

The Myth of Laziness

Mel Levine

Too bad you can't clone Mel Levine's genius

This book is organized as a series of case studies building up to three chapters of recommendations. Levine's insight into children is stunning. It is why people come from all over the country to see him in North Carolina. I am sure he wishes as ardently as anybody that his genius were transferrable. While this book gives one an appreciation of his methods, it also highlights how subjective the judgments really are. Any parent who has been through the rounds of physical therapists, speech therapists, child psychologists, ritalin, Prozac, tutors, school counsellors, etc. etc. will know that not all experts have the same powers of perception, and they certainly don't all agree.

I of course love the advice with which I agree. Turn off the TV! Have the kids read. Practice writing. He gives some very concrete and useful advice on how to do this... forms you can copy and suggest that your child's teachers hand out with assignments.

As another reviewer suggests, examining the unique balance of skills and weaknesses in each child, and tailoring life and learning plans to meet their special needs, takes a tremendous amount of resources. Public school classroom teachers charged with 35 young minds, or a modestly paid and trained counsellor responsible for a whole school cannot possibly be expected to handle every child's issues.

There are always alternatives -- many, confusing and conflicting -- for parents with the money and time to investigate them. The sad reality is that society just can't devote enough resources to give all kids the attention that would benefit them. How to apply Levine's insights and techniques to as many kids as possible within what voters are willing to spend is an interesting question.