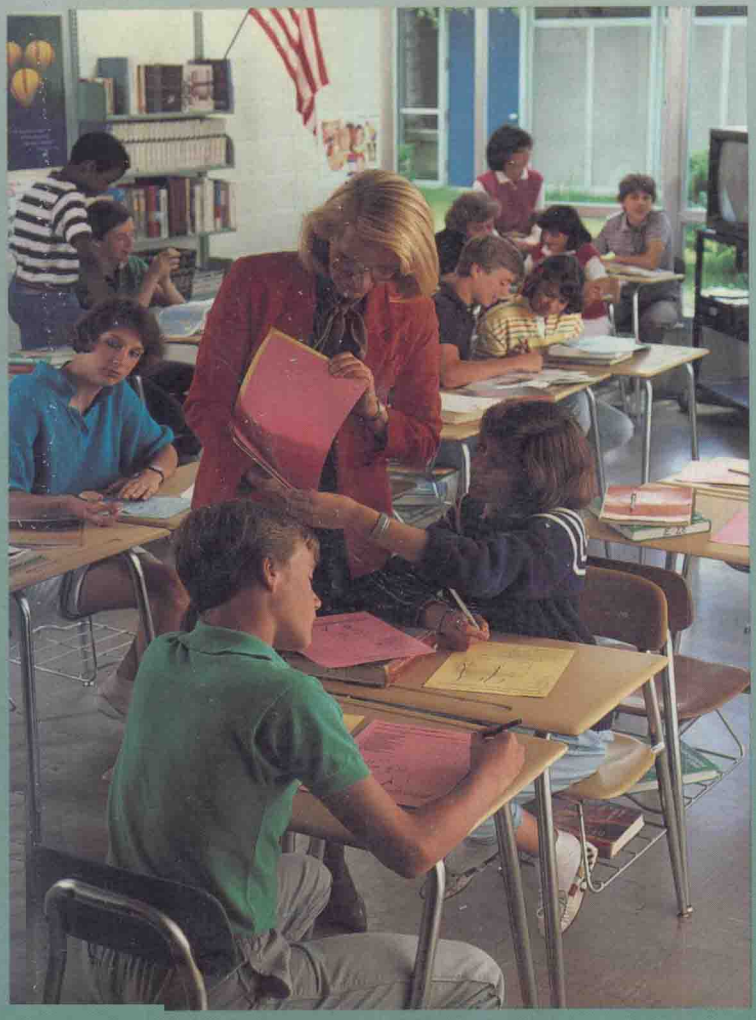

STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE TEACHING

ALLAN C. ORNSTEIN

Strategies for Effective Teaching

Allan C. Ornstein

Loyola University of Chicago

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Dedication

All of us have had teachers whom we remember with fond memories and who were apparently good teachers. I remember six:

Mrs. Katz, P.S. 42 Queens: a warm, friendly, and understanding teacher who was concerned more with social development than with cognitive development.

Mrs. Schwartz, P.S. 42 Queens: a tough school marm who drilled the facts and enforced the rules.

Mr. Tietz, Far Rockaway High School: a good natured, quick-witted teacher with a booming voice.

Dr. Kohn, City College of New York: the scholar type, who through dialogue and questioning made me think.

Dr. Greene, Brooklyn College: humanistic and philosophical, she emphasized the personal, emotional, and moral aspects of education.

Dr. Clift, New York University: both friend and teacher, he balanced the talents and tempers of his students, and animated the best plans for their good.

To the Instructor

This book is written for all who are interested in learning how to teach or improve their teaching, as well as teaching students how to learn. It will help prepare novice teachers for their new roles, and provide seasoned teachers with new insights into what they are doing.

The text focuses on the theory and practice of teaching. It attempts to blend theory with practice by reporting and analyzing important research, then presenting practical procedures and adaptive strategies for teachers to use. For example, what do successful teachers do to start a lesson? How do they monitor classroom activities? How do they deal with disruptive students? How do they proceed with a student who doesn't know the answer? These are problems that teachers must deal with on a daily basis. The answers to these questions depend on how we apply the theory we have learned in our course work to the classroom setting.

Prospective teachers and beginning teachers need to master theoretical concepts and principles and then *integrate* these concepts and principles into practice by developing specific methods and strategies that work on the job. The integration process, or the leap from theory to practice, is not easy. However, this book helps by interweaving practical strategies and methods with research. Many theories and practices are presented with the understanding that the reader can pick and choose those methods and strategies that coincide with his or her personality and philosophy. In each chapter look for "Tips for Teachers," "Guidelines for Implementing . . ." the research, and a section entitled "Theory into Practice" at the end of each chapter. These sections of the text are designed to help the reader apply the theory to practice.

