

TEACHING  
**UNPREPARED**  
STUDENTS

Strategies for Promoting Success  
and Retention in Higher Education

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*with a forward by Sandra Fluke*

# Learner-Centered INSTRUCTION

Building Relationships for Student Success



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- Lea et al. (2003:322) characterizes student–centered learning as:
  1. Reliance on active rather than passive learning,
  2. Emphasis on deep learning and understanding,
  3. Increased responsibility and accountability on the part of the student,
  4. An increased sense of autonomy in the learner
  5. Interdependence between teacher and learner,
  6. Mutual respect within the learner teacher relationship,
  7. A reflexive approach to the teaching and learning process on the part of both teacher and learner.’

# Paradigm Shift in Institutional Attitudes About Learning

Teacher Centered  
Institutions



Vs. Learner Centered  
Institutions





## 1. LEARNER-CENTERED INSTRUCTION:

This applies to both curricula and specific techniques. It is contrasted with **teacher-centered**. It includes:

- . Techniques that focus on or account for learners' needs, styles, and goals.
- . Techniques that give some control to the student (group work, strategy training, etc.)
- . Curricula that include the consultation and input of students and that do not presuppose objectives in advance.
- . Techniques that allow for student creativity and innovation.
- . Techniques that enhance a student's sense of competence and self-worth.

**Table 1. Changes in student and teacher roles in learner-centered environments\***

<b>Changes in Teacher Role</b>	
<b>A shift from</b>	<b>A shift to</b>
Knowledge transmitter, primary source of information, content expert, and source of all answers.	Learning facilitator, collaborator, coach, mentor, knowledge navigator, and co-learner.
Teacher controls and directs all aspects of learning.	Teacher gives students more options and responsibilities for their own learning.
<b>Changes in Student Role</b>	
Passive recipient of information.	Active participant in the learning process.
Reproducing knowledge.	Producing and sharing knowledge, participating at times as expert.
Learning as a solitary activity.	Learning collaboratively with others.

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# Teachers Centered V/S Learner-Centered Curriculum

Teacher-Centered	Learner-Centered
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Focus is on instructor</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Focus is on both students and instructor</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Instructor talks; students listen</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Instructor models; students interact with instructor and one another</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students work alone</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students work in pairs, in groups, or alone depending on the purpose of the activity</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Instructor monitors and corrects every student utterance</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students talk without constant instructor monitoring</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Instructor chooses topics</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students have some choice of topics</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Instructor answers student's questions about language</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students answer each other's questions, using instructor as an information resource</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Classroom is quite</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Classroom is often noisy and busy</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Instructor evaluates student learning</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students evaluate their own learning; instructor also evaluates</li></ul>

## Five Steps to Create a Progressive, Student-Centered Classroom

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1. Create ongoing projects.
2. Integrate technology.
3. Replace homework with engaging in-class activities.
4. Eliminate rules and consequences.
5. Involve students in evaluation.



## **Some of Benefits of Learner-Centered Education**

- The role of the educator shifts. No longer is the teacher simply someone who stands at the front of the room imparting knowledge to students. Instead, the instructor works as an educational architect and facilitator.
- Students assume responsibility for their own learning. The educator and student work together to decide on appropriate coursework and evaluation. It is the student's job to follow through with these choices.
- Rather than revolving around content, the learner-centered classroom centers around learning processes. These are meta-cognitive skills that the student can apply in any educational scenario. Therefore the student is more likely to attain success in a new educational environments.
- The student is no longer a passive “receptacle” for the teacher's knowledge. Instead, the student becomes an active part of the learning process, and may even assist in teaching his or her classmates.
- The learner-centered classroom provides an emphasis upon higher-order thinking skills, such as the ability to judge and evaluate. Students who master these skills are better able to assimilate new information and apply it to different situations (<http://learnercentered.wikispaces.com/Benefits>).

# Preparing for Resistance to Learner-Centered Education



**Resistance comes in  
multiple forms:**

- The Student
- University Administrators  
(Deans, Department  
Chairs, )



# Countering Resistance to Learner-Center Education

- On the first day of class provide data on the benefits of the learner-centered approach;
- “point out the skills” that students developed through learner-centered approach “...that can be used in their future careers” (Gabriel, p.78).  
In an instructive example,
- Solicit student direct involvement; inform students the success of a course depends on their willingness to adapt to active learning mode” (and not just the instructor).
- Instructor must utilize the syllabus as a method to ensure that the student is “invested” in their education.

