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FOCUSING ON THE LEARNER: CREATING A LEARNER-CENTERED IS COURSE

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ABSTRACT

There is a large and growing body of evidence that learner-centered education is more effective in terms of learning outcomes; it is also more satisfying for the learner. In a learner-centered course, the focus is on a partnership between the teacher and learner with shared responsibility for learning. The learner-centered approach fits well with the characteristics of “millennial” generation students, who are team-oriented, value continuous learning and seek frequent feedback. Learner-centered education has been recommended as a viable approach for information systems education for at least a decade, but applying these principles may be especially important today. Because learner-centered education matches well with the preferences of today's students, it is possible that applying learner-centered principles to IS courses can help address our enrollment problems. The purposes of this workshop are to introduce the concepts of learner-centered education, to illustrate how learner-centered concepts can be applied to information systems courses, and to help participants understand how they can employ learner-centered education in their courses. In addition, a methodology for developing learning activities will be presented and applied. The workshop will be highly interactive, and will use the principles of learner-centered education. Participants will receive a link to workshop materials and additional resources.

Keywords

Learner-centered education, information systems education, millennial students

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By actively participating in the workshop, participants will be able to:

- Compare and contrast learner-centered and instructor-led approaches to education
- Discuss the fit between learner-centered education and the “millennial student”
- Discuss how to develop a learner-centered environment for their course
- Apply a methodology to develop learner-centered activities

ACTIVITIES

The workshop will be evenly split between an interactive presentation and learning activities. The workshop will begin with an overview of learner-centered education and its relevance to teaching today's students. This is followed by a presentation of a methodology that can be used to develop learner-centered activities. Participants will then break into small groups and apply the methodology to develop one or more learning activities, which will then be shared with the rest of the participants. The workshop will conclude with a brief wrap up and open discussion.

WORKSHOP OUTLINE

1. What is learner-centered education?
 - A. Definitions
 - B. Principles
 - C. Key characteristics
 - D. Advantages
2. Building a learner-centered environment
3. Methodology for developing learner-centered activities
4. Group activity: Developing learner-centered activities
 - A. Group time
 - B. Sharing activities
5. Wrap-up and discussion

WORKSHOP LEADERS

Craig Van Slyke
Associate Dean for Academic Programs
John Cook School of Business
Saint Louis University

Dr. Van Slyke has over 15 years of university teaching experience, primarily in the area of information systems. He has published extensively on information systems education and has co-authored three IS textbooks. Dr. Van Slyke is on the editorial review board of the *Journal of IS Education*, and has held leadership positions in Southern AIS and AIS SIG:ED. In addition, he has applied the principles of learner-centered education to a variety of courses, including the introduction to IS course.

France Belanger
Professor and Byrd Senior Fellow
Pamplin College of Business
Virginia Tech

Dr. Belanger has been teaching information systems for more than 15 years in the United States, as well as in Canada, Portugal, and New Zealand. She has published two books and several articles on IS education-related topics, including a highly cited book on distance learning. Over the last five years, Dr. Belanger has been a proponent of learner-centered approaches to IS education, and has developed a number of tools and materials to facilitate such learning. She currently teaches introductory classes to information systems to undergraduates, Masters students, as well as Executive MBA students.

Thomas Case
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Dr. Case is Professor and Chair of the Department of Information Systems at Georgia Southern University. He has held numerous leadership roles in SAIS and AIS SIG:ED associations and serves on the editorial boards of the *Journal of IS Education* and the *Journal of Informatics Education Research*. He has authored three textbooks and has published extensively on information systems education for more than two decades. He has applied learner-centered education in multiple courses including data communications, e-commerce, and management information systems.