Over 1,000 Practical Teaching Strategies

Super Teaching

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Third Edition

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EDUCATION

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The Game Has Changed

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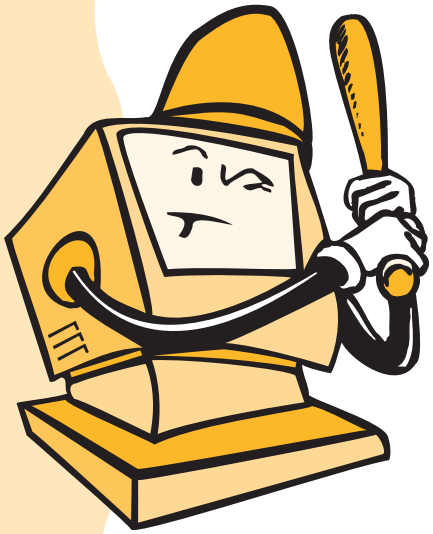

What's Really Going On?

This book is not about the problems facing today's educators. It is about the vision and possibility that can be brought forth to make education work. After all, the problems we face as educators are, to a large degree, merely symptoms. Addressing the symptoms will not change education. New ones appear faster than we can solve the old ones. We are bailing water out of a boat that we already know has holes in it!

We've spent trillions of dollars in education since landing on the moon, yet many measuring sticks say the quality has remained the same or gotten worse. Teachers experience widespread powerlessness, bitterness and resignation. Teacher strikes have doubled in the last decade. Instead of a conversation about the joys of learning, education has become a conversation about dropouts, low test scores, school security, teenage pregnancy, vandalism, AIDS, drunk driving, violence, drug abuse and suicides. Not that these areas don't deserve attention; they do. But somehow the focus of education has changed.

What has caused this? How can we identify the real source of the frustration? How do we get off the treadmill? And is it possible to win the education game? The questions we raise seem to point to something fundamental. The world has changed in many profound ways. We cannot play by the old rules and succeed. A return to the basics will not work. Another simple "band-aid" will not work. Why? The basic foundation upon which the traditional education system was established is crumbling.

We cannot solve our problems at the same level of thinking that got us into them. Outcome-based education, cooperative learning, inclusion, cultural diversity or any other "quick fix" in education is not the answer. Nearly everything we've hailed as "the answer" has proven inadequate. We simply cannot approach education in a business-as-usual fashion. Life, as we know it, has changed; and our approach to education has yet to catch up. One such change is the pace at which change is occurring.

Greater Velocity of Change

Entire industries start up and stop within a single decade. Schools no longer prepare students for only one job or career focus. The average high-school graduate in 2010 will have three to five careers (not jobs) compared to the one to two jobs his/her parents held. Jobs simply become extinct faster today. Students need to learn *how* to learn, not *what* to learn. Many students believe that their curriculum is outdated and does not provide them with the necessary tools for life. Greater numbers of students are being schooled at home, are attending alternative classes, alternative schools, summer programs or taking "home study." Classroom enthusiasm is at an all-time low. Dropout rates are staggering. High school dropout rates in urban schools average 30 to 50 percent. Nationwide, one out of four students drops out of school!

Many of the ideas and programs offered as solutions to problems in our schools are obsolete by the time they are implemented. Teachers have become tired of having to learn something new only to have it dropped and replaced by something even "newer." This constant "band-aid" approach leaves teachers burned out and cynical about additional teacher training since most programs continue to teach content - the *what* rather than the *how*. Even if a program is useful, it often trains teachers in an area so specific that it exemplifies the saying, "If what you hold is a hammer, you only look for nails."

Quotable

It is the learners
who will inherit the future;
the "so-called learned,"
who think they "know it all"
will find themselves frustrated
by a world that has
passed them by.

The Information Age

The gap between what's known and what's implemented in schools is wide. Research findings from the fields of psychology, sociology, neuroscience, biology, physics and education usually experience an enormous lag time before implementation. In fact, the lag time for innovation within the system is usually 5 to 10 years for pilot programs, and 10 to 25 years for widespread implementation!

This lapse creates a sense of hopelessness about staying informed. Teachers stop trying to stay updated. Textbooks are often out of date by print time. When the wheels turn this slow, students begin to believe that what happens at school is reflective of the rest of the world. High frustration levels reduce teacher and student motivation. Many perceive education today as an irrelevant or bankrupt system.

