

## **CAPITALIZING ON STUDENTS' PRIOR KNOWLEDGE**

“If there is one thing that all psychologists can agree on, it is that prior knowledge and experience affect current behavior and learning” (Svinicki, 2004, p. 27).

“A disadvantage of prior knowledge is that sometimes a given learner’s prior knowledge is incorrect, and that can result in confusion or misunderstanding” (Svinicki, 2004, p. 27).

## **INSTRUCTOR STRATEGIES TO HELP STUDENTS OVERCOME PRIOR MISCONCEPTIONS**

Source: Learning and Motivation in the Postsecondary Classroom, by  
Marilla D. Svinicki, p. 192.

1. Confront students with conflicting data, in a way that is hard to ignore. Do this by “forcing students to make a prediction before they see the real data.” This makes misconceptions easy to see.
2. Use collaborative learning to make “student thinking public and therefore possible to evaluate.”
3. Ask students probing questions and “don’t give them the answer right away.”
4. Show students how to process conflicting data by thinking aloud.
5. Present content in multiple ways, such as through examples, pictures, experiences, analogies, etc.
6. Frequently check for inaccuracy in students’ thinking through the use of Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs).