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978-1-107-11261-2 - Effective Teaching and Successful Learning: Bridging the Gap between Research and Practice

Inez De Florio

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EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND SUCCESSFUL LEARNING

The overall aim of this reader-friendly book is to enable current and prospective teachers as well as other education professionals to improve practice, leading to more successful learning for all students. Drawing on her extensive experience as both a high school teacher and a university professor, Inez De Florio provides an evidence-informed and value-based approach to teaching and learning that takes the personality and the accountability of teaching professionals into account. Students' needs and interests are the primary focus of an evidence-informed teaching model, the MET (Model of Effective Teaching), which is described and exemplified in detail. In order to allow for informed decisions and suitable applications of the steps of the MET, the book furthermore provides a succinct and comprehensible introduction to the main features and types of educational research, especially newer findings of evidence-based education such as presented in John Hattie's research.

Inez De Florio is a professor in the Department of Humanities at the University of Kassel.

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AND PRACTICE

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*Science is simply common sense at its best, that is, rigidly accurate
in observation, and merciless to fallacy in logic.*

THOMAS HUXLEY

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Preface

During the past years, I have dedicated much time to gaining better insights into educational research and the implementation of its results. Among other things, I read many scientific research studies on education and the social sciences, watched a great amount of videotaped teaching, tried to make sense of lesson transcripts, and consulted textbooks as well as lesson plans. More and more the picture of a land of milk and honey came to my mind.

Even though a host of scientific studies on education, as well as research textbooks and teacher guides, do not meet the criteria of serious scientific endeavor, educators can draw on a rich and helpful body of literature in their field – at least in the English-speaking countries. The more my readings and my searches proceeded, the more I began asking myself questions like the following:

- How may busy teachers find the time to read at least the most important studies regarding their teaching context?
- How can they evaluate the quality of educational research?
- According to which criteria will they decide whether an intervention program or a teaching strategy is adequate for their students?
- Furthermore, by which means are they enabled to adapt science-based interventions to their classroom, as they are always confronted with the warning that the evaluated “tools” don’t work in every context in the same way?
- How will they be able to distinguish useful research-based teacher guides from the recipe books of self-proclaimed education gurus?

As time went by, another association crossed my mind: I saw Pieter Bruegel the Elder’s well-known painting of the Land of Cockaigne before my inner eye. The protagonists on the ground show in a striking manner

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what it means to cope with abundance. In my opinion, the fact that even countries with a remarkable body of education research don't perform well in international achievement studies may depend to a certain degree on the plethora of advice which is lavished on teachers. To avoid misunderstandings, international studies such as TIMSS or PISA are only one small indicator for the proper functioning of a school system, and other factors, for example teacher training and opportunity standards such as public funding, are of even greater importance than the overabundance of scientific findings.

For all these and many other reasons, my overall aim is to provide teachers in training and in service, as well as other education professionals, with a comprehensible, concise, and critical overview of current scientific research on education. I don't focus on a particular country but rather address teachers all over the world who are willing to improve their everyday practice to the benefit of all their students. My aim is to help teachers find their way to a more reflective practice on their own or in interaction with colleagues without further resources. This will be made possible by looking at scientific research and the implementation of its findings through the eyes of teachers.

Inez De Florio