# Activities for the Instructor

- How would you utilize the learner-centered approach in your course?
- How would you utilize the learner-centered approach during your office hours?
- What aspect of the learner-centered approach is most beneficial to your teaching?
- What type of in-class learning activities would you utilize to increase student understanding of core concepts in your discipline?



# LEARNER- CENTERED *Teaching*

FIVE KEY CHANGES  
→ TO PRACTICE

Maryellen Weimer  
SECOND EDITION

LEARNER-CENTERED  
ASSESSMENT ON  
COLLEGE CAMPUSES

*Shifting the Focus  
from Teaching to  
Learning*

MARY E. HUBA  
JANN E. FREED

The  
School Leader's  
GUIDE  
to  
Learner-Centered  
Education

From  
COMPLEXITY



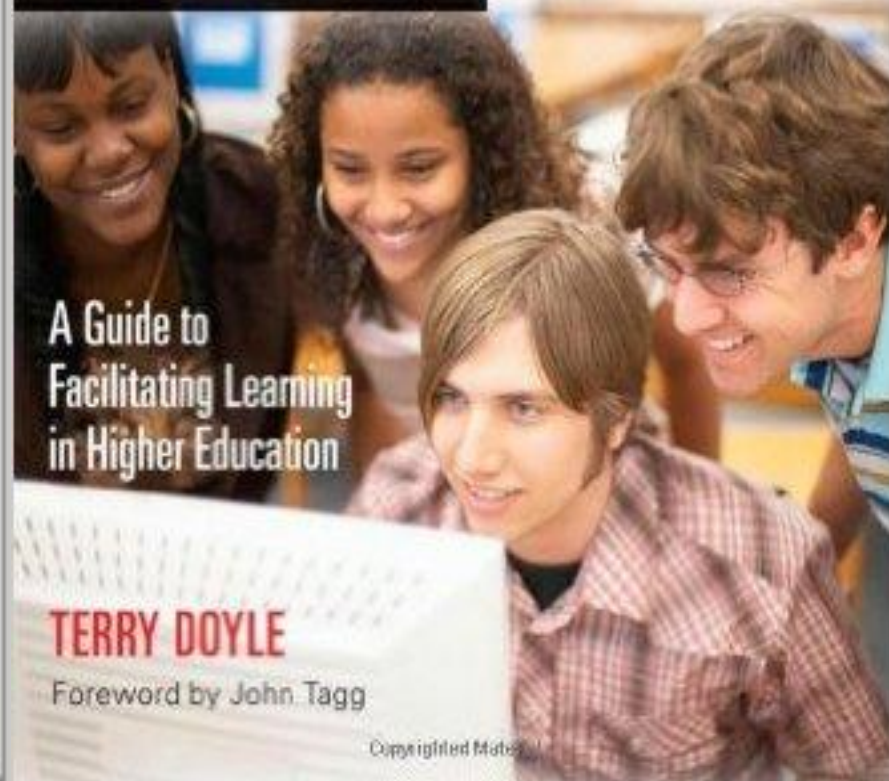
to  
SIMPLICITY

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Helping  
Students  
Learn

in a  
Learner-  
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Environment



A Guide to  
Facilitating Learning  
in Higher Education

TERRY DOYLE

Foreword by John Tagg

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# HOW LEARNING WORKS

7 Research-Based Principles  
for Smart Teaching

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Michael D. Bransford | Melissa D. Peters  
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WHAT  
THE  
BEST  
COLLEGE  
TEACHERS  
DO

Stephen D. Brookfield

Becoming  
a Critically  
Reflective  
Teacher

Parker J. PALMER



THE  
COURAGE  
TO  
TEACH

EXPLORING  
the INNER LANDSCAPE  
of a TEACHER'S LIFE

LEARNER-  
CENTERED  
*Teaching*

FIVE KEY CHANGES  
TO PRACTICE

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