

Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education

The original seven “Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education” articulated by Chickering & Gamson in 1987 developed from broadly shared understandings—grounded on observation and experience- of what works in teaching practice. Since then, scholar-practitioners have examined the principles as subjects of scholarly inquiry. Based on this research, the value of the original principles has been underscored and additional principles have been added.

1. **Good practice encourages student-faculty contact**

Frequent student-faculty contact is the most important factor in student motivation and involvement. Faculty concern helps students to continue working through rough times. Students’ intellectual and emotional commitment to learning is enhanced by knowing a few faculty members well.

2. **Good practice encourages cooperation among students**

Learning is enhanced when it is more like a team effort than a solo race. Good learning, like good work, is collaborative and social, not competitive and isolated. Articulating and sharing ideas and responding to others’ reactions improves thinking, deepens understanding, and expands the potential for learning.

3. **Good practice encourages active learning**

Learning is not a spectator sport. Students do not learn much just sitting in classes listening to teachers, memorizing prepackaged information, and spitting out answers. They must talk about what they are learning, write about it, relate it to past experiences, and apply it to what they feel is important.

4. **Good practice gives prompt feedback**

Knowing what you know and don’t know focuses learning. Students need appropriate feedback on performance to benefit from courses. Students need help in assessing existing knowledge and competence and need frequent opportunities to perform and receive suggestions for improvement.

5. **Good practice emphasizes time on task**

Time plus energy equals learning. There is no substitute for time on task. Students need help in learning effective time management. Allocating realistic amounts of time means effective learning for students and effective teaching for faculty.

6. **Good practice communicates high expectations and provides appropriate support**

Expect more and you will get it. High expectations are important for everyone – for the poorly prepared, those willing to work hard, and the bright and well prepared. Expecting students to perform well becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy when teachers hold high expectations for themselves and their students. In challenging students and developing in them a sense of independence and responsibility for their learning, the appropriate amount of support must also be provided, otherwise the development we strive for in the students may be hindered.

7. Good practice respects diverse talents and ways of learning

There are many roads to learning. People bring different talents and learning students to college. Students need the opportunity to show off their talents and learn in ways that work for them. Then they can be pushed to learn in new ways that do not come so easily.

8. Good practice reflects clear organization and smart preparation

Paramount in learning is how well we structure new knowledge for our students. Lessons must be organized and clear, with an appropriate level of difficulty of content. Clarity and cohesiveness are emphasized by the well-chosen example, analogy, and active learning strategy.

9. Good practice communicates enthusiasm for subject and teaching

There is no substitute for a professional's eager interest in and love for teaching and for their subject. Some instructors demonstrate this interest outwardly through their classroom teaching behaviors, while others demonstrate it in the tone of their assignments, exams, and teaching-learning strategies.

10. Good practice emphasizes fairness

Ethical behaviors and the creation of optimal learning environments are integral to the academy's learning mission. Students thrive in situations they trust, i.e., instructors who are consistent in expectations and grading, and uphold academic integrity.

11. Good practice acknowledges diversity among students

In addition to diversity of talents and ways of learning, students in the classroom represent the diversity that is found in the wider community. Such diversity includes cultural and linguistic backgrounds, religious beliefs, educational and employment experiences, urban and rural backgrounds, different school experiences, family and community structures, sexual orientation, gender, and age. The effective classroom acknowledges, supports, and uses this diversity to enhance the learning experience.

12. Good practice is based on interconnected knowledge and the creation of meaningful and relevant context for learning

Cognitive growth is enhanced by the restructuring that occurs when new knowledge is connected with existing knowledge. Most learning occurs naturally embedded within a context which is obvious/explicit to the learner. It is much easier to learn subsets of knowledge when you have an idea of the big picture, can see its relevance, see how it is connected to practice and how it builds on what you already know.

Modified from: http://www.osds.uwa.edu.au/other_services/publications/principles

Resources:

- Chickering & Gamson. (1987) The Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education, AAHE Bulletin.
- Hatfield, S.E. Ed. (1995) *The Seven Principles in Action: Improving Undergraduate Education*, Bolton, MA: Anker.
- *Seven (Plus Three) Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education*. The Office of Instructional Resources, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. February 2000.
- Biggs, J. (1999) *Teaching for Quality Learning at University*. SRHE & Open University Press.