

EFFECTIVE TEACHING

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EFFECTIVE TEACHING

Preparation and Implementation

By

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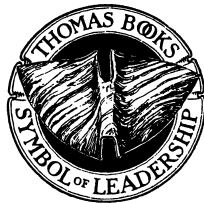
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PREFACE

Schools today have transcended from the chalkboard to the whiteboard and are populated by students who are not frightened to use the technology of this new digital age of learning. During this period of dynamic change, teachers must be ready to meet the challenges of preparing students for a global society characterized by diversity and ever-increasing expectations.

Effective teachers in the new millennium must prepare their students to function in a society that will be represented by several career changes before retirement. This societal complexity is due to the fact that knowledge is increasing, needs are changing, and opportunities sometimes seem endless for those individuals who leave school knowing how to learn on their own and solve problems in a dynamic environment.

It is little wonder that educators are held accountable for their students' learning more today than ever before in our history. Legislators, parents, and citizens in general are demanding that students be provided with a rigorous, standards-based curriculum that prepares them to function in the complex, challenging society of the twenty-first century. Because of this emphasis on high standards for student performance, which has resulted in more rigorous assessment of learning and higher accountability for teachers, one of the major issues facing teachers today is the need to provide high-level instruction in a learning environment that attends to expectations for academic rigor while remaining sensitive to all students' needs and providing each student an opportunity for success.

As professionals who have been school practitioners, who now are teacher educators, and who have evolved as students of teaching during a climate of change in public education and society, we prepared this textbook with the needs of both future and current teachers in mind. This study is organized around those teaching behaviors and instructional issues that are central to the dynamics of effective learning environments today.

We begin with a definition of effective teaching and best practice research that forms the basis for the development of the teacher as an effective practitioner. We proceed through discussions of planning for instruction, com-

municating as professionals, and research-based teaching behaviors and strategies. We complete the study with a discussion of managing student behavior and assessing student performance. Specifically, the textbook offers recommendations for planning, providing instruction, classroom management, and the evaluation and reporting of student progress.

Like teaching itself, learning to become an effective teacher must be approached on an individual though systematic basis. Successful preparation, characterized by formalized study, clinical experiences, and hours of reflection, along with an instructional philosophy which focuses on both student needs and content responsibilities, makes the possibility of becoming an effective teacher a reachable goal. We hope this textbook will guide as well as offer helpful insight in order that success in teaching becomes a reality.

Gilbert H. Hunt
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EFFECTIVE TEACHING

Chapter 1

DEVELOPING A FRAMEWORK FOR EFFECTIVE TEACHING

The desire to improve the quality of education for all students has become a driving force politically, socially, and even economically in the new millennium. In fulfilling this desire, teachers must focus on the development of educational practices and programs which will provide all students with the opportunity to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to contribute to a global economy and a diverse, ever-changing, world society. In reaching this end, teachers need to create environments in their classrooms that support and encourage success for all students, not just a few. Though a daunting challenge, teachers today are expected to maintain high and relevant standards for academic success while also maintaining student-centered, achievement-oriented classroom environments.

It is not possible to determine if certain teaching behaviors are effective without knowing whether or not students learn as an end result of these behaviors. This determination rests, in part, on the clarity of identified student learning outcomes, i.e., “What does the teacher desire for the students to learn?” A framework for effective teaching cannot stand alone in that it is relational to, and dependent upon, these outcomes. While educational research has identified many instructional strategies and behaviors which have come to be referred to as effective, it is not the case that each of these strategies and behaviors produces the same outcomes with all students and in all teaching situations. The challenge for the teacher is not only to identify and develop mastery of certain instructional strategies and behaviors accepted as effective practices, but the teacher is also challenged to develop the ability to effectively match these strategies and behaviors, at the appropriate time, to individual students and student groups, in specific teaching situations as these relate to the teacher’s desired student learning outcomes.