Since the new currency is information systems, how can our students become culturally, socially and economically wealthy if they are still being taught to recite rote history dates and math facts, states and capitals; and excel in spelling drills, home economics and woodshop? We've become a world dependent on calculators, CD-ROM encyclopedias, The Internet, digital communication and carbon-fiber plastics. But students, in many schools are still being taught what students were taught in the 1950s and in the same ways. Since only a limited amount of concrete knowledge can be absorbed by the human brain at a given time, what's the solution? Simply put, we must move our students away from being content-absorbers; and redirect them towards being "information navigators."

Quotable

The new currency of our time is not factory skills, but information and the ability to access information at will. Highly successful people know what's going on and have the knowledge to navigate skillfully.

The Electronic Authority

The sophistication of the information age means that we have created a new entity, "the electronic authority." Students now turn to the Internet, home computers, television, radio, CD-ROM, compact discs, and videotapes as their source of up-to-the-moment information. The degree of learning that happens through alternate sources beyond school has multiplied and expanded dramatically. Trends, values, fashions, manners, customs, and ethics are influenced and transmitted phenomenally fast via such means. Historically, this information was taught through the authority of parents, churches, or schools. Yet today, none of these traditional institutions seem to be the primary source of authoritative information for young people.

Quotable

Where yesterday's teacher used to be the leader and provider, today's teacher is the catalyst and navigator.

Though most of us would not argue the value of advanced technology, we do experience the problems associated with it. In the midst of the information age, nearly any information, regardless of its integrity, can be transmitted quickly and world-wide. Keeping current with the advances poses another layer of challenge; and information overload is real. Relationships established via electronic means are on the rise - many nurtured in the isolation and anonymity of a home office. In such an environment, accountability, personal bonding, and sense of community are impacted. Classroom discipline problems, delinquency and crime continue to escalate. Students don't *have* to seek critical information from their parents, anymore. The menu is greatly expanded.

Chapter 15

Multiple Intelligences

Chapter Preview:

- Teaching Content or Discovering Intelligence?
- Intelligent People
- Defining Intelligence
- Who Is Intelligent?
- The Seven Intelligences
- Additional Considerations
- Reaching All the Intelligences
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- Assessing Multiple Intelligences
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Teaching Content or Discovering Intelligence?

In order to boost learning and intelligence, it's useful to know what intelligence is. Robert Sternberg (1985) says, "Intelligence boils down to your ability to know your own strengths and weaknesses and to capitalize on the strengths while compensating for the weaknesses." He says that when we think of intelligence, we are really talking about our ability to react intuitively, creatively and constructively to a wide range of experiences. In other words, being "street smart" is just as important, or more so, than being "book smart."

For years, the official way to measure intelligence was the IQ test, the Stanford-Binet, or the Weschler. Using these tests, individuals would be rated at various levels. Yet researchers and educators have long suspected that something is amiss in this assessment. Often students who were assessed as "smart" or "genius" had very ordinary, if not miserable, lives. And often students who were assessed as "ordinary" or "average" had very successful and extraordinary lives. After all, the IQ test was developed decades ago as a screening process for immigrants and for sorting wartime recruits. Could it be that the IQ form of assessment is inaccurate or incomplete?

Intelligent People

Ella Fitzgerald, Carl Sagan, John Williams, Martha Graham, Bill Gates, Helen Gurley Brown, Quincy Jones, Albert Einstein, Michael Jordan, Indira Ghandi, Margaret Thatcher and Steven Segal. Which one was or is more intelligent? You guessed it! All are intelligent, in their own way! Did you know that every single one of them was labeled by their teachers as having some kind of learning problem?

Fortunately, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, with the support from the VanLeer and MacArthur Foundations a project was headed up by Howard Gardner, professor of graduate education at Harvard University, that has since widened our definition of intelligence. The project's purpose was to discover the nature of intelligence and consider alternative ways for thinking about it (1993). Because the researchers wanted to start with no prior assumptions about intelligence, it was named Project Zero.

