

## How can we create a more student-centred learning environment?

### Independent evidence

Research indicates that when teachers employ student-centred approaches, such as allowing students to choose which tasks they do, or arranging and facilitating group discussion, learners experience increased confidence, motivation and performance i.

### Your evidence and reflections

Of course, even highly interactive teachers sometimes need to offer direct instruction and operate didactically. And some students look for very hands on forms of teaching. To get an idea of how they currently experience the balance of student- and teacher-centred activity ask them to complete a mini-questionnaire at the end of a session. You could adapt the one set out below for your context. Ask them to tick the box on the scale for each pair of statements which best describes the lesson:

we had a choice about the activities we did	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	the teacher took most of the decisions about who was doing what activity
the lesson took my individual needs into account	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	the teacher used the same approach with all students
we spent a lot of time exploring the topic through activities and discussion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	most of the time we took notes from information the teacher provided

You could also complete the scale yourself before looking at student responses to see how closely your perceptions of the session match theirs. Consider and make a note of what it was that was happening in the session that made students mark a particular point on the continuum. This could also be the basis for a discussion with them on approaches to teaching and learning in your sessions, and for reflecting on where you would like to go next.

### Putting the evidence to work

Now you have an idea of where you are currently on the continuum, you might want to start to plan the next steps in working towards a more student-centred approach. You could start by considering what you could do differently in your next lesson that would shift you one place to the left of one or more of the lines. Ask a colleague what student-centred practices they are familiar with. You might find it interesting to explore student-centred practices from other contexts, e.g. a work-based learning setting or school.

### i Find out more about student-centred learning in:

Swan, M. (2006) Learning GCSE mathematics through discussion: What are the effects on students? *Journal of Further and Higher Education* 30 (3) pp. 22-241

There's more information on how we might help students to learn for themselves in the second issue of Inside Evidence: [http://www.qia.org.uk/aboutus/uploads/second\\_issue.pdf](http://www.qia.org.uk/aboutus/uploads/second_issue.pdf)