

Teaching Tips

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Tips to Create a Learner-Centered Environment

In learner-centered education the teacher is the facilitator as much as, or more so, than the content expert. Through active engagement and experiential learning, students are required to become independent reflective life-long learners. Below are some tips to help preceptors create a learner-centered environment.

1. Create awareness about learner-centeredness

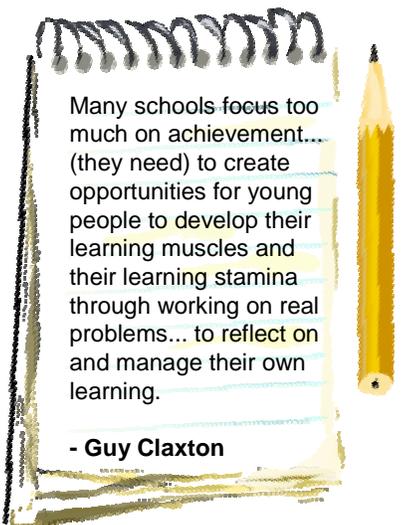
- Communicate how learner-centeredness affects both faculty and students' roles and responsibilities. Students' involvement in and accountability for their learning is critical to their success and teachers are expected to serve as a facilitator and a resource person.
- Consider how your interactions with students can impact their overall well-being; don't focus solely on conveying information.

2. Recognize the uniqueness of each learner

- Recognize that our learners are diverse in terms of culture, religion and education.
- Allow students some flexibility in their learning. Ask students what areas they are interested in developing and try to accommodate their interests.
- Develop students as independent learners. Encourage critical thinking, problem solving, reflection and self-assessment.
- Expect students to help identify deficiencies in their knowledge / skills and be ready to make provisions to fill these gaps.
- Encourage students to actualize their potential. For example, if they are interested in pediatrics, discuss their area of interest and refer them to faculty who can support and mentor them.

3. Encourage open communication about the curriculum

- Be explicit about learning outcomes and assessment. Students need to have clearly defined expectations and be informed about how they can achieve the expected competencies.
- Empower students to provide feedback on the formal and informal curriculum. Giving feedback enables students to gain insight into their learning and to understand their role in the process; it can also help us provide a better experience for our students.



Many schools focus too much on achievement... (they need) to create opportunities for young people to develop their learning muscles and their learning stamina through working on real problems... to reflect on and manage their own learning.

- Guy Claxton

References / Resources:

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Teaching Tips is a monthly e-newsletter for Faculty, Residents, and Community Preceptors sponsored by the DFSM Faculty Development Fellowship at Montefiore Medical Center. *Teaching Tips* will include practical teaching techniques for busy physicians who want to enhance teaching and learning at their clinical practices. If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions for future topics for *Teaching Tips* please contact Ellen Tattelman at etattelm@montefiore.org, Jennifer Purcell at jennifer.purcell@einstein.yu.edu or Stacia Maher at smaher@montefiore.org.