BEST PRACTICES FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

Best Practices offer guidelines for establishing a foundational structure by which to develop curriculum and educational implementation models.

In order to achieve maximum understanding and learning, it is recommended that the activities created have as foundation a best practice model that provides an overall theme and pervasive tone to the planned curriculum, activities and experiences that are created.

The key elements for providing effective instruction are:

➢ Effective learning should be supported when students are actively engaged in the learning process. It is critical that the student feel that he/she is an active participant and engage in the activity;

➢ Effective learning is supported by a climate of inquiry where students feel appropriately challenged. Students should have the opportunity to feel the learning experiences sufficiently challenge their ability to question and investigate alternative answers as well as explore problem solving strategies;

➢ Activities should be designed to challenge and engage, and are of interest to the student. Thus, these activities should be fun to enhance the learning experience. Therefore, many of these activities should be based on practical- *life* scenarios. In so doing, the learner has a frame of reference that is current and can be easily identifiable;

➢ As part of the learning process, there should be structured interactions and periods of discussion that allow the students to explore their experiences. The intent of these experiences is to challenge the student's current beliefs and, more importantly, have them discover and develop new practices and understandings.

➢ Lessons and activities should be based on prior knowledge and experiences, to be recognised and built upon, to achieve effective impact and better understanding.

➢ To become more engaged in the learning process, the student's activities should be placed within a personal context if possible, in order to be relevant in their studies, both professionally and in their personal life;

➢ Dialogues should be constantly encouraged between all constituents (student to teacher. student to student, etc.) in order to foster a community of learner's - encouraging increased student motivation, understanding and engagement;

➢ Diversity of experiences should be encouraged. All students and their educational experiences are enhanced when these are recognised for their diversity and are acknowledged, valued and drawn upon, within the environment of activities and teaching approaches;

➢ Multiple teaching methods should be incorporated into all or most of the activities and learning experiences. Students learn in different ways and modalities and as such their learning can be better supported using multiple modalities of instruction (i.e. visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and reading/writing, etc.);

➢ Courses and experiences should be clearly articulated as to expectations goals and outcomes. In so doing, when students can be encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning, they are more likely to develop higher order thinking skills such as analysis, synthesis and evaluation;

➢ Meaningful and timely feedback is paramount to improve student learning;

➢ Learning cooperatively with peers, rather than individually, or in a competitive way, may help the students to develop not only their cognitive skills but also their interpersonal and professional skills.

SRDA, Dr A. Pober
Nov 18, 2016