



These 6 Things: How to Focus Your Teaching on What Matters Most

by Dave Stuart Jr. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin. ©2019. 272 pages. ISBN 978-1506391038.

Elizabeth Yomantas

To cite this article: Elizabeth Yomantas (2020) These 6 Things: How to Focus Your Teaching on What Matters Most, Kappa Delta Pi Record, 56:3, 143-143, DOI: [10.1080/00228958.2020.1770009](https://doi.org/10.1080/00228958.2020.1770009)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00228958.2020.1770009>



Published online: 22 Jul 2020.



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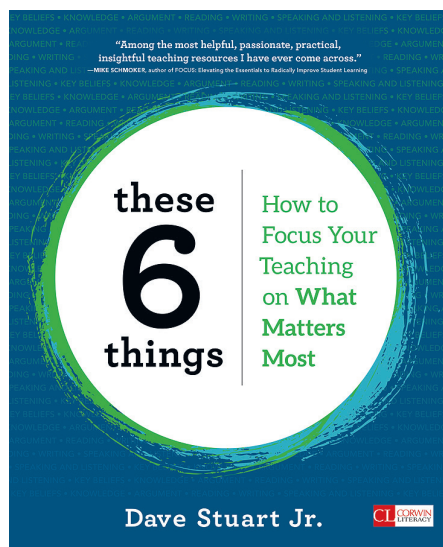


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BOOK REVIEW



Kappa Delta Pi Record, 56: 143, 2020
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ISSN: 0022-8958 print/2163-1611 online
DOI: 10.1080/00228958.2020.1770009

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Reviewed by Elizabeth Yomantas

These 6 Things: How to Focus Your Teaching on What Matters Most is an excellent instructional resource for educators. Author Dave Stuart Jr. aims to equip teachers to teach in ways that promote student flourishing. He challenges educators to reset priorities and reconsider professional objectives in education. With long-term flourishing as the primary goal set forth in the text, Stuart explains how educators can embody key beliefs in daily literacy-rich classroom experiences that help students achieve mastery. The text is organized into three sections, including “Start With the Heart,” “Making Mastery,” and “Literacy-Rich Learning Experiences.” In each chapter, the author focuses on an aspect of his six-part interconnected framework: beliefs, knowledge, argument, reading, writing, and speaking/listening.

This book is recommended for new and veteran educators alike. For

Elizabeth Yomantas is an Assistant Professor of Teaching in the Department of Humanities and Teacher Education at Pepperdine University in Malibu, CA. Email: elizabeth.yomantas@pepperdine.edu

educators who are just beginning their time in the classroom, Stuart includes specific teaching suggestions and ideas to start strong. He also relates stories from his personal teaching experiences. For veteran educators, this book is rife with challenges to reconsider widely accepted, yet ineffective practices that are common in education. He provides new solutions to old problems and encourages experienced teachers to reexamine their priorities in the classroom. Stuart also offers a wide variety of innovative instructional strategies that all teachers can employ in their classrooms. To supplement the book, a wealth of resources is available online, including access to the author’s blog, newsletter, and videos that connect with the book’s topics.

Stuart’s credibility as an educator bolsters the ideas in his book. In addition to his experience as a classroom teacher, the author is an educational writer who has a following of more than 35,000 monthly readers. Furthermore, in writing this book, Stuart did his homework as he engaged with thousands of educators across the country to discuss various aspects of teaching

and learning. The new understandings he gained from these collaborations are reflected in the text. Stuart does not position himself as an expert but rather as a colleague and co-learner. This stance creates a collegial bond between the author and readers who are engaging with the text. The book also has a solid research base; the concepts in the book stem from larger bodies of educational research and literature.

For busy, stressed educators, this book can breathe new life into the daily demands of being a teacher. Stuart wrote this book for the multi-vocational educator, meaning educators who have personal lives and play other roles outside of the classroom. The author encourages teachers to focus on doing a few things well rather than trying to attain the impossible goal of doing everything perfectly. Stuart asks educators to recognize the humanity in themselves and, consequently, in every one of their students. He provides strategies for working more efficiently and purposefully to strengthen everyday instruction. This book has the potential to bring forth great renewal and hope in teaching and learning. ■