Preface

Have you ever had a room or area in your home that was quite functional, perhaps attractive, but you had some ideas to make it even better? If so, you probably took on a remodeling project. Remodeling usually means we keep the useful and positive aspects of a space, but we improve on other aspects.

This book applies that very concept—remodeling—to instruction of students. As a teacher, you've probably developed many great lessons and units. And you probably have some that could be improved on too. This book provides you with a process to reflect on and critically analyze your instruction and the tools you need to refresh those lessons.

You'll begin the journey by first examining some of the evidence—research and best and promising practices—of what we know works when it comes to students' learning. This will provide you with the basis against which to analyze your lessons. Next, you'll learn about the process of remodeling and ways in which you can remodel either by yourself or with a group of peers in a professional learning community. Finally, just as you can't remodel a space without the right tools, you need tools for lesson remodeling as well. To achieve that, we offer you a compendium of 95 strategies to remodel your lessons, along with reproducibles where possible, to ensure that you can implement them in your classroom. These strategies are the tools you can use to efficiently and effectively remodel lessons for any subject and just about any grade level.

Using This Book

This book is designed to both outline processes and act as a reference guide. It has been piloted in various versions with more than 100 members of the education community and can be used in several ways:

Practitioner Uses

- For teachers planning a lesson or unit, who can flip through the compendium of strategies and select those they wish to use, inserting them directly into their lessons and making copies of the relevant reproducible
- When revising courses and lessons to remodel their existing lessons by flipping through the compendium of strategies and revising the lesson accordingly

College Faculty Uses

- A teaching tool and textbook to support preservice teachers' unit and lesson planning
- As a resource for inservice courses and workshops

District Uses

- A basis for professional development for teachers to guide lesson remodeling in workshop-driven inservice education
- As a basis to build professional learning communities aimed at improving instruction at either the school or district level

An Evidence-Based Approach

Research suggests that students retain only 20% of what they learn (Gardiner, 1998). Increasingly, we see calls for evidence-based practice (EBP) to define *what works* in education and inform practices in classrooms, schools, and districts. EBP is concerned with looking to research evidence to see what types of teaching/learning approaches are effective.

But what counts as evidence? The answer, which happens to be "many things," is a bit complicated. Evidence can be as simple as one teacher's experiences, where trial-and-error in the classroom can identify what works in *that* classroom, with *that* teacher, and with *those* students. Evidence can be as sophisticated as large-scale, international comparisons of teaching/learning approaches and their systemwide outcomes. The bottom line is that experience and analysis, together, lead to evidence, which can inform practice. However, as these examples suggest, some pieces of evidence are stronger than others. Figure 0.1 provides a guide to understanding the strength of evidence (adapted from Hyde, Falls, Morris, and Schoenwald's [2003] hierarchy for medical evidence). It should be noted that educational research is increasingly qualitative. When the research design is sound, both qualitative and quantitative

studies can provide strong evidence, through very different types of useful information. In this book, we've drawn on evidence at just about all levels of the hierarchy.

Part of the teacher's role is to gather, assess, and apply evidence—in part, based on its strength, and in part, based on the teacher's professional judgment within his or her own classroom, school, and community. One caution to bear in mind is that though some evidence may be very sophisticated, this does not mean that it is applicable to other contexts. What works in the United Kingdom, for example, may not be appropriate for the United States. What works in rural Michigan might not work in urban Michigan. It's up to educators to analyze and make sense of the factors that may or may not make sense.

The authors have been mindful of using and applying evidence in the design of this book. In particular, the following important

Figure 0.1 Hierarchy of Evidence-Based Information

Higher level of evidence ↑	Experimental designs with control groups having random assignments that have been replicated in a variety of contexts	• In education, these typically appear in the academic literature; because education is a social science, not all phenomena can be controlled in this way.
	Experimental designs with control groups having random assignments that have only been investigated in one context	
	Evaluation of student outcomes; empirical (qualitative and quantitative) data collected from educational stakeholders	• Consumer feedback • Pilot tests of strategies and approaches
↓	Expert consensus agreement among a number of professionals; best practices	• Best practices achieved largely through professional discussion among teachers and PLCs but also through some published research
	Anecdotal evidence based on experiences of teachers or researchers; promising practice	• Action research publications • Professional discussion among teachers and PLCs
Lower level of evidence	Single-case studies, teachers' action research; promising practice	• Checklists and process charts established by individuals • Action research publications

NOTE: PLCs = professional learning communities.

evidence informs both the process of remodeling and the strategies we've included:

- Geoff Petty's (2009) extensive research into effective teaching suggests that a Present-Apply-Review (PAR) model is most effective to address shortfalls in student learning. This is the research that guides the structure of the book. Petty's research reflects a high level of evidence.
- Research on the importance of student engagement in the learning process and the efficacy of constructivist approaches in meaning making is presented throughout Chapters 1 and 2, which supports the strategies in Chapters 3, 4, and 5. Moreover, the strategies have been used by the authors and those who have been involved in pilot versions, offering the strategies themselves as best practices via expert consensus. Similarly, the process of lesson remodeling as it is articulated in this book has also been tested and is a best practice among practitioners.
- Finally, we present compelling empirical evidence in Chapter 2 to support the efficacy of teacher learning and professional learning communities as major drivers in improving student outcomes. This suggests that, if applied judiciously, lesson remodeling can contribute to better, more effective teaching *and* learning.

Book Features

Because of its intended purpose, this book is designed for teacher convenience. Some of the important features to be aware of include the following:

- *Process diagrams* and *examples of pre- and post-remodeled lessons* offer guidance on how to approach lesson improvement and how to use the various strategies.
- Strategies *organized within the three categories of learning* offer a balance of PAR strategies to choose from when remodeling. Keep in mind, however, that many of the strategies can be adapted to fit into multiple categories.
- *Very brief and very clear instructions* demonstrate how each strategy works within the following headings for easy reference: Rationale, Ideal for, Materials, Description, and (where applicable) Cautions.

- *Reproducibles* are included for many of the strategies, as well as for use in professional learning communities.
- A *Correlation to Common Core State Standards Anchors* are available online at http://www.corwin.com/95strategies. These allow teachers to identify how strategies help them to address these important learning expectations.
- A *Professional Learning Community Guide* located in Appendix B provides suggestions that can be adapted to meet teachers' needs if they work collaboratively to remodel. The guide offers structures for PLC meetings, as well as additional resources in the form of reproducibles.

Now, it's time to remodel. Let's put our hard hats on and get to work!