John F. Fanselow here.

Welcome to the Audio Book version of a book I wrote and produced: *Small changes in teaching, big results in learning: Videos, activities and essays to stimulate fresh thinking about language teaching and learning.*

This is an introduction to the Audio Book version of the Kindle and print versions, which are available through Amazon.

This advice, “You can change the world, but please don’t unless you know what you are doing!” which I heard in a talk at Teachers College, Columbia University by James Garbarino about bullying and school shootings in the US resonated with me because it is a central theme of *Small changes in teaching, big results in learning.*

All too often school districts, ministries of education and politicians propose new plans to stop bullying, improve learning, or increase test scores. Most of these have little effect because the mandates provide no release time or training for teacher preparation, no practical details about implementation, and no methods to explore the extent to which the prescribed methods produce the hoped for better, outcomes.

Since I was first asked to supervise teachers practice teaching in a teacher training college in Nigeria 57 years ago, I have seen teacher preparation and ways to improve teaching and learning as a joint enterprise of exploration rather than a series of directives from ministries, school districts and politicians.

Why? Well, initially, because the Nigerian teachers I supervised in practice teaching had more experience that I had and were teaching material I was not familiar with, such as Nigerian history, geography, and monetary system, to name just a few of these topics. Ignorance can be a great teacher, if it leads you to try to find new ways.

From conversations with my graduate students through the years, I came to understand that I was ignorant of the fact that most teacher preparation materials I used, and some that I had written, took too long to read and described activities that were often very difficult to understand much less put into practice.

I realized that materials were needed that contained activities that could be easily learned in minutes rather than hours, that showed students doing the activities on videos, and that enabled teachers not only to expand the range of their activities but also to see the extent to which the new activities were successful or not.

In the readings and videos in *Small changes in teaching, big results in learning*, I illustrate ways to analyze 1-page transcripts of recordings of our teaching and of classroom interactions, make small changes, and compare the results.

Why just 1-page transcripts? Well, because I know teachers are busy. And, also, because there are dozens and dozens of communications in every class, way too many to transcribe all of, much less analyze, if you are a teacher.

Yet, from a 1-page transcript, you can see at the minimum, what language your students understand and do not understand and what they need to work on. This provides precise details about what you need to teach and eliminates the need to make, give, and grade tests.

The transcripts, though, show us more than what we need to teach. They enable us to understand how what we do, what we plan or want to do, and what we think we do are often very different.

The transcripts show us that what we need to teach is just part of what they show us. They also show us that what we do, what we plan or want to do, and what we think we do are often very, very different.

Much of what we do is out of consciousness, and all teachers who begin analyzing transcripts are surprised at how much they do that they are unaware of. And how much their students say that they do not hear during the class. These discoveries are magnified if they also watch video recordings of their classes. So, we find out not only what students need to learn, but also what we and our students are actually doing. With this knowledge, we can begin to analyze our teaching and to generate alternative ways to teach and to have our students engage with materials and interact with us and each other in different ways.

The alternatives that I advocate are based on my ideas about learning and teaching. They are not generated randomly. To me, teaching is reminding learners of what they already know. And learning is predicting and doing and using language. So, for example, if a teacher decides to explain grammar rules for 10 minutes rather than 5 minutes, it is not an alternative that fits these beliefs. Talking at people does not allow either prediction or doing and using language.

Over the years, I noticed how a few minutes of viewing and re-viewing a video of teaching or student interactions led to more changes than reading a chapter in a methods book. That is why I produced the 29 videos related to the audio and print versions of *Small changes in teaching, big results in learning*.

I hope you and your students will experience the same exhilaration in trying and analyzing non-judgmentally some of the alternative small changes I suggest as I experienced in describing and demonstrating them.

If you type *“Small* *changes in teaching, big results in learning”* into your Internet search engine, and choose the Amazon listing that appears, you can read some of the chapters using the *Look inside* feature. If you choose the iTDi listing that appears, you can see videos of some of the activities.

The URL for the 29 videos is

[www.iTDi.pro/itdihome/small-changes-big-results-videos/](http://www.iTDi.pro/itdihome/small-changes-big-results-videos/)

Though I spent the majority of my professional life coordinating the graduate programs in TESOL at Teachers College, Columbia University in New York City and Tokyo, I have also learned from teachers I worked with for extended periods in Nigeria, as I said earlier, and in New Zealand, Senegal, Somalia, Spain, and Togo. And, I have seen teachers from scores of countries use activities in my videos and readings successfully.

Before you move on, let me point out that you do not have to listen to the chapters in the sequence that they occur. In a gardening book in which the sections on different flowers are arranged in alphabetical order, you do not have to read the sections on roses and sunflowers if you are mainly interested in tulips.

In the same way, you do not have to read Chapter 3 on Integrating vocabulary and grammar if you are intrigued by Chapter 6 Emotion.

To see the chapters you can either fast forward till you hear a chapter title that captures your attention or you can read the Table of Contents. I have posted it on my itdi blog at <https://itdi.pro/johnfanselow/> and on my Language Teaching Professionals blog at Language Teaching Professionals.

Enjoy, enjoy.