

Using Learning-Centered Practices to Achieve Student Learning Goals

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Introductions

✦ Who are you?

– Administrators

– Faculty

– Assessment directors/ self-study coordinators

✦ How many people are familiar with the concept of learning centered teaching?

Objectives of this session

- ✦ Discuss how and why learning centered approaches can be fostered
- ✦ Learn about the varieties and ways of implementing learning centered practices
- ✦ Gain an understanding of how to objectively assess the learning centered status of courses and programs through rubrics
- ✦ Gain an understanding of what incremental steps educators can take to improve courses and programs

What is learning centered teaching?

- ✦ Shifts the role of the instructors from one of sage or giver of information to one of facilitating student learning or creating an environment for learning.
- ✦ Learner-centered teaching does not use a single teaching method
- ✦ Phrase student centered learning is also used, but some faculty do not like it as much

Why should administrators encourage faculty to implement learning centered teaching?



Learner-centered teaching is increasingly being encouraged in higher education

- ✦ The swift growth in the number of institutions of higher learning using the NSSE support the wide spread acceptance of learning centered teaching

- ✦ Regional accreditation standards are focusing on learning outcomes

Learning theories support learning centered approaches

- highlight the roles of active engagement
- show social interaction is important for learning
- focus on the critical role of students' own construction of knowledge

– Bruner, 1966; Kafai & Resnick, 1996; Piaget, 1963; Vygotsky, 1978.



Benefits of learning centered education

- ◆ increased motivation for learning
- ◆ greater satisfaction with school
- ◆ both of these outcomes leading to greater achievement



Johnson, 1991; Maxwell, 1998; Slavin, 1990


Important outcomes of learning centered approaches

When the focus is placed on student learning,

- ✦ colleges attain higher rates of student retention
- ✦ have better prepared graduates

than those students who were more traditionally trained.

Our experiences show that many instructors are at a loss in terms of how to transform their own teaching to be more learning centered.



✦ What have you found difficult for faculty to accept or change about learning centered approaches?

Myths about learning centered teaching

- ✦ Can only be implemented in small classes
- ✦ Can only be implemented in upper level or graduate classes
- ✦ Reduces the content covered
- ✦ Reduces the rigor of the courses
 - When students engage in active learning the course gets dumped down

Needs of non-traditional and online learners

- ✦ pushing distance education to be more vivid, interactive, and learning centered in nature.
- ✦ creating challenges of how to create learning centered environments and online learning centered communities



What will help you or your faculty implement learning centered teaching?



Some suggestions for what will help faculty to implement learning centered teaching

- ✦ Further education about what is learning centered teaching
 - Courses can be learning centered without sacrificing content and rigor
 - There are many different ways to implement learning centered teaching
- ✦ Easier and more practical to make incremental, transformative changes

A continuum from teacher centered to learning centered

- ✦ Teacher centered and learning centered teaching are not either/ or situations, but a series of continua
- ✦ Courses can be at different points along the teacher-learning centered continua
- ✦ I will be giving you examples of series of continua formed into rubrics later

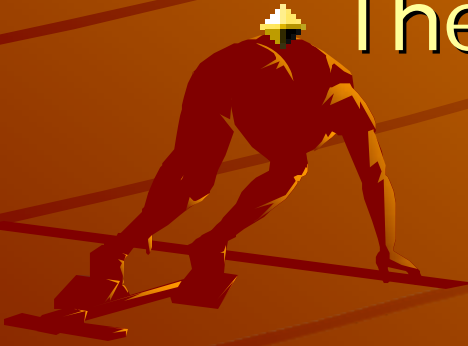
According to Weimer (2002) there are 5 practices that need to change to achieve learning centered teaching

- ✦ The functions of content
- ✦ The role of the teacher
- ✦ The responsibility for learning
- ✦ The processes and purposes of evaluation
- ✦ The balance of power

✦ Within this workshop we will focus on:

1 practice area

✦ The responsibility for learning



Components of the responsibility for learning

- ✦ Responsibility is shared between the teacher and the students
- ✦ Students develop learning skills for further learning
- ✦ Students become self-directed lifelong learners



Components of the responsibility for learning (continued)

- ✦ Students can and do assess their own learning
- ✦ Students become proficient at self-assessment
- ✦ Students become proficient with all information literacy skills (e.g., accessing and evaluating sources, using information legally)



Reading the Rubric

Criterion↓; level of standard→	Employs learning centered Approaches	Transitioning to learning-centered approaches		Employs teacher centered approaches
		higher level of transitioning	lower level of transitioning	
The Real Independent Component of Learning	1. responsibility is shared between the teacher and the students with the teacher providing opportunities to learn, ongoing assessment and feedback so that the students take responsibility for achieving the stated learning objectives	1. teacher provides ongoing opportunities to learn, for <input type="checkbox"/> to accomplish Major component	1. teacher assumes most responsibility for the student learning by providing detailed notes of content to be learned and reviewing the content to be examined while assisting students to learn the material and meet objectives	1. teacher assumes all responsibility for the students learning by giving them the content in a memorizable way, not requiring them to make meaning of the content and telling students exactly what will be on the exams
	2. students develop learning skills for further learning (i.e., time management, self-monitoring, goal setting)	2. students develop some learning skills for further learning (learning how to learn skills)	2. students develop few learning skills for further learning (learning how to learn skills)	2. teacher examine exactly what was covered in class, only requiring students to recall information without learning how to learn it
	3. students become self-directed, lifelong learners <input type="checkbox"/> students become aware of their own learning, their abilities to learn	3. students become self-directed learners in specific, prescribed areas i.e., learning to read assigned material <input type="checkbox"/> students become somewhat aware of their own learning, their learning abilities	3. Aspects of major component <input type="checkbox"/> encouraged by the teacher <input type="checkbox"/> Some students become somewhat aware of their own learning, or their learning abilities	3. students do not become self-directed, lifelong learners <input type="checkbox"/> students do not become aware of their own learning, nor their abilities to learn.

