

Darling-Hammond & Bransford (2005)

Cite the work of Pamela Carter who identified a set of common practices among highly effective teachers and found that “although teachers differed in their ages, backgrounds, and personalities, the researchers found that the teachers ‘offered a remarkably similar picture’ of effective teaching including:

1. Expectations for the students were clearly stated and exemplars of previous year’s assignments were shown to students as models of what to produce.
2. Student work could be found everywhere; inside the classroom, out the door, and down the hall.
3. The teachers did not stand still and lecture; they covered every part of the room and monitored every activity that took place.
4. Multiple small-group activities were often found, while the traditional arrangement of desks and rows was practically non-existent.
5. There were high levels of “instructional discourse”; students were encouraged to ask questions, discuss ideas, and comment on statements made by teachers and other students.
6. The organization of the room and the lessons was clearly evident. Materials were easily accessible when needed, and no class time was wasted from lack of preparation.

Darling Hammond (2008) and her colleague’s state, “There are at least three fundamental and well-established principles of learning that are important for teaching:

1. Students come to the classroom with prior knowledge that must be addressed if teaching is to be effective.
2. Students need to organize and use knowledge conceptually if they’re to apply it beyond the classroom.
3. Students learn more effectively if they understand how they learn and how to manage their own learning.

They go on to identify what they call “principles of learning for effective teaching.” They found that “looking across domains, studies consistently find that highly effective teachers support the process of meaningful learning by:

- Creating *ambitious and meaningful tasks* that reflect how knowledge is used in the field.
- Engaging students in *active learning*, so that they apply and test what they know.
- Drawing *connections to students’ prior knowledge* and experience.
- Diagnosing student understanding in order to *scaffold the learning process* step-by-step.
- *Assessing student learning continuously* in adapting teaching to student needs.
- Providing clear *standards*, constant *feedback*, and opportunities for work.
- Encouraging *strategic and meta-cognitive thinking* so students can learn to evaluate and guide their own thinking.

In her most recent book, Darling-Hammond (2010) goes on to say that the key elements in effective schools include the careful scaffolding of learning of complex skills, “the conscious use of multiple instructional strategies, well managed small-group work, real-world connections, and community service and internships”(pp.254-255).