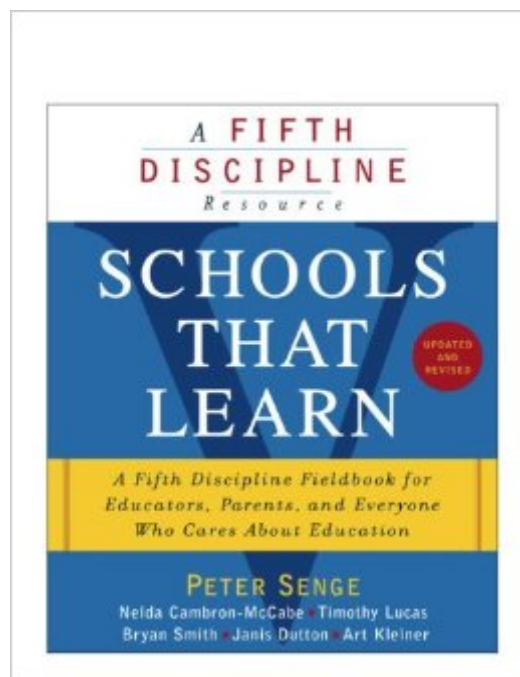


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# Schools That Learn (Updated And Revised): A Fifth Discipline Fieldbook For Educators, Parents, And Everyone Who Cares About Education



## Synopsis

"A rich, much-needed remedy for the standardized institutions that comprise too much of our school system today | ideal for teachers and parents intent on resurrecting and fostering students' inherent drive to learn | An essential resource." -Daniel H. Pink, author of *DRIVE* and *A WHOLE NEW MIND*

Schools that Learn is a magnificent, grand book that pays equal attention to the small and the big picture - and what's more integrates them. There is no book on education change that comes close to Senge et al's sweeping and detailed treatment. Classroom, school, community, systems, citizenry---it's all there. The core message is stirring: what if we viewed schools as a means of shifting society for the better!" -Michael Fullan, author of *Change Leader* and *Learning Places*

A new edition of the groundbreaking book that brings organizational learning and systems thinking into classrooms and schools, showing how to keep our nation's educational system competitive in today's world. Revised and updated - with more than 100 pages of new material - for the first time since its initial publication in 2000 comes a new edition of the seminal work acclaimed as one of the best books ever written about education and schools. A unique collaboration between the celebrated management thinker and Fifth Discipline author Peter Senge and a team of renowned educators and organizational change leaders, *Schools that Learn* describes how schools can adapt, grow, and change in the face of the demands and challenges of our society, and provides tools, techniques and references for bringing those aspirations to life. The new revised and updated edition offers practical advice for overcoming the many challenges that face our communities and educational systems today. It shows teachers, administrators, students, parents and community members how to successfully use principles of organizational learning, including systems thinking and shared vision, to address the challenges that face our nation's schools. In a fast-changing world where school populations are increasingly diverse, children live in ever-more-complex social and media environments, standardized tests are applied as overly simplistic "quick fixes," and advances in science and technology continue to accelerate, the pressures on our educational system are inescapable. *Schools That Learn* offers a much-needed way to open dialogue about these problems and provides pragmatic opportunities to transform school systems into learning organizations. Drawing on observations and advice from more than 70 writers and experts on schools and education, this book features:

- Methods for implementing organizational learning and explanations of why they work
- Compelling stories and anecdotes from the field - classrooms, schools, and communities
- Charts, tables and diagrams to illustrate systems thinking and other practices
- Guiding principles for how to apply innovative practices in all types of school systems
- Individual exercises

useful for both teachers and students-Team exercises to foster communication within the classroom, school, or community group-New essays on topics like educating for sustainability, systems thinking in the classroom, and the great game of high school.-New recommendations for related books, articles, videotapes and web sites-And more Schools That Learn is the essential guide for anyone who cares about the future of education and keeping our nation's schools competitive in our fast-changing world.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Whether we experienced our student life as "sweat hogs" or not, each of us have tales to tell of being forced to learn in spite of the schools we attended instead of because of them. If we counted how many "good" schools or teachers we experienced over our lifetimes, we could probably count them on one hand (or finger!). For an institution that plays such a significant part in our development, this is a terrible performance record. With SCHOOLS THAT LEARN, Peter Senge (et al) legitimize the fieldbook format as an extremely effective teaching tool. Chocked full of examples, tools, theory, tips and traps to avoid, SCHOOLS THAT LEARN outlines an effective strategy for

