

# **Learner-Centered Psychological Principles:**

## **Guidelines for School Redesign and Reform**

American Psychological Association Task Force on Psychology in Education and the mid-continent Regional Education Laboratory, 1999-

“The following principles, which are consistent with more than a century of research on teaching and learning, are widely shared and implicitly recognized in many excellent programs found in today’s schools.” (page5) “Our immediate goal in offering these learner-centered psychological principles is to provide a framework that can contribute to current education reform and school redesign efforts.. . .The following fourteen psychological principles pertain to the *learner* and the *learning process*. They focus on psychological factors that are primarily internal to the learner, while recognizing external environment or contextual factors that interact with these internal factors.” (page6)

### **Cognitive and Metacognitive Factors**

#### ***Principle 1:*** The Nature of the Learning Process

The learning of complex subject matter is most effective when it is an intentional process of constructing meaning from information and experience.

#### ***Principle 2:*** Goal of the Learning Process

The successful learner, over time and with support and instructional guidance, can create meaningful, coherent representations of knowledge.

#### ***Principle 3:*** The Construction of Knowledge

The successful learner can link new information with existing knowledge in meaningful ways.

#### ***Principle 4:*** Strategic Thinking

The successful learner can create and use a repertoire of thinking and reasoning strategies to achieve complex learning goals.

#### ***Principle 5:*** Thinking About Thinking

Higher order strategies for selecting and monitoring mental operations facilitate creative and critical thinking.

#### ***Principle 6:*** Context of Learning

Learning is influenced by environmental factors, including culture, technology, and instructional practice.

## Motivational and Affective Factors

### *Principle 7: Motivational and Emotional Influences on Learning*

What and how much is learned is influenced by the learner's motivation. Motivation to learn, in turn, is influenced by the individual's emotional states, beliefs, interests and goals, and habits of thinking.

### *Principle 8: Intrinsic Motivation to Learn*

The learner's creativity, higher order thinking, and natural curiosity all contribute to motivation to learn. Intrinsic motivation is stimulated by tasks of optimal novelty and difficulty, relevant to person interests, and providing for personal choice and control.

### *Principle 9: Effects of Motivation on Effort*

Acquisition of complex knowledge and skills requires extended learner effort and guided practice. Without learners' motivation to learn, the willingness to exert this effort is unlikely with coercion.

## Developmental and Social Factors

### *Principle 10: Developmental Influences on Learning*

As individuals develop, there are different opportunities and constraints for learning. Learning is most effective when differential development within and across physical, intellectual, emotional, and social domains is taken into account.

### *Principle 11: Social Influences on Learning*

Social interactions, interpersonal relations, and communication with others influence learning.

## Individual Differences

### *Principle 12: Individual Differences in Learning*

Learners have different strategies, approaches, and capabilities for learning that are a function of prior experience and heredity.

### *Principle 13: Learning and Diversity*

Learning is most effective when differences in learners' linguistic, cultural, and social backgrounds are taken into account.

### *Principle 14: Standards and Assessment*

Setting appropriately high and challenging standards and assessing the learner as well as learning progress—including diagnostic, process, and outcomes assessment—are integral parts of the learning process.

# Learner-Centered Psychological Principles

