Foreword

How *can I use these ideas in my classroom tomorrow?*

This is the fundamental question every teacher asks when given new ideas about teaching, learning, or effectively managing a classroom. Whether attending a staff development session, reviewing a new district-wide initiative, attempting to implement a national policy, or reading a new book on teaching like this one, this is the essential through-line of their thinking. In what way is this information of value to me and my students? How can I apply these new ideas? In the end, for classroom teachers, how these new ideas can change their classroom for the better is the ultimate question.

In *The Active Classroom*, Ron Nash concentrates on answering this question. With just enough theory to ground his approach in brain science, he offers some very clear, practical, manageable strategies teachers can implement the very next time they see their students. Maintaining a wonderful balance between philosophy and practice, the primary focus of the book is what to *do* with the ideas it presents: how to adapt and apply them to any content and for students of all ages.

This is a wonderfully refreshing change from more theoretical books. Of course, educational research can be helpful at pointing our vision toward the most significant educational issues of our times. It can isolate strategic policies or provide goals and direction for a specified curriculum, a grade level, a school, or a nation. Indeed, in the last thirty years, brain research has opened our educational eyes regarding the effects of stress and emotions, food and drink, socialization and isolation, and many other aspects of the learning process on the human brain. The bank of knowledge we are building through research is fascinating and thought-provoking to anyone involved in education. But real classroom teachers, working with real students, still want to know . . .

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When I was studying for my PhD in Educational Psychology, I was delighted to be deeply immersed in current literature regarding many aspects of learning theory. It was fascinating to read a plethora of current studies being conducted on how to manage a dynamic classroom, and how to facilitate effective learning. Yet—most likely because of my background as a classroom teacher—I found myself continually asking my professors how to use these theories in the classroom.

One of the wonderful things about *The Active Classroom* is that you don't have to read far before that vital, practical piece of the puzzle falls into place. In fact, just by dipping into the book, teachers will be able to begin implementing Ron Nash's ideas immediately. This makes the book a highly valuable resource for busy teachers, who can look at almost any section and within a few minutes select an idea, a tool, or a strategy, and put it into action the next day.

Perhaps even more importantly, I am convinced that the strategies Ron Nash offers within these pages will WORK—because they align with the needs of *today's classrooms and today's learners*. Digital natives are a new breed of learners. With their brains hardwired to expect constant stimulation, outside the classroom their world is a constant riot of games, music, video content, and interaction. The result, as any current classroom teacher will attest, is that teaching techniques used a mere ten to fifteen years ago do NOT work with these learners. At the most elemental level they need to be engaged, engrossed, and ACTIVE during the learning process. Ron's book shows clearly and simply how this can be accomplished on a public budget in a mainstream classroom.

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In *The Active Classroom* Ron Nash has given us some important answers.

—Rich Allen, PhD