STUDENT CENTERED LEARNING
- new paradigm of teaching mission of HE and its institutional implementation

Zdenka Steblovnik Župan
EURASHE,
Association of HVCs of R Slovenia,
Wood Technology School Maribor, Higher Professional College

Slavonski Brod, 4.-5.12.2014

Student-centred learning - definition:

»Student-Centred Learning represents both a <u>mindset</u> and a <u>culture</u> within a given higher education institution and is a learning approach broadly related to, and supported by, constructivist theories of learning. It is characterised by <u>innovative methods of teaching</u> which aim to promote learning in communication with teachers and other learners and which takes students seriously, as <u>active participants in their own learning</u>, fostering transferable skills such as problem-solving, critical and reflective thinking.«

Key elements:

- Reliance on active rather than passive learning;

- Emphasis on deep learning and understanding;

- Increased responsibility and accountability on the part of the student;

- Increased sense of autonomy in the learner;

- Interdependence and mutual respect between teacher and learner;

and

- Reflexive approach to the teaching and learning process on the part of both the teacher and the learner.

Student-Centered Learning emphasises student responsibility for the following activities:

- planning the learning

- interracting with all stakeholders of the learning process
*(teachers, other students, school faculty, external parties
-e.g. companies, employers, institutions,…)*

- researching the learning

- assessing the learning

DILEMMAS/FACTS about what SCL is and is not:

1. SCL requires an Ongoing Reflexive Process.

2. SCL does not have a ›One-Size-Fits-All‹ Solution.

3. Students have different learning styles.

4. Students have different needs and interests.

5. Students have different experiences and background knowledge.

6. Central to effective learning in SCL approach is Choice.

7. Students should have control over their learning.

8. SCL is about ›Enabling‹ not ›Telling‹.

9. Learning needs cooperation (trust) between students and staff.

Students responsibility and activity in learning help to develop characteristics of **lifelong learners**:
•**motivation,**
•**self-evaluation,**
•**time management skills,**
•**skills to access information.**

Researching the learning underscores the importance of concentrating on **what and why learners do** *(what are their **learning outcomes)*** rather than
**what the teacher does** *(who the teacher is and what are his/her acheivements)*.

"Obviously the paradigm of education (including HE) will have to shift to **enterprenourship.** Enterprise education develops **couriosity** – by putting a student out of his/her comfort zone, creates **optimism** – by emphasising personal advantages and individual aproach (coaching), induces **activity,** by taking risk and responsibility."
Jan Műhlfeit (Chairman Europe Microsoft Corporation), Prague, 2009
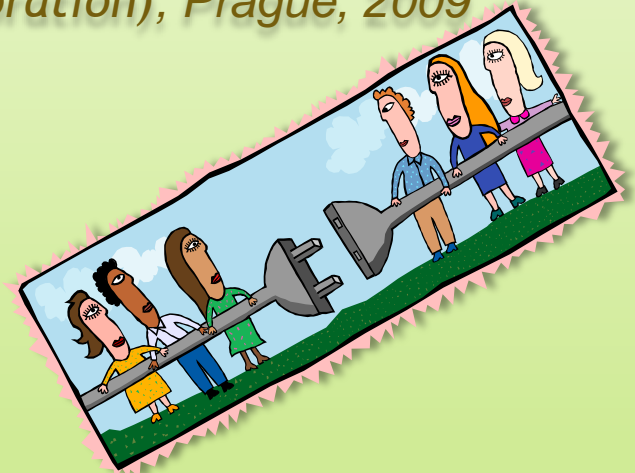
"To fulfill the role of an **educator** successfully, the HEIs have to abandon an education model resembling filling the bottles from the lake of knowledge and sending them along the line of users who will drink from the bottle when needed. This obsolete model must be replaced by another model: **Give the potential users boats and compasses and let them paddle on the lake of knowledge to the needed sources themselves.**"
Zbynek Pitra, Prague, 2009
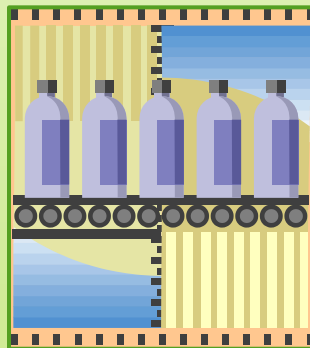
LEARNING must be:
- social
- active
- contextual
- engaging
- student-owned

A COLLEGE IS AN INSTITUTION THAT EXISTS TO PROVIDE **LEARNING**

A COLLEGE IS AN INSTITUTION THAT EXISTS TO PROVIDE **INSTRUCTION**

teaching mission of HEIs - PARADIGM SHIFT

"Within the role of an **intermediary** HEIs would be in a unique position to visualize new opportunities synthesized from insights and technologies provided by several companies - ideas that might never occur to companies working on innovation programs on their own."

