

HERVÉ-LÉONARD MARIE

100+ TEACHING SPARKS

*Unlock your Creativity
to Make your Lessons Shine*

Atramenta

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Foreword and User Guide

This book does not claim to provide magic wands or potions that turn teachers into superheroes.

To be a good teacher, at least two conditions must first be met:

– *A solid mastery of the academic knowledge in one’s subject.* This is, in principle, the goal of initial training. But the knowledge acquired in one’s younger years must be constantly maintained and updated. This book will not provide any guidance on that.

– *A benevolent attitude toward students, whoever they may be.* This does not exclude strictness when necessary. Such an attitude requires deliberate effort, and it is probably the most important factor distinguishing a “good” teacher from a “bad” one. This book will not explain how to adopt such a posture, though it will offer a few suggestions along the way.

Once these two foundations are laid, what remains are the small “tricks of the trade” that teachers gradually learn to use and refine. These are the “teaching tips” presented here.

All of these tips have been tested to varying degrees by the author and several colleagues. All are effective. Every teacher uses some of them—especially experienced ones—though I have known veteran teachers unable to apply certain ones. Beginners, on the other hand, sometimes hesitate or simply don’t know how. This book has been designed for both groups.

It does not claim to be exhaustive. Each reader will likely notice gaps, perhaps glaring ones, depending on their own experience.

The author warmly welcomes suggestions for new “pedagogical sparks” or additional examples of how a given tip can be applied (contact details can be found at the end of the book). These may well lead to updates, or even an expanded second edition.

Now, how should this book be used?

It is not intended to be read cover to cover with the idea of applying every single suggestion exactly as described. For one thing, you are certainly already using some of them; for another, some may not suit your personal style, your subject area, or the age of your students. Finally, none of these tips is absolutely perfect: each can be adapted to fit your practice.

What I can say, however, is this: the broader your range of strategies, the more effective your teaching will be, and the more your students—and their parents—will appreciate it.

I suggest the following approach: choose one of the teaching tips you haven’t yet tried, experiment with it, and observe what happens—the expected benefits, the actual results. For some, it may take several attempts before they become second nature and no longer require conscious effort.

Once you have validated one tip, move on to another, and so on, gradually enriching your teaching toolkit as much as possible.

A summary of all the tips can be found at the end of the book, which may help you navigate. There is no hierarchy or logical order to these suggestions. They do not form a teaching method in the strict sense, but rather a collection of insights drawn from the lived experience of teachers throughout their careers.

Teaching is perhaps the most useful profession in the world—second only to farming. For once people have been fed, it is essen-

tial to teach them how to grow the wheat, knead the flour, and bake the bread.

This book will, I hope, prove to be a valuable aid in that endeavor.

1) To Each According to his Due.

There's a need for everything: everything important you say in a class must also be visualized by the students. A few words on the board, a diagram, a photo...

Some teachers just talk, or nearly so. Others rely heavily on printed texts.

Both forget that their students are neither identical to themselves nor to each other. Some are more visual, others more auditory. (Sight and hearing are the main channels for grasping the information presented in class, however, there are others that should not be forgotten. See tips #5, 13, 22, 64, 69, 99).

Therefore, if you want to be understood by the greatest number, if you want to keep your students' attention for as long as possible, don't forget: everything important in your class must be heard and visualized, or visualized and heard.

For this, use the board to the maximum, or use images, diagrams...

Write each somewhat complicated word on the board.

Articulate well."