

## 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

Work-based and vocational practitioners may feel restricted in how student-centred they can make their teaching, as often the tasks which learners are required to do can be tightly prescribed. There is also the practical question of cost constraints on the amount of resources students can 'experiment' with. Consider which of the student-centred practices below you could realistically employ in delivering your subject.

*Encourage learners to:*

- discuss mistakes
- compare different methods for solving a problem
- discuss their ideas
- carry out 'thought experiments' (what happens if ...?) before starting on a practical task
- invent and use their own methods
- work in pairs or small groups
- choose for themselves which tasks they do
- set their own problems for other learners to solve

### Putting the evidence to work

Now you have considered which student-centred practices you could employ on your programme, plan in detail how you might implement them in a specific session. Sound the plan out with a colleague before the session to help you think carefully about how you will implement the new approach. If you are delivering the same course to two or more groups of learners, you could try the new approach with one group over time, and compare their progress with a second group following your usual approach.

**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

Find out more about student-centred approaches in WBL/vocational subjects in:

[http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/assets/Internet\\_Content/Shared\\_Content/Files/2007/dec/youngappr ent.pdf](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/assets/Internet_Content/Shared_Content/Files/2007/dec/youngappr ent.pdf)

Find out more about student-centred learning in the second issue of Inside Evidence  
[http://www.gia.org.uk/aboutus/uploads/second\\_issue.pdf](http://www.gia.org.uk/aboutus/uploads/second_issue.pdf)