Zbynek Pitra (Chairman of the Board of Experts, Czech Management Association), EURASHE annual conference Prague, 2009
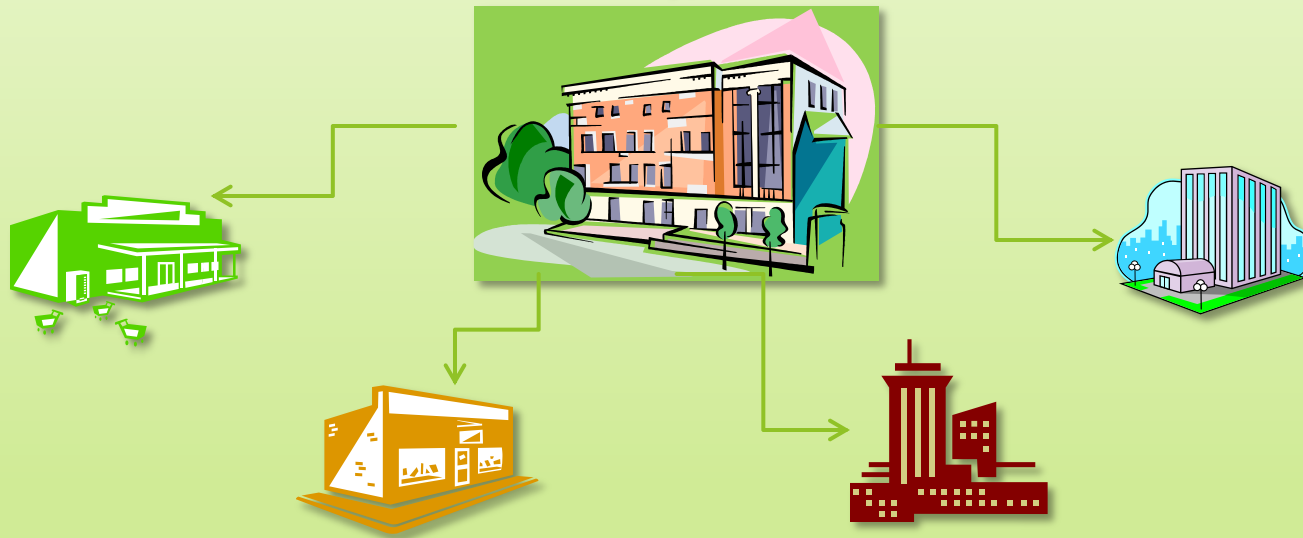
A SAGE ON THE STAGE

A GUIDE ON
THE SIDE

role of a teacher in HE -
PARADIGM SHIFT

"Why student-centred learning especially NOW?":

Massification and Diversification of student body:

•Universities are no longer accessed only by elite student population.

•We have growing number of non-traditional and international students.

Competition and the impact of Departmental practice:

•We are competing for students as never before.

•There exists a strong impact of values and departmental practices in shaping student learning.

Employability pressure: there is great and growing pressure to align the outcomes of higher education with useful generic skills, employability and enterprenourship.

Information explosion — — — — — — — — ***ssure:*** with the explosion of accessible information — — — — — — — the most essential outcome of a higher educa— — — — — — — le graduates to become life-long learners *(how we le— — — — — — ion is becoming more important than __what__ we learn, — — — — life of information may be so short).*

> The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn
>
> Alvin Toffler

Research: we have a growing understanding of how students (and we all) learn.

Institutional implementation: common excuses & complaints

1. SCL does not mean anything in practice.
SCL is flexible enough to be adapted and applied to all areas of study and teaching.
Must first ensure **students at the centre** of their own learning,
teacher is a facilitator in this learning process, **enabling** learning, not enforcing.
First this **culture** then find good practice ideas for application in particular cases.
Each teacher and each student are unique - so SCL **can be adapted to all needs**.

2. SCL requires more resources.
The biggest challenge is in changing the mindset of students and teachers - that does not require additional resources. The most can be done to achieve SCL without additional funding in terms of **encouraging students** to be active learners.