creating a powerful alliance between learners, schools, and communities. His is a call to action that must be heeded. Readers will be informed, challenged to get involved, inspired, troubled, and made to see how important an issue lifelong learning is. Rather than seeking to place blame, **SCHOOLS THAT LEARN** simply acknowledge the "opportunities" that are before each of us. Senge then uses this "gap" between the desired state of learning and the current state to motivate readers to take action. This is a book that should be on desk of every school administrator, teacher, parent and corporate training staff. The dialogue it will initiate has the potential to create, sustain and improve learning throughout all areas of our lives. Get it, read it, act on it, and **SHARE IT WITH EVERYONE YOU KNOW!**

This is an essential book for anyone interested in education. Its comprehensive coverage gives much background, even at the risk of being distracting when you want to follow-up on the leads to so many interesting source-books and links. Though you are told to dip in anywhere, you must read the first section, esp. "The Industrial Age System of Education" by Senge and "A Primer to the Five Disciplines" (Personal Mastery, Mental Models, Shared Vision, Team Learning and Systems Thinking) (pp. 27-93). The authors consider this book a "prequel" to their other books about learning organizations (p.7). That's true. Though this is the most recent book, you can start with this one and go on to the others for further depth. Some repetitions may only serve well for mastery. The whole book is very readable and informative. Concepts are clearly explained. It follows the same excellent editing format as *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook* and *The Dance of Change*. When you get too enthused by so many ideas and success stories of innovations, heed the advice for "The Strategy of Organizational Change". "Focus on one or two new priorities for change, not twelve. Most school systems are already overwhelmed with change. They don't need a new initiative; they need an approach that consolidates existing initiatives, eliminates "turf battles," and makes it easier for people to work together toward common ends." (p.25) There are just too many passages that you wish to quote. The book is a treasure mine. However, for those (esp. busy administrators) who find the volume too daunting or verbose (592 pages!) and still want to get a handle on launching into transforming their schools into learning organisations, I would recommend, "Ten Steps to a Learning Organization" and start with the simple questionnaire given there.

**SCHOOLS THAT LEARN** is both a visionary and practical guide for how schools must evolve to meet the needs of students in the next 20 years. The use of multiple authors and perspectives mirrors some of the changes our schools must make to meet the needs of a new age. As

Professional Development Director at a diverse Jesuit high school in San Francisco, I recommend this book to any educator, K-college. Senge's work will help prepare students for an era requiring a strong traditional academic foundation coupled with the need for creativity, and the social, emotional, and intellectual skills to work in high performing teams needed to rebuild our world.

SCHOOLS THAT LEARN shows that challenges facing businesses, organizations and schools may be different, but strategies and methods to understand and address the challenges are indeed similar. This book does a great job of translating the theory of learning organizations and the five disciplines into terms that relate to the life of schools and the people who work and learn there. The many stories presented demonstrate the wide variety of ways to address organizational learning. The perspectives of various authors highlight the complexity of school development and offer ways to better understand systems. The mere clarity from increased understanding of the current reality offers great opportunity for growth and improvement. A great read and reference for school leaders and those interested in helping students learn and succeed.

The fourth book in the Fifth Discipline series, SCHOOLS THAT LEARN, legitimizes Senge's fieldbook format as an extremely effective means of teaching. It leads the reader into the exciting adventure of creating, sustaining, improving, and helping classrooms, schools, and communities. It outlines a way to achieve our common birthright as humans, "life as eager and natural learners." This will be an important work, a source of dialogue for years to come, and - hopefully - inspiration for meaningful action in fostering the best method yet discovered to creating a positive globalizing force...LEARNING! With the release of each Fifth Discipline resource, the concepts, the thought, the ideas, best practices, examples, and usefulness to readers have become sharper, more focused, and infused with an ever increasing sense of urgency. Personal mastery, systems thinking, shared vision, team learning, and mental models wait ready to serve today's learners. And, SCHOOLS THAT LEARN show how to put them into service in one of the most - if not THE most - fundamental areas of our lives...LEARNING! When teaching schools, school systems, parents and community leaders begin to read, to discuss, to reflect on, advocate and actually take action to use the principles and practices described in SCHOOLS THAT LEARN, the promise of lifelong learning and the power of learners freed to learn will be realized. SCHOOLS THAT LEARN challenges, it inspires, it educates, and it forces you to engage with its content. Readers beware. You cannot enter this "stream" and emerge unchanged.

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