

Authentic Learning: Student-Centered Success

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Published by *K20 Center*

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Essential Question(s)

- Why does providing students with choice increase the students' level of engagement?

Summary

In this session, participants will explore the authenticity component, student-centered learning. First, participants identify characteristics of student-centered learning environments. Next, participants consider common views regarding student engagement and how it affects learning. Participants will read a research document about student-centered learning and create a visual representation that demonstrates their understanding of the component. Finally, they will assess and adapt their teaching methods to be more student-centered and list key features of this approach to demonstrate their knowledge.

Learning Goals

- Justify the attributes of a student-centered learning climate.
- Evaluate the framework needed to support student-centered learning.

Standards

InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards (K-12th)

1b: The teacher creates developmentally appropriate instruction that takes into account individual learners' strengths, interests, and needs and that enables each learner to advance and accelerate his/her learning.
2a: The teacher designs, adapts, and delivers instruction to address each student's diverse learning strengths and needs and creates opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning in different ways.
3i: The teacher understands the relationship between motivation and engagement and knows how to design learning experiences using strategies that build learner self-direction and ownership of learning.
7j: The teacher understands the strengths and needs of individual learners and how to plan instruction that is responsive to these strengths and needs.

Attachments

- ABC Grafitti—Student-Centered Success.pdf
- Always Sometimes or Never True Discussion Guide—Student-Centered Success.docx
- Always Sometimes or Never True Discussion Guide—Student-Centered Success.pdf
- Always, Sometimes, or Never True Posters—Student-Centered Success.docx
- Always, Sometimes, or Never True Posters—Student-Centered Success.pdf
- Frayer Model—Student-Centered Success.docx
- Frayer Model—Student-Centered Success.pdf
- Improving a Student-Centered Learning Activity—Student-Centered Success.docx
- Improving a Student-Centered Learning Activity—Student-Centered Success.pdf
- Instructional Strategy Note Catcher—Student-Centered Success.docx
- Instructional Strategy Note Catcher—Student-Centered Success.pdf
- Presentation Slides—Authentic Learning.pptx

Materials

- Presentation Slides (attached)
- Always, Sometimes, or Never True Discussion Guide (attached; one per facilitator)
- Always, Sometimes, or Never True Posters (attached; one set)
- Components of Authenticity: Student-Centered Learning handout (linked; one per participant; printed front/back)
- Frayer Model handout (attached; one per participant; printed front only)
- Improving an SCL Activity handout (attached; one per participant; printed front only)
- ABC Graffiti handout (attached; one per participant; printed front only)
- Instructional Strategy Note Catcher handout (attached; one per participant; printed front only)
- Color A Sticky Notes (one per participant)
- Color B Sticky Notes (one per participant)
- Color C Sticky Notes (three per participant)

10 minutes

Engage

Facilitator's Note: Padlet Preparation

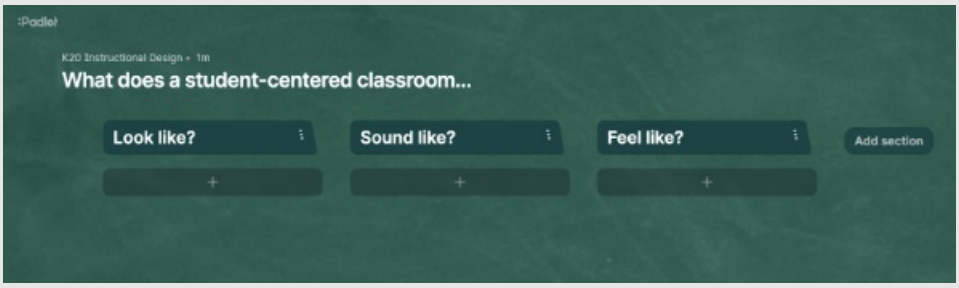
Padlet: Option 1—Copy Existing

1. Direct participants to your padlet.com.
2. Log in to or create a Padlet account.
3. Return to this page and open the What does a student-centered classroom... link.
4. Click "Get QR code," and either copy the image of the QR code or click "DOWNLOAD."
5. Paste your QR code on slide 14.

Padlet: Option 2—Make Your Own

1. Direct participants to your padlet.com.
2. Log in to or create a Padlet account.
3. Create a Padlet using the template below. Consider using the "Wall with Sections" format and add the rules as column headings.
4. Repeat steps 1-3 above if using one Padlet for multiple sessions.

The Padlet should include columns with the following three titles: "Look like," "Sound like," and "Feel like."



