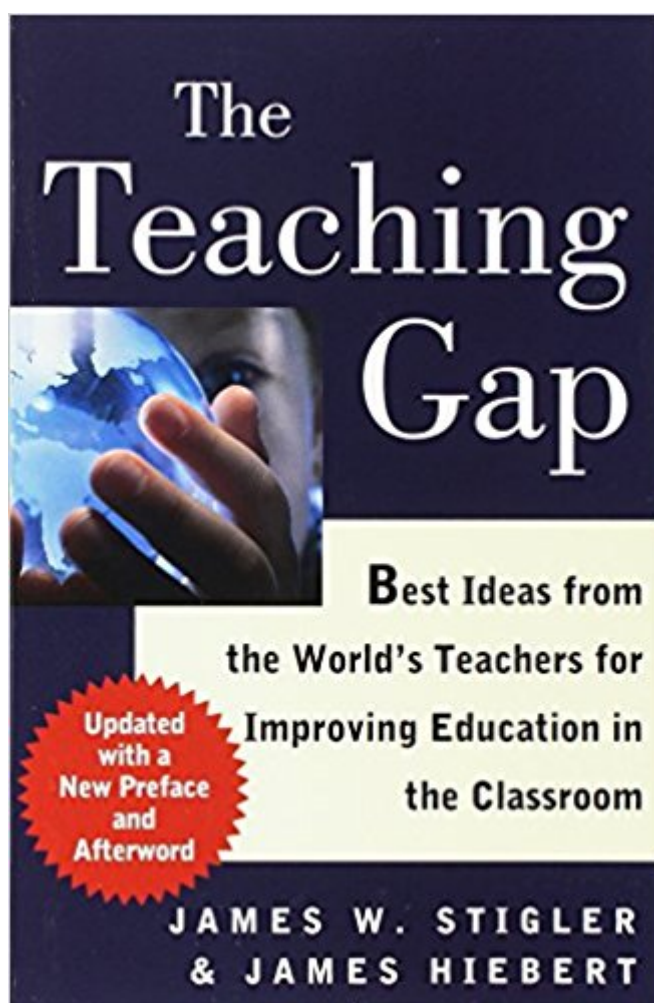


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# The Teaching Gap: Best Ideas From The World's Teachers For Improving Education In The Classroom



## Synopsis

Ten years after its first publication, *The Teaching Gap* remains "a critical resource" (Publishers Weekly) for anyone involved in education. In paperback for the first time, it has been fully revised and includes a new preface and afterword by the authors. American schools have famously lagged behind foreign schools in all areas of academic achievement. When James W. Stigler and James Hiebert made their assessment of the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) ten years ago, they discovered that the problem with American education is neither one of testing nor curricula, but teaching. A clarion call for treating teaching like the craft it is, *The Teaching Gap* lays out a clear program for change that administrators, teachers, and parents can implement together. Newly updated with fresh teaching solutions drawn from new research, this educational classic is as vital a teaching tool as ever.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In a time when educators and politicians in the United States are fumbling for a fix--from vouchers to smaller class sizes--for ailing public schools, it's refreshing to read the more sophisticated take on what can be done to improve American education found in *The Teaching Gap*, a straightforward analysis of approaches towards teaching around the world. James W. Stigler, a UCLA psychology professor, and James Hiebert, an education professor at the University of Delaware, argue that America's culture of teaching needs to be changed before we see any real change in student achievement--and they're not simply talking about higher pay and more respect. The bulk of *The*

Teaching Gap examines the cultural differences among teaching methods, with detailed accounts of video observations of eighth-grade math teachers that were part of the Third International Mathematics and Science Study, or TIMSS (which Stigler directed). American teachers in the videos tend to emphasize terms and procedures, thinking of math as a set of tedious skills. They try to interest students with praise and real-life problems. In contrast, Japanese teachers are more likely to emphasize ideas, expecting the concepts alone to stir students' natural curiosity. They weave together lessons that have a distinct beginning, middle, and end. Teachers in the other countries are more likely to share lessons on what works in the classroom and receive more sophisticated training, the authors found. Only seven out of 41 nations scored lower than the U.S. in TIMSS, placing American eighth-graders with those from Cyprus, Portugal, South Africa, Kuwait, Iran, and Colombia. Without falling into teacher-bashing mode, Stigler and Hiebert insist that reform efforts need to originate with teachers, not university researchers. They call for overhauling the teaching profession with stricter requirements, better peer review, and more demanding academic standards, as well as improved interaction between teachers. Their detailed examination of the study's video observations gets to the heart of the matter and should be worthwhile reading for educators, policymakers, and anyone interested in the condition of today's education system. --Jodi Mailander Farrell --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Offering a detailed comparison of the educational methods of Germany, Japan and the U.S., the authors dissect the information gleaned from a pioneering effort to videotape instruction in a representative sample of 231 eighth-grade math classrooms in the three countries, as a part of the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). Stigler, a professor of psychology at UCLA, and Hiebert, a professor of education at the University of Delaware, found that, overall, the international samples emphasize weaknesses in the American educational process that may not be overcome by reducing class size or adding school choice and vouchers, more technology or charter schools. Only seven countries out of the 41 nations surveyed in the TIMSS study scored lower than the U.S.: Cyprus, Portugal, South Africa, Kuwait, Iran and Colombia. Using simple graphs and sample data, they reveal that Japanese teachers stress understanding and thinking while German and American teachers emphasize skills. Despite a wealth of complex information, the book never lapses into academic jargon or trite conclusions. Especially illuminating are the recommendations in its final chapters, which call for overhauling the teaching profession with higher status, greater pay, stricter certification requirements, more accountability, better peer review and more demanding academic standards. For anyone interested in the quality of American education, this impressive

book is a critical resource. (Aug.) Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This book not only has interesting observations about teaching but more importantly has how teaching is a cultural phenomena which can have large impact for those that are trying to change teaching.

Interesting reflection on how to improve teaching. Convincing argument. A must-read for policy-makers! Making teachers responsible for researching education appears a very sensible idea.

As a teachers, I have been interested in how we can improve our mathematics teaching approach. This book gives the progress we have made in the ten years after the publication of his first book. I would encourage this book to educators to encourage improvement that is needed

The scary conclusion for parents is that math is basically not taught. What passes for math teaching in the US is training kids in the rote application of some math-like algorithms. An example is giving kids the formula for Pythagoras's theorem and having them apply it tens of times instead of teaching them how to prove it and how it connects to the other basic theorems. Words and formulae rather than completing the proof alone. The result is that most kids never develop a coherent picture of the full math landscape and never develop the self confidence and the tools to be able to guide themselves through mathematical reasoning in this landscape. Some teach themselves math in spite of this system, some others catch up in college but most are robbed of the opportunity to get these skills.

The teaching gap is an example of the benefits we can obtain when understanding other countries models of education, philosophy and formalities about teaching as well as their vision of what is to be accomplished. This book shows that kind of field transcultural research that can benefit education. Easy to read and positive approach. I do recommend it to teachers!

It's a great book, with a lot of insight. Stigler needs to revise it for the current state of Education and social media.

If you are looking for answers or quick "take aways" for your classroom - you won't find them in this book. But if you are interested in examining teaching methods through a new and different lens - then definitely pick up this book. There is enough information in other reviews that I don't feel the need to elaborate too much - but this book is a thoughtful examination of instructional methods and it will change the way you think about teaching.

Excellent book. Fascinating research. Easy to understand if you are not an educator. Deep understanding if you are. A must read if you are a teacher, administrator, parent, or policy-maker.

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