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26 March 2024

"Small Teaching: Everyday Lessons from the Science of Learning" by James M. Lang is a book that explores simple, practical teaching techniques grounded in the science of learning. Here's a summary and takeaway:

Summary:

Understanding How Students Learn: Lang emphasizes the importance of understanding how students learn and applying evidence-based strategies in teaching.

Small Teaching Techniques: The book introduces "small teaching" techniques - brief, easy-to-implement strategies that can have a significant impact on student learning outcomes.

Retrieval Practice: Lang discusses the benefits of retrieval practice, where students actively recall information from memory, strengthening their retention and understanding.

Predictions and Previews: He suggests using prediction activities and previews to engage students and activate their prior knowledge, promoting deeper learning.

Metaphors and Analogies: Lang advocates for the use of metaphors and analogies to make abstract concepts more accessible and relatable to students.



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Feedback and Reflection: The book emphasizes the importance of providing timely, constructive feedback to students and encouraging self-reflection to promote continuous improvement.

Building Connections: Lang encourages instructors to help students make connections between new information and their existing knowledge, fostering deeper understanding and retention.

Takeaway:

The key takeaway from "Small Teaching" is that effective teaching doesn't always require major overhauls of instructional methods. Instead, small, evidence-based changes to teaching practices can lead to significant improvements in student learning outcomes. By incorporating techniques such as retrieval practice, prediction activities, and the use of metaphors, educators can create more engaging and effective learning experiences for their students. Additionally, providing regular feedback and encouraging self-reflection can help students become more active participants in their own learning journey. Overall, "Small Teaching" offers practical insights and strategies that can be easily implemented by instructors to enhance teaching and promote student success.