Defining Intelligence

Gardner first had to define intelligence in order to research it. He used two criteria. The first criteria was demonstrating the ability to use a skill, fashion an artifact or solve a problem; and the second one was to do this in a way that was valued by the particular culture where one ordinarily lives. In other words, an Australian Aborigine may not be able to score as highly on intelligence if measured in Tokyo, New York or London. But he or she may be quite intelligent in the outback of Australia. The same could be said in reverse for a banker or stockbroker who succeeds in the world of global finance but, of course, might die in three days in the remote outback.

Who Is Intelligent?

Gardner's research sought to find various ways intelligence was demonstrated around the world. What he discovered was skill sets that included thing like: a Pacific Islander who can sail from island to island at night with no formal navigation system; and an equally talented choreographer of Broadway musicals. Certainly these people were succeeding in the eyes of their own culture. But there was no apparent link to formal schooling. Gardner eventually grouped the array of human intelligences he identified into seven categories. He purposely included what some refer to as "abilities" because he wanted them to get the respect they deserve. Instead of having one single figure or mark that assesses our intelligence, he believes that each of us has our own unique combination of intelligences and that these can change over time. Gardner speculates that there may be other intelligences, such as naturalist.

The Seven Intelligences

The seven original intelligence categories Gardner identified are logical-mathematical, interpersonal, spatial, musical-rhythmic, intrapersonal, bodily-kinesthetic and verbal-linguistic. Gardner first presented these ideas publicly in 1983 at the Tarrytown conference in New York. We'll introduce each of them here and discuss how they can be used to enhance student learning in your classroom.

1. Logical-Mathematical

Description: This intelligence category encompasses the ability to discern logical or numerical patterns. It includes those with the ability to solve mathematical equations or life's daily problems; one who asks many "why" or "how" questions; one who likes reasons for doing things; one who wants to classify, sort and understand information; one who wants to predict, analyze, theorize, fix things, offer advice, work

in the physical and theoretical sciences or simply make sense out of their world. It's the ability to pursue extended reasoning and detailed analysis. Compatible occupations include: teaching, banking, astronomy, computer programming, accounting, inventing, engineering, mathematics, science, or appliance repair. Famous people who exhibit this intelligence: Carl Sagan, Plato, Bill Gates, Ted Koppel.

In the Classroom: This student is an effective problem-solver. He or she likes things in place and in order; and dislikes chaos and confusion. Repetitive seat work bores this student the most. Catch the attention of these students with questions like: "How would you solve this?" "What would an expert say about this?" Reach the student with challenges, problems and projects.

Can Be Developed More By: Outlining the material, doing statistical analysis, solving problems, creating puzzles and solving them, finding patterns, comparing and contrasting the material, classifying ideas or objects, exploring new material, finding locations, making calculations, computing averages, creating time sequences, using a calculator, predicting the future, creating a problem-solving guide for your subject, solving ecological problems, finding examples of how it all relates to something else. These students like computers, tangrams, inventor's fairs and science projects.

2. Interpersonal

Description: This intelligence category encompasses those with the ability to influence others, to negotiate, to listen, to resolve conflict, to persuade, to get along with others, to influence, to form teams. This student works well with diverse groups of people and enjoys the company of others. Compatible professions include: teachers, customer service representatives, therapists, politicians, beauty queens, religious leaders, actresses and actors, managers, social workers, telephone operators, salespersons and waitresses. Famous people who exhibit this intelligence: Oprah Winfrey, Sally Jessey Raphael, Phil Donahue, Bill Clinton, Mother Theresa, and Princess Di.

In the Classroom: This student prefers to work with others. Small groups and workstations attract attention. They like student council, peer counseling and service-learning projects. Working alone is distasteful. Reach this student with strong communication activities. Attract his or her attention with words like "We can do this next" or "What did we learn today?"

Can Be Developed More By: Doing more role-play, using cooperative learning groups, using peer assessment, getting and giving feedback, creating teams to solve problems, working with a single partner, doing subject matter drills with a partner, quizzing each other, reading out loud or singing, using peer coaching, organizing events, celebrations, or talent shows.

3. Spatial

Description: This intelligence category encompasses those who have the ability to judge space around them in relation to other objects or people. Gardner emphasizes that spatial intelligence is different from visual intelligence. Spatial intelligence is more three-dimensional and relational. It is not the ability to see something, but rather the ability to see things in relationship to others. A person might be legally blind and still have strong spatial intelligence.