Collaboration

This book is one of the best teacher books ever. I'll be giving copies of it to lots of teacher friends as we find our way back to trusting what we know about kids, about learning, and about teaching writing.

-Gretchen Bernabei

Author of Reviving the Essay

Holding On to Good Ideas in a Time of Bad Ones is for every teacher who has struggled under top-down mandates, who ever had to slavishly follow the script of a reading lesson, who ever felt that tests were driving instruction. It is for those whose good, humane, and sensitive ways of teaching literacy are threatened by rigid, mechanical programs. It is for teachers who feel they are losing control of their daily work. Hear a podcast, where Tom Newkirk and Nancie Atwell discuss teaching principles worth fighthing for. In Holding On to Good Ideas in a Time of Bad Ones, Tom Newkirk eloquently defends teaching against the "cult of efficiency" that turns classrooms into assembly lines of knowledge. Newkirk goes beyond diagnosing the problem to present six ideas worth fighting for. These transformative practices gently but firmly return instructional decisions to where they belong: with you, our teachers. Newkirk shows how to:

- increase your instructional emphasis on writing to reflect the reality that producing text is more important than ever
- help students access deep knowledge and expand their thinking through time to write freely
- build strong connections between school learning and the real world by teaching with popular culture
- propel the development of reading skills by helping students discover the pleasure of reading
- provide the time and space for meaningful, long-lasting teaching and learning by uncluttering the curriculum
- spark professional growth and avoid stagnation by discussing failure and uncertainty with colleagues.

Holding On to Good Ideas in a Time of Bad Ones is affirming, not argumentative. It celebrates the humanity and unpredictability of teaching with Newkirk's blend of humor, passion, and warmth. Let it inspire a search for the things in your teaching that are most worth holding on to.

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Maria Mariani:

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