Fully updated to reflect latest teaching practice

Third Edition

Effective Teaching in Schools
Theory and Practice

What is effective teaching?

How do I plan?

What is active learning?

How do children learn?

Which approach?

How do I teach ?

What works best?

Chris Kyriacou

Nelson Thornes

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Preface

I have been very gratified by the continuing success and popularity of this book since it first appeared. However, I felt that a new edition of the book was needed to take account of changes in policy and practice. In particular, this edition includes material that addresses the new professional standards for qualified teacher status and beyond, and better addresses the needs of those undertaking masters-level work as part of their initial teacher training programme. Whilst the thrust of the book remains the same, some sections have been polished further and other sections have been substantially rewritten. The revised text has taken particular account of developments in personalised learning, the use of ICT, interactive teaching, classroom dialogue, inclusion, assessment for learning, evidence-based classroom practice, the *Every Child Matters* agenda, and the teaching methods underpinning the National Strategies.

1 Introduction

This book looks at those aspects of teaching and learning in schools that are important for effective teaching. Some people have voiced the opinion that anyone who knows their subject matter can teach. Nothing could be further from the truth. Effective teaching involves having a sound understanding of how and why certain activities lead to learning, and what factors influence their effectiveness. Teachers make use of a whole range of teaching skills to make sure learning occurs effectively. Only a combination of both subject matter knowledge and an understanding of the nature of effective teaching itself can provide a solid foundation for effectiveness.

Three of the key tasks of teacher education are:

- to help teachers build up their knowledge and understanding of effective teaching
- to help teachers to develop the key skills involved in classroom teaching
- to help teachers to critically reflect upon and evaluate their own teaching.

What has struck me about most books on effective teaching is that they largely fall into two camps. Some specifically concern themselves with common-sense observations about teaching, largely based on the professional experience of the writers, often termed 'craft knowledge'. Others concern themselves with theoretical discussion and research, stemming from mainly psychological and sociological perspectives. Such books do not satisfactorily meet the needs of teacher development for effectiveness. The former camp, whilst often giving good advice, does not provide the necessary framework of understanding that enables teachers to teach effectively. The danger of simply following advice is that it encourages an attempt to model one's practice upon some envisaged image of teaching, which does little to help you deal with the variety of classroom situations that occur. Books in the latter camp, however, often tend to gear their discussion towards the needs of other researchers, or those following academic courses, rather than the needs of those concerned to develop their own teaching effectiveness. These two camps are often discussed as the gap between theory and practice, i.e. between theoretical considerations drawing on academic concerns on the one hand, and a sound knowledge of the craft of good classroom practice on the other hand.

My own expertise lies within the psychology of education, but I have also taught in schools and observed many lessons given by both student teachers and experienced teachers. There is clearly much within the psychological perspective on teaching and learning in schools that can make an important contribution to effective teaching. However, the key to doing this is to make clear how sound craft knowledge is actually based on underlying psychological principles and processes. By doing this, it can be made clear what works well in the classroom and why.

The central aim of this book then, is to help develop and sharpen teachers' craft knowledge through a clarification of the key psychological considerations involved. This books aims to bridge the gap between theory and practice, by considering what is involved in establishing and maintaining the effectiveness of an educational experience, both at the surface level of what the teacher needs to be doing, and at the underlying level of what psychological processes underpin this.

The need to improve the quality of teaching in schools is a source of public debate in many countries throughout the world. In attempting to do this, some governments have introduced new forms of initial teacher training, the regular appraisal of established teachers, lists of teacher competencies, and statements about what should be taught and how. Indeed, it is not at all uncommon to witness one country making a major change towards something just as another country has decided to move in the opposite direction.

At the same time, there has been much debate among teacher educators concerning how teacher education can best foster effective teaching, taking account of the government's views on teacher training, the teacher educators' own professional views of how training is best conducted, and the findings of research studies looking at aspects of effective teaching and the impact of training.

Research into effective teaching is largely concerned with investigating three inter-related perspectives:

- *The teachers' perspective.* How do teachers view teaching and learning? What are their views about what works best and why? What factors influence their teaching practice? How much variation is there among teachers in their views and behaviour?
- *The pupils' perspective.* How do pupils view teaching and learning? What motivates them? What learning strategies do they use? What types of teachers and activities do they feel are effective and why? How much variation is there among pupils in their views and behaviour?
- *The activities perspective.* Are some activities more effective than others? What factors influence whether an activity will be effective? How well does the activity match the learning needs of the pupil? How can teachers and pupils get the most out of a particular activity? How frequently are different activities used? What factors influence the method of using different activities?

Within each chapter I have tried to encompass these three perspectives. In choosing the theme for each chapter, I have been very conscious of the extent to which each theme seems to relate to and touch upon considerations explored in other chapters. Such is inevitably the nature of effective teaching: a complex inter-relationship of a number of different concerns, each impinging on each other to greater or lesser extents. Nevertheless, I have attempted to focus on the themes that appear to me to be the most crucial ones in understanding effective teaching.

The book is broadly divided into three parts, which reflect the three key tasks of teacher education that I outlined earlier. The first part (chapters 2 and 3) focuses on providing an understanding of the key issues that underpin the nature of effective teaching and pupil learning. The second part (chapters 4 to 8) focuses on the delivery of effective classroom practice. Finally, the third part (chapter 9) deals with reflecting on teaching experience.

