

# The Seven Principles of Good Teaching: Application to the Web Environment

## Background:

The *Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education*, originally published in the AAHE Bulletin (Chickering & Gamson, 1987), are commonly used as a set of guidelines for defining effective teaching in the traditional, face-to-face classroom. It is our intent to use the Seven Principles to outline instructional strategies that will include effective use of technology to enhance online learning. In 1996, the AAHE published *Implementing the Seven Principles: Technology as Lever* (Chickering and Ehrmann, 1996) thereby promoting the incorporation of the seven principles in the technology-enhanced environment. We are broadening the scope of the original document in hopes that we can continue with the quality teaching and enhance it with the inclusion of technology. Since the original principles were based on years of higher education research (Chickering & Reisser, 1993), we felt they would provide us with a solid foundation upon which to reach out to the online environment.

Technology has permeated education, particularly higher education, and we feel the need to develop principles to ensure the quality of the online environment. Almost of all the principles include some type of professional development/training for the faculty member as well as up-to-date technology and support for the online course. The examples used have been chosen to represent technology and capabilities currently available and supported in CSTL and at Southeast. It is our hope that with these established principles, our online courses will meet if not exceed those for face-to-face courses.

The seven principles are only one aspect of developing effective online courses with a focus on assuring quality online education. The CSTL Technology Associates and Southeast continue to work toward developing a quality online course program. These efforts will benefit all courses being supported by course Web sites. Numerous other approaches are currently underway to further the effort to promote pedagogically sound, effective online courses. In this process, we can certainly learn from others. In constructing this seven principles document, we encountered a number of online resources pertinent to our endeavors. These will be included in the expanded online version of this document.

The Institute for Higher Education Policy has examined benchmarks developed by various organizations in higher education and produced a compiled set of benchmarks based on a study of active distance learning programs at several institutions. These benchmarks are found in *Quality on the Line - Benchmarks for Success in Internet-Based Distance Education* from The Institute for Higher Education Policy, published in April 2000 and are summarized below.

These benchmarks include **institutional support** (technology plan, security measures, reliable delivery system, distance education infrastructure), **course development** (course development, design, and delivery guidelines, review of instructional materials, courses that engage students), **teaching/learning** (student interaction with faculty/ students, constructive and timely feedback), **course structure** (preparation of students, supplementary material availability, students expectations), **student support** (student support services, student on-line research methods, student access to technical assistance, response to student questions), **faculty support** (technical assistance for faculty, assistance in transition to online instruction, continual instructor training and assistance, faculty student interactions), and **evaluation and assessment** (multiple method approach to assessment, enrollment and cost evaluation, regular review of intended learning outcomes)

## *Executive Summary of the Seven Principles of Good Teaching: Application to the Web Environment*

This executive summary has been compiled by the CSTL Technology Associates from the complete document, which can be found at <http://cstl.semo.edu/quality>. The seven principles of teaching have been applied, by the CSTL Technology Associates, to teaching in the online environment, focusing on the implementation of them here at Southeast Missouri State University.

### **1. Good Practice Encourages Contacts Between Students and Faculty**

*Frequent student-faculty contact in and out of class is a 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 plans.*

#### Interact with students

- Email
- Announcement Board
- Listservs
- OIS Forum
- Chat

#### Create an active learning environment

- Make weekly assignments
- Require several smaller point value assignments at the beginning of the course

### **2. Good Practice 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 ideas and responding to others' improves thinking and deepens understanding.*

#### Create synchronous and asynchronous interaction

- Email
- OIS
- Chat
- Online Meetings/Conferences
- Listservs
- Blind peer reviews

### **3. Good Practice Uses Active Learning Techniques**

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

### Develop various response formats

- Interactive modules
- Forms

### Modelling active learning

- Create assignments that require students to react to real life scenarios, etc., or make real life application of information.
- Students create visual models to represent concepts
- Orchestrate on-line interactive group projects

## 4. **Good Practice Gives Prompt Feedback**

*Knowing what you know and don't know focuses your learning. In getting started, students need help in assessing their existing knowledge and competence. Then, in classes, students need frequent opportunities to perform and receive feedback on their performance. At various points during college, and at its end, students need chances to reflect on what they have learned, what they still need to know, and how they might assess themselves.*

### Prompt student feedback

- Notify student by email when assignments are received
- Promptly respond student emails should be replied to within an already established period of time
- Post the grading schedule on the course website
- Utilize the feedback option within OIS UTest - include the correct answer, the answer's textbook page reference, and a real-world application.
- Publish "office hours" on the course website
- Hold "office hours" by video-conferencing, email, phone, etc.

### Student Understanding

- Implement Interactive Multimedia elements to enhance/test students' understanding of concepts or modules.
- Enhance PowerPoint presentations with tip box messages or hyperlinks

## 5. **Good Practice Emphasizes Time on Task**

*Time plus energy equals learning. Learning to use one's time well is critical for students and professionals alike. Allocating realistic amounts of time means effective learning for students and effective teaching for faculty.*

### Instructional design issues

- Create user-friendly and easily negotiated website

### Create clear, precise grading criteria

- Describe feedback process to students

- Give intermediate and long-range deadlines for assignments
- Post scoring guides/grading scale(s) on the website

## 6. **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 becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.*

### Clearly establish students performance criteria

- Link to the course syllabus (Required course syllabus format: [http://www2.semo.edu/provost/cghm/cg\\_9\\_1.htm](http://www2.semo.edu/provost/cghm/cg_9_1.htm))
- Duplicate the information found in the syllabus on the course splash page
- Design quizzes and tests that are based on integration and application
- Provide examples of expected quality of work
- Clearly define make-up work and testing policies

### Make a commitment to give feedback promptly

- Respond to e-mail or Forum responses or graded assignments promptly
- Take time to critique the student's demonstration of their knowledge
- Provide suggestions and direction that facilitates the student's ability to expand their understanding and performance

## 7. **Good Practice Respects Diverse Talents and Ways of Learning**

*Many roads lead to learning. Different students bring different talents and styles to college. Brilliant students in a seminar might be all thumbs in a lab or studio; students rich in hands-on experience may not do so well with theory. Students need opportunities to show their talents and learn in ways that work for them. Then they can be pushed to learn in new ways that do not come so easily.*

### Utilize technology

- Post audio and/or video recordings of lectures
- Use graphics to supplement written information
- Provide a dynamic, synchronous, interactive learning environment through chat and videoconferencing
- Provide asynchronous interaction via OIS Forum and email discussion lists

### Use effective teaching strategies to encourage active learning

- Implement various teaching and learning strategies to the online environment
- Vary the choice of ways students can complete assignment (i.e. PowerPoint presentation, Webquest, FAQ, traditional paper)
- Address ADA compliance issues where necessary