Comprehension check: What criterion/ criteria and component(s) and level(s) is this example within the responsibility for learning?

- ✦ Lifelong learning is a goal of this educational program
- ✦ Teachers do not explicitly model these skills with students in the classroom, lab or 1:1
- ✦ Students are not given opportunities to practice lifelong learning skills
- ✦ As students graduate, they are surveyed on their goal setting and time management skills

✦ Should walk audience through incrementally from present level up through levels to show how incrementally can change item



Possible examples (for the next activity) to consider in terms of how much the students assume responsibility for learning:

- ◆ Teachers provide their complete lecture notes online
- ◆ Teachers tell students what content will be on the test and how it will be tested
- ◆ Teachers provide all required and selective reading assignments

Small group activity:

- ✦ Determine the criterion/ component and the level of the learning centeredness of the example you choose to focus on
- ✦ Using the rubric as a guide, discuss ways that you can change this example to make it more learning centered
- ✦ Be creative, think of alternative ways to help students to accept responsibility for their learning
- ✦ Complete the worksheet that is the last page of handout
- ✦ We will discuss solutions with the larger group

Rubrics on 5 practice areas

1 rubric for each practice area

- ◆ The functions of content
- ◆ The role of the teacher
- ◆ The responsibility for learning
- ◆ The processes and purposes of evaluation
- ◆ The balance of power

Courses can be at different points on each practice criterion on each rubric

The function of content

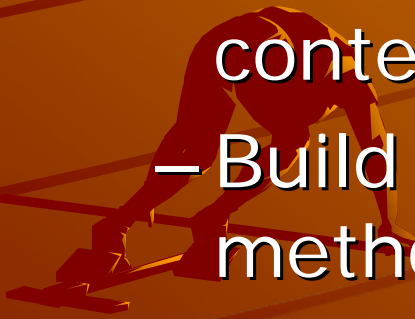
✦ In addition to building a knowledge base, the content facilitates students to:

– Build an appreciation for value of content

– Build discipline-specific learning methodologies

– Practice using inquiry or ways of thinking in the discipline

– Learn to solve real problems



The function of content (continued)

- ✦ Students engage in most of the content to make it their own, students make meaning out of the content
- ✦ Content can help students develop an organizing framework or way to learn in this discipline
- ✦ Content is framed so that students see how it can be applied in the future

The role of the teacher

- ✦ The teacher creates an environment that:
 - Fosters students learning
 - Accommodates different learning styles
- ✦ Explicitly aligns objectives, teaching methods and assessment consistently

The role of the teacher (continued)

- ✦ Utilizes multiple teaching techniques appropriate for student learning goals
- ✦ Designs activities in which students interact with the material, the teacher and each other
- ✦ Articulates and refers to SMART objectives
- ✦ Inspires and encourages student ownership of learning

The purposes and processes of evaluation

- ✦ Integrated Assessment
- ✦ Formative assessment with constructive feedback
- ✦ Peer and self assessment
- ✦ Multiple opportunities to learn and demonstrate mastery
- ✦ Students encouraged to justify their answers
- ✦ Students and teachers agree on feedback timeframes
- ✦ Authentic assessment is used throughout

The balance of power (control issues)

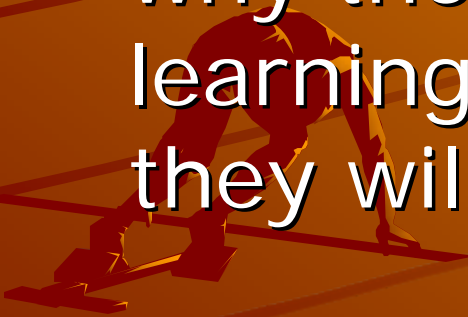
- ✦ Students are encouraged to explore additional content
- ✦ Students are encouraged to express alternative perspectives whenever appropriate
- ✦ Use mastery or contract grading
- ✦ Assignments are open ended
- ✦ Policies, deadlines are negotiated and adhered to
- ✦ Students take advantage of opportunities to learn

Uses of the rubrics


- ◆ Accreditation tool to document the learning-centered status of programs
- ◆ Can plan developmental progression of an educational program
- ◆ Assessment tool
 - Self, peer or in conjunction with consultation on teaching
- ◆ Shows how individuals or programs implemented learning centered teaching
- ◆ Create dossier artifacts, can be used over time

Uses of the rubrics

- ✦ As a stimulus for discussion with faculty individually or in workshops
- ✦ To begin dialogue with students on why they are implementing more learning centered practices and how they will be teaching



Uses of the worksheets

- ✦ Plan enhancements to existing teaching practices
 - ✦ Develop strategies for incorporating new teaching practices
 - ✦ How to plan incremental and achievable changes toward learning centered teaching
- 

How can you use this material
in accreditation self-study and
review process?



Desirable to have a unified learning centered approach

- ✦ Holistic integration of key instructional characteristics or components and desired outcomes
- ✦ Use of individual learning centered techniques may be a good beginning toward becoming learning centered



Questions? Comments?

