

Concordia University
Nine Principles for Good Practice in Teaching and Learning

I. Good Practice Encourages Student – Instructor Contact

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

II. Good Practice Encourages 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 ideas and responding to others’ reactions improves thinking and deepens understanding.

III. Good Practice Encourages Active Learning

Learning is not a spectator sport. Students do not learn much just sitting in classes listening to instructors, memorizing 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. Integrating content makes for active learning.

IV. Good Practice Gives 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.

V. Good Practice Emphasizes Time on Task (Time Investment in Coursework)

Time plus energy equals learning. There is no substitute for quality time on task, both in and outside the classroom. Learning to use one’s time well 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 instructors.

VI. Good Practice Communicates 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 can become a self-fulfilling prophecy when instructors uphold high expectations of themselves.

VII. Good Practice Respects Diverse Talents and Ways of Learning

There are many roads to learning. People bring different talents and styles of learning to college. Students rich in hands-on experiences may not do so well with theory. Students need the opportunity to show their talents and learn in ways that work for them, and then be encouraged to learn in less familiar ways.

VIII. Good Practice Reflects the Mission and Values of Concordia

Good practice reflects our mission and values and connects faith to learning. The concept of vocation is one that is particularly important. Martin Luther developed this radical and democratic concept in reaction to the medieval notion of vocation only as a calling to a religious order. God provides us with a wide variety of ways to serve our neighbors through our chosen occupation. Luther calls us to take seriously those vocations, to recognize and seek out opportunities to be of service - each within our own path.

IX. Good Practice Consistently Uses Assessment and Quality Improvement

Good practice engages faculty and students in ongoing processes of assessment and improvement. Processes of quality improvement occur at the level of the individual course, the academic program or department, in the general education core, and across the university. Departments develop programmatic learning goals which form the basis of improvements in program offerings through assessment of student learning outcomes. Faculty seek feedback to reflect on their teaching and improve with practice.