

The Seven Laws of Teaching

These principles are enumerated and explained by John Milton Gregory, a Baptist Minister and Educator, in The Seven Laws of Teaching, revised edition (1917, original 1884), reprinted by Baker Book House, 1993.) These principles continue to be popular with Christian Schools and Home schoolers who want to pursue a “classical education.”

1. **The Law of the Teacher:** The teacher must know that which he would teach; therefore, know thoroughly, clearly, and familiarly the lesson you wish to teach.
2. **The Law of the Learner:** The learner must attend with interest to the material to be learned; therefore, gain and keep the attention and interest of the pupils on the lesson. Do not try to teach without attention.
3. **The Law of the Language:** The language used in teaching must be common to teacher and learner; therefore, use words understood in the same way by the pupils and yourself.
4. **The Law of the Lesson:** The truth to be taught must be learned through truth already known; therefore, begin with what is already well known to the pupil about the subject, and proceed to the new material by single, easy, and natural steps.
5. **The Law of the Teaching Process:** Teaching is arousing and using the pupil's mind to grasp the desired thought or to master the desired art; therefore, stimulate the pupil's own mind to action. Keep his thought as much as possible ahead of your expression, placing him in the attitude of a discoverer and anticipator.
6. **The Law of the Learning Process:** The student must reproduce in his own mind the truth to be learned; therefore, require the pupil to reproduce in thought the lesson he is learning---thinking it out in its various phases and applications until he can express it in his own language.
7. **The Law of Review and Application:** The completion, test, and confirmation of the work of teaching must be made by review and application; therefore, review, review, review, reproducing the old, deepening its impression with new thought, linking it with added meanings, finding new applications, correcting any false views, and completing the true.

Online resources:

- “A Home schooler’s Discussion of the 7 Laws”: <http://www.eho.org/sevenlaws.htm>
“Gregory’s entire book in downloadable form”: http://www.sschoo.com/content/7_Laws.htm
“A Contemporary Abridgement in pdf form”: <http://www.kittle.siu.edu/course/hed491/7rules.pdf>
“A Restatement of the Rules for Presenters”: http://www.natsem.com/law_w.htm

A Shorter Version: In Acrostic Form

- *T**eachers know their stuff
- *E**eager students pay attention
- *A**ble to understand each other
- *C**onnect the known to the unknown
- *H**elp children to find out for themselves
- *E**xpress and explain it
- *R**eview and apply it

Seven Laws to Help You Present Better: An Abridged version

1. Know the subject

Study the material fresh each time
Seek out and use illustrations from real life
Use a natural order of truth, from the simple to the complex

2. Generate audience interest

Gain and keep the attention and interest of your audience
Use a variety of presentation techniques: visual aids, stories, illustrations, questions and discussion Make your presentation interactive by asking questions

3. Use words that your audience knows

Use short sentences
Explain new ideas by using objects, visual aids, slides, pictures, analogies and discussion

4. Build on known truths

Relate your points and illustrations to what your audience has experienced
Help your audience understand that practical new knowledge is usable in life experience

5. Stimulate self-learning

Use practical exercises and illustrations that activate audience members' imaginations and get them involved
Encourage your audience to try new skills and seek new knowledge. Demystify the unknown

6. Learn by doing

Stimulate audience questioning, answering and participation
Make sure your audience's actions are practical. An activity must lead somewhere and go there for a reason

7. Tell them, tell them again, then tell them what you told them

Remember that review is the final touch to your presentation
Repetition begets retention.