3 SCL is not appropriate to teach a large and diverse student body.
SCL requires imaginative thinking, but can be done in all types of HE institutions!
Example: teacher giving a small slip of paper to a large student group asking them to write down one aspect of the lectures that they really like and another which they are unsure of and want to ask questions about. Even one such session is a concrete step towards implementing SCL.

...

4. SCL undermines the teaching profession

…since it takes the focus away from the teacher and places it on the student. It is likely that the teaching profession will actually become **more valued** – role is changed, but more demanding and important. Students become part of the academic community, research-led teaching becomes a reality, feedback is more constructive.

5. Students have more work to do in SCL

Not necessarily - it rather requires a re-organisation of their study-time, focus more on genuine learning activities rather than memorisation of information – so they become more effective and adaptable, better-equipped to solve problems when they arise.

6. Teachers have to do more preparatory work in SCL

At the beginning maybe yes – they have to re-think their ways of teaching, but on the long-run the preparation work will **not increase** and the work will be **more enjoyable**!
*(**often case now is:** teachers have a lot of preparatory work to do in order to make sure their students will be able **to take notes** from what they say in class and **then repeat** this in their examination. Usually either teachers or students don t have much joy in that)*

...

7. Problem-based learning is the same as SCL
Problem-based learning (PBL) is a **teaching/learning method** *(students collaboratively solve problems and then reflect upon their experiences)* in which the wider SCL approach can be applied but there are many alternatives to it. SCL is the umbrella under which PBL falls - not one and the same thing.

8. SCL is not suitable to all academic fields.
SCL is easily adaptable to all subjects and courses, but the practical manner may differ. **In all courses and programmes students can be put at the center**. The learning philosophy is what counts! Differences in teaching across different subject-disciplines, especially between the humanities and e.g. technical sciences.

9. In SCL students learn very little subject-matter.
On the contrary, they are likely to know more! They may know fewer repeatable facts though, but more about solving problems, thinking for themselves analytically and engaging in research. *(sometimes, especially at the beginning of introducing SCL approach, they may not be even aware of that – that s why involving students in evaluation and assessment of their learning is also very important).*

. . .

10. Not all teachers can teach in a student-centred way.
All teachers are able to apply SCL approach! It is only a question of their willingness. *(does not matter whether a teacher has been in the profession for a few months or for many years)*. But all teachers do require **support** and professional development which is **imperative** for the success of the implementation of the SCL approach.

11. SCL requires being technologically-minded
SCL may incorporate aspects of e-learning or distance-flexibility. The use of ICT is welcomed in enhancing the students to give feedback in various ways and to source infopart of already existing in the practice of higher education institute CL requires **no more than what is already required** in many cases.

SCL and the Bologna Process

- ECTS and the Use of Learning outcomes

- Qualification frameworks

- Quality Assurance as an Aid to SCL

- Recognition of Prior Learning

- Mobility of Students and Staff

- The Social Dimension and SCL

What are the current priorities ~~...~~ **...ted to implementing SCL in HEIs?**

Priorities

- Strengthen policies of **widening access and raising completion rates;**
- Establish conditions that **foster student-centred learning**, innovative teaching methods;
- Allow EQAR-registered QA agencies to perform their activities across the EHEA, while complying with national requirements;
- **Enhance employability, LLL, entrepreneurial skills** through improved cooperation with employers, especially in the development of educational programmes;
- Ensure that **NQFs, ECTS implementation and DS is based on learning outcomes;**

Bucharest Com...

- **Europe is undergoing an ec...** damaging societal effects,
- **HE is an important par...** difficulties, it should ... overcome the crisi...
- **We commit to s... funding for h... appropriate so...**
- We confirm our co...
- We recognise the impor... **funding instruments** to purs...
- We stress the importance of mo... **managerial structures at HEIs.**

EURASHE policy, current and planned activities

EURASHE policy

*"In relation to qualification frameworks, **learning outcomes and student centered learning approach,** EURASHE holds that:*
- Foccusing on learning outcomes is crucial for linking programmes to Qualifications Frameworks and profiling institutions.
- Based on specifics of study programmes, learning outcomes enable institutions to choose a holistic approach and bring an external world focus to the programmes, making learning social, active, contextual, engaging and student-owned.
- Proper impementation of qualifications frameworks ensures full involvement of students in programme design, institutional governance and quality assurance
- Learning outcomes increase the dimension of employability, facilitating students to become responsible and active life-long learners with developed motivation, capability for self-evaluation, time management skills and skills to access information."

