ENHANCING THE QUALITY OF LEARNING

High-quality learning is extensive, well integrated, and deep and supports the use of knowledge in new situations that require adaptation of what has been learned previously. This book reviews current research on the nature of high-quality learning and the factors that facilitate or inhibit it. The book addresses relationships between quality of learning and learners' dispositions, teaching methods, cognitive strategies, assessment, and technologies that can support learning. The chapters provide theoretical analyses, reports of classroom research, and suggestions for practical application for both teachers and learners. The book will be of value to teachers at all levels of education, and it provides guidance for students about how to approach classroom tasks to develop high-quality learning.

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Enhancing the Quality of Learning

Dispositions, Instruction, and Learning Processes

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CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town,
Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi, Mexico City

Cambridge University Press
32 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10013-2473, USA

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521199421

First published 2012

Printed in the United States of America

A catalog record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication data
Enhancing the quality of learning : dispositions, instruction, and learning
processes / [edited by] John R. Kirby, Queen's University;
Michael J. Lawson, Flinders University.
pages cm
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-0-521-19942-1 (hardback)
1. Learning, Psychology of. 2. Educational psychology. 3. Cognition.
I. Kirby, John R. II. Lawson, Michael J.
LB1060.E545 2012
370.15–dc23 2012012608

ISBN 978-0-521-19942-1 Hardback

To Barbara, Steve and Noni, and Jamie and Alison and family (ML)

To Marlo and Robert: thanks for the quality (JK)

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Preface

We began to work seriously on this book during a sabbatical that John R. Kirby spent in Adelaide in 2009. However, our discussions about the issues at the heart of the book began much earlier, when we were graduate students at the University of Alberta in Edmonton in the early 1970s. We were fortunate to be working with John Biggs, who was then at the University of Alberta. Biggs at that time had completed his *Information and Human Learning* book and was doing research on approaches to learning. Both of us gained greatly from his teaching and supervision during this period of study. We have continued to benefit from his mentoring and writing throughout our academic careers. The schemas that he developed for the issues discussed in this book have been good examples of what Donald Norman referred to as prototype models – sound general frameworks for thinking that can be effectively adapted across time as new discoveries are made. Biggs's teaching and research have done much to keep a focus on how teaching can help students develop high-quality learning.

While at the University of Alberta, we were also greatly influenced by another fine teacher and research supervisor, J. P. Das. Das was then beginning his work on models of intelligence, in particular on the nature and impact of simultaneous and successive processing. Das has also been a valued mentor and friend. He is also a teacher who led us in new directions in the study of learning and showed how the quality of that learning could be influenced by the use of different cognitive and metacognitive processes.

We thank both these teachers for their contribution to our thinking and for their friendship across many years. Any lesser-quality thinking evident in our writing is entirely our own work.

We also thank the many postgraduate students and colleagues who have contributed to our thinking. Some of these influences are more obvious than others as we have set out in new directions that have been influenced by the

thinking of these people. Thinking has a random element, and on many occasions the ideas sparked in discussions with students and colleagues have led us in unanticipated directions.

Particular thanks are due to the contributors to this book. We deeply appreciate the enthusiasm with which they responded to our invitation and how much we have learned from reading their contributions.

Finally we thank Cambridge University Press for its encouragement, help, and tolerance of missed deadlines.