

How Learning Works: Seven Research-Based Principles for Smart Teaching

By Susan A. Ambrose, Michael W. Bridges, Michele DiPietro, Marsha C. Lovett, Marie K. Norman

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Distilling the research literature and translating the scientific approach into language relevant to a college or university teacher, this book introduces seven general principles of how students learn. The authors have drawn on research from a breadth of perspectives (cognitive, developmental, and social psychology; educational research; anthropology; demographics; organizational behavior) to identify a set of key principles underlying learning, from how effective organization enhances retrieval and use of information to what impacts motivation. Integrating theory with real-classroom examples in practice, this book helps faculty to apply cognitive science advances to improve their own teaching.

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Editorial Review

From the Inside Flap

Any conversation about effective teaching must begin with a consideration of how students learn. However, instructors may find a gap between resources that focus on the technical research on learning and those that provide practical classroom strategies. How Learning Works provides the bridge for such a gap.

In this volume, the authors introduce seven general principles of learning, distilled from the research literature as well as from twenty-seven years of experience working one-on-one with college faculty. They have drawn on research from a breadth of perspectives (cognitive, developmental, and social psychology; educational research; anthropology; demographics; and organizational behavior) to identify a set of key principles underlying learning-from how effective organization enhances retrieval and use of information to what impacts motivation. These principles provide instructors with an understanding of student learning that can help them see why certain teaching approaches are or are not supporting student learning, generate or refine teaching approaches and strategies that more effectively foster student learning in specific contexts, and transfer and apply these principles to new courses.

For anyone who wants to improve his or her students' learning, it is crucial to understand how that learning works and how to best foster it. This vital resource is grounded in learning theory and based on research evidence, while being easy to understand and apply to college teaching.

From the Back Cover
Praise for "How Learning Works"

""How Learning Works" is the perfect title for this excellent book. Drawing upon new research in psychology, education, and cognitive science, the authors have demystified a complex topic into clear explanations of seven powerful learning principles. Full of great ideas and practical suggestions, all based on solid research evidence, this book is essential reading for instructors at all levels who wish to improve their students' learning." --Barbara Gross Davis, assistant vice chancellor for educational development, University of California, Berkeley, and author, "Tools for Teaching"

"This book is a must-read for every instructor, new or experienced. Although I have been teaching for almost thirty years, as I read this book I found myself resonating with many of its ideas, and I discovered new ways of thinking about teaching." --Eugenia T. Paulus, professor of chemistry, North Hennepin Community College, and 2008 U.S. Community Colleges Professor of the Year from The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the Council for Advancement and Support of Education

"Thank you Carnegie Mellon for making accessible what has previously been inaccessible to those of us who are not learning scientists. Your focus on the essence of learning combined with concrete examples of the daily challenges of teaching and clear tactical strategies for faculty to consider is a welcome work. I will recommend this book to all my colleagues." --Catherine M. Casserly, senior partner, The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

"As you read about each of the seven basic learning principles in this book, you will find advice that is

grounded in learning theory, based on research evidence, relevant to college teaching, and easy to understand. The authors have extensive knowledge and experience in applying the science of learning to college teaching, and they graciously share it with you in this organized and readable book." --From the Foreword by Richard E. Mayer, professor of psychology, University of California, Santa Barbara; coauthor, "e-Learning and the Science of Instruction"; and author, "Multimedia Learning"

About the Author
Susan A. Ambrose is Vice Provost for Teaching and Learning and Professor of Education at Northeastern University in Boston, Massachusetts.

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The Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence at Carnegie Mellon University was created in 1982 with a mission to distill the research on learning for faculty and graduate students and to collaborate with them to design and implement meaningful educational experiences. The center's work is based on the idea that combining the science and art of teaching empowers college faculty to create the conditions for students to learn and, through this learning, transform their world.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

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