

Ten Steps to Promote a Stronger Emphasis on Student Learning

Inspired by the AAHE Assessment Forum's *Principles for good practice for assessing students' learning*, the author has generated Ten Steps (1992) to Promote a Stronger Emphasis on Student Learning in a Hydrology–Fluid Mechanics Course.

1. Student-Learning must not be focused only about *making* the connections initially. Instead it should concentrate more about *maintaining* those connections in the long run. Student learning is fundamentally about a strong bond between the academic establishment and the student citizens of the entire community.
2. Student-Learning is enhanced by the environment. It should *take place* in the context of a *compelling situation* that balances curiosity, challenge and opportunity. A dynamic environment and an interactive dialog is of great help in this area.
3. Student-Learning should have an *active search for meaning* by the learner -- constructing knowledge rather than passively delivering it or receiving it. In other words one should create a *Concept Mapping Model* instead of a *Structured Content Model*.
4. Student-Learning is *developmental*. In other words, it is a cumulative process *involving the whole person*, who is capable of integrating the new with the old. The settings, the surroundings, the influences of others contribute to successful accomplishments.
5. Student-Learning should be viewed as an effort promoted by *individuals* who are intrinsically *tied to others as social beings*, actually interacting as collaborators.
6. Student-Learning is strongly influenced by the *educational climate* in which learning achievements takes place.
7. Student-Learning requires Action, Communication, Ownership, Reflection and Nurture (ACORN) as suggested by Hawkins and Winter (1997).
8. Student-Learning in reality aims at an educational experience that *takes place informally and incidentally*, beyond explicit teaching in the lecture hall.
9. Student-Learning is *grounded in particular contexts and individual experiences*, requiring effort to transfer specific knowledge and skills to other citizens.
10. Student-Learning involves *the ability of individuals not only to monitor their own learning, but also* be able to enhance learning through collaboration and cooperation.

References:

AAHE Assessment Forum (1992). *Principles for good practice for assessing students' learning*. Washington, D C : American Association for Higher Education.

Hawkins, P., & Winter, J. (1997). *Mastering change: Learning the lessons of the enterprise in higher education initiative*. London: Department for Education and Employment.