

Some progressives have a “Build It and They Will Come” attitude toward learning. Adults just need to resource a good learning space and get out of the way and the kids will come and learn. This approach just makes the rich richer and the poor poorer. Kids who have already learned elsewhere how to be proactive deliberate strategic learners thrive and others do not. Teachers and teaching are required. The job of a teacher (and a parent) is to build a certain “type of person”, people who become proactive deliberate learners and citizens who can teach themselves and collaborate with others to make the world better.

Below I list 14 principles of good teaching. Elsewhere in my work I have listed good principles for learning. See: <http://mason.gmu.edu/~lsmithg/jamespaulgee2print.html>.

Here are the principles for teaching. I am heavily indebted here to John Hattie and Gregory Yates’ new book *Visible Learning and the Science of How We Learn* (Routledge 2013). Teaching and learning go together.

1. Good Teachers are the Most Important Factor in Education

Good teachers are proactive learners about their own teaching and about what students are actually learning.

2. Instruction, Strategy Training, and Extended Deliberative Practice are Necessary not Optional

Instruction via just-in-time and on-demand talk, modelling, feedback, and design of learning experiences.

3. The Ultimate Goal is Proactive Deliberate Learners

The goal is students who become proactive deliberate learners teaching themselves.

4. Learning from Experience Requires Clear Goals and Deliberate Practice

People learn from experience best when they have a clear goal and are taught to engage in strategic thinking and deliberate practice in the experience.

5. Lucidity is Crucial

Goals, intentions of lessons, and standards of mastery must be clear and shared by students and teachers.

6. Challenging but Attainable Goals are Best for Learning

Learners learn best—and seek and use feedback best—when they face challenges at the edge of but within their “regime of competence”.

7. Copious Feedback is Necessary

Feedback is not praise but actionable information that helps the student know what to do next on a trajectory of manageable steps towards mastery.

8. Surface Learning, Deep Learning, and Construction of Knowledge

Deep conceptual understanding requires some knowledge of facts to work with. The final goal is for the student not just to understand deeply, but to know as well how to produce knowledge and solve problems.

9. Motivation must be Nurtured

Nurturing motivation involves affective, cognitive, and environmental variables working together; it involves, as well, the avoidance of factors that demotivate learners.

10. A Mastery Orientation is Better than an Achievement Motivation

Attribute success to effort not ability and engage in learning for its own sake, not just for praise, rewards, or status.

11. Language of Home and School

Align the language and values of home and of school; ensure every family gets access to the language of school.

12. Room to Fail

The cost of failure should not be so high that it discourages risk taking, exploration, and innovation. Failure should be seen as valued form of learning.

13. Peers as Teachers

Peer to peer learning and peers as teachers are crucial for the eventual production of proactive deliberate learners, but peer to peer learning and teaching needs to be well structured, well designed, and well resourced.

14. Teachers Think Like Expert Novices

Good teachers know their field (the content they are teaching) well, but understand it from a beginner's and a learner's perspective.