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Feldman J, McPhee D. The science of learning and the art of teaching (paperback).

Thomson Delman Learning, 2008. 1st edition. 462 pages; ISBN 978-1-4180-1616-6; price: € 68.95

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Field: Post-secondary education.

Format: Soft cover.

Audience: Educators and instructors at college and university level.

Purpose: Practical advice for educators on teaching, stimulating students' learning, and assessing students' knowledge based on scientific evidence.

Content: The book is divided into an introductory chapter and 5 units, which are further divided into 21 chapters and an appendix. Unit 1 deals with understanding one's approach to teaching, gives an overview of the science of learning, and shows the conceptual foundations of learning. Unit 2 deals with the art of teaching, which involves the planning and preparation for learning and teaching, improving the presentations and creating interactive lectures, and assessing teaching and learning. Unit 3 gives an overview on strategies for lasting learning, while Units 4 and 5 deal with classroom dynamics and personal growth, respectively.

Highlights and limitations: It is hard to say which part of the book is the most important, but the Introduction really grabs the reader's attention and "sells" the rest of the book. I have read many texts on the art and science of teaching and the science behind learning, and even have published reviews on several of them in this journal. These texts have dealt with all aspects of the classroom experience. The present book, however, makes a teacher constantly re-think, reexamine, and reevaluate one's approach to teaching and stimulating learning. What better way is there to improve your teaching approach than to stimulate your own learning? And then driven with the knowledge,

help create and reinforce students' positive attitudes toward the same challenges. Teachers expect constant betterment from their students without being aware of the difficulties of adult learning. The students are sometimes intimidated by the ease with which the teachers show (or show off) their factual knowledge. The students are usually intimidated by the teachers' expectations that they should know everything about a topic, although it had taken several years even for the teachers to completely understand that topic (or at the least to know that there are still things they do not understand). And, finally, the students are always intimidated when it comes to evaluation of their efforts. This book succeeds in achieving all of its goals, making teachers aware of themselves (*nosce te ipsum*), their students, the problems they both face, and the solutions to these problems. It is a highly recommended read. Actually, it is a must for anyone starting to teach, anyone not happy with the way the students react to one's teaching, and anyone who thinks there is no need to change anything. Basically, every teacher has to read this book, reinvent their approach, and apply it.

Related reading: There are many books on bettering the approaches to teaching and learning. The reasons are simple – the sheer number of students who need to be taught and the constant increase in the level of expectations the society has from them and their teachers. The authors make the search easier and guided by giving helpful pointers at the end of every chapter and unit, with key names to follow and key terms to look up. Moreover, the final part of the book, the appendix, gives a short overview of recommended resources and readings.