

## Six Principles of University Teaching

### Principle #1: Consider the Audience

The instructor's approach to learning is based on recent cognition research and understands how language competencies, physical abilities, cultures, communities, and social identity influence learners' acquisition of knowledge and skills. The instructor uses this knowledge to differentiate the curriculum: engaging students in equitable and positive classroom behaviors; designing valuable and relevant learning tasks; and clearly communicating academic expectations to learners. The instructor creates a learning environment that supports individual and collaborative learning by ensuring students feel accepted by the teacher and peers.

### 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. Instructors are able to identify where the courses s/he teaches fit into the *program's* curriculum and uses this information to intentionally design courses to develop students' knowledge and skills at the appropriate level of rigor. The instructor ensures *alignment* between course outcomes and course content, course content and the assessment tools. 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.

### Principle #3: Enhance Engagement

The teacher works with others to create a positive and safe learning environment for all. The instructor models and requires positive, respectful social interaction and clearly communicates academic expectations: homework is clearly relevant and at the appropriate level of difficulty; formative and summative assessments are designed to promote the students' ability to communicate what they have learned. The instructor connects course content to students' prior knowledge and extends and refines students' knowledge through authentic tasks, such as complex problem solving, critical discourse and civic activism.

### Principle #4: Teach

Each class session, directly aligned to one or more course outcomes, begins with engaging attention getting openings that capture students' interest. The instructor uses a variety of instructional strategies to enhance both individual and collaborative student engagement: engaging lectures are abbreviated; class sessions include small and/or whole group discussion; writing; cooperative learning; problem solving, think-pair-share; jigsaw, etc. Metaphors, analogies, stories, cooperative activities, technology and demonstrations are regularly incorporated into teaching to illustrate ideas and concepts. Lessons close with a revisiting of the day's lesson objective.

### Principle #5: Assess

Academic expectations are clearly and consistently communicated to students. The instructor uses a variety of assessment tools during the course to monitor learner progress *and* uses that data to adjust and pace the teaching of the course. Grading procedures are designed to accurately reflect students' acquisition of key knowledge and skills developed during a course. Summative (final) assessments are directly aligned to the content and skills taught and developed during the course (the course outcomes).

### Principle #6: Reflect

The instructor engages in both formal and informal reflection about teaching effectiveness, 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.