

## Teaching-Centered vs. Learning-Centered Paradigms

Some of today's educators are suggesting that colleges and universities should consider a paradigm shift. This shift involves moving from the Teaching-Centered Paradigm to a Learning-Centered Paradigm in the classroom. Courses which employ the Teaching-Centered Paradigm are those where the instructor is the primary information giver and the primary evaluator. Courses which employ the Learning-Centered Paradigm are those where the instructor is the facilitator and coach, learning together with students. The following table compares the differing paradigms:

| <b>Comparison of Teaching-Centered and Learning-Centered Paradigms<br/>           (Learner-Centered Assessment on College Campuses by Huba and Freed 2000)</b> |   |
|--|---|
| <i>Teaching-Centered Paradigm</i>  | <i>Learning-Centered Paradigm</i>   |
| Knowledge is transmitted from professor to students  | Students construct knowledge through gathering and synthesizing information and integrating it with the general skills of inquiry, communication, critical thinking, problems solving and so on |
| Students passively receive information   | Students are actively involved  |
| Emphasis is on acquisition of knowledge outside the context in which it will be used   | Emphasis is on using and communicating knowledge effectively to address enduring and emerging issues and problems in real-life contexts   |
| Professor's role is to be primary information giver and primary evaluator  | Professor's role is to coach and facilitate<br>Professor and students evaluate learning together  |
| Teaching and assessment are separate   | Teaching and assessment are intertwined   |
| Assessment is used to monitor learning   | Assessment is used to promote and diagnose learning   |
| Emphasis is on the right answer  | Emphasis is on generating better questions and learning from mistakes   |
| Desired learning is assessed indirectly through the use of objectively scored tests  | Desired learning is assessed directly through papers, projects, performances, portfolios and the like   |
| Focus is on single discipline  | Approach is compatible with interdisciplinary investigation   |
| Class culture is competitive and individualistic   | Class culture is cooperative, collaborative and supportive  |
| Only students are viewed as learners   | Professor and students learn together   |

Instructors may ask: why is it important to begin to transform our classroom practices? In the Learning-Centered environment students learn how to use a discipline, integrate disciplines to solve problems, and master learning objectives. In the Teaching-Centered environment material is covered, but not necessarily mastered. The pedagogy is different, too. In the Learning-Centered environment students learn by *doing*. They engage in the material and practice the discipline. In the Teaching-Centered environment faculty cover the material through lecture where information and learning are based on the delivery of information.

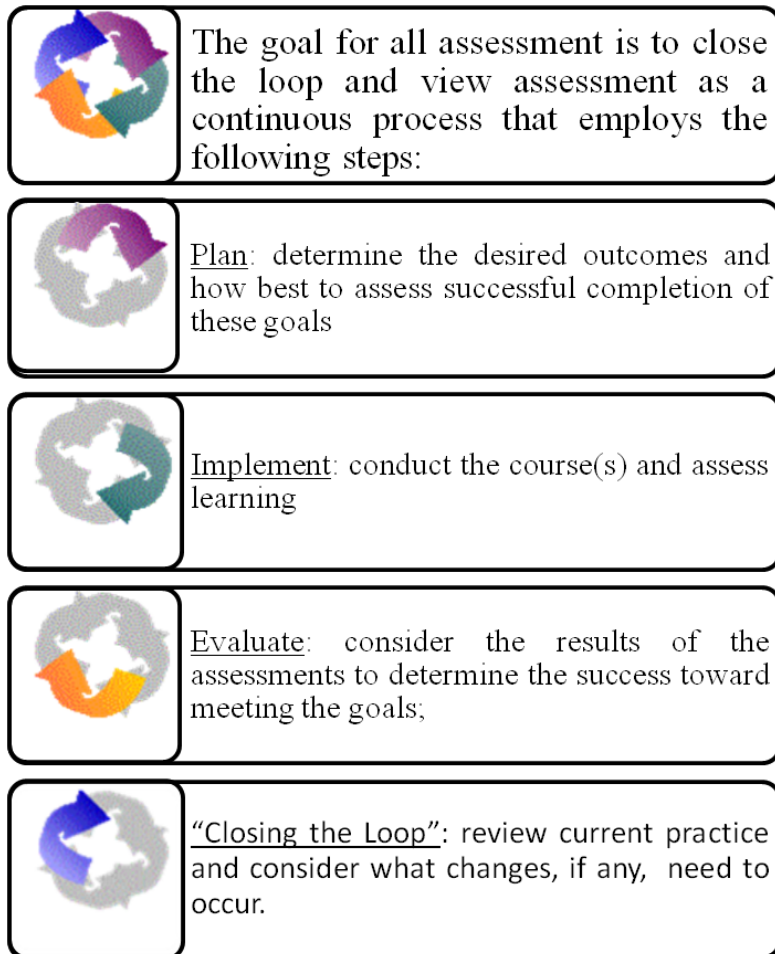
If we are to understand how learning occurs, thinking about creating neural pathways that perpetuate and ensure life-long learning, it becomes important to think about how instructors can facilitate this learning. If, as in the Teacher-Centered classroom, the faculty role is that of the *sage on the stage*, students are not the focus of the teaching. However, if, as in the Learning-Centered environment, the faculty role is that of a designer of a learning environment, the student becomes the focus of the teaching and has a greater chance of mastery and life-long learning.

You can learn more about facilitating this paradigm shift in your teaching by registering for the Course Design workshop being held on Saturday, August 13, 2011 from 10 A.M. - 2:30 P.M. Please register at [www.svsu.edu/workshops](http://www.svsu.edu/workshops).

**Teachers assess to test; educators assess to assist learning.- Dave Carter**

## The Cycle of Assessment

Assessment at the university comes in many forms. Assessment occurs in the classroom as you and your students evaluate their mastery. Assessment occurs by the students when they complete your course evaluations. Assessment occurs by programs as some accreditation agencies require that student success be measured. Assessment occurs in General Education so that the University can examine student achievement, not only within courses, but across them, asking about cumulative learning outcomes. All assessment is intended to provide feedback for improvement. Regardless of the objective for assessment, the process works most successfully when it is cyclical. With any assessment, if you follow the stages outlined in this plan, you will be able to reflect upon your classroom experiences and make appropriate changes in order to affect student success. The following is an illustration of an effective assessment plan:



\* Accessed from [http://www.luc.edu/learningtech/Assessment Best Prac.shtml](http://www.luc.edu/learningtech/Assessment%20Best%20Prac.shtml) on May 10, 2011.

**Make assessment  
 a vision worth  
 working toward.  
 -Thomas Angelo**

## Suggest Material for Library

It's time to start thinking about material you want to have available for your students in the library during the upcoming academic year. In mid-July, funds will again be available for book and media purchases. Zahnnow liaison librarians encourage suggestions for specific items or recommendations to strengthen subject areas. To locate your library liaison, visit the SVSU Faculty button on the library homepage and click the Library Liaison link. The Library Liaison page is arranged by subject and contains the contact information for liaisons librarians.

For more information or questions, contact your liaison librarian or Jennifer Dean, Head Collection Development & Acquisitions at [jldean@svsu.edu](mailto:jldean@svsu.edu) or 964-7092.