The Learner-Centered Classroom

STARTALK Spring Meeting
April 29-30, 2011
Albuquerque, New Mexico
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Goals of this Presentation

• Participants will be able to explain what a learner-centered classroom is.
• Participants will be able to create a classroom environment that supports learner engagement.
• Participants will be able to design instruction and assessment to engage the learner.
• Participants will be able to assess their own effectiveness in delivering learner centered instruction.
What does a learner-centered classroom look like?
How do we know if students are really actively engaged in learning?
Let’s watch video clips of two classrooms-

1) A high school classroom where students are asking another student to participate in an activity.

(Grade 11-Intermediate Low)

Source: Student-centered Cooperative Learning, Consortium of Texas Chinese Language Institutes.
Let’s watch video clips of two classrooms-

2) A kindergarten class where students are buying and selling something.

(Novice Mid)

Source: *Staying in the Target Language*, Concordia Language Villages
Discussion Question 1

What evidence do you have that these students are engaged in learning?
Discussion Question 2

What have the teachers done to create these learner-centered environments?
Discussion Question 3

How do the nature and purpose of the tasks contribute to the engagement of the students?
Discussion Question 4

What do you think the teachers had to do to prepare this type of lesson?
Video Clip 1:
Kindergarten Novice Low
Video-Guide Questions 1-4

Take 5 minutes to think about your own answers to the four questions.
Video-Guide Questions 1-4

Now share with a partner—compare your answers.
Whole-group Sharing

• Share the most important thing you identified about learner-centered classroom and student engagement
Whole-group Sharing

How would you define learner engagement?

Here is what you’ve said...
“By engaged learning, we mean that all student activities involve active cognitive processes such as creating, problem-solving, reasoning, decision-making, and evaluation. In addition, students are intrinsically motivated to learn due to the meaningful nature of the learning environment and activities.”

Engagement Theory - Kearsley and Shneiderman
Venn Diagram Comparison

- Ours
- Common
- Theirs
Learner-centered classroom practices

Let’s look at why students think their teachers should know about them.
Knowing the Learner

“The better teachers know their students the better they can meet their learning needs.”

(Alejandro, age 12)
Knowing the Learner

Teachers should know about their students... “so they can know fun projects the students would like to do.”

(Giovanni, age 12)
Knowing the Learner

“Teachers should get to know their students so they can figure out ways to help them learn.”

(Fabian, age 12)
Knowing the Learner

Resources you have in your handouts:

1) LinguaFolio: How Do I Learn?
2) LinguaFolio: What Have You Already Accomplished Using This Language
3) LinguaFolio: Optional Learning Summary Form
Knowing the Learner

In groups of 3-4, look over those resources, then generate a list of what you might learn about your students. (5 minutes)

1) What do you NEED to Know?

2) What would be NICE to Know?
NEED to Knows for STARTALK Programs

– The learner’s Language background.

– Characteristics of the American classroom environment.

– The learner’s developmental level.

– The learner’s special learning needs.

– The reason the learner is participating in the program.
NICE to Knows for STARTALK Programs

- The learner’s interests
- The learner’s technological skills
- The learner’s learning styles

• LinguaFolio: Learning Inventory
  LFBiography_Inventory.doc

• LinguaFolio: How Do I Learn
  LFBiography_HowDoILearn.docx
Others you think are important?
Strategies for setting learner-centered goals

Begin with the outcome or end goal in mind.

Then determine what evidence (assessment) will show whether the goal has been reached.

Then establish short term benchmarks to indicate progress toward the goal.
To keep in mind when setting learner-centered goals

Involve students in establishing their own individual goals.

Based on your knowledge of the students, create goals that are purposeful and meaningful for them.
Learner-centered Goals?

1) The student will describe his/her family.
2) The teacher will present ways to tell time.
3) The student will understand how to form the future tense.
4) The student will create a magazine feature article about a popular singer from the target culture.
Part 3: Creating tasks and assessments based on learner-centered goals

• With 2-3 other people, think back to the two videos we watched.

  1) Identify the task in each video.

  2) Decide what the goal of the task was.

  3) Describe a learner-centered assessment that would provide evidence that students have met that goal.
Developing a learner-centered mindset in the Language Program

Barriers
Discuss with a partner what has to change in these classrooms.
• The teacher worries that there will not be enough time to answer students’ questions.
• The teacher focuses on finishing the lesson as planned.
• The teacher is doing most of the talking and thinking.
• The class consists mostly of direct teaching.
• The teacher has arranged the desks in rows and students work individually.
• The teacher prefers a quiet classroom.
• The teacher asks students questions that only elicit factual one-word responses.
• The teacher expects students to respond quickly and correctly.
• The teacher responds mostly with evaluative comments; such as well done, good, that’s not right, or providing the “correct” answer.
• The teacher tends to create one task that is designed for all learners.
• The teacher has the same expectations for every learner.
• The teacher uses activities directly from the textbook.
Working toward a learner-centered classroom

Teacher-centered_____/_______/_____/___Learner-Centered
Checklist for Self-Assessment: Learner-centered Practices