
Preface to the New Edition

Since the previous edition was published in 2003, further research and new concerns have come to the fore. This revised edition presents this research and these concerns so that educators and students can understand and benefit from them.

Research-based theory identifies a breakthrough link between how the brain naturally learns and how people naturally learn: The brain learns *because* and *as* the learner is experiencing the natural stages of learning. When students have the opportunity to learn through the natural stages of learning—the natural human learning process (NHLP)—in any subject at any level, their brains will be motivated, engaged, and will naturally learn. The natural stages of the NHLP are explained, described, and demonstrated throughout this edition.

Perhaps one of the foremost concerns today is the widespread, pervasive use of user-controlled technology. A stand-up comedian, Joel Levitt, has a new routine that begins, “I’m here to entertain you. But you don’t have to shut off your iPods or laptops or stop twittering and texting and checking Facebook and YouTube. I’ll just keep on, and if you hear any of it and have some laughs, I’ll be happy.” Should teachers adapt Levitt’s routine for their classes where many, if not most, students are now technology experts or addicts? What is happening in the classroom?

Why are about 35% of high school students dropping out? Does it have anything to do with what they’re doing outside school contrasted to what is happening inside school? Does being in classes geared to a large degree towards standardized tests and/or prescribed curricula and imparted knowledge provide too little opportunity for students to figure things out themselves, to do their own critical and creative thinking, to be active and interactive—as they are outside school with their technological tools and toys—have anything to do with it? Accordingly, Chapter 2 has a new section on technology.

Another added focus is on one of the most important strategies a teacher can use to respond to the technology insurgency. It is a strategy that a student once named the “mating call” of the brain, what this book calls the “seven magic words”—*see if you can figure this out*—because they invariably engage the brain to do what it is born to do, to figure things out. This new edition discusses how a teacher can use these seven magic words as a strategy for developing and delivering curricula that help students be the naturally engaged, motivated learners they are born to be. There are also additional activities to help readers reflect on these strategies.

Another change that has occurred since the first edition is that ADD and ADHD have become more widespread, and more research has been focusing on these conditions. The first edition did not include information about ADD and ADHD, and it also did not include information about gifted students. Interestingly, the new research now shows that some gifted students might be mistakenly seen as having ADD or ADHD, suggesting that perhaps the traditional classroom environment is causing gifted students to misbehave or withdraw and, thus, be misidentified. Chapter 4 includes a focus on both these types of students and also on students with autism. There is also a new focus on gifted students.

Moreover, the text has been edited throughout to cohesively integrate the new and original materials.