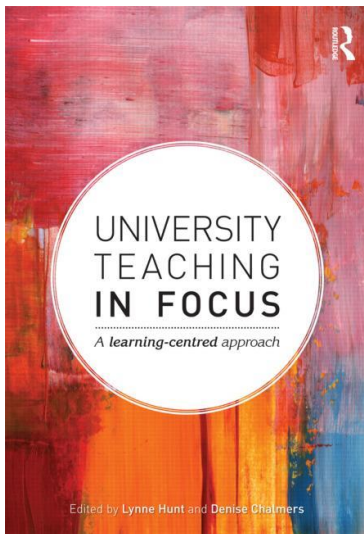


UNIVERSITY TEACHING IN FOCUS: A Learning-centred Approach

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University Teaching in Focus provides a foundational springboard for early career academics preparing to teach in universities. Focusing on four critical areas -teaching, curriculum, students, and quality/leadership- this succinct resource offers university teachers a straightforward approach to facilitating effective student learning.

The book empowers university teachers and contributes to their career success by developing teaching skills, strategies, and knowledge, as well as linking theory to practice. Written in a clear and accessible style by internationally acclaimed experts, topics include: learning theories, assessment, discipline-based teaching, curriculum design, problem-based and work-integrated learning, effective classroom teaching, and flexible modes of delivery.

The needs of diverse student groups are explored and the scholarship of teaching and learning is addressed within a quality and leadership framework. The book also makes reference to seminal works and current resources. Real-world cases illuminate the theoretical content and 'Your Thoughts' sections encourage reflection and adaptation to local contexts. University Teaching in Focus explores ways that teachers can effectively engage students in life-long learning, extending their capacity to solve problems, to enter the workforce, to understand their discipline, and to interact positively with others in a global community throughout their professional lives. The teaching and learning in the higher education has gone a sea change during the past few decades. While teachers have realized the importance of the role of students in teaching and learning process, more and more efforts are made to shift the focus of learning process from teacher to learner. The tools of teaching and learning are integrated in the instructional design in such a way that more and more autonomy and responsibilities of learning are shifted to the learner. The teachers are expected to gain expertise in designing learner-centred activities in the pedagogical process. The volume in hand focuses on this paradigm of instructional process. Different components related to the process are focused by the authors in the book in a nice manner. An in-depth analysis of the core competencies required by the teachers in the university system is provided by the authors.

The old teaching styles of the teachers are now challenged by the learner-centred approach to teaching and learning.

The book spread over 16 different chapters, is divided into 4 parts and each of the parts focuses on a particular domain .e. teaching, curriculum, students and quality and leadership. The figures, tables and case studies in small format related to the topics through out the book, give a real and practical experience and help the reader in understanding the concepts in a more lucid way. Chapter-1 focuses on various theories of learning with key debates on their philosophy.

It initiates an open discussion on various pedagogical aspects and analyses the implications of the learning theories on teaching and learning processes, since awareness of the theoretical framework enables the teacher to optimally use different tools to 'secure learning outcomes' for the students. Chapter-2 discusses the role of an effective teacher in the classroom setting and highlights the use of different instructional styles and design components that help the students in the learning process.

The teachers need to develop a creative learning environment in the classroom by organising the content and various learning activities for different groups of students.

Chapter-3 presents the strong primary influence of the disciplinary context on teaching with 'generally accepted conceptual structures and boundaries' of its communities of practice. Various aspects of discipline based teaching practices are highlighted by the author in the discussion. Chapter-4 focuses on integration of 'graduate attributes' in discipline-based teaching. The 'graduate attributes' are defined by the authors as the necessary 'qualities, skills and understanding' which a student is supposed to have as an active participant of the learning process. The teachers should be able to embed necessary strategies in their teaching styles so as to develop these 'graduate attributes' in their students. Chapter-5 discusses about the different approaches adopted towards assessment. The author views the assessment of learner's performance as a means of promoting learning. The teachers need to review their time old methods of learning measurement used since when 'a smaller proportion of the population participated in higher education' and therefore, the issue remains as to how to redesign the assessment system so that it becomes a 'fit-to-purpose'.

