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MEDIA RELEASE

Award recognizes SFU prof's outstanding book on education

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[Tweet](#) [Facebook](#) [Pinterest](#) [Email](#) [Print](#)**Contact:**Kieran Egan, 604.261.1533; egan@sfu.caDiane Luckow, PAMR, 778.782.3219; dluckow@sfu.ca

Simon Fraser University education professor **Kieran Egan's** book challenging educators to "re-imagine" schools is being recognized with a 2011 Outstanding Book Award from the [American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education \(AACTE\)](#).

The Future of Education: Reimagining Our Schools from the Ground Up (University Press, 2008) is being lauded as "an exemplary book that makes a significant contribution to the knowledge base of teaching... and teacher education." He'll receive the award Feb. 26 in San Diego.

The award-review panel calls Egan's book timely. "At a time when various camps and their champions are aligned in seemingly endless strife over the appropriate solution to the challenges our education system confronts, Egan presents an original and provocative argument that opens the door to a truly alternative framing for how the future of education might unfold," says **Jennie Whitcomb**, chair of the AACTE's committee on research and dissemination, which reviewed award submissions.

Egan's book describes how teachers can implement his ideas about what he calls Imaginative Education in everyday classrooms. The book also provides an entertaining and insightful "future history" of education from 2010 to 2060.

The book has received accolades from colleagues throughout the field. Described by Harvard professor **Howard Gardner** as "one of the most original 'big picture' thinkers in education," Egan says imaginative education would dramatically change teaching and curriculum while more effectively delivering the skills and understanding children need in the 21st century.

Egan, who holds a Canada Research Chair in Cognitive Development at SFU, is the founder of SFU's **Imaginative Research Education Group (IREG)** and author of another soon-to-be released book, *Learning in Depth*. In it he argues for a simple change to the regular curriculum, one that involves giving students a topic to study throughout their time in school, and through it, helps to nurture their sense of wonder. The **Learning in Depth project** was created to help teachers and parents implement the idea.

"When we learn in depth, we develop our own expertise," says Egan, who received a **Killam Research Fellowship** and the prestigious **Grawemeyer Award** in Education in 2001. He says long-term immersion can engage students' imaginations and emotions and provide for them a broader understanding of the human experience.

Egan's revolutionary theories and practices were earlier outlined in his book *The Educated Mind: How Cognitive Tools Shape*

our Understanding, (translated into 10 other languages) and earned him election as a foreign associate into the U.S. National Academy of Education.

The author of several books including one on gardening (*Building My Zen Garden*), Egan is known for melding humour with seriousness. “Whether or not you fully agree with Egan’s analyses and prescriptions,” adds Whitcomb, “reading his book leads you to rethink and rediscover the importance and power of education, and of what the experience of schooling can be, and mean, in transforming the lives of both teachers and students.”

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Simon Fraser University

8888 University Drive

Burnaby, B.C.

Canada V5A 1S6

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