The book adopts a cognitive science approach, blending cognitive-developmental research with informational-processing research. Consequently, a good deal of the subject matter is rooted in educational psychology, linguistics, and subject-related methods—and there is little that deals with philosophy, history, or sociology of teaching.

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Cognitive science focuses on how teachers teach and how learners learn; it has reached a point that it can be used to derive strategies that guide effective teaching and learning. The book presents research on how students process information or what we call "learning strategies": how to skim data, summarize information, take notes, do homework, read text material, take tests, and so forth. Existing research can be used to teach students to think critically: to classify, infer, interpret, extrapolate, evaluate, and predict.

Research also exists to help identify effective teaching strategies. This is one of the first books that use recent cognitive science research to discuss how to teach by explaining, questioning, monitoring, and reviewing; how to diagnose, assess, and place students into groups for instruction; how to teach basic skills, concepts, and problem solving; how to manage the surface behavior of students on an individual and group basis; how to plan for instruction; and how to use textbooks and improve instructional materials.

The new emphasis in cognitive science, and in this text, is no longer concerned with the students' answers, but rather with how they derived the answers and what strategies the teachers used to help the student learn. The book informs teachers about recent research on how students process information and how teachers can modify their instruction to help students learn more effectively.

The book is organized into three parts with twelve chapters. Part I is comprised of four chapters and deals with students. It assumes that before one teaches one has to understand students. Part II, which contains six chapters, concerns instruction. It assumes that planning precedes instruction and that one should employ multiple instructional methods, materials, and activities. Part III, about teachers and teaching, has two chapters and provides additional help on what is good teaching and how teachers can grow professionally.

There are many distinctive features to the text, including the following:

- Focusing questions at the beginning of each chapter help orient the reader, set the stage for what is to follow, and highlight the main ideas in the chapter.
- Short, easy-to-read headings and subheadings facilitate understanding and illustrate relationships among ideas.
- Short descriptors and categories serve as anchors to help classify and conceptualize information.
- Tables and charts organized as overviews make learning more meaningful.
- Current research findings are applied to classroom teaching.
- "Professional Viewpoints," original statements by experts in the field, written specifically for the text, highlight a major concept or principle and/or give advice for both the beginning and the experienced teacher.

- Lists of practical tips for teachers give insights into teaching.
- Summaries at the end of each chapter contain a short list of main ideas, coinciding with the sequence in the narrative.
- "Things to Do," "Questions to Consider," "Key Terms," and Suggestions for "Further Readings" at the end of each chapter aid in reading comprehension and application.

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In addition, there are some 40 people who wrote "professional viewpoints." They were kind enough to take time from their busy schedules to jot down some valuable advice or personal views about teachers and teaching. Their thoughts add a timely and unusual dimension to the text while providing useful information in an appealing manner. I appreciate their cooperation.

Special thanks also go to Judy Kahn, who did a very capable job in editing the manuscript, and Alan McClare, the sponsoring editor for the project, who worked with me on it from start to finish and gave me wise counsel.

Allan C. Ornstein

To the Student

This book has five major purposes. The first is to help beginning teachers develop an understanding of what goes on in the classroom, and what the job of teaching involves. Despite your familiarity with education from a student's point of view, you probably have limited experience with teaching from a teacher's point of view. And even if you are experienced, you can always integrate your own experiences about teaching with new information to achieve professional improvement and development.

A second purpose is to provide classroom teachers with concrete and realistic suggestions about ways of teaching—and how they can improve the teaching-learning process. Often teachers are unaware of their behavior, or the effects they have on students; others can sharpen their expertise in what methods and strategies work with different students.

Another purpose is to apply theoretical and research-based data to teaching practices. Social scientists and educators have discovered many things about human behavior, and they have established many principles that can be translated into practices. In still other cases, existing practices of the teacher can be clarified and refined through understanding of research. The idea is to convert "knowledge of" teaching into "knowlege of how" to teach.

A fourth purpose is to show how teachers can make a difference, and how they can have a positive influence on students. The data in the text indirectly suggest that teachers affect students, and that some teachers because of their practices have better results than others.

Finally, the text deals with how teachers can teach students how to learn—that is, learning strategies that will increase students' chances for achievement and reduce the loss of human potential so pervasive in our society today. Coming to know is the goal of the learner; helping students learn how to learn is the goal of the teacher. The extent students come to know and learn how to learn is influenced by how well the teacher can teach.

Allan C. Ornstein

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