

Shifting the Focus of Activity from Teacher to Learners

In the traditional approach to teaching, most class time is spent with teacher lead instruction with lecturing and the students watching and listening. The students work individually on assignments, and cooperation is discouraged. Learner-centered teaching methods shift the focus of activity from the teacher to the learners.

These methods include:

- **Active learning**, in which students solve problems, answer questions, formulate questions of their own, discuss, explain, debate, or brainstorm during class
- **Cooperative learning**, in which students work in teams on problems and projects under conditions that assure both positive interdependence and individual accountability
- **Inductive teaching and learning**, in which students are first presented with challenges. Inductive methods include inquiry-based learning, case-based instruction, problem-based learning, project-based learning, discovery learning, and just-in-time teaching.

Learner-centered methods have repeatedly been shown to be superior to the traditional teacher-centered approach to instruction, a conclusion that applies whether the assessed outcome is short-term mastery, long-term retention, or depth of understanding of course material, acquisition of critical thinking or creative problem-solving skills, formation of positive attitudes toward the subject being taught, or level of self-confidence in knowledge and skills.

Richard Felder has written or co-authored a book and numerous papers about the use of learner-centered teaching methods in college science and engineering courses, some reporting on his own classroom research studies and some summarizing the literature. Click on the link to read more...

<https://www.engr.ncsu.edu/stem-resources/legacy-site/learner-centered/>