Display **slide 3**. Instruct participants to reflect on the following prompt: *What does a student-centered classroom look like? Sound like? Feel like?*

Direct participants to your Padlet. Instruct them to add to the Padlet by clicking on the plus (+) symbol under the column they wish to contribute to, then type or insert an image from online for what a student-centered learning classroom looks, sounds, or feels like.

After most participants have added to all three columns, take a moment to share some of the responses. Consider asking participants to elaborate on their posts, especially if their posts consist only of an image.

Move to **slides 4-5** to briefly highlight the session's essential question and learning goals.

20 minutes

Explore

Facilitator's Note: Poster Preparation

Before the session, prepare the **Always, Sometimes, or Never True** posters by printing one copy front-only and placing them around the room. The posters should be positioned far enough apart so that groups can be clearly distinguished during the activity. They do not necessarily need to be placed in corners.

Before the session, select five statements from **slides 7-15** that you want participants to respond to, and hide the slides containing the other statements.

Move to **slide 6** to begin a modified version of the Four Corners strategy. Instruct participants to examine a set of statements regarding student engagement. Some statements are based on research, while others reflect common thoughts or ideas about student engagement. For each statement, allow participants a moment to evaluate whether they think it is always, sometimes, or never true, then instruct them to move to the area of the room that aligns with their opinion.

Once all participants have moved to their chosen areas, prompt them to discuss their decisions with their group members. Then, instruct each group to justify their reasoning for their choice.

Facilitator's Note: Discussion Guide

Your role as the facilitator is to guide the discussion, focusing on the categorization of these statements. Given that responses may vary, consider using the attached Always, Sometimes, or Never True Discussion Guide to provide research and conversation stems for each statement in the lesson.

Repeat this activity with the remaining selected statements on **slides 7-15**. After completing the activity, instruct participants to return to their seats. Once most participants have had time to read the materials and discuss the various components, ask groups to share out. After groups have shared their responses, ask them to set the model lesson aside for later.

Facilitator's Note: Abbreviations

Consider asking participants to abbreviate the components of authenticity in the Vetting Design and Feedback for 5E Lessons.

20 minutes

Explain

Move to **slide 16** and place participants into groups of four. You may choose to keep participants in their previous groups or organize them into new ones.

Distribute a copy of the **Components of Authenticity: Student-Centered Learning** research brief to each participant. Invite participants to read the brief individually and allow them time to do so.

Once it appears that most participants have read the handout, display **slide 17** and give each person a copy of the **Frayer Model handout.** Explain that each group member will fill in a different quadrant of the handout to demonstrate their understanding of Student-Centered Learning. Ask each member of the group to choose one of the following prompts present on the handout:

- **Define:** How would you define "student-centered learning" in your own words?
- **List the characteristics:** List three to five essential characteristics of SCL.
- **Draw a visual representation:** Sketch a scene or symbol that represents SCL.
- **Reflect:** How does this look in your class? Give an example of what SCL looks like in your classroom.

Once each group member has filled out their individual section, ask them to discuss their responses as a group. Each person will fill in the remaining sections of their Frayer Model with the responses from their peers.

Allow groups approximately fifteen minutes to discuss and fill in their Frayer Models. After most participants have completed their handouts, invite each group to share out one of the segments of their model.

Briefly explain the Frayer Model instructional strategy. Inform participants that this strategy encourages students to organize both prior and new knowledge about a topic.

25 minutes

Extend

Facilitator's Note: Preparation

For this activity, you will need three different colors of sticky notes. If you do not have three different colors, you can modify the activity by having participants label sticky notes of the same color according to the color designation in the directions (color A, color B, and color C). Place participants into groups of four and pass out an easel pad paper or blank poster paper to each group.

Display **slide 18** and distribute the **Improving a SCL Activity** handout. Invite participants to describe a lesson they have taught previously in the first box of the handout. Once all participants have written a response, ask them to consider how they could modify the lesson to integrate more aspects of student-centered learning. Instruct participants to record their thoughts in the second box of the handout.

Next, pass out sticky notes to each participant, ensuring they have three different colors of sticky notes (Color A, Color B, Color C). Display **slide 19**. For the first post, have participants summarize their original activity from the handout on the Color A sticky notes. For the second post, have participants summarize how they would make the activity more student-centered on the Color B sticky notes.

Instruct each participant to add the sticky notes to their group's easel pad paper or poster paper and draw an arrow from their original post (Color A) to their student-centered post (Color B).

