

Introduction

In 2009 a new journal was launched by the Center for Research and Reform in Education at the Johns Hopkins School of Education and the Institute for Effective Education at the University of York in the United Kingdom. Called *Better: Evidence-Based Education*, this unique publication aims to get the latest education research into the hands of the people who need it, particularly teachers, administrators, and policy makers.

Each issue of the journal features accessible articles written by leading international academics, all of which are rooted in what really works in the classroom. The articles that have been published in *Better* form an invaluable anthology of the latest developments in evidence-based education, and so we decided to bring them together in a series of themed books. This book comprises articles on the subject of classroom management and assessment, all reviewed by the original authors and, where necessary, updated. We hope you find it useful.

Preface

How can teachers create classroom environments in which students are productively engaged at all times? Classrooms in which time is effectively used? In which activities are structured to maximize motivation and deep learning? In which behavioral disruptions are mostly prevented and responded to effectively if they do occur?

How can teachers assess student learning—both formatively during instruction and summatively at the end of a lesson or unit? How can they use innovative approaches to assessment to encourage learning behaviors that go beyond lower-level skills and facts? How can assessment be embedded in tasks so that teachers and students constantly learn how students are progressing toward class objectives and standards?

These and many other questions about classroom management and assessment are at the core of effective teaching. These are two of the issues that teachers worry most about, and there are dozens of books on each. What is distinctive about this one?

The answer is that in this volume, respected researchers have written about *what works* in classroom management and assessment. That is, they are not writing uninformed ideas about how classrooms could be managed and learning assessed but are writing about strategies that have been put to the test in real classrooms and found to improve learning and behavior.

In education today, evidence of effectiveness is becoming increasingly important. Educational leaders don't just want to know what's "in"; they want to know what works. Ideally, what this means is that innovative practices or programs have been tested in experiments, in which some number of teachers use the new practices while others continue with their usual practices. All students are tested before and after the experiment. If the classes using the new methods show greater gains, this is good evidence that the practice is effective. If many such studies find similar impacts, the body of evidence grows, and educators can have increasing confidence that the practice is likely to be beneficial in their classrooms, too.

The classroom management and assessment methods described in this book have been proven to work, sometimes in dozens of studies collectively involving hundreds of teachers. Because different researchers use different methods, and because science progresses over time, not all of the chapters agree with each other. However, basic principles of effective practice in classroom management and assessment have been supported many times and appear across many individual chapters.

The chapters in this book are updates of articles that first appeared in a journal called *Better: Evidence-Based Education*. *Better* is produced three times a year in a collaboration between the Institute for Effective Education at the University of York, in England, and the Center for Research and Reform in Education at the Johns Hopkins School of Education. Each issue is on a particular topic, and top researchers on that topic are invited to submit articles intended to translate their own research or reviews of their field into language that is accessible to practicing educators and educational leaders. Authors were asked to include compelling classroom examples to make their findings clear and pragmatic. We did not want authors to hold back on the richness of their ideas but just to express them in a nonacademic way.

As editor-in-chief of *Better*, I have the job of inviting researchers to submit articles. These are very busy, productive, and sought-after people, yet they hardly ever refuse. In fact, I think most authors are delighted to have a place to explain to educators the meaning of what they have spent their professional lives trying to learn about. These are people who care deeply about teaching, teachers, and learning, not just about theory. I think that's why they have been delighted to set aside their usual academic work for a while to write for the professionals on the front lines.

This book is the product of the talents of many people. I'd like to thank all of the researchers who have contributed to *Better*: to Jonathan Haslam, Jeannette Bollen-McCarthy, and Bette Chambers at the University of York; to Beth Comstock at Johns Hopkins University; and to Arnis Burvikovs at Corwin.

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—Robert Slavin