



Principles of Teaching and Learning

Tell me and I forget,
Teach me and I remember,
Involve me and I learn.
-Benjamin Franklin

The following principles form the foundation for teaching and learning through the Kingston Resuscitation Institute:

Deep learning is superior to superficial learning.

The roles that physicians play in the health care team require them to analyze critically, make decisions and evaluate situations that are often complex and fluid. The accumulation of factual knowledge without a deeper understanding will not equip physicians to take on these roles. They require a deeper understanding about why things happen, in order to be able to predict, anticipate, and diagnose. The development of deeper learning often involves other important skills like problem solving and critical thinking. Deeper understanding also helps the learner put the information in context, and helps demonstrate relevance.

Learning should be a positive experience.

This is based on the most basic behaviorist principles of stimulus-response. Negative learning experiences will eventually result in avoidance, where as positive experiences will be sought out. It may not be possible, or even desirable, for every learning experience to be pleasant – learning requires effort, and sometimes being pushed to our boundaries makes us experience them. There may be considerable effort required to set-up a series of positive learning experiences to help bring the learner from where they are to their goal.

Learning improves if it is an active and engaging experience.

A learner who is active is more likely to learn (and learn with understanding) than a learner who is passive. Learners who are engaged, who have 'bought in' to the process are more likely to retain and progress. This engagement happens when the learner feels the goals and objectives that can be achieved from the lesson match their own goals and interests.

Learning can and should be a transformative process

Deep learning requires thoughtful consideration, reflection and metacognition. Properly encouraged, this process results in more than the acquisition of facts – they lead to

transformation and maturation of thought and learning. The end result is personal growth and maturation.

Motivation is integral to learning.

Internal motivation is one of the key components that differentiate the adult from adolescent or child learners. Truly internal motivation is difficult to engender, but teaching should seek, align with, and support a learner's internal motivation. Even more important is for teachers to avoid creating environments or situations that stifle or rob learners of their motivation.

Linking is important to learning.

One important role of the educator is to help the learner link material. This is done by activating prior knowledge (the advance organizer), by providing an organizational structure for the material (schema construction), and by showing how the material will link to further knowledge. The educator should also provide opportunities for the learner to test these links and revise them to fit their needs (schema refinement).

Attitudes and principles should be modeled, not just described.

Students are far more likely to do as we do than to do as we say. Educators must ensure that there is not discordance between the attitudes and philosophies they model and those that they advocate.

Environment effects learning.

The learning environment can have a significant effect on the quality of learning that takes place within it. This environment includes physical components (desks, tables, seating), environmental factors (temperature, sound, lighting), social factors (openness of a group, competition between learners). These important factors should all be considered when creating a learning environment.

Respect the learner.

A curriculum should have the flexibility to be tailored to the individual needs and goals of the learner. Learners should feel responsible for their own learning. This autonomy grows from a respectful, accepting attitude from the educator, and acceptance of the responsibility from the learner.

Different learners will have different goals, skills and abilities. They will have different personalities, personal beliefs and cultural backgrounds. Educators must recognize and respect those differences, and modify their teaching accordingly.

Respect the value of education.

Education, done well, is valuable. Teachers and learners must consider the process and results of education to have great worth – as such, it is something to be invested in with effort, time, and pecuniary support.