

Improving Learner-Centered Teaching in Your Online Environment

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### **Introduction**

Creating an environment conducive to maximized constructivist learning theory is the ultimate goal of learner-centered online instruction (Mccombs, 2015). As digital technologies continue to rapidly change the educational landscape it is important that educators keep with the trends. Three major keys to creating a student-centered learning environment include allowing students to assist in the selection and development of course materials, use of social media and web-based educational applications, and the effective use of learning management systems (DiClementi & Handelsman, 2005). Learner-centered environments ensure that student needs are being taken into consideration upon selection and development of course curriculum (Richmond, et al., 2016). Moreover, learner-centered environments encourage students to take on a major portion of the responsibility for applying knowledge, conducting inquiries, and making meaning of what they are learning (Orwat, et al., 2018). Whether you are an early childhood educator, an instructor in high school, or a university professor, cultivating a student-centered learning environment will assist your students to become independent learners who will take charge of their own education. However, developing a student-centered learning environment isn't always easy. As traditional classroom settings are being forced to transition to online environments, educators are faced with the challenge of using technology to promote effective learning strategies. In this presentation, we will explore these major keys and strategies that will make the transition from a teacher-centered learning environment to a student-centered learning environment a reality, and success, in an online learning community.

### **Presentation Elements**

The presentation will introduce participants to the 5 domains of college level learner-centered practices as described by Mccombs' (2015) while using an interactive online learning application. The five domains are as follows:

- Establish positive interpersonal relationships: Critical elements of this domain include connecting students with each other and addressing student technology hang-ups.
- Facilitate learning processes: Critical elements of this domain include connecting students with the educational content and providing students with adequate learning tips and strategies.
- Adapt to learning needs: Critical elements of this domain include rewarding student successes and addressing students' content and personal fears.
- Encourage personal challenge and responsibility: Critical elements of this domain include following up with struggling students and providing personalized feedback and assistance for those who may need it.
- Provides for individual and social learning needs: Critical elements of this domain include encouraging peer mentoring and personal responsibility and building a learning community.

### **Presentation Structure & Expected Outcomes**

The presentation will be an interactive demo of how to best use online learning technology to enhance the learning experience for everyone involved. The objectives are as follows:

1. Define and discuss learner-centered teaching and its role in higher education.
2. Evaluate online learner-centered teaching strategies and practices.
3. Identify online learner-centered teaching techniques that fit your personal philosophy.

**References**

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