

A Few Good Books on Teaching

“So many books, so little time.”

—Frank Zappa

In his regular column on teaching in the *Chronical of Higher Education*, James Lang once suggested four items from Lang’s list as well as a few more of my personal favorites. These books all readable, yet quite authoritative. Feel free to borrow one from the CTL library.

What the Best College Teachers Do, by Ken Bain (Harvard, 2004).

Appears on virtually every list of “best books” on college teaching, often in first place.

Make It Stick: The Science of Successful Learning, by Peter C. Brown, Henry L. Roediger III, and Mark A. McDaniel (Harvard, 2014).

A practical and readable account of recent research into learning, suggesting what we think we know about learning might not be quite true.

How Learning Works: 7 Research-Based Principles for Smart Teaching, by Susan A. Ambrose, Michael W. Bridges, Michele DiPietro, Marsha C. Lovett, and Marie K. Norman (Jossey-Bass, 2010).

Another practical account of recent work in learning theory, this time applied a wide range of disciplines.

Mindset: The New Psychology of Success, by Carol S. Dweck (Ballantine, 2006).

A discussion of research suggesting that how students think about learning is crucial to their success.

Small Teaching: Everyday Lessons from the Science of Learning, by James M. Lang. (Jossey-Bass, 2016).

Simple ways to apply new research in human learning—small adjustments that don’t involve re-organizing an entire course.

Creating Self-Regulated Learners: Strategies to Strengthen Students’ Self-Awareness and Learning Skills, by Linda B. Nilson (Stylus, 2013).

Specific strategies for helping students become independent learners—smart and practical like everything Nilson writes.

Engaging Ideas: The Professor’s Guide to Integrating Writing, Critical Thinking, and Active Learning in the Classroom, by John Bean (Jossey-Bass, 2011).

Suggestions on how to help students use reading and writing as tools for learning, written primarily for those not in English.

Clear and to the Point: 8 Psychological Principles for Compelling PowerPoint Presentations, by Stephen M. Kosslyn (Oxford, 2007).

Advice for using PowerPoint to connect with an audience instead of alienating it, and offered by a cognitive psychologist instead of a techie.

Advice for New Faculty Members: Nihil Nimus, by Robert Boice (Allyn and Bacon, 2000).

Boice’s prescription for getting a fast start in an academic career? Moderation.