Introduction to teaching and assessing so students will learn more using learner-centered teaching
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Warm-up activity

How can instructor’s behaviors increase learning?

Think about why assessment is a key driver for learning, especially with undergraduate students
At the end of this session you will be able to:

- identify characteristics of learner-centered teaching
- Discuss effective roles of instructors to increase learning
- discuss various purposes and processes of assessment
- formulate a plan to make specific changes in your teaching
Some facts to help you implement learner-centered teaching

Courses can be learner-centered without sacrificing content and rigor

There are many different ways to implement learner-centered teaching

Easier and more practical to make changes in one area at a time, or make small changes
Faculty need to know and accept the advantages of learner-centered approaches before they will change their teaching.
Learner-centered teaching

It is an approach to teaching that focuses on student learning – rather than on what the teacher is doing.

Learner-centered teaching is not one specific teaching method.

Many different instructional methods can use a learner-centered approach.
Why learner-centered approaches should be implemented?

There is good evidence to support teaching this way.

Educators are under increasing pressure to use learner-centered teaching.
Students/graduates of learner-centered programs

Know why they need to learn and how to learn

Have self awareness of their learning abilities and their process of gaining it

Are responsible and are prepared to become informed citizens

Can retrieve & evaluate information

Use knowledge to solve problems

Can communicate their knowledge in real settings

Support for why educators need to implement learner-centered teaching

Comes from numerous sources:
- Learning theories
- Research on student learning and student engagement
- Accreditation requirements for professional programs and college accreditation agencies
Regional accreditation standards are focusing on learning outcomes

Accreditation agencies expect institutions to assess student learning outcomes

– Assessment of student learning outcomes are fundamental to the accreditation process

Focus on assessment of student learning is congruent with learner-centered teaching

http://www.msche.org/publications/characteristics,

Middle States Commission on Higher Education. (2003)  Student Learning Assessment
Divide and conquer works for implementing learner-centered teaching also.

“Really? — my people always say multiply and conquer.”
According to Weimer (2002) there are 5 practices or dimensions that need to change to achieve learning centered teaching:

- The functions of content
- The role of the instructor
- The responsibility for learning
- The processes and purposes of assessment
- The balance of power

What do you do with content in a course?
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.
How do you decide how to conduct or teach the course after you selected the content to teach?
The role of the instructor

The instructor creates an environment that:

– Fosters students learning
– Accommodates different learning styles
The role of the instructor (continued)

- Explicitly aligns objectives, teaching methods and assessment consistently
- Utilizes multiple teaching techniques appropriate for student learning goals
- Designs activities in which students interact with the material, the teacher and each other
- Motives students to learn intrinsically
Who should take responsibility for learning?
Who should take responsibility for learning?

The students should

Often it is the faculty who does because we adapt our teaching to fit requests/ needs of students through detailed notes, study guides
Consequence of faculty taking responsibility for learning

- Students remain passive
- Students do not gain confidence in their ability to learn on their own

Yet a common goal of higher education is for graduates to be self-directed learners who can continue to learn the rest of their lives.
Faculty need to teach students how to take responsibility for learning

There are specific skills that can be taught, practiced and mastered
Why do you assess students?

How does the manner in which you assess students have learning implications or consequences for the students?
The purposes and processes of assessment

Assessment is integrated within the learning process

Instructors give formative feedback for the purposes of fostering improvement

Students have multiple opportunities to assess themselves and their peers

Students can learn from their mistakes and then demonstrate mastery
Instructors encourage students to justify their answers when they do not agree with those of instructor.

Instructor and students: mutually agree on a timeframe for feedback and always follows the timeframe for providing feedback

Instructor uses authentic assessment throughout the course
What happens if students have some control over how the course is run?
The balance of power

Learner-centered approaches empower students to take responsibility and to share in some of the decisions about their courses

- Students can have some say over some policies, deadlines

Allows students some grading options
The balance of power

Once students begin to gain some control over the course, they will engage more in the course and will learn more.
Peer teaching activity (13 minutes)

Break into pairs

For 3 minutes, each person studies a different dimension (a different colored sheet for each dimension) to prepare to explain it to the other person.

I will answer any questions or help you understand the dimension.

Then explain both dimensions spending about 5 minutes on each dimension and especially focusing on the examples.
Beginning to teach so students will learn more

Changes in 1 dimension will lead to changes in another dimension

You can start anywhere
Making changes in your teaching

Select one component of one dimension to focus on for the duration of the workshop.

We will form small groups of people working on the same dimension.

I have prepared questions to help guide you in your planning to make changes.
Forming Groups to Make changes

Who wants to focus on the role of the instructor?

Who wants to focus on assessment?

Which components are you considering transforming?

Once in the larger section for the chosen dimension, form smaller sub-groups working on the same component.
Select one component you want to consider

- Each component has specific questions to help you identify how you can change your course (spend 15 minutes on questions)
  - Questions are grouped by dimension
  - Components are labeled and numbered as they are on the tables you have

Answer only the questions for the component you want to change

- Individually answer the questions about how you teach (usually in the middle of the questions)
- Discuss in groups the questions about in
2 part small group activity (20 minutes)

Groups will be working on the same component

Part 1 - consider possible changes
- Consider which changes you might make based on the discussion you just had
- Agree upon 1-2 possible changes

Part 2 - planning for transformation
Discuss the answers to the questions on the planning for transformation form for the selected component
Complete the planning for transformation form (green sheet) as a group or individually

Use the form as a stimulus to plan how you can assist your students to learn more through the use of this component

Pay special attention to the following tactical questions
Answer tactical planning questions

What do you need to do, decide prior to making changes?

Identify obstacles or challenges that need to be overcome

Identify strategies for overcoming obstacles

Identify necessary resources

How can you get students to accept this change?
Discussion of next steps
Any questions?

Please complete the feedback form.