

Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education

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Research on good practice in undergraduate education

- Original study by Arthur Chickering & Zelda F. Gamson
- *Applying the Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education, 1991*
- Other researchers after this study
- At Montgomery College: CSSE

Research on good practice in undergraduate education

Fundamental guidelines for meaningful teaching and learning in higher education

Focus on the “how” of teaching, not on the “what”

Applicable in various educational settings

A generally agreed-upon philosophy for effective teaching and learning

The Seven Principles

1. Effective student-faculty contact
2. Cooperation among students
3. Active learning by students
4. Prompt feedback to students
5. Emphasize time on task in classroom
6. High expectations for students
7. Respecting diverse talents and ways of learning

Principle 1:

Good practice encourages student-faculty contact

- Learn their names as soon as possible
- Greet students as they enter the classroom
- Explain office hours to students
- Invite individual students to an office hour
- Send emails to the class as a whole and to individual students



Principle 2

Good practice encourages cooperation among students.

- Getting to know one another early will assist cooperation
- Jigsaw approach to cooperative learning
- Study partner or study group
- Group projects with individual accountability



Principle 3

Good practice encourages
active learning by the students

Examples:

- Think-pair-share
- Jigsaw approach is active learning
- One-minute paper
- After receiving test results, ask students what they will do differently next time
- Give mini lectures (15 to 20 min.) interspersed with engagement by students



Principle 4

Good practice gives prompt feedback to students



- Assign work to be graded early in the semester to give them and you feedback early
- Return graded work ASAP – for most assignments, two weeks is too long
- Point out their strengths
- Be as concrete as possible with feedback- both positive and constructive

Principle 5



Good practice emphasizes time on task in the classroom

- Professor is punctual and ready to go
- Reduce “settling-in” time
- Reduce in-class time taking attendance
- Develop system for turning in/returning assignments
- Develop a system for movement into groups

Principle 6

- Tell them often how they can succeed
- Refer them to writing center, math center, etc. for extra help to help them succeed
- Explain how to learn and study (*)
- High standards may be achieved if students submit large assignments in stages
- Use *types* of questions in class that will be on exams

(*) John Gardner: first year: a deliberately designed period of transition into higher education, teaching to concentrate on the foreground of academic life against the demanding noisy background of the rest of campus or work life.



Principle 7

Good practice respects
diverse talents and ways of learning

- Get an indication of them as learners early in the semester (2nd or 3rd class)
- If possible, allow for multiple ways of completing an assignment
- Assess students in a variety of ways
- Balance teaching methods to incorporate various learning styles



Summary

Applying the Seven Principles compels faculty to do the following:

- ✓ Create meaningful ways to relate to students
- ✓ Encourage cooperation among students
- ✓ Promote active learning by the students
- ✓ Give prompt feedback to students
- ✓ Emphasize time on task in the classroom
- ✓ Communicate high expectations to students
- ✓ Respect diverse talents and ways of learning

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