

## Book Review

# Learner-Centered Curriculum: Design and Implementation

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Citation: Cullen, R., Hill, M., & Reinhold, R. (2012). *Learner-Centered Curriculum: Design and Implementation*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons. ISBN: 9781118171004

Publisher Description: Most of the scholarship on learner-centeredness is focused on individual classroom pedagogy, but this book takes learner-centeredness beyond the classroom and asks academic leaders to consider the broader implications of making their institutions fully learner-centered. Systemic change is needed, and curriculum is at the heart of what higher education does. To truly effect change, the curriculum needs to be examined and aligned with learner-centered practices. In this book, the authors offer both design specifications for a learner-centered approach to curriculum as well as practical recommendations for implementation and assessment. The book covers the need for redesigning curriculum, curriculum design in the instructional paradigm, learner-centered design in practice, implementation, program assessment (including a helpful rubric for this), innovation through technology, and construction of learning spaces that support learner-centered curricula.

Curriculum restrictions have been inhibiting faculty members from fully embracing learner-centered practices. Because learners' needs are quickly changing in regards to diversity and technology, classrooms need to redesign programs that meet the needs of "Generation We." Society needs learners who are autonomous, engaged in lifelong learning, flexible, and who can adapt quickly to new situations. Students who are intrinsically motivated will begin to independently present themselves with more opportunities to connect through curriculum and their learning, as well as creating individual self-efficacy (Cullen, Hill, & Reinhold, 2012).

*The Learner-Centered Curriculum: Design and Implementation* is directed at teachers (primarily higher education) who are confronted with the diverse and ever changing needs of undergraduate classes. The book is organized into chapters that go deeply into defining learner centered curriculum, how it can be set up, and how the logistics of grading and classroom arrangement can play a role in proper classroom facilitation. Allowing for student creativity and self-efficacy as part of successful student improvement are common themes throughout the entirety of this book.

The beginning of *The Learner-Centered Curriculum: Design and Implementation* explores the importance of redesigning curriculum and how it plays a role in creating a learner-centered classroom. The authors discuss the increased need and importance for individuals to be resourceful and adaptable within work environments. The authors also reiterate that students should develop a skill set to promote social adjustment with various cultures, as well as become personally and socially responsible and integrative in their learning. The authors suggest that by

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supplementing current undergraduate courses to foster creativity and learner autonomy, transposition of information occurs that in turn stimulates true, authentic learning.

The text continues to deliberate the implications of learner-centered curriculum and how educators can effectively facilitate this type of learning environment. The authors discuss the importance of learners being actively engaged in the strategy of their learning experiences, creating individual goals, and having the ability to deliberate existing knowledge into newly learned knowledge. Lifelong learning strategies occur when autonomy is developed and students learn how to become more self-directed and determined in their learning.

The authors describe learner-centered practices in three domains: (1) creation of community, (2) sharing of power, and (3) use of assessment for continuous improvement. A useful table for faculty to appraise their current curricular design is included. The table creates a focus on separating the design element of the curriculum into various, evaluative parts and specifically examines: recursion, rigor, richness, relations, community building, power sharing, and assessment. The authors find that when examining learning outcomes for specific programs, faculty members must develop a plan of how to achieve and measure those outcomes and use the rubric to brainstorm possible changes and specific strategies that may be implemented (Cullen et al., 2012).

The conclusion examines the expected outcomes from using a learner-centered curriculum. The authors conclude that the use of valuable assessments both direct and indirect, facilitate the assessor as learner. The importance and need for using technology to support instruction is also discussed. The authors stated that as learners become more adept at monitoring and taking responsibility for their own learning, the use of technological tools will become more effective.

*The Learner-Centered Curriculum: Design and Implementation*, provides a solid foundation in understanding learner centered curriculum and its importance in working with today's students in today's classrooms. The book would be most appropriate for undergraduate faculty members; however, it has promising and feasible structures that any classroom would benefit from, specifically in terms of preparing autonomous, self-efficacious learners.