

Best Practices in Teaching and Learning

The increasing focus on student learning as the central indicator of institutional excellence challenges many tacit assumptions about the respective roles of college students and faculty. In student-centered education, faculty take on less responsibility for being sources of knowledge, and take on greater responsibility as facilitators of a broad range of learning experiences. For their part, students are called on to take on more responsibility for their own learning.

As shown in the following table, the responsibilities of students and faculty and the relationships between them are quite different in the two models:

Domain	Teacher-centered	Learner-centered
Knowledge	Transmitted from instructor	Constructed by students
Student participation	Passive	Active
Role of professor	Leader/authority	Facilitator/partner in learning
Role of Assessment	Few tests, mainly for grading	Many tests, for ongoing feedback
Emphasis	Learning correct answers	Developing deeper understanding
Assessment method	Unidimensional testing	Multidimensional products
Academic culture	Competitive, individualistic	Collaborative, supportive

Beginning with Bloom's taxonomy for educational objectives, and continuing with considerable research on teaching and learning, over the last thirty years many detailed lists of "best practices in teaching" have been compiled. Most lists of important "best practices" include the following:

- Engage students in active learning experiences
- Set high, meaningful expectations
- Provide, receive, and use regular, timely, and specific feedback
- Become aware of values, beliefs, preconceptions
- *Recognize and stretch student styles and developmental levels*
- *Seek and present real-world applications*
- *Understand and value criteria and methods for student assessment*
- *Create opportunities for student-faculty interactions*
- *Create opportunities for student-student interactions*
- *Promote student involvement through engaged time and quality effort*