

New roles for learners

Let us consider the principles which guide much of today's thinking in regard to standards for teaching and learning in a knowledge- or information-driven society. The following principles have been adapted from Zemelman, Daniels & Hyde (1998: 8) and Callison (2001: 58-59):

- **Student-centred** – Considered the best starting point for schooling is learners' interests, with investigating students' own questions across the curriculum taking precedence over study of arbitrarily/distantly selected content.
- **Experiential** – Active, hands-on, concrete experience is considered the most powerful and natural form of learning.
- **Holistic** – The belief that learners learn best when they encounter whole ideas, events, and materials in purposeful contexts.
- **Authentic** – The conviction that real, rich, complex ideas and materials should be central to the curriculum.
- **Expressive** – Employing a whole range of media – speech, writing, drawing, poetry, dance, drama, music, movement, and visual arts – to encourage engagement of ideas and construction of meaning.
- **Reflective** – Learners need to reflect upon and debrief on how well they have actioned, thought and learned.
- **Social** – The belief that learning is socially constructed and often interactional, and teachers need to create classroom interactions that scaffold learning.
- **Collaborative** – Cooperative learning activities which tap the social power of learning are preferable to an individualistic and competitive approach.
- **Democratic** – That the classroom should model community practice, with learners learning their rights, responsibilities as citizens, and ways to contribute to the community.
- **Cognitive** – Providing learners with opportunities to develop true understanding of concepts through higher-order thinking, inquiry learning and being able to self-monitor their thinking.
- **Developmental** – The need for schooling to fit its activities to the developmental level of students.
- **Constructivist** – Where students understand the power of creating and reinventing their own cognitive path.
- **Challenging** – The commitment to providing learners with genuine challenges and choices, and facilitating their development as responsible learners.

Zemelman, S., Daniels, H. and Hyde, A. (1998). *Best practice: New standards for teaching and learning in America's schools*. 2nd ed. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Callison, D. (2001). Inquiry, literacy and the Learning Laboratory. In Hay, L., Hanson, K & Henri, J. (eds.) *New millennium, new horizons: Information services in schools. 2000 online conference proceedings*. Wagga Wagga, N.S.W.: Centre for Studies in Teacher Librarianship, Charles Sturt University, 55-64.

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