EURASHE policy, current and planned activities

We urge ministers to:

•Help HE institutions in accepting the necessity of SCL approach, especially in PHE and SCHE for its specifics in relation to learning outcomes and employability and also for the increased diversity of the learners that emphasise societal and social role of HE and demands SCL management approach, mindset and methodology within programmes and HEIs.

•Provide and support personal development of HEI management and staff, exchange of good practice and collaboration related to learning outcomes and the ongoing reflective process of a SCL approach.

•Initiate platforms for discussions, networks and projects to explore the possibilities for sector- and/or profession-specific approach in teaching methodology in HE.

Something to think about and discuss…

What is important is to keep learning, to enjoy challenge, and to tolerate ambiguity. In the end there are no certain answers.
Martina Horner, *President of Radcliffe College*

Learning is not compulsory... neither is survival.
W. Edwards Deming
US business advisor & author
(1900 - 1993)

**Are teachers in HEIs important?
Do students need them?**

You learn more quickly under the guidance of experienced teachers. You waste a lot of time going down blind alleys if you have no one to lead you.
W. Somerset Maugham, The Razor's Edge, 1943, English dramatist & novelist (1874 - 1965)

http://sidewood.eu/
Maribor, 15.-30.6.2014

HELLO !
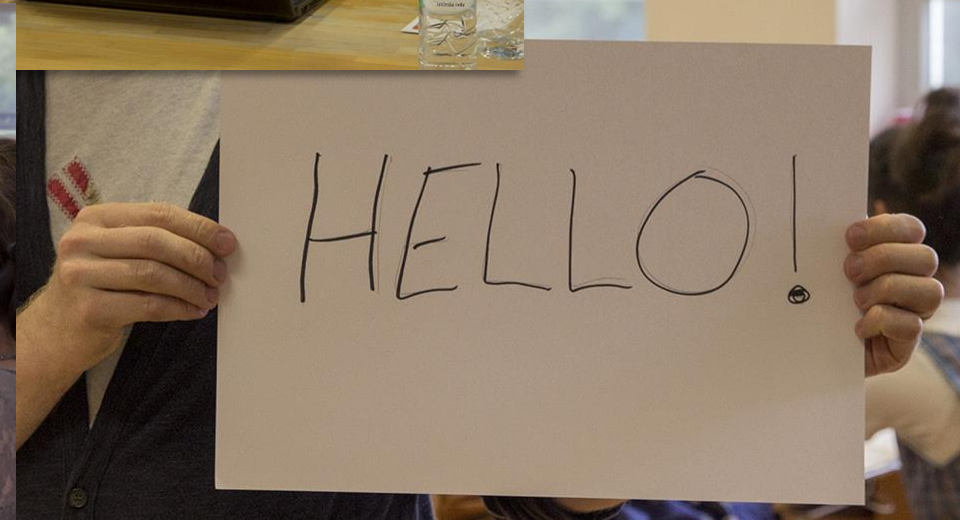
Recources / literature / references:

1. Ingleton, C., Kiley, M., Cannon, R., Rogers , T. (2000). *Leap into...* **Student-centred Learning.** *ACUE, The University of Adelaide.* (redesigned by: Murdoch, P. (2005), CLPD). (http://www.adelaide.edu.au/clpd/resources/leap/leapinto/StudentCentredLearning.pdf (jan. 2011))
2. Bender, B. (2003). *Student - centred Learning: A personal Journal.* *ECAR, Vol. 2003, Issue 11*
3. Attard, A., Di Iorio, E., Geven, K., Santa R. (2010). *Student-Centred Learning—Toolkit for students, staff and higher education institutions.* The European Students' Union, Brussels
4. Zbynek PITRA (*Chairman of the Board of Experts, Czech Management Association),* **The Role of Higher Education Institutions in the Support of Regions Innovation Development**, EURASHE Conference Prague, 21-23 May 2009 (www.eurashe.eu)
5. Jan Mühlfelt (*Chairman Europe Microsoft Corporation),* **Education in 21st century: globalization, competitivness and the role of technology,** EURASHE Conference Prague, 21-23 May 2009 (www.eurashe.eu)
6. Andrejs Rauhvargers (Latvia,Co-Chair, BFUG ImplementationWG), **The EHEA in 2012: Bologna Process Implementation Report** , EURASHE annual conference, Riga 2012 (www.eurashe.eu)

Thank you for your attention!

zdenka.szupan@gmail.com
www.eurashe.eu
www.skupnost-vss.si
www.lesarska-sola-mb.net