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# Transforming Classroom and Online Courses to Become more Learning-Centered

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# Objectives of this session

- Discuss how and why learning centered approaches can be fostered
  - Gain experience with an incremental guide to becoming more learning centered in approach
  - Explore possible workshops for use at your home institution
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# 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 faculty do not like it as much
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Why should we as faculty developers  
encourage learning centered  
teaching?

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# 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

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# Support for learning centered approaches

- Supported by theories of learning
  - That highlight the roles of active engagement
  - Social interaction in the students' own construction of knowledge

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

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# Benefits of learning centered education

- Increased motivation for learning
- Greater satisfaction with school
- Both of these outcomes leading to greater achievement

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# 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.

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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?
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# 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

Blumberg, P., & Everett, J. (2005).

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# 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
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# Promoting learning centered teaching was the most important issue for faculty developers

- Results of a survey of 494 North American, faculty-developers who are members of POD
- faculty developers are seeking guidance in how to assist faculty to transform their teaching to be more learning centered

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What will help your faculty implement  
learning centered teaching?

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# What will help your faculty 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
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# A continuum from teacher centered to learning centered

- Teacher centered and learning centered teaching are not a 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 later
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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

Weimer, M. (2002). *Learner-centered teaching*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

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# An example

- Within this workshop we will focus on:
    - 1 practice area of the processes and purposes of evaluation, and
    - 1 component of this practice area
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# The Processes & Purposes 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
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# 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 <b>Major component</b> to splash	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. <b>Aspects of major component</b>  <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.

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# Comprehension Check: A course grading scheme

- 2 non-cumulative exams = 20% each\*
- Integrative final = 30%
- Critical summary of the literature on a specific topic chosen by the student = 20%
- Class participation = 10%

\* can take a make-up exam to improve grade on the first non-cumulative exam.

- Make up exam is given 1 week after students receive grade on the test
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## Small group activity (~15 minutes)

Using the brief example given on how students are graded, in small groups, complete the attached worksheets

- Decide what projected level of learning centered practice is reasonable for the next time this course is taught
- Develop a plan for making this grading scheme more learning centered-
  - Be creative, think of alternative ways to assess students
- Answer the questions on the second page

We will discuss solutions with the larger group

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# 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

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# 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
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## The Function of Content (cont.)

- 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
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# The Role of the Teacher

- The teacher creates an environment that:
    - Fosters students learning
    - Accommodates different learning styles
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# The Role of the Teacher

- 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
  - Articulates and refers to SMART objectives
  - Inspires and encourages student ownership of learning
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# 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
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# The Responsibility for Learning

- 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)
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# 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
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## The **B**alance 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
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# Uses of the Rubrics

- Assessment tool
    - Self, peer or in conjunction with consultation on teaching
  - Shows how implemented learning centered teaching
  - Create dossier artifacts, can be used over time
  - Can plan developmental progression of an educational program
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# 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
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# 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
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# How to use this guide in Workshops?

- The entire set of rubrics is too overwhelming the first time you introduce it
    - That is why we worked on just 1 specific aspect of one practice
  - I divide the material into 2 workshops
    - Introduction to teaching focusing on learning
    - Implementing learning centered approaches in your teaching
      - Participants select 1 practice area and focus on changing a course using the aspects of that rubrics
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# How will you use this material

- Any suggestions for workshops?



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## 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
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Questions? Comments?

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