Students
by Tom Wayman

The freshman class first printouts showed birthdates so recent Wayman was sure the computer was in error. One young man, however, was curious about Wayman's mention near the start of term of his old college newspaper: "You were an editor when? Wow, that's before I was born."

The wisdom of the students hadn't altered, though. Wayman observed many clung to The Vaccination Theory of Education he remembered: once you have had a subject you are immune and never have to consider it again. Other students continued to endorse The Dipstick Theory of Education: as with a car engine, where as long as the oil level is above the add line there is no need to put in more oil, so if you receive a pass or higher why put any more into learning?

At the front of the room, Wayman sweated to reveal his alternative. "Adopt The Kung Fu Theory of Education," he begged. "Learning as self-defence. The more you understand about what's occurring around you the better prepared you are to deal with difficulties."
The students remained skeptical.
A young woman was a pioneer
of The Easy Listening Theory of Learning:
spending her hours in class
with her tape recorder earphones on,
silently enjoying a pleasanter world.
"Don't worry, I can hear you,"
she reassured Wayman
when after some days he was moved to inquire.

Finally at term’s end
Wayman inscribed after each now-familiar name on the list
the traditional single letter.
And whatever pedagogical approach
he or the students espoused,
Wayman knew this notation would be pored over
with more intensity than
anything else Wayman taught.

Take a moment and consider: What theory describes how you view
education? (The Vaccination theory, the dipstick theory, the kung-fu theory, the easy listening theory?) Is there a better theory that you can create that sums up your views on learning? Take a minute to consider this and provide a response below.