

TPS Learning Principles

Learning is defined as the natural, self-regulated process of constructing personal meaning from information and experience, filtered through each individual's unique perceptions, thoughts, and feelings. This definition of learning should guide all TPS educators as they plan for, and provide, instruction to students.

The **goal of learning** is to understand, apply, and transfer knowledge in a variety of contexts.

Learning principles are laws of learning. They provide a research-based and conceptual foundation for how people learn. Learning principles add insight into what makes people learn most effectively. These learning principles should consistently guide all TPS staff in their instructional and other decisions. Evidence of these principles should be apparent in classroom instruction.

Learning Principle 1: Learning is an **active process** in which learners use **sensory input** to construct meaning.

It is important to engage students in both hands-on and minds-on learning experiences. People learn best when they can take in information using a variety of sensory inputs.

Learning Principle 2: Learners link new information with **prior knowledge and experiences** in meaningful ways.

Prior knowledge and experiences are primary factors in a person's ability to learn new information. This is true because prior learning creates a bridge that helps learners link what they already know with what they need to learn. These connections help learners store, retrieve, and transfer new learning.

Learning Principle 3: Learning requires the use of **various forms of language** (e.g., words, symbols, numbers, and images) to capture and develop thinking.

In addition to learning with words, people often learn best using a variety of nonlinguistic representations including drawing pictures, constructing graphic organizers, acting out content, making physical models, and generating mental images. According to Robert Marzano, nonlinguistic representations represent one of the most powerful instructional strategies.

Learning Principle 4: Learning is influenced by many **contextual factors**, including differences in background knowledge; thinking patterns; and cultural, linguistic, and social backgrounds.

Learning does not happen in a vacuum. All learning is contextual and situational and therefore, is influenced by the unique context of the learning environment. Teachers should create learning contexts that maximize students' learning opportunities.

Learning Principle 5: Learning is influenced by emotional state, social interactions, interpersonal relations, and **communication** with others.

Learning is dependent on positive social interactions, communication, and relationships. That is one reason why using cooperative learning structures enhances students' learning.

Learning Principle 6: Learners' **motivation**, both extrinsic and intrinsic, is a key component to ensure engagement and learning.

Motivation is the activation of goal-orientated behavior. Because the learning process is based on establishing and achieving learning goals, figuring out how to motivate students is key to effective learning experiences. Making the learning relevant increases students' motivation to learn.

Learning Principle 7: Learners' persistent effort, developmentally appropriate challenges, and instructional support result in **rigorous** learning.

Teaching a rigorous and relevant curriculum is one of the effective schools correlates. Students need both support and challenge to achieve rigorous learning. Persistent effort results from students who are motivated.

Learning Principle 8: Learners need **multiple opportunities over time** to practice in supportive, respectful environments.

Significant learning takes time and must be supported in a safe learning environment. Quality learning requires effective teaching followed by guided and independent practice. Teacher support must include close monitoring of progress toward achieving the learning goals.

Learning Principle 9: Learners need regular, specific, and timely **feedback** with opportunities to use the feedback to maximize learning experiences.

Feedback is the breakfast of champions. The best in the world hire coaches to provide them with feedback. In order to be helpful, feedback must be ongoing, specific, and given within 24 hours.

Learning Principle 10: Learners reflect, monitor, and adjust their thinking and reasoning to achieve learning goals (**metacognition**).

We are the only person available to assess our own work at all times. The ability to self-assess and monitor one's own work accelerates learning.