

Seven Principles of Highly Successful Teachers

First Principle: Create a natural critical learning environment

- Embed the skills, concepts and information you wish to teach in tasks-projects and experiences-that the students will find fascinating.
- Create opportunities for students to work together, to collaborate, to struggle with problems and issues.

Second Principle: Get their attention and keep it

- Consciously try to get students' attention with some provocative act, question, or statement-at the beginning of the term and at the beginning of each class.
- Teaching is about "commanding attention and holding it."

Third Principle: Start with the students rather than with the discipline

- Start with something students care about, know, or think they know.
- Ask students to begin struggling with an issue from their own perspective even before they know much about it, getting them to take a position.

Fourth Principle: Seek commitments

- "I tell my students the first day of class that the decision to take the class," one professor explained, "is the decision to attend the class every time it meets."
- "I also tell them that my decision to teach the class includes the commitment to offer sessions worth attending, and I ask them to let me know if they think I'm not doing that."
- Approach each class as if you expect students to listen, think, and respond, and engage them through enthusiasm, eye contact, questions!

Fifth Principle: Help Students learn outside of class

- Give students meaningful study guides or worksheets to complete between classes.
- Assign a group project that requires collaboration and hands-on learning.

Sixth Principle: Engage students in thinking, not just in memorizing

- Think about how to teach students to understand, apply, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate.
- Ask questions that will help students grapple with concepts and invent ways to solve problems.

Seventh Principle: Create diverse learning experiences

- Sometimes offer visual information (pictures, diagrams, flow charts, time lines, films, demonstration)
- Other times, offer auditory input (speech or visual symbols of auditory information—written words and mathematical notations).
- Allow students to talk things out, to interact with each other.
- Also give them a chance to reflect independently or to hear someone else's explanations.