Display **slide 20**. Use the Gallery Walk instructional strategy to have participants post feedback on at least two other lessons using the Color C sticky notes. Instruct them to draw an arrow from the student-centered posts (Color B) to their feedback posts (Color C). Once all participants have left comments on at least two other lessons, instruct them to return to their original lesson to review comments left by their peers and reflect on their modifications.

If time allows, consider providing additional time for participants to record any further thoughts about modifying their lessons to be more student-centered on their handouts.

Optional Activity for LMS Integration

Invite participants to consider how their redesigned, student-centered activity could be implemented in a digital classroom setting.

Direct participants to the K20 Center's Tech-Integrated Strategies page. Ask each participant to browse the available strategies and select one that could support or enhance their revised activity in a digital environment.

Once participants have selected a strategy, instruct them to reflect on how the strategy could be facilitated using their school's Learning Management System (LMS). Encourage them to consider features such as discussion boards, collaborative tools, or multimedia submissions. Ask participants to jot down notes on how they would adapt their activities using their selected strategies and LMS tools.

Invite volunteers to share their ideas with the group and highlight how the integration of technology supports student-centered learning. If time permits, allow participants to update their handouts with these digital adaptations.

20 minutes

Evaluate

Display **slide 21** and distribute the attached **ABC Graffiti** handout to each group, or provide each group with a poster and a different-colored chart marker for the instructional strategy ABC Graffiti.

Ask participants the following question: *What is student-centered learning?* Instruct each group to jot down one word or phrase associated with student-centered learning for each letter of the alphabet, aiming to fill in as many letters as they can in one minute. Start the K20 1-minute timer on the slide.

When time is up, display **slide 22**. Have groups rotate to the next poster, instructing them to take their marker with them so their contributions can be traced back to their corresponding marker color. At their new poster, participants should continue where the last group left off, adding words and phrases for as many blank letters as they can in 30 seconds. If all letters are filled before time is up, participants can add additional words or phrases to letters that have already been used.

When time is up again, display **slide 23** and direct groups to rotate to another poster. Instruct them to fill in as many blank letters on the next poster as possible within 30 seconds. After the third round, have participants return to their original poster. Ask them to review the responses on their poster and develop a summary of student-centered learning. Direct each group to select one spokesperson to share the summary of their poster with the whole group.

Transition to **slide 24** and invite participants to reflect on the different instructional strategies they saw used throughout the session. Ask them to consider the impact these strategies had on their understanding or approach.

As they reflect, pass out one copy of the **Instructional Strategy Note Catcher** handout to each participant. Invite participants to fill in the first column with their thoughts on how each strategy impacted their understanding of the content. Ask them to fill in the second column with their ideas about how to integrate each strategy into their teaching practices.

If time permits, invite participants to share out their ideas about how they could use the instructional strategies in their classrooms.

Research Rationale

In a student-centered classroom, students engage in guided learning opportunities where they make purposeful learning decisions that connect to their own experiences and understanding. Teachers incorporate student choice, allowing students to have a voice in their own learning by fostering an environment where students and teachers collaborate to co-construct new knowledge. The learning environment should include scaffolding opportunities, providing structure that enables students to take control over their own learning (Reiser, 2004; Schwartz et al., 2021). Additionally, lessons should integrate different perspectives, allowing students to draw meaningful connections between classroom learning and their everyday experiences (Gay, 2018; Hammond, 2015; NASEM, 2018). Student-centered learning supports students in becoming active, independent learners with teachers gradually allowing for increased autonomy throughout the process.

Resources

- Gay, G. (2019). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research and practice (3rd ed.).* Teachers College Press.
- Hammond, Z. (2015). *Culturally responsive teaching & the brain: Promoting authentic engagement and rigor among culturally and linguistically diverse students*. Corwin Press.
- K20 Center. (n.d.). ABC graffiti. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/96
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- K20 Center. (n.d.). Four corners. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/138
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Frayer model. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/126
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Gallery walk/carousel. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/118
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Looks like, sounds like, feels like. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/88
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Padlet. Tech Tools. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/tech-tool/1077
- National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2018). *How people learn II: Learners, contexts, and cultures.* The National Academies Press. https://doi.org/10.17226/24783
- Reiser, B. J. (2004). Scaffolding complex learning: The mechanisms of structuring and problematizing student work. *The Journal of the Learning Sciences, 13*(3), 273–304.
- Schwartz, L., Adler, I., Madjar, N., & Zion, M. (2021). Rising to the challenge: The effect of individual and social metacognitive scaffolds on students' expressions of autonomy and competence throughout an inquiry process. *Journal of Science Education and Technology, 30*(4), 582–593. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10956-021-09905-4