This, however, still does not fully resolve the question of just what is

desired as an end result of instruction. The answer to this question will depend on who is asking it and in what context the question is being posed. For example, "Does effective teaching result in student acquisition of a certain skill or body of subject matter knowledge?" "Does effective teaching result in students feeling good about themselves?" "Does it result in students liking, not disliking school?" "Does it result in students who obey the laws of society?" "Does it result in producing all of these possible outcomes?" While perhaps philosophical, this inquiry is important when deciding whether or not teachers are functioning in an effective manner, though it likely would be the more popular belief that effective teaching contributes in some way to each of these accomplishments.

Teachers today live and work in a world of cognitive and affective dissonance. Mixed messages abound. As an example, teachers often feel pressured to reach various desired outcomes popularly associated with effective teaching by the American public. Much of the critical attention now being given to American education has surfaced because America's teachers are expected to produce all of the desired outcomes previously mentioned, and more. Exploring the reasonableness of this expectation, however, goes well beyond the purview of this text. Though this is the case, the fact that American education and what goes on in America's schools and classrooms is of paramount interest to society should not, and cannot, be ignored.

In considering the many potential and desired outcomes associated with effective teaching, as discussed in this text, effective teaching has as its primary purpose the increased academic achievement of students which society expects of its schools and, consequently, its teachers. An effective teacher is one who is able to use certain strategies and exhibit certain behaviors which result in improved academic achievement, i.e., increased test scores, of students. Two additional points, however, are important. First, the most effective instruction associated with academic achievement also is instruction that produces positive affective ends. Second, no instructional strategy or behavior should be utilized for the purpose of achieving academic gain which results in affective loss.

A critical and difficult task facing today's teachers is the development of curricula and learning experiences that challenge students academically while remaining responsive to their individual needs. Much has been written about the importance of addressing individual learning styles, multiple intelligences, and numerous affective concerns. Each of these areas is important and needs to be considered as teachers develop their classroom learning environments. Teachers need to accept, however, that society sees the increase in academic achievement as the main purpose of schooling. Parents, school board members, legislatures, and concerned citizens hold schools and the teachers in them accountable for their students' academic achievement

gains. Any education system that does not clearly strive toward, and reach, higher academic standards will face public disapproval. It is more critical now than ever before that teachers have the ability to develop and implement instructional programs that lead to greater academic success while also supporting the individual affective needs of their students. The balancing of these two concerns will no doubt be one of the greatest challenges for teachers in the future.

Ultimately, teachers determine the quality of schooling that students receive. In order to perform this important role effectively, an understanding of best practice research on effective teaching is needed so that a framework for effective teaching can be established and for effective teaching to take place. In studying this chapter, you will learn more about best practice research as you explore the following topics:

1. the characteristics of effective teaching,
2. the research on effective teaching, and
3. the process of analyzing best practice in the classroom.

CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE TEACHING

Classroom teachers work at the core of a dynamic profession and hold the key position of responsibility for implementing high quality instruction for children. Effective teaching involves effective planning, communicating, managing, and evaluating, as well as the actual act or process of instructing. Each of these expectations is important in the successful pursuit of increased student learning.

Educational literature is replete with research on effective teaching. Some of this literature is empirically based while some is more conceptually grounded. Some is quite valuable and some, quite frankly, is much less so. The study of research on effective teaching must be approached and focused in such a way that it is based on the identification of those desired student learning outcomes previously mentioned. Once this has been accomplished, strategies and behaviors identified then can be studied and mastered with the understanding that, if they are exhibited properly, at the right time, at the right place, and with the right students, the desired learning outcomes will result. The enormous complexity of this undertaking is not only in identifying instructional strategies and behaviors that produce academic gains, but, as can be seen, also in using them properly at the right time and the right place and with the right students. This is where the need for a critical understanding of students, effective teaching practices, learning environments, teaching contexts, and rational decision making is essential.