
Foreword

The interesting thing about successful teachers is that they never stop learning. And this new book about successful teachers by Neal Glasgow and Cathy Hicks, both veteran and master teachers, makes it easy to keep on learning. The format reads like a well thought-out lesson plan: a teaching strategy, the research supporting that strategy, classroom applications, precautions and possible pitfalls, and sources, all designed to provide the teacher with the confidence needed to apply the new teaching strategy in tomorrow's lesson. *What Successful Teachers Do* offers solid research to develop real instructional strategies in brain-based, learning-friendly ways.

After teaching for over 30 years, I am still constantly striving to be a better teacher. And like all busy teachers, I prefer to work smarter, not harder. This book cuts to the chase. There are 12 chapters, each one presenting strategies in categories that are useful both for beginning and for seasoned teachers.

I was hooked the instant I first saw this book. My life has been a search to become a more effective teacher, and I was pulled in by the book title *What Successful Teachers Do*. After 30 years of teaching, however, I have learned to be wary of books that carry messages the likes of "believe and you can achieve." I want proven methods and materials, not feel-good promises. This book delivers with 91 researched-based classroom strategies for teachers in the real world.

The strategies cover the necessarily wide spectrum of important topics for successful teachers: from working with students, colleagues, and parents to managing your classroom, your curriculum, your assessment, your teaching style, and yourself.

Perhaps most important to me is that the authors have written with the underlying belief that students don't care what you teach if you don't teach that you care. They include strategies for dealing with test anxiety and the use of humor to help put students at ease, to gain attention, and to help let the student know that the teacher is indeed an empathetic, caring human being. Successful teachers take time to talk and to listen to their students.

The strategies that encourage peer coaching are invaluable. Even today as I travel the world providing teacher training, I am still amazed that

xii ● What Successful Teachers Do

many teachers do not realize the wealth of knowledge and experience in their own buildings. Teachers do not need to suffer in the silence of isolation. They need to talk, share, and grow with their colleagues. One of the most worthwhile strategies is the authors' caveat to surround yourself with mentors who are positive and to avoid the teacher who is negative.

What Successful Teachers Do addresses the timely issues of technology, diversity, and students with special needs, which are of paramount importance for today's educators. The strategies for becoming a professional—such as dressing for respect and results and joining professional growth organizations—are priceless. Many teachers find out about these secrets only after years of experience. The authors also explore an important area that needs more attention for your students and for teachers. It seems as if almost everyone involved with education today is stressing proficiency and standards testing. These are important concerns. But what about reality testing? Do you know about youth culture and how it relates to student health, to school safety, and to learning? Is your classroom youth-culture-friendly? And what about you as a teacher? Teaching is a stressful occupation. Safe and healthy teachers are better teachers who teach more effectively.

The effectiveness of these strategies may vary from teacher to teacher, class to class, school to school, and year to year. Becoming a successful teacher is not a destination, it is a never-ending wonderful journey. And successful teachers continually reflect on their classroom experiences along the way. No matter where you are in your teaching career, this book will take you places you have been, will be, and wish to be. In fact, I have found some strategies that I can't wait to try!

Dr. Stephen Sroka
www.DrStephenSroka.com