

"Good Practices" Derived from Educational Research*

1. *Create high expectations for student learning.* Students appreciate general education's aims and goals; faculty need to be clear that they expect students to attain them.
2. *Provide coherent, progressive learning.* Students learn, grow, and develop when the first step is not too high, when each step is a reasonable and connected elevation from the preceding one, and when there are clear standards for attainment in sight.
3. *Create synthesizing experiences.* Students benefit from the challenge of synthesizing their learning through essays and journal keeping, capstone and cornerstone courses, and integrative experiences in cooperative and service learning.
4. *Integrate education and experience.* The relevance to students' lives, aspirations, and perceptions is brought home when education is bolstered by application and experience.
5. *Create active learning experiences.* Students who are engaged in their studies learn more. First-generation students may need validation that their involvement is a legitimate part of the learning experience.
6. *Require ongoing practice of skills.* Skills, once learned, soon atrophy without practice. For example, second-language learning in college suffers from students' lack of practice.
7. *Assess learning and give prompt feedback.* Students cannot improve their learning unless they receive constructive suggestions for improvement in time to adjust their behavior to enhance their efforts.
8. *Plan collaborative learning experiences.* Students are affirmed in their learning by their peers' support, criticism, and collaboration. Collaborative learning promotes behavior expected after college.
9. *Provide considerable time on task.* The press to cover the material leaves much of general education cursory; key knowledge, skills, and abilities are fostered by thorough explanation, discussion, and application.
10. *Respect diverse talents and ways of knowing.* Not all students learn the same way. Making a student conform to the predominant curriculum may militate against success. Diversity challenges the curriculum to represent learning in multiple, coherent, purposeful forms.
11. *Increase informal contact with students.* A minority of students' time is spent in the classroom. Make the curriculum and extracurriculum work together to support student learning.
12. *Give special attention to the early years.* The transition to college (and between colleges) presents significant social and academic adjustments for students. Instilling a thirst for inquiry and reflection ~early on will set the stage for more rapid growth, development, and educational attainment.

*D.P. Jones and P.T. Ewell (1993, pp. 9-13) Cited in Chapter 7: Quality and Coherence in General Education, Handbook for Undergraduate Curriculum, San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1997, p. 164.