Chapter-6 talks about the practical research-based principles and guidelines for designing subjects. Better subject design will promote student learning. The need for the teachers is underlined by the author to pose and answer 'meta' design questions which should be based on choice of specific subject content and techniques. He highlights the criteria of '7Cs' for a successful curriculum design.

Chapter-7 synthesises different research-based principles and modes for online leaning which can be helpful in creating blended learning environment to enhance the learning outcome for the students. He reiterates 5 strategies as propounded by different scholars as a multi-faceted approach to learning. The seven critical components of blended learning i.e. 'objective, content, instructional design, learner tasks, teacher roles and assessment are critically examined by the author.

Chapter-8 focuses on the undergraduate curricula based on research and explores the related issues. It tries to define the term 'research-led curriculum' in a broader perspective further giving the opinion of using the terms like 'research-based', 'research-active', 'problem' or, 'inquiry-based' to better describe the process.

Chapter-9 discusses about problem-based learning which is based on 'principles of adult education and cognitive psychology'. The process acknowledges the prior experiences and knowledge of the student which influences his behaviour in the classroom setting. These instructional strategies are considered important in developing communication, collaborative and informed decision making skills in the students. The role of reflective behaviour and assessment becomes important in such problem-based learning.

Chapter-10 describes one more approach to learning i.e. Work-integrated learning. It defines the element of work-integrated learning and advocates for constructing work-integrated learning curriculum which includes agreements, views, projects and reflective practices. The variety of terms of engagement in work can be seen as a continuous activity. The 'work-integrated learning focuses on the work itself as a learning activity'. This approach has the capacity to integrate the engagement of work with the learning process so as to benefit not only the learner but also those who are associated and influenced by the learner's work. Inclusive teaching is the focal area of

Chapter-11. The authors explore different important points related to the concept as a broader term. It is not only about registering students from different strata of the society to the university education but also engaging them in effective and enriching learning activities at the same time helping them in successfully completing the respective programmes. This entails the designing of an inclusive curriculum. Broadly the strategies can focus on other issues also like teacher self-awareness and organizational change. Majority of universities face the issues related to teaching of international students.

The **Chapter-12** focuses on analysis of nature and extent of international students' *vis-à-vis* addressing the transcultural issues. The main issues highlighted by the authors are: cultural adjustment, social integration, language proficiency, academic integrity and managing intercultural conflicts, The main focus remains on curriculum development and different pedagogical strategies that enrich the learning experiences of the international students.

Chapter-13 focuses on the 'undeniable complexity' of the issues related to 'indigenisation' and their implications in pedagogical framework. The authors quote special reference to Australian philosophy of 'indigenisation' spread over different areas like 'indigenous knowledge, indigenous pedagogy, indigenous cultural protection' etc. The Australian universities are working for 'indigenisation' through integration of 'traditional knowers' and their 'knowledge practices'. Quality of teaching is the concern of the academic communities across the world. This phenomenon has received more attention during the past few decades consequent upon the exponential growth of educational opportunities for the students. While discussing quality management mechanism in the form of 'quality assurance' in the higher education institutions, the author in

Chapter-14 examines the issue as to why quality of teaching matters so much and thus explores the strategies adopted to enhance the quality of teaching in higher educational institutions.

Chapter-15 argues that 'scholarship' leads to quality learning and focuses on the needs of the students. The author view 'scholarship' in two dimensions i.e. about 'improving student learning' and as a systematic 'peer supported process'.

The scholarship of teaching is about 'making transparent, for public scrutiny and how learning has been made possible'. Leadership is one of the important aspects dealt by higher education institutions with a student point of view.

Chapter-16 discusses about 'leadership' as an important quality of teachers while presenting different dimensions of 'leadership' with special reference to teachers. To the author, 'academic work is inherently an act of leadership' as through this teacher vouches for transforming learning experiences of the students.

The book as the name depicts, focuses on different aspects of university teaching from learner-centred point of view. A wide range of issues has been highlighted and properly addressed by the authors in a very diligent manner. It will help the teachers in constructively engaging the students in effective learning. It is a step forward towards empowering the upcoming teachers with necessary strategies and stand point so that they are able to help the students in enhancing their quality learning. The book would be helpful not only to the novice teachers who have just stepped in the teaching profession but also other stakeholders of higher education system.

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