

Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education (with suggestions)  
By Arthur W. Chickering and Zelda F. Gamson

Apathetic students, illiterate graduates, incompetent teaching, impersonal campuses -- so rolls the drumfire of criticism of higher education. More than two years of reports have spelled out the problems. States have been quick to respond by holding out carrots and beating with sticks.

There are neither enough carrots nor enough sticks to improve undergraduate education without the commitment and action of students and faculty members. They are the precious resources on whom the improvement of undergraduate education depends.

But how can students and faculty members improve undergraduate education? Many campuses around the country are asking this question. To provide a focus for their work, we offer seven principles based on research on good teaching and learning in colleges and universities.

Good practice in undergraduate education:

1. **encourages contact between students and faculty,**
2. **develops reciprocity and cooperation among students,**
3. **encourages active learning,**
4. **gives prompt feedback,**
5. **emphasizes time on task,**
6. **communicates high expectations, and**
7. **respects diverse talents and ways of learning.**

We can do it ourselves - with a little bit of help...

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.

Good practices hold as much meaning for professional programs as for the liberal arts. They work for many different kinds of students -- white, black, Hispanic, Asian, rich, poor, older, younger, male, female, well-prepared, underprepared.

But the ways different institutions implement good practice depend very much on their students and their circumstances. In what follows, we describe several different approaches to good practice that have been used in different kinds of settings in the







