

Oikonomia Network Pedagogical Principles

The ON advisory committee has created this document to summarize helpful pedagogical principles to assist faculty members. The principles are grouped according to level of implementation interest and capacity. We encourage all our colleagues to include the Foundations level principles in their teaching, and consider including the Intermediate and Advanced level principles.

The principles are meant to be broad enough to be applied across disciplines and in cross-disciplinary environments. They could be employed with a checklist approach, to assist faculty members when planning a course or parts of courses. They could also be used to assess assignment components. Finally, we anticipate they will be helpful to evaluate the whole learning experience that the professor attempts to convey in the syllabus, including the content to be conveyed, the learning climate to be cultivated, and to what extent the course reflects the department and institutional mission.

Foundations Level

1. Biblical and theological foundations of learning community participants addressed

- Recognize that instructors and learners are God's image bearers.
- Recognize that instructors lead best by stewarding their own life-long learning.
- Lament that instructors and learners are fallen, rebellious, and alienated sinners.
- Rejoice that instructors and learners are redeemed, reconciled, and transformed saints.
- Anticipate that instructors and learners will be whole, joyful, tearless worshippers one day.

2. Teaching objectives and hoped-for outcomes clearly articulated

- What does the instructor or author plan to contribute so the climate and content contribute to appropriate gospel fruit among the learners?
- What gospel fruit does the instructor or author hope the course or resource provides for the learners to steward?
- To what extent does the course reflect overall department and institutional mission?

Intermediate Level

3. Human development principles recognized and incorporated

- Holistic "Know, Be, Do" learning domains embedded in light of human image bearing
- Course goals, assignments, readings, etc. at Christian-maturity-appropriate levels
- Hoped-for contributions of the course to personal and corporate maturity in Christ
- Learning style preferences and challenges accommodated
- Appropriate structure, support, and challenge provided

4. Bloom's taxonomy levels addressed in methods and assignments

- Remember; Understand; Demonstrate; Analyze; Evaluate; Create

Advanced Level

5. Opportunity to cultivate Natural Critical Learning Environment (Bain, *What the Best College Teachers Do*)

- Dilemma-solving focus built on foundational elements
- Challenging and supportive environment
- Collaborative work
- Fair and honest evaluation
- Iterative feedback process

6. Evidence of the four Motivational Conditions that Enhance Adult Learning (Wlodkowski, *Enhancing Adult Motivation to Learn*)

- Inclusion – How are learners valued as contributing members of the community?
- Attitude – How relevant is the material to learners? How do learners get to make appropriate choices about the learning process given how they learn best?
- Meaning – To what extent is the material timely and challenging, given curriculum needs and learner concerns and experiences?
- Competence – How do learners get to practice what they are learning and receive feedback?

Recommended Reading for Further Study

1. Ambrose, S. A., Bridges, M. W., DiPetro, M., Lovett, M. C., & Norman, M. K. (2010). *How learning works: Seven research-based principles for smart teaching*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

In a highly readable style, the authors relate how the seven principles bridge the gap between learning theory and teaching practice. The seven principles address findings from prior knowledge influence, knowledge organization, motivation, mastery, feedback, climate setting, and self-direction.

2. Bain, K. (2004). *What the best college teachers do*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bain's much-referenced first book on professorial pedagogy captures the ingredients of what he calls the natural critical learning environment and how excellent teachers create and cultivate such environments for outstanding teaching and learning.

3. Cook-Sather, A., Bovill, C., & Felten, P. (2014). *Engaging students as partners in learning and teaching*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

This book addresses faculty/student partnerships across a spectrum including teaching, research, grant-funding, curriculum development, program planning, and outcomes assessment. It includes many case studies and outlines for personal and institutional planning.

4. Fernandez, E. S. (Ed.). (2014). *Teaching for a culturally diverse and racially just world*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock.

Focusing on theological education, this collection of essays addresses alternative teaching approaches in light of racial/ethnic diversity in the classroom.

5. Merriam, S. B., & Bierema, L. L. (2014). *Adult learning: Linking theory and practice*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Merriam is the long-time leading expert on adult learning. Her latest book is the most accessible summary of adult learning theory and practice in a lengthy line of helpful resources.

6. Nilson, L. B. (2010). *Teaching at its best: A research-based resource for college instructors* (3rd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

This is an encyclopedic, research-based resource on teaching and learning topics. The tool-based approach in each chapter makes finding your specific topic very easy.

7. Smith, D. I., & Smith, J. K. A. (Eds.). (2011). *Teaching and Christian practices: Reshaping faith and learning*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

In this collection of essays, the authors creatively harmonize teaching and Christian formation practices in the context of learning communities. The essays address how particular Christian disciplines can be integrated into the overall pedagogical landscape as well as specific disciplinary classrooms.