**Seven Principles of Good Practice**

By Arthur W. Chickering and Zelda F. Gamson

These seven principles are not ten commandments shrunk to a 20th century attention span. They are intended as guidelines for faculty members, students, and administrators -- with support from state agencies and trustees -- to improve teaching and learning. These principles seem like good common sense, and they are -- because many teachers and students have experienced them and because research supports them. They rest on 50 years of research on the way teachers teach and students learn how students work and play with one another, and how students and faculty talk to each other.

While each practice can stand alone on its own, when all are present their effects multiply. Together they employ six powerful forces in education:

•activity,

•expectations,

•cooperation,

•interaction,

•diversity, and

•Responsibility.

**1. Encourages Contact between Students and Faculty**

Frequent student faculty contact in and out of classes is the most important factor in student motivation and involvement. Faculty concern helps students get through rough times and keep on working. Knowing a few faculty members well enhances students' intellectual commitment and encourages them to think about their own values and future plans.

**2. Develops Reciprocity and 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. Working with others often increases involvement in learning. Sharing one's own ideas and responding to others' reactions sharpens thinking and deepens understanding.

**3. Encourages Active Learning**

Learning is not a spectator sport. Students do not learn much just by sitting in classes listening to teachers, memorizing pre-packaged assignments, and spitting out answers. They must talk about what they are learning, write about it, relate it to past experiences and apply it to their daily lives. They must make what they learn part of themselves.

**4. Gives Prompt Feedback**

Knowing what you know and don't know focuses learning. Students need appropriate feedback on performance to benefit from courses. When getting started, students need help in assessing existing knowledge and competence. In classes, students need frequent opportunities to perform and receive suggestions for improvement. At various points during college, and at the end, students need chances to reflect on what they have learned, what they still need to know, and how to assess themselves.

**5. Emphasizes Time on Task**

Time plus energy equals learning. There is no substitute for time on task. Learning to use one's time will is critical for students and professionals alike. Students need help in learning effective time management. Allocating realistic amounts of time means effective learning for students and effective teaching for faculty. How an institutional defines time expectations for students, faculty, administrators, and other professional staff can establish the basis for high performance for all.

**6. Communicate High Expectations**

Expect more and you will get more. High expectations are important for everyone - for the poorly prepared, for those unwilling to exert themselves, and for the bright and well-motivated. Expecting students to perform well becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy when teachers and

institutions hold high expectations of themselves and make extra efforts.

**7. Respect Diverse Talents and Ways of Learning**

There are many roads to learning. People bring different talents and styles of learning to college. Brilliant students in the seminar room may be all thumbs in the lab or art studio. Students rich in hands-on experience may not do so well with theory. Students need the opportunity to show their talents and learn in ways that work for them. Then they can be pushed to learning in new ways that do not come so easily.

Teachers and students hold the main responsibility for improving undergraduate education. But they need a lot of help. College and university leaders, state and federal officials, and accrediting associations have the power to shape an environment that is favorable to good practice in higher education.

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