

Make Your Classroom More Learner-Centered

em [Métodos de Ensino](#)

The KEY questions to ask yourself:

What is it my students need to know and be able to do during their professional lives?

What skills and knowledge will stand the test of time, given the dynamic nature of knowledge and information?

The Syllabus

- Allow students to have input into entire syllabus. Students interview each other about what they want to learn and teacher puts that information on the board/newsprint. Teacher brings a DRAFT syllabus to the class and distributes. Given all this, how should the course be revised?
- Give a quiz on the syllabus, individually and then in pairs and then the whole class. Don't count the quiz.
- Introduce assignments by having students get out syllabus and read it.

The First Day & Week of Class

- Discuss classroom climate the first day of class. Have students talk about a class in which they learned a lot and one where they didn't learn much. Have them free write on the conditions that could create a good learning climate. Have students complete sentence stems relating to

climate written on newsprint and placed around the room. Revisit whatever principles are developed and assess their presence, absence, and quality of the condition.

- Have students decide which assignments they will complete--teacher may make some mandatory, provides specifics about the assignments, including due dates.
- Have students write a short paper at the beginning of the term/semester outlining why they are taking the course and what they want to learn and the content that might help them accomplish these learning goals. Share in small groups and then prioritize a list of topics.
- Develop and prioritize a list of skills and awarenesses that students need to be successful with the content of this course.

Class Structure

- Use the class content to cover learning skills and to promote a self-awareness of learning.
- Use short activities routinely.
- Utilize learning center staff.
- Use supplementary materials--note taking, learning style inventories, etc.
- Teach students how to read the texts.
- Let students learn how to summarize--don't do it for them--by writing short summaries or possible test questions at the end of class.
- With small groups, have them think and write about successful/unsuccessful groups of which they've been members. Best and worst experiences studying in groups. What gifts and liabilities do

they bring to a group? Use an inventory to assess students' attitudes about working in a group.

- Have students provide the illustrations/examples, not the teacher.
- Write concepts on the board that arise during discussion and have students make connections while you draw arrows between.
- Use matrices and concept mapping. You'll need to take the time to teach students how to do both of these.

Assignments

- Have students discuss the details of an assignment.
- Have students self assess own work before submitting it.
- Allow time for students to discuss how their projects are going, while they are in the midst of doing them.
- Allow time for students to debrief their experiences--exams, projects, and papers--and write their own suggestions for next time.

Assessments

- Have students determine the content of the review sessions--topics and specific questions.
- Have students develop a plan for studying for the upcoming exam--with a time-line and list of activities.
- Leave one question blank on the exam. Have students write a question that was anticipated but not asked and answer it.
- Have students process "what can I learn from my exam results?"--What questions from lecture, book, etc.; which ones did they miss; why? Do a free write for themselves about what they should remember when

preparing for the next exam. Begin the review session for the next test by having them read what they've written.

- Ask students to meet individually with you if they do poorly on the exam. Use the meeting to have students do self-analysis about what worked and didn't work.
- Debrief the exam in ways that promote learning--"show me why you think that answer was correct"--discuss/debate it; maybe give some points.
- Have students self-assess their level of participation in the class.

Feedback

- Solicit feedback early and often. Don't wait until the end of the term.
- Have students complete a "start", "stop", "and continue" feedback sheet on the class.
- Use questions like "talk to me about how much and how well you learned from this activity?" not "did you like this activity?"
- Ask students, "what do you remember from this course?" (or from yesterday's or last week's class)
- Ask students: "how did this activity affect your learning?" "What about it needs to change so that if we do it again, you will learn more?"

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