GOOD PRACTICES IN
STUDENT CENTERED LEARNING
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

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Student centered learning: definition

» Student-Centered Learning represents both a mindset and a culture within a given higher education institution and is a learning approach which is broadly related to, and supported by, constructivist theories of learning. It is characterized by innovative methods of teaching which aim to promote learning in communication with teachers and other learners and which take students seriously as active participants in their own learning, fostering transferable skills such as problem solving, critical thinking and reflective thinking.«

(from the Student Centred Learning Toolkit developed by ESU and Education International)
Student centered learning principles

- Principle I: SCL requires an Ongoing Reflexive Process.
- Principle II: SCL does not have a "One-Size-Fits-All" solution.
- Principle III: Students have Different Learning Styles.
- Principle IV: Students have Different Needs and Interests.
- Principle V: Choice is Central to Effective Learning in SCL.
- Principle VI: Students have Different Experiences and Background Knowledge.
- Principle VII: Students should have Control Over their Learning.
- Principle VIII: SCL is about "Enabling" not "Telling".
- Principle IX: Learning needs Cooperation between Students and Staff.
Student centered learning common misconceptions?

- SCL requires higher amount of resources
- SCL is not appropriate to teach a large groups
- SCL undermines the teaching profession
- Students have more work to do in SCL
- Teachers have to do more preparatory work in SCL
- SCL is not suitable for all academic fields
- Students learn very little subject matter
- Not all teachers can teach in student centred way
- SCL requires being technologically minded
Peer assessment

- It is an **enhancement-led evaluation**.

  **Aim**: Helps the participating institutions recognize their best practices and develop their educational philosophy

- Selection of universities

- Peer assessment teams

- Site visits

- Reports
Good practices summary

1. Student support activities and services
2. Management of facilities and resources
3. Student engagement in governance and QA
4. Institutional support for and recognition of quality teaching
5. Access and equity
6. Institutional culture
1. Student support activities and services

- **Tutoring/mentoring:** mentoring programme developed by the Student Service Centre together with the Latvian Student Union to support 1st year students’ adaptation and integration in a new learning environment.

- **Career counselling:** needs analysis with the labor market before commissioning courses, graduate tracking to understand educational outcomes from employment perspectives, well-developed guidance and orientation services, university-business cooperative councils

- **Academic support:** flexibility to take exams at different times, availability for consultations after 5 PM to meet with working students, flexible pace of study, courses designed for students who lack the knowledge to keep up with coursework

- **Internships** are part of curricula and the university assist actively in securing them

- **Soft skills and certificate granting courses** available to all students
2. Management of facilities and resources

- Auditoriums equipped with modern technology that allows the recording and digitization of lectures
- Medical center with simulation facilities
3. Student engagement in governance and QA

- Students have the veto right in Senate.

- The Commission for Plagiarism is encouraging students’ participation and opinion in the process, consists of one third students.
4. Institutional support for and recognition of quality teaching

- Quality of teaching made an important criteria for faculty promotion
- Availability of grants for improving teaching and course revision
- Mentoring schemes whereby new and inexperienced professors get assigned a more experienced colleague as a mentor within the faculty
- Setting up Centers for academic development /pedagogical support/teaching and learning
- Setting up awards that recognize teaching such as the Bologna teacher award organized and developed by the Student Union
5. Access and equity

- Working with students with disabilities to make the university more accessible
- Assigning a specific unit dedicated to supporting students with disabilities
6. Institutional culture

- A high dedication of the teaching staff to their profession and students
- The importance of students’ satisfaction acknowledged by leadership and constantly reinforced in all official documents
- Working as a community to support students and make them employable