SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF GOOD TEACHING PRACTICE

1. Student faculty contact
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. 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 improves thinking and deepens understanding.

3. Active learning
Learning is not a spectator sport. Students do not learn much just 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. Prompt feedback
Knowing what you know and don't know focuses learning. Students need appropriate feedback on performance to benefit from courses. In 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. Time on task
Time plus energy equals learning. There is no substitute for time on task. Learning to use one's time well is critical for students and professional 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 institution defines time expectations for students, faculty and administrators, and other professional staff can establish the basis for high performance for all.

6. High expectations
Expect more and you will get it. 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 for 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 in 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.

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT STUDENT LEARNING:  
ANOTHER VIEW

1. **The learner is not a “receptacle”** of knowledge but rather creates her or his learning actively and uniquely. That is, learning is doubly constructed.

2. **Individuals learn by establishing and reworking patterns, relationships, and connections.** New learning always connects with prior learning and imbedded mental models.

3. **Every student learns all the time,** both with us and despite us. Hence the importance of extremely clear expectations for learning outcomes.

4. **Direct experience** decisively shapes individual understanding—hence the importance of active learning.

5. **Learning occurs best in the context of a compelling problem.**

6. **Learning requires reflection** in order for the learner to reshape priori ideas. Give students occasions to reflect on their learning.

7. **A cultural context that provides both enjoyable interaction and substantial personal support,** as well as challenge, is most conducive to learning.

Source: Peter Ewel, “What We Know About Learning,” AAHE Bulletin 50 (December 1997), 3-6, summarized by Peter Frederick, History Department, Wabash College.

FOUR CHARACTERISTICS OF “DEEP LEARNING”—
AND SOME QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS

1. **It is problem-centered:** students are motivated when they experience a need to know something or by a problem that really matters. The problem has been connected to their lives, values, or experience. (Can your course/assignment be structured so that students are led to a need-to-know point and then prompted to find answers?)

2. **It is active.** Students are involved beyond listening. (Who did most of the talking in class today? Who wrote on the board? Are students involved in structuring the class session or the project? Can service learning or outside-the-classroom experience play a role?)

3. **It is interactive and collaborative,** with safe opportunities for exploratory talk. (What strategies might lead your students to see each other as collaborators in the construction of knowledge, rather than competitors in the drive for grades? How can you encourage and validate exploratory discussions?)

4. **It rests on a well-structured knowledge base:** content is taught in integrated wholes and related to other knowledge and other wholes, rather than presented in small, separate pieces. (What is the organizing principle, metaphor, question, or idea of your course?)

Source: Graham Gibbs (Head, Oxford Centre for Staff Development), AAHE Bulletin (April 1993) 10-13, summarized by Peter Frederick, History Department, Wabash College.
“WHY CAN’T A STUDENT BE MORE LIKE A PROF?”

—loosely adapted from Henry Higgins

“Why don’t they understand that . . . ?

“How can they possibly think that . . .?”

“Don’t they see that . . . ?”

“How could they have missed . . . ?”

“Where on earth did they get . . . ?”

A few fundamental laws of teaching:

1. Sooner or later we all wish the students were more like us.
2. We are regularly amazed by their failure to grasp the idea, master the skill, get the concept, care about the right things
3. Every generation of faculty laments the students’ decreasing preparedness for college.
4. The more energy we spend focused on the students’ failure to be where we want them to be, the more unpleasant the academic experience will be for us, not to mention them.

Arthur Levine and Jeanette S. Cureton, in When Hope and Fear Collide (1998), help to explain the dissonance we often feel in the classroom:

According to research by Charles Schroeder of the University of Missouri-Columbia, more than half of today’s students perform best in a learning situation characterized by “direct, concrete experience; moderate-to-high degrees of structure, and a linear approach to learning. They value the practical and the immediate, and the focus of their perception is primarily on the physical world.” Three-quarters of faculty, on the other hand, “prefer the global to the particular, are stimulated by the realm of concepts, ideas, and abstractions, and assume that students, like themselves, need a high degree of autonomy in their work.” In short, students are more likely to prefer concrete subjects and active methods of learning. By contrast, faculty are predisposed to abstract subjects and passive learning. The result, says Schroeder, is frustration on both sides and a tendency for faculty to interpret as deficiencies what may simply be “natural” differences in learning patterns of students.

This mismatch may cause faculty to think that every year students are less well prepared, and students to think their classes are incomprehensible.

To teach is, then, to face a sizable cultural divide. If we accept that teaching involves cross-cultural communication, we can be more effective in stimulating student learning and growth.
HOWARD GARDINER'S THEORY OF MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES

In *Frames of Mind: the Theory of Multiple Intelligences* (1993), Gardiner defined seven different types of intelligence. In 1999, he added two more. His framework can help teachers appreciate, use, and develop the various forms of intelligence students bring with them to class, including those in which the teacher may be weak and those the course may not seem to “need” or to value.

1. Logical/Mathematical
2. Verbal/Linguistic
3. Visual/Spatial
4. Body/Kinesthetic
5. Musical/Rhythmic
6. Intrapersonal
7. Interpersonal
8. Naturalistic
9. Intuitive/Spiritual