



BOOK REVIEW

The Missing Course: Everything They Never Taught You about College Teaching

David Gooblar

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The Missing Course offers an extended treatment of the benefits of active learning strategies for students and instructors of all disciplines across higher education. David Gooblar draws deeply from a sizable body of research on pedagogy as well as from his “Pedagogy Unbound” column found in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. By contextualizing the practice of teaching in current theory about active learning, Gooblar’s work expands on existing studies and offers a useful guidebook to new and seasoned instructors regardless of specialization. Readers will appreciate the holistic approach and practical application of the strategies discussed.

Clearly organized, timely, and relevant, this book is grounded firmly in theory and in application; as a result, readers are invited to evaluate with the author a relationship between strategies and outcomes that may apply to their own courses and contexts. “The Students are the Material” introduces the rationale for the book as the author recounts graduate school and early career teaching experiences that validate the significance of the contemporary turn from content- to student-centered pedagogy. Subsequent chapters engage key topics related to the cultivation of a transparent, process-centered, skills-prioritized approach to teaching and learning. Chapter 1, “Helping Students Revise Themselves,” attends to using active learning strategies effectively in familiar practices including lecture and class participation. Chapter 2 turns to empowering student ownership of a course through involvement in syllabus construction, use of technology, and goal setting. Chapter 3, “Building a Better Course,” tackles assignments and centers well on reading, writing, and testing practices. Chapter 4, “Teaching the Students in the Room,” discusses student accessibility and classroom community by focusing on student demographics and diversity. Chapter 5, “Assessment Isn’t Just Assessment,” presents a useful range of formative and summative practices. Chapter 6 offers strategies for creating a process-centered teaching and learning environment. Chapter 7, “Teaching in Tumultuous Times,” explores inclusive pedagogy, implicit bias, and information literacy.

Whereas scholars of religious studies and theology will find those sections of the book aligned with their specific concerns most useful, the reminders issued in the final chapter, “Revise Your Teaching,” are universally appropriate. Here, the author considers strategies for critical reflection on teaching as a consistent practice. By cultivating habits of improvement, instructors engage in the types of learning, growth, and development that directly informs their teaching.