Chapter 2, 'Ways of thinking about effective teaching', considers three main approaches to looking at effective teaching. The first approach focuses on two central concepts:

'active learning time' and 'quality of instruction'. The former is concerned with the amount of time pupils spend during a lesson (or while at school) actively engaged in learning experiences related to the educational outcomes intended. The latter refers to the actual quality of the learning experiences themselves. These two concepts have dominated research on effective teaching aimed at explaining why some teachers are more effective than others. In essence, effective teachers are those who are able to maximise both the amount of active learning time and the quality of instruction. The second approach focuses on teaching as an essentially managerial activity, and has sought to identify key teaching skills that underlie the effective management of learning. The third approach focuses on the key psychological concepts, principles and processes that appear to be involved when effective teaching is taking place. This approach places emphasis on the pupil's psychological state and how it relates to the success or failure of an educational activity.

In chapter 3, 'How pupils learn', the nature of pupil learning itself is explored. Particular attention is paid to three psychological conditions that appear to be crucial for learning:

- The pupil must be *attending* to the learning experience.
- The pupil must be *receptive* to the learning experience.
- The learning experience must be *appropriate* for the desired learning to take place.

In chapter 4, 'Setting up the learning experience', the different ways in which teachers can set up learning activities are considered. One of the key features of effective teaching is the use of a diversity of approaches that enables the teacher to elicit and sustain pupils' interest and involvement in their learning. Much effective teaching involves allowing pupils to be more active and to have greater control over the direction and pace of the learning experience.

Chapter 5, 'Taking account of pupil differences', discusses the implications for effective teaching of a variety of important differences between pupils that can influence learning. There are many such differences, but the most important ones, which are explored here, are ability, motivation, social class, gender, race, and special educational needs. In attempting to consider the implications for teaching of these categories, what becomes very apparent is that the issues and strategies related to dealing with the needs of one group of pupils are also relevant to meeting the needs of *all* pupils. For example, in considering the needs of gifted pupils, a central problem is how to keep such pupils interested and challenged by the learning activities provided. In meeting their needs, it is evident that the same problem and possible response to it could be just as relevant to meeting the needs of all the pupils in the school.

The first half of chapter 6, 'Key classroom teaching qualities and tasks', attempts to identify the essential qualities of effective teaching. It is often claimed that it is easy to recognise good teaching when you see it, but few would claim that it is equally easy to break down such a global assessment into its constituent parts. This problem largely results from the fact that different observers actually mean different things by the notion of good teaching. Moreover, what a particular observer has in mind can often be achieved in different ways. Nevertheless, when one looks at the discussion of such qualities within the context of teacher education, there does appear to be a fair degree of consensus, although the exact headings and emphasis may vary from writer to writer.

In the second half of chapter 6, attention focuses on three key tasks underpinning effective teaching in the classroom: planning; presentation and monitoring; and reflec-

tion and evaluation. These three tasks need to be based on sound decision-making before, during and after the lesson. Planning deals with key questions regarding the basic format of the lesson and its content. Presentation and monitoring deals with how the teacher delivers a lesson and monitors its progress in order to establish and maintain its effectiveness. Reflection and evaluation deals with how the teacher evaluates the success of a lesson and reflects on implications for future teaching.

In chapter 7, 'Relationships with pupils', it is argued that a sound relationship between the teacher and pupils needs to be based on two qualities: the pupils' acceptance of the teacher's authority; and the establishment of mutual respect and rapport. The chapter looks at the way in which establishing a positive classroom climate forms an important aspect of effective teaching in promoting an expectation towards learning and in minimising pupil misbehaviour. Finally, the chapter also considers the way in which the teacher's pastoral care responsibilities also underpin teacher–pupil relationships.

Chapter 8, 'Dealing with pupil misbehaviour', looks at the major strategies and techniques that teachers can use to deal effectively with pupil misbehaviour. After considering the nature and causes of pupil misbehaviour and the strategies that can be used to pre-empt their occurrence, the chapter goes on to examine the use of reprimands and punishments, and the qualities that will increase their effectiveness.

In chapter 9, 'Appraising practice', three major professional concerns facing teachers are discussed: the curriculum; teacher appraisal; and teacher stress. The first concern explores the need for teachers to stand back from time to time and look afresh at the content and purpose of the school curriculum, both as a whole and in relation to particular areas. The second concern looks at how teacher appraisal can offer an opportunity for teachers to review their classroom practice and to consider their professional development needs. The third major concern is the issue of teacher stress. This reflects the fact that teaching is a demanding profession, and the ability to cope skilfully with the pressures and frustrations that can arise is an important part of maintaining one's enthusiasm for teaching and the capacity to perform well.

The final chapter, 'Conclusions', reflects on the various themes covered in this book and highlights the main priorities for fostering effective teaching in schools.

Useful websites

The following websites provide useful information about policy, practice and research on effective teaching.

Behaviour4Learning
www.behaviour4learning.ac.uk

British Education Index (BEI)
www.bei.ac.uk

British Educational Communications and Technology Agency (Becta)
www.becta.org.uk

British Educational Research Association (BERA)
www.bera.ac.uk

Centre for the Use of Research and Evidence in Education (CUREE)
www.curee-paccts.com

Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF)
www.dcsf.gov.uk

Educational Evidence Portal (EEP)
www.eep.ac.uk

Education Resources Information Center (ERIC)
www.eric.ed.gov

Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Co-ordinating Centre
(EPPI-Centre)
www.eppi.ioe.ac.uk

Institute for Effective Education (IEE)
www.york.ac.uk/iee

Intute
www.intute.ac.uk

National Curriculum
http://curriculum.qca.org.uk

National Strategies
www.nationalstrategies.org.uk

Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted)
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA)
www.qca.org.uk

Standards
www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk

TeacherNet
www.teachernet.gov.uk

Teacher Training Resource Bank (TTRB)
www.ttrb.ac.uk

Teachers TV
www.teachers.tv

Teaching and Learning Research Programme
www.tlrp.org

Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA)
www.tda.gov.uk

What Works Well
http://whatworkswell.standards.dcsf.gov.uk