

# Table of Contents

**Getting Started: Starting the Course** ..... v

**Getting Started: The Course Logistics**..... ix

**Section 1: Checking Prior Knowledge** ..... 1

Activity 1: Predictions 2–4–8 ..... 2

Activity 2: Course Goals ..... 3

Activity 3: The Journal\* ..... 4

Activity 4: My Course Goals\* ..... 6

Activity 5: Portfolio Start Up ..... 7

*Blacklines* ..... 8

**Section 2: What Is a Learner-Centred School?** ..... 13

Activity 6: What's In a Word? ..... 14

Activity 7: How Do We Learn Best? ..... 15

Activity 8: Learner-Centred Beliefs ..... 16

Activity 9: Systemic Change..... 17

Activity 10: Issues (Optional) ..... 18

Activity 11: Design An Ad ..... 19

Activity 12: Change Chain ..... 20

Activity 13: Individual Change Process ..... 21

Activity 14: Time Out! (Optional) ..... 22

*Blacklines* ..... 23

**\* denotes an assignment activity**

|  |    |
|--|----|
| <b>Section 3: What Instructional Strategies Are Most Effective in the Learner-Centred Classroom?</b> ..... | 33 |
| Activity 15: Brain Compatible Learning .....   | 35 |
| Activity 16: Graphic Organisers .....  | 36 |
| Activity 17: Multiple Intelligences .....  | 37 |
| Activity 18: Cooperative Learning .....  | 38 |
| Activity 19: Thematic Instruction .....  | 39 |
| Activity 20: Whole Language .....  | 40 |
| <i>Blacklines</i> .....  | 41 |
| <br>   |    |
| <b>Section 4: How Do We Evaluate in the Learner-Centred Classroom?</b> .....                               | 47 |
| Activity 21: Authentic Assessment .....  | 48 |
| Activity 22: The Tools and Strategies .....  | 49 |
| Activity 23: Portfolios/Conferences .....  | 50 |
| Activity 24: Parent Empowerment .....  | 51 |
| Activity 25: Full Circle .....   | 52 |
| <i>Blacklines</i> .....  | 53 |
| <br>   |    |
| <b>Section 5: Applying Information</b> .....   | 59 |
| Activity 26: The Start .....   | 60 |
| Activity 27: Out-of-Class Assignment .....   | 61 |
| <i>Blacklines</i> .....  | 62 |

# Preface

## *Getting Started:*

### Starting the Course

Put Transparency 1, “A partnership for quality,” on the overhead.

- Introduce yourself. Tell what and where you teach.
- Welcome participants to the course (acknowledging any you already know) on behalf of the three co-sponsors.
- Acknowledge that the adult learner’s primary reason for continuing education—in banking, education, health services, etc., is to earn more income through learning. A related goal is to learn how to do the job better.
- Explain that in this course, participants will learn the “practical how-to” of thinking in the classroom. They will also learn in a variety of ways suitable to their learning styles.
- Review DOLLAR.

Participants will learn by:

**Doing** (active participation) and trying out the strategies they might use with students.

**Observing** the instructor model the use of critical instructional tools.

**Listening** to small-group discussions, all-class discussions, and different insights.

**Laughing.** What more is there to say?

**Assessing** the worth of what we teach you. Is it useful? Is it valuable to you and your students?

**Reflecting** on what and how you are learning and on how you can best use the ideas in your classroom.

## Introduction

# Getting Started:

## The Course Logistics

Some instructors like to get the logistics out of the way before starting the course itself. Others prefer to do the first activity or two to set a collaborative tone before discussing the logistics. You must decide which approach fits best with you and the situation. Remember that adults can get very hyper about “busy work” and their time. You can keep their anxieties down by emphasizing that this course is not a research-gathering course but an application course. This emphasis requires them to use the course time to do their best thinking about how they can use what they are learning. This is a higher-order standard than is found in courses in which they have information poured into their heads and they paste together someone else’s thinking in a research paper. As the instructor, it is your job to make the material as applicable as possible and to help those who have difficulty with thinking at the application level to develop that capability. (It is our experience that the inability to transfer displayed by some teachers is more a question of conditioning than one of ability. By the time they finish this course and study “transfer,” all should have a fuller appreciation of what learning for transfer means.)

### **TRAINER NOTES:**

Whether you are teaching this course as a seminar without credit or as a program for graduate credit or inservice points, the participants need to know in the first half-day what your expectations are. Basically, there are two:

1. That each person actively participate in the dialogue and interactions. This means showing respect to all persons in the course and thoughtful consideration of all ideas suggested.
2. That participants complete all individual and group assignments given in the class, including those that require application thought. If this is a four- or five-day intensive, participants will have enough time each day to assemble assignments in their work portfolios. If this is a class spread over several weeks, they are expected to try out in their classrooms.

To reinforce these expectations, it is important that you select a time in the first part of the course to introduce the course requirements, the assessment process, and your evaluation criteria. Include these items in the course syllabus and review them with the class. Explain the portfolio process you will use.

# Checking Prior Knowledge

When teachers come to your *Learner-Centred* course, each will come with prior knowledge about what “learner-centred” means. It is important that you model the constructive process by (a) tapping their prior knowledge, (b) providing new information and experiences to expand that knowledge, and (c) helping participants think about how to make what they learn about thinking useful.

In this section, there are a number of active learning strategies to help the teachers in your course identify what they already know about learner-centredness, to form a working definition, and to create images of learner-centred classrooms. Each activity needs a different time allotment. Adjust your selection to the situation.

For each activity, it is important for you to model thought-producing instruction. From the beginning of the course, the strategies that make for a thoughtful climate are essential. So do not forget to stress and model thoughtful questions, wait-time, signals, equal responsibility to answer, and selective reinforcement of thinking. At various times throughout the course, you will have the chance to point out the modeling you have been doing to promote thinking.

## Section 1

### **TO THE TRAINER:**

Every teacher knows that students think. Aristotle defined humans as rational animals. He identified the critical attribute that sets humans apart from other living creatures as the ability to think. Observations of young babies at play tell us that they start distinguishing faces, objects, colours, sounds, and so forth as soon as they open their eyes. As they gather experiences, their thinking patterns develop. Thus, the question for the classroom teacher is not whether students learn, but how well or how skillfully.

Our understanding of learning is built on a constructivist perspective. This perspective says that we learn when we have the chance to build new knowledge on prior experience. As we learn new information or have novel experiences, we see what fits. In this way we construct our understandings of ourselves and our world.

