



# SIX PRINCIPLES OF UNIVERSITY TEACHING

Oregon State University

## PRINCIPLE #1: CONSIDER THE AUDIENCE

The educator understands how language competencies, physical abilities, cultures, communities, and social identity influence learners' acquisition of knowledge and skills. The educator also creates a conducive climate by directly addressing students' common concerns: acceptance by peers enrolled in the course; the teacher's approachability and willingness to support their learning; and the degree of clarity about what they are to learn and how they will be required to demonstrate that learning. The instructor uses this knowledge to set high expectations, differentiate the curriculum, engage students in equitable and positive classroom behaviors, illustrate the relevancy of the course content, and clearly communicate academic expectations.

## PRINCIPLE #2: PLAN

The instructor understands the central concepts, and structures of the discipline(s) he or she teaches and is able to plan for students' development of knowledge over time. Course designers organize the course around specific concepts, questions, and skills (course outcomes). The course is designed to revisit and underscore central ideas; it integrates multiple opportunities for students to practice targeted skills. Alignment between course outcomes, course content, assignments, and assessment tools is easily identifiable. Prior to teaching a course the instructor identifies the "critical points" in the course where students are most likely to struggle, and plans additional supports to help learners make accurate sense of the difficult content. Students are informed of what they will learn during each class session (this sets the learning target for the lesson). Homework is relevant and at the appropriate level of difficulty.

## PRINCIPLE #3: ENHANCE ENGAGEMENT

Student engagement begins with the instructor's modeling and requirement of positive, respectful social interaction. The instructor connects course content to students' prior knowledge and extends and refines students' knowledge through authentic tasks, such as complex problem solving, cooperative work, critical discourse, and civic activism (such as service learning). Class sessions begin promptly and open with a compelling question, activity, scenario or demonstration (this attracts students' attention and inspires engagement). The instructor provides prompt feedback on student performance. Clear ground rules are set to ensure civility and invite multiple perspectives.

## PRINCIPLE #4: TEACH

Class sessions begin with an attention-getting opening. The instructor uses a variety of instructional strategies to enhance both individual and collaborative student engagement: metaphors, analogies, stories, cooperative activities, technology, visuals, and demonstrations. Lectures are delivered in 15-20 minute increments allowing students to review and comprehend new content. Informative and summative assessments are used to modify the teaching pace and content: identifying the need for re-teaching and clarification. Thinking, specific to the discipline, is clearly demonstrated and accompanied by an explanation the thinking process; students have multiple opportunities to practice the thinking before they are assessed.

## PRINCIPLE #5: ASSESS

Academic expectations are clearly and consistently communicated to students. In order for students to illustrate what they have learned, the instructor uses a variety assessment tools. These informative assessments monitor learner progress providing feedback to both the students and the teacher. Assessment data diagnoses misconceptions, areas of confusion, and teaching pace. Assessments are directly aligned to daily, course, and program outcomes. Summative assessments are targeted at conceptual understandings and the application of knowledge.

## PRINCIPLE #6: REFLECT

The instructor engages in both formal and informal reflection about teaching, particularly the effects of his/her choices and actions on others (learners, colleagues, and the community). Professional learning is evidence-based and informed by research. The instructor uses new knowledge and the scholarship of teaching to modify and adapt teaching practices. The instructor collaborates with colleagues in the continuous improvement of teaching practice.

*Six Principles of University Teaching, Kay M Sagmiller (2014). Based on The Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) Model Core Teaching Standards, 2011, Council of Chief State School Offices. 5/22/2014*