



Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking – by Malcolm Gladwell

- Gladwell, M. (2005). *Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking*, Little Brown: New York, NY.
- How does it apply to education?
- Lessons for administrators.
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The statue the didn't look right

- In the first chapter, Gladwell relates a story of an ancient Greek statue that the Getty Museum was considering for purchase. All the scientific tests indicated that it was authentic. The eyes of an expert, however, spotted it correctly as a fake almost instantly. This is an example of the power of in-depth expertise that is stored in long-term memory.

Blink: The four top reasons that marriages break up

- Defensiveness
- Stonewalling
- Criticism
- Contempt
- Guess which one is the most important.
- If one or both partners show contempt toward each other the marriage is in trouble

Blink: Signs of Contempt

- Speaking from a superior plane
- Insults that place the target at a lower level
 - “You’re scum and you know it.”
- Tone of voice can also make someone feel respected or like they are being talked down to. (It doesn’t take long to decide which tone you are hearing.)

Doug - Relationships at school are like forced marriages

- While the hiring process should ideally bring people together at work who are compatible, close working relationships at work resemble forced marriages.
- If that is the case, the same things that cause marriages to fail will make for problems at work.



Blink: Which Doctors get Sued?

- A) Those who make the most mistakes?
- B) Those with the least experience?
- C) Those who have spent less effort keeping up with their field?
- D) Those who take on the most risky patients?
- E) Those who the patient doesn't like?
- Answer: E

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Blink: How to avoid being sued

- Spend more time with each case
(Surgeons who have never been sued spend 3.3 minutes longer with patients.)
- Adopt a tone of voice that sounds caring as opposed to dominant.
- Doug: This should apply to education.
 - Don't rush people who ask for attention.
 - Above all, watch your tone of voice and don't talk down.

Blink: Lessons from a successful car salesman

- The three most important things
 - 1) Take care of your customer
 - 2) Take care of your customer
 - 3) Take care of your customer
- Never judge anyone on the basis of their appearance. Don't let a first impression drown out every other piece of information you gather.
- This is also known as the Warren Harding error. Harding became president primarily because he was handsome. He died in office after two years and is widely considered a very poor president.

Blink: Information – How much is enough?

- Lee Goldman developed an algorithm that proved 95% effective in diagnosing heart problems. Physicians who usually had access to additional information were less successful.
- There is such a thing as too much information.

Blink: Writing can interfere with problem solving

- Psychologist Jonathan Schooler found that people who were asked to write down details of how they are trying to solve a problem ended up solving 30% fewer problems.
Journal of Experimental Psychology 122, no. 2 (1993): 166-183.
- Doug: Don't ask students to write about how they solved a problem until after they solve it.

Blink: Some 1st impressions can be misleading

- Pepsi won the Pepsi challenge because it was sweeter. People who drink several cans were more likely to prefer Coke.
- All in the Family and the Mary Tyler Moore show got poor initial ratings because they were different. They both became big hits.
- For some products the package makes the difference. E & J and Christian Brothers brandy were placed in the others bottles. The brandy in the E & J bottle was preferred regardless of which brandy it was.
- Margarine was unpopular until someone colored it yellow like butter, wrapped it in foil, and called it Imperial.



Blink: Your facial expressions are a window into your mind

- Extensive studies of facial expressions allow experts to mind-read when they see someone's face.
- The rest of us are amateurs. We gather key information from faces but sometimes make mistakes.
- People with autism use the same part of the brain used to evaluate objects for evaluating faces. This explains why social skills are difficult for them.

Blink: Stress and heart rate

- In stressful situations one's heart rate can shoot up to 175 or more.
- At that rate cognitive processing breaks down. The forebrain shuts down and the mid-brain takes over. All mammals have mid-brains. Talking to an angry or frightened person is like arguing with a dog.
- Stress can improve performance, however, if one's heart rate stays between 115 and 145.



Blink: Controlling Rapid Cognition

- Prior to the use of curtains to conceal the identity of people auditioning for orchestras, people on the audition committee were biased by appearance and especially gender.
- In essence they were hearing with their eyes. This simple change allowed orchestras to hire better musicians. For the cost of a curtain we get better music.
- The lesson is, if we can control the environment in which rapid cognition takes place, then we can control rapid cognition.
- Doug: The quality of snap judgment is a function of experience and expertise. The confidence you place in snap judgments should be a function of the amount of experience and knowledge you have on the topic in question.