

Reviews / Comptes rendus

Mindful Learning: 101 Proven Strategies for Student and Teacher Success

By Linda Campbell, & Bruce Campbell
(2nd ed.; Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 2009, 179 pages)

The first edition of Campbell and Campbell's *Mindful Learning: 101 Proven Strategies for Student and Teacher Success* was published in 2002. In 2009, at the urging of their editors, the authors updated the book. As summarized from the book's introduction, the new edition offers ready-to-use instructional strategies that have a demonstrated ability to improve student achievement. The book responds to the question, "How can I improve the learning of my students?" With over 50% new content, the second edition of *Mindful Learning* reflects the latest information for improving student learning in any grade and subject. To facilitate searching for just the right strategy, the authors reorganized instructional strategies from the first edition, merged them with new strategies, and grouped, reorganized, and cross-referenced them. While the authors make it clear that the strategies are neither new nor best practice, they insist all strategies are the most likely to result in the desired student gains.

Each of the book's five chapters—Beginning With What Students Know: The Role of Prior Knowledge in Learning; Active Learning: Differentiated Strategies for All Learners; Ensuring Gender-Fair Instruction; Teaching Diverse Students: Addressing Language, Class, Culture, and Ability Differences in the Classroom; and Assessing Student Performance—begins by summarizing the topic's literature and then outlines practices that address the range of aptitudes, interests, and diversities found in today's classrooms. The book is written within the context of the American *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2001, the philosophy of which reflects the theories of standards-based education reform, grounded in the belief that setting high standards and establishing measurable goals can improve individual outcomes in education. The concluding sentence of the Introduction to *Mindful Learning* (2009) is, "one teacher in one classroom when supported with effective instructional strategies can make a profound and lasting contribution to the lives of students" (p. 6). While the authors consider that placing tools of excellent instruction into the hands of teachers is necessary to improve standardized score results, is their commitment to the belief sufficient to make this a great book?

Linda and Bruce Campbell acknowledge from the outset that there are no miracle strategies. Instead, they push forward an agenda of down-to-earth, pragmatic, commitment-to-excellence learning, and tools and strategies that can help to overcome learning barriers. The authors maintain that when these strategies are steadfastly applied, pre-determined standards are achieved over the long run. It is the accumulation of these incremental student learning successes, achieved through the application of the strategies, that provides the start-up momentum that turns the flywheel of learning and *over time* engages and intrinsically motivates students to become independent learners.

Mindful Learning (2009) is not about falling into Collins' "doom loop" (Collins, 2001) of introducing new fad strategies to achieve instant results. Campbell and Campbell's strategies are based on cognitive tools that have stood the test of time and the rigors of inquiry. The authors make no caveats that alert the reader to the fact no sustainable learning gains are made in the absence of a community of like-minded instructors; great tools with mediocre people still produce mediocre results.

Most importantly, *Mindful Learning* (2009) fails to address contemporary education's emerging technological environment. Today's learning environment is such that school boards build contingencies for the online delivery of learning material in the event of, for example, adverse weather conditions or health epidemics. However, the book provides no pedagogical notes to guide the online implementation and translation of these strategies from traditional face-to-face classrooms to virtual classrooms.

Mindful Learning: 101 proven strategies for student and teacher success (2009) is a good book that can provide, framed with appropriate insights, useful aids to teaching. It is not, however, a great book.

Caterina L. Valentino, Ryerson University

REFERENCE

Collins, J. C. (2001). *Good to great: Why some companies make the leap . . . and others don't*. New York: Collins, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers.