

Preface

In the eight years since publishing *Impact Teaching: Ideas and Strategies for Teachers to Maximize Student Learning*, a whole new raft of technology has entered education. PowerPoint, interactive whiteboards, MP3s, and the Internet have brought stunning changes to all levels of learning in schools throughout the world. As teachers, however, the biggest change we face is not the technology itself, but how that technology has shaped the current generations of students in our classrooms.

Kids who spend their formative years immersed in the intense stimulation of the digital age are hard-wired for different patterns of learning. They have shorter attention spans and greater expectations of learning experientially. As teachers whose brains developed in a slower, gentler age, it may be hard for us to truly appreciate the gap between our own education needs and those of our current students.

We need an intense and immediate focus on closing this generational fissure in our classrooms. The issue is urgent—the span of the divide appears to be increasing almost exponentially. Traditional teaching methods may still help some students, but they are hampering more and more students with each passing year. The sooner we can build a conduit of understanding, the sooner teachers and students can join together again in creating an effective and efficient learning environment.

This book offers some building blocks for that connection—a host of practical strategies, illustrated in real-life lesson examples. These strategies will engage, empower, and excite the digital natives in our classrooms. They will help to transform any academic content into a relevant and compelling learning experience for students of all ages.

If we make a studied, conscious effort to span the generational gap by using High-Impact Teaching Strategies, the learning of today's students can soar. Without it, our lessons will become increasingly distant from our students' reality, losing relevance and impact with every passing day.

It does not matter if our lesson plans have always worked in the past. The first rule of High-Impact Teaching is to “teach people—not content.” Thus, as our students change, so must the way we teach them.

For time-poor teachers appalled at the idea of rewriting lessons, let me offer a beacon of hope. As the contributors to this book will attest, High-Impact Teaching Strategies do not merely empower students, they also re-energize teachers. Revisiting the way we teach is daunting. But the



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results—students engaging with our material, celebrating their achievements, and succeeding beyond their expectations—repay our investment of time and effort many times over. With High-Impact Teaching, academic results, classroom behavior, and student attitudes all improve—as does our own personal satisfaction.

I believe, if we act together to bridge the gulf between traditional teaching and today's learners, we can renew education as a vibrant, relevant, and vital contributor to society. I hope you join the teachers whose ideas and lessons populate this book in driving toward that goal.

—Rich Allen