

Something for Everyone

Teaching Tips for College and University Instructors: A Practical Guide

by David Royle
Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2001. 333 pages.

Reviewed by Paul O. Myhre

Few texts provide the level of helpful guidance, relevant tips, and sage advice in one volume as David Royle's *Teaching Tips for College and University Instructors: A Practical Guide*. Royle, in a jargon-free voice, articulates the merits of various models for teaching, identifies some of the potential pitfalls, and gives specific directions on how to employ these methods in one's own instructional practices.

The book is arranged in a logical sequence that moves from philosophical and practical considerations for teaching to specific types of methods and strategies for instruction and concludes with chapters on ethics and vocation. Beginning teachers will find a series of snapshots of what a career of teaching higher education may look like, while seasoned teachers discover practical ways to reflect on their own teaching and their presuppositions about teaching and learning.

The opening chapter, "The Mental Groundwork," prompts teachers to consider hermeneutical and epistemological questions concerning the task of teaching. Aware of the deficit nature of courses that teach graduate students about teaching during their graduate education, Royle challenges readers to make explicit their assumptions, opinions, and ideas about what good teaching entails. He prompts readers to reflect on their accepted notions about how people learn, what they have done specifically to prompt learning, and how they might take tangible steps to begin to make transparent their own philosophy of education.

Drawing on the work of Cross, Steadman, and others, Royle articulates seven principles for good teaching practice. These include: frequent stu-

dent-faculty contact, encouragement of cooperation among students, prompt feedback, emphasis on time on task and good time-management skills, communicating high expectations, and respecting diverse talents and ways of learning. Although these principles may seem self-evident, this is not always true for those who are beginning their careers as teachers, nor it is necessarily true for those who have spent their careers in teaching. Questions of diversity and inclusive teaching are addressed as well.

Chapters two through eight are excellent essays for thinking about learning design and how to achieve projected course outcomes. From his chapter on basic course components to the chapter on the use of instructional technology, Royse provides guidance through methods and strategies for how one might improve teaching and learning. Each chapter conveys helpful ideas for how one might consider the task of building a learning experience for students and how to engage students in a process of lifelong learning. His chapters on teaching students how to learn, experiential learning, and the use of instructional technology are particularly timely.

After exploring the landscape of methods available for good teaching, Royse provides helpful chapters on the challenges of assessment, managing problems that arise in the classroom, and how to incorporate humor in teaching. The concluding chapters of the book pertain to issues of how to enhance the caliber of one's teaching, what contributes to one's vocation as a teacher, and consideration of specific examples of ethical dilemmas that teachers routinely face. His chapter on how to navigate the tenure track is particularly helpful to pre-tenure faculty.

Although Royse does not directly attend to issues of learning theory, his chapters are infused with knowledge of learning theories that percolate out in specific tips and hints for good teaching. This book would be a helpful one for those who are beginning their careers as teachers or for those who find themselves longing for new ideas and approaches for stimulating learning in their classrooms. It could also be useful for department meetings or retreats devoted to discussions about teaching and learning. 

Paul O. Myhre has worked in higher education since 1996. He has taught in undergraduate and graduate contexts, including Pacific Theological College in Suva, Fiji. Since 2001, he has served as associate director for the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion located in Crawfordsville, Indiana.