



The Jewish Education Center Of Cleveland's Óã-- a newsletter for educators

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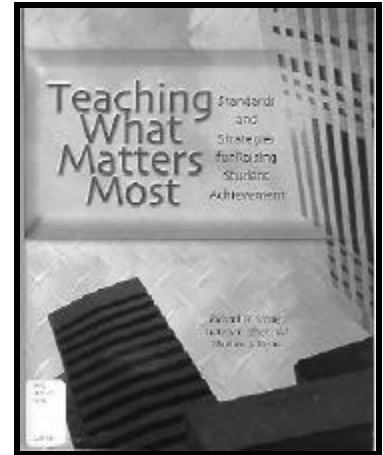
October 12, 2001

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Classroom Environment

Teaching What Matters Most: Standards and Strategies for Raising Student Achievement, by Richard W. Strong, Harvey F. Silver, and Matthew J. Perini (Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 2001).

Classroom environment is not just about bulletin boards and behavior management. It encompasses the milieu that undergirds student learning. This book offers four standards that deeply affect a class' learning environment: *rigor* (reading and understanding powerful and challenging texts and the ideas that animate them"), *thought* ("the disciplines of learning," like collecting and organizing information, speaking and writing effectively, mastering the art of inquiry and problem solving, and reflecting on their own activity as learners), *diversity* (individual strengths and weaknesses, learning styles, cultural heritage, etc.) and *authenticity* (applying learning beyond the school setting). Written in an engaging style with lots of specific classroom examples, the ideas in this book are applicable both to supplementary schools and day schools. Highly recommended for teachers looking to create a class environment with deep thinking about our Jewish heritage.



-Reviewed by Nachama Skolnik Moskowitz, Director of Curriculum Resources

Active Learning: 101 Strategies to Teach any Subject, by Mel Silberman (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1996).

In an active learning classroom one may see that students are engaged, grappling with issues, involved in discussion over their material, asking questions and making sense of the information. As a result of this type of classroom atmosphere, students become confident, accepting of others, proud of their work and can self assess. *Active Learning* offers several techniques including ways to: set up a classroom in order to promote discussion among the students; encourage partners to work together, make a lecture more active; and get all students involved in learning simultaneously. This book is appropriate for teachers of all grade levels.

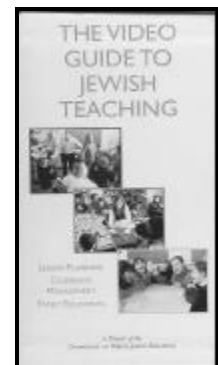
-Reviewed by Melissa Bernstein, Curriculum Associate



The Video Guide to Jewish Teaching. UAHC. 1995, VHS, color.

Part one (Planning) is 20 minutes. Part two (Creating a Learning Environment) is 23 minutes.

This video transports the viewer into the Jewish classroom, revealing the challenges, humor and energy inherent in that setting. Designed as a teacher-training tool, this set of two videocassettes includes interviews with master teachers and candid students. It includes footage from religious school classes, kindergarten through high school. Part one deals with planning, while part two deals with creating a learning environment. The video is appropriate for all Jewish teachers, regardless of their affiliation.



-Reviewed by Bonnie Shapiro, Ratner Media and Technology Center Associate

Websites that focus on classroom environment/management are proliferating online. Here are a few examples:

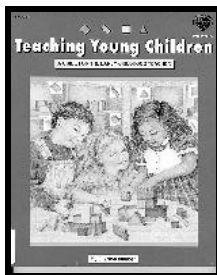
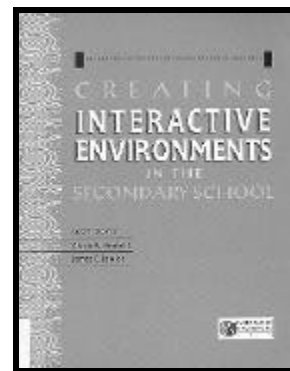
teachnet.com (<http://www.teachnet.com/how-to/manage>)
A collection of classroom management suggestions.

BrainConnection.com: (http://www.brainconnection.com/content/11_1)
The use of humor as an effective tool in classroom management.

The Innovative Classroom (http://www.innovativeclassroom.com/Class_Management/)
Ideas for organizing classroom space and structure for more effective learning.

-Reviewed by Maury Greenberg, Director, Technology Resources & Professional Development

Creating Interactive Environments in the Secondary School, by Lois T. Stover, et al (National Education Association, 1993). Interactive environments are defined by the authors as places “where students maximize the use of their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in order to interact with their teachers; their peers; and with visual, auditory, and tactile materials.” The purpose of this guide is to help teachers establish interactive classrooms, providing actual practice in constructing knowledge.



Teaching Young Children: A Guide for the Early Childhood Teacher, by Dianne Nielsen (Fearon Teacher Aids, 1995). A preschool classroom is “a unique, exciting, interesting place where active learning happens from the minute the first child walks through the door.” With this model in mind, goals are established for language, cognitive, physical, aesthetic, social and emotional development. Chapters give practical instructions for creating many different kinds of learning centers, from art through outdoor play, with a separate section on management and supervision guidelines

-Reviewed by Linda R. Silver, JECC Librarian

How to Create an Effective Learning Environment. ASCD. 1998, VHS, 15 minutes, color.

Part of the *How To Video Series for the Classroom Teacher*, this video gives tips on building constructive relations with students, organizing flexible classrooms and designing learning environments.



-Reviewed by Bonnie Shapiro, Ratner Media and Technology Center Associate