

# Pedagogical and educational practices

Because getting a high school diploma involves acquiring knowledge and passing certain school subjects, how this knowledge is transferred also plays a role in school perseverance. Teachers' pedagogical and educational practices will affect students' overall interest in the subject being taught and, more broadly, their enjoyment of the learning experience. In this respect, successful pedagogical strategies stem as much from classroom management as from the actual teaching techniques employed.

## What the research says

Pedagogical decisions, meaning what is taught and how it is taught, have a major influence on how students perform and what they learn. In the end, these decisions also influence the long-term results of students who experience difficulties and ultimately, whether or not they graduate.

New Zealand researcher Hattie studied over 800 meta-analyses, which summarized some 50,000 individual studies, involving over 250 million students, on what constitutes good teaching.<sup>1</sup> Below are some of the 136 factors that Hattie examined in his book. They indicate which factors, taken individually, promote or hinder learning.

### Factors that HINDER learning

- Repeating a year
- Too much TV
- Long summer vacations

### Factors that DO NOT HINDER but DO NOT HELP either

- Open education
- Multi-age classrooms
- Web-based teaching and learning

### Factors that HELP MINIMALLY

- Small classroom size
- Financial resources
- Discovery-based learning
- Homework

### Factors that PROMOTE learning

- Regular monitoring of results
- Encouragement in preschool
- Teacher-directed learning (direct instruction)
- Enrichment for gifted students

### Factors that SIGNIFICANTLY PROMOTE learning

- Teacher feedback
- Problem-based learning
- Continuing teacher training in the subject being taught
- Effective programs for teaching literacy
- Student-teacher relationships based on trust

The key finding of Hattie's work is that teachers are the most determinant factors in student success. This is based primarily on two points: the choice of teaching methods and the quality of classroom management. With respect to teaching methods, those based on direct instruction<sup>2</sup> are considered most effective, while "discovery-based" pedagogies only help minimally and are even inadvisable for students with difficulty or from disadvantaged environments.

At an international symposium, William presented the results of a study on the importance of the teacher's role in student learning.<sup>3</sup> In the best teachers' classes, students learn twice as fast as those in the classes of average teachers. Indeed, in the classrooms of the most effective teachers, students from disadvantaged families and students with behavioural problems learned just as well as students from well-off families or who did not have behavioural problems.

### For more information

*Comment enseigne-t-on dans les écoles efficaces ?*

<http://www.pulaval.com/produit/comment-enseigne-t-on-dans-les-ecoles-efficaces-efficacite-des-ecoles-et-des-reformes>

[1] J. Hattie (2009), *Visible Learning: A Synthesis of Over 800 Meta-analyses Relating to Achievement*, New York, NY: Routledge.

[2] C. Gauthier, M. Mellouki, D. Simard, S. Bissonnette, M. Richard (2005), *Quelles sont les pédagogies efficaces ? Un état de la recherche*, *Les Cahiers du débat*, Fondation pour l'innovation politique, Jan. 2005, p.31–32.

[3] D. William (2011), *How do we prepare students for a world we cannot imagine?* Paper presented at the Salzburg Seminar, Optimizing Talent: Closing Educational and Social Mobility Gaps Worldwide, 6–11 December. Salzburg.

## Taking effective action

An international study conducted in nine countries on four continents examined teaching practices in schools whose effectiveness was deemed good, average or poor.<sup>1</sup> The authors concluded that teachers working in effective schools had more behaviours associated with direct instruction than those in schools deemed less effective. There is thus reason to believe that using direct teaching methods, whose effectiveness has been demonstrated at both the classroom level<sup>2</sup> and the school level,<sup>3</sup> should be emphasized as a pedagogical approach in order to ensure the success of all students, but especially those for whom school must make a difference, such as students who have difficulties or students from disadvantaged environments.

### What teachers from effective schools do:

#### Classroom management

- Use a reward system to manage behaviour
- Continuously supervise classes
- Have high expectations of students
- Show enthusiasm
- Use display boards that are attractive, stimulating and relevant

#### Teaching management

- Present material clearly
- Provide precise instructions and explanations
- Emphasize essential aspects of the lesson
- Focus on the academic dimension
- Check to make sure students understand
- Ask questions frequently to students
- Ask questions related to the subject
- Ask open questions
- Provide support when students answer incorrectly
- Use students' answers to delve deeper into the subject

## Avenues for effective action related to pedagogical and educational practices

### Put in place initiatives to attract and keep competent teachers:

- by making sure teachers get continuous training,
- by providing the best classroom teaching techniques (direct instruction, problem-solving, emphasis on teaching literacy, monitoring and following up on learning, support for students having trouble, verification of student comprehension, asking questions to students, summarizing material, providing clarity and precision of instructions, etc.),
- by offering the best classroom management techniques (positive climate, quick feedback, positive reinforcement, classroom supervision, realistic expectations of students, attractive materials and environment, disciplinary systems centred on expectations and problem-solving, etc.),
- by promoting the development of warm and positive student-teacher relationships (teacher awareness, coaching, activity ideas, etc.),
- by ensuring that teachers believe that their students can succeed,
- by promoting a favourable attitude of teachers toward their profession.

### Encourage a positive attitude of parents and the community toward the teaching profession, people working in schools, and in particular, the teachers of their children (presence at school, participation in meetings and activities, school interventions, etc.):

- to make sure that parents provide support for their children's school work (confidence and support of the teacher, importance placed on school work, attendance at school, etc.).

[1] D. Reynolds, B. Creemers, S. Strinfield, C. Teddlie and G. Schaffer (2002), *World Class School, International Perspectives on School Effectiveness*, London: Routledge/Falmer Press.

[2] CRIFPE (2005), *Écoles efficaces et réussite scolaire des élèves à risque, Un état de la recherche*. Downloaded at:

<http://www.formapex.com/telechargementpublic/gauthier2005e?616d13afc6835dd26137b409bec9f87=4d34101224fa8bcc8a53050fda55c277>

[3] Ibid. 1.