Best Practices

Introduction

Research over the past few decades into teaching methods, classroom environments, and assessment practices that facilitate teaching and learning has led to increased knowledge about what constitutes “best practice” in the contemporary college classroom. The articles below offer guidelines and specific research-based strategies for improving the quality of higher education courses and supporting faculty efforts to achieve teaching excellence.

General Resources

A compilation of “practices that constitute excellence in college teaching,” with explanations and examples of each item under twelve general categories such as Lecture Practices, Active Learning, Group Discussion Triggers, etc. Footnoted references cite the research base for each teaching method.

Concise descriptions of ten practices that research suggests increase college students’ engagement and retention, identified by George Kuh in High-Impact Educational Practices: What They Are, Who Has Access to Them, and Why They Matter (AAC&U, 2008).

Indiana University SOTL Bibliography.
A selected annotated bibliography of research, scholarship, and current thinking on excellence in teaching. Divided into five areas—absolute essentials, fundamentals of good teaching, student heterogeneity, curricular reform, and online resources. Original bibliography compiled by Craig Nelson, Indiana University.

Summary of a classic article detailing seven research-based principles for effective undergraduate education.

“Implementing the Seven Principles: Technology as Lever,” Arthur W. Chickering and Stephen C. Ehrmann, AAHE
This article explores ways to apply Chickering and Gamson's original seven principles through technology with the use of computers, videos, and new telecommunication technologies.


**Best Teachers Website Resources.**

This large collection of resources and examples based on the Natural Critical Learning Environment model is designed to help faculty in all fields teach themselves new approaches to teaching using best practices.


**MERLOT ELIXR** (Multimedia Educational Resource for Learning and Teaching Online).

This site hosts over 70 multimedia case stories demonstrating exemplary teaching practices in the digital environment.


**Enhancing Education** (Carnegie Mellon University).

Teaching principles and skills for best practices from designing a course to assessment.

http://www.cmu.edu/teaching/index.html [8]

**Teacher Behaviors Inventory, Harry G. Murray, University of Western Ontario.**

An inventory for students to assess an instructor’s specific classroom behaviors in the following categories: clarity, enthusiasm, interaction, organization, pacing, disclosure, speech, and rapport. Offers faculty an opportunity to gather information about students’ responses to their own teaching practices.


Also see **Online Tutorials on Teaching** [10] for self-directed modules based on best practices in teaching.

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**Links**