

Follow-up Discussion

Professional Development Monthly Advisor and Planner (PDMAP)

Learner-Centered Instruction

October 2010

Discussion Questions:

1. The resources contrast the traditional approach to education – the teacher-focused transfer of knowledge to passive learners – with learner-centered instruction where the teacher receives input from learners and facilitates learning based on that input. What challenges does this paradigm shift present to teachers? What are some ways teachers can overcome such challenges?
2. Some of our learners may be most familiar or comfortable with a traditional approach to education that is more teacher-centered. How can teachers help these learners appreciate and understand the benefits of a learner-centered classroom?
3. The concept of learner choice is discussed in many of the resources. Learners can be given choices in what to learn (content), how to learn (process), and how to demonstrate their learning (product). Which area of choice do you find easiest to implement with your adult learners? Which area of choice is most challenging?
4. How can teachers implement learner-centered instruction while also adhering to the adult education program's established curriculum, materials and standardized assessments?
5. The authors of the CAELA Network article, *Evidence-Based Student Centered Instruction*, discuss the research-supported technique of connecting instruction to learners' lives. Share some ways in which you have incorporated your learners' lives in your lessons. What was the impact on learning?
6. Teachers who work at programs with managed enrollment have a stable group of learners. Teachers who work at programs with open enrollment are faced with a constantly changing group of learners. How can teachers implement learner-centered instruction in these two different contexts?

7. Some teachers might advocate that an independent study “learning lab” structure offers the greatest degree of learner centeredness, since each learner studies content that has been specifically matched to their assessed needs, studies in their own way, at their own pace, on their own chosen time. However, much research has indicated the benefits to learning and to retention when teachers build a community of learners, when instruction includes small-group work, when instruction includes task-based activities. Based on what you completed in the PD MAP, discuss ways in which group instruction can take advantage of community AND be learner-centered.
8. What did you learn about Multiple-Intelligences Theory from the resources in the PD MAP? How can you apply MIT with your learners?