

Student-centred learning

This paper was developed in 1999 by Keri Moore, of the Course Improvement Team, in consultation with colleagues from EPI and ITAP. It provides some practical discussion points in relation to the concept of student-centred learning.

Underpinning concepts:

- Student-centred learning is a way of thinking about student learning that drives your teaching practice i.e. a focus on how the students are learning, what they experience, and how they engage in the learning context.
- Through gradual empowerment student-centred learning focuses on student outcomes rather than on teaching.
- This implies a conceptual shift from:

I will tell you this and therefore you will learn

to:

I want to help you in ways which are effective for you and match your needs.

A

checklist:

Attitude

✓✗

Students' ideas and questions are welcomed, valued and encouraged.

Students are seen as partners in a learning journey.

The student is supported when taking responsibility for their own learning

Staff have a commitment and desire to share their field of expertise and its relevance to professional practice.

Staff actively search for new ways to help students learn.

Staff learn about teaching from evaluating and reflecting on student learning.

Learning is fun and is vital to personal development for grasping opportunities throughout life.

Communication

Formal communications (subject guides, learning outcomes and assessment guidelines, timetables etc) are clear, specific and in writing. (This includes any changes to the original information).

Discussion of aims and intentions to include differing perspectives.

Students receive timely and adequate information on which they can base work/study plans and decisions.

Students are offered opportunities to discuss connections they are making with previous classes and other subjects in the course.

Students' experiences and views about RMIT's programs are actively sought and used as an integral part of planning for future programs.

Program/subject design

Student input is sought in planning subject revision.

Programs facilitate student choice - negotiation of learning outcomes where appropriate; student adaptation of own learning issues and context where possible.

The planning of all aspects of programs involves students to ensure their perspectives, ideas and needs have been accommodated.

Evaluation

Students are offered opportunities to give feedback with the assurance that issues will be addressed in response to that feedback.

Staff reflect on student feedback and performance seeking improvement / documentation in personal teaching portfolios.

Learning activities

Consideration and discussion has been given to prior learning i.e. address the needs of students who may be at different starting points.

Negotiation has taken place regarding the learning activities, (when appropriate and possible). So that they occur in ways that students find relevant, engaging and suitably challenging thereby ensuring the development of graduate capabilities.



A range of teaching methods are offered that will ensure the development of the necessary skills to meet the demands of industry and professional workplace.



'Less effective' students are exposed to the learning processes used by more effective learners, thus encouraging them to learn from each other. Therefore creating a forum for sharing learning approaches and ideas.



Opportunities are generated for students to explore their own hypotheses, promoting scholarly and reflective practices consistent with skill development as life- long learners.



Assessment activities

Staff explain assessment methods and negotiate where possible.



Staff check to ensure that the assessment achieves the desired graduate capabilities and requirements of professional practice in each discipline.



A range of assessment approaches is made available to accommodate different learning styles.



Opportunities are sought for both formal or informal peer and self-assessment.

