

## WHAT MAKES TEACHING LEARNER-CENTERED?

### Teaching is learner-centered if . . .

It engages students in the hard and messy work of learning

*The problems:* Teachers are doing too many learning tasks for students.  
Too much teaching is telling, rather than students doing.

*Examples that illustrate the solution:* Students should be asking more questions than teachers  
Students should be doing the summaries and reviews

### Teaching is learner-centered if . . .

Students are being taught learning skills explicitly

*The problems:* Learning the content is more important than learning skills  
Teachers assume that learning skills are acquired by osmosis

*Examples that illustrate the solution:* Facing problems that students can't solve  
Assignments that get students doing the reading at the same time they develop reading skills

### Teaching is learner-centered if . . .

Students are given some control over learning processes

*The problems:* Teachers are making all the decisions about learning for students

*Examples that illustrate the solution:* Giving students some choice over what and how they learn  
Letting students decide the weight of some assignments

### Teaching is learner-centered if . . .

Students are reflecting (thinking about) what and how they are learning

*The problems:* Students don't know much about learning generally  
Students haven't encountered themselves as learners

*Examples that illustrate the solution:* Talk about learning  
Exam debriefs where student face the decisions made about learning

### Teaching is learner-centered if . . .

Students are learning from and with each other

*The problems:* Teachers underestimate how much and how well students can learn from each others  
Teachers have concerns about using group work

*Examples that illustrate the solution:* Collaboration on exams

These features of learner-centered teaching are discussed more fully in the second edition of Maryellen Weimer's book, *Learner-Centered Teaching* (available at [www.josseybass.com](http://www.josseybass.com)). Maryellen's email is [grg@psu.edu](mailto:grg@psu.edu) and she blogs in the Teaching Professor blog at [www.facultyfocus.com](http://www.facultyfocus.com)