Learners’ Lives as Curriculum©

Moving Towards Learner-Centered Teaching: Using Learner Stories for Language and Literacy Outcomes
Training Agenda

I. Introductions
II. Principles of Learner-Centered Teaching
III. The Anatomy of a Lesson
IV. Hot Topics
V. Creating a Lesson
VI. Wrap up
Principles of Learner-Centered Teaching

1. Require Ongoing Inquiry
2. Build on What Learners Know
4. Strive for Authenticity
5. Entail Shared Responsibility for Learning Among Students and Teachers
6. Build Communities of Learners and Practitioners
## Moving Towards Learner-Centered Practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience, current and future practice- Directions in learner-centered practice</th>
<th>What you do now</th>
<th>What you would like to do</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1. Take an inquiring stance; learn about learners and their context</strong></td>
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<td><strong>2. Build on what learners know; provide opportunities to integrate the past with the present</strong></td>
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<td><strong>3. Balance skills and structures with meaning-making and knowledge creation</strong></td>
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<td><strong>4. Strive for authenticity in texts and tasks, as well as linguistic and non-linguistic outcomes</strong></td>
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<td><strong>5. Foster learner agency through choices, learner control, and documented mastery</strong></td>
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<td><strong>6. Build community among learners and practitioners</strong></td>
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<td><strong>7. Your idea</strong></td>
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Learner-Centered Teaching: Anatomy of a Lesson

• The Anatomy of a Learner-Centered Lesson
• Learning About Our Learners
The Anatomy of a Learner-Centered Lesson

A. Anatomy of a learner-centered lesson

✓ Reading and reacting to a story
✓ Mastering the language of the story
✓ Generating new language to tell new stories
✓ Comparing experiences for reflection and/or action
Playing With and Mastering the Language of the Story

- Traditional cloze
- Delete every seventh word

See “Never Too Late” in *Stories to Tell Our Children*, pg 50
Story Language

With a classmate, fill in the blanks.

In my country, I didn’t go to _____. When I was 12, I went _____ learn sewing. But not reading or ____. I stayed home with my mother.

_____Now I am 60 years old. I _____ to school in Chicago. The first _____, I was nervous. Sometimes I don’t ______. I look at the blackboard. I _____ everything. I tell my husband, “George, _____ don’t understand.” But if I don’t _____ right, he doesn’t understand either. When _____ can’t help me, I want to ______. I am learning to read. I _____ also learning to talk English. My _____ says, “Amne, your English is good _____.” I say, “Yeah, I go to school!”
Gebre Goso
Playing With Language

• Cloze activity with grammar focus
• Remove subject and object pronouns
• Provide word list (or not)

See “I Help My Kids, My Kids Help Me” in Stories to Tell our Children, pg 32
1. Fill in the blanks. Use pronouns from Gebre’s story.

I, me, my, they, them

_____ help _____ kids.

_____ teach _____ good things.

_____ play with _____.

_____ protect _____ and _____ correct _____.

_____ kids help _____ too.
Story Language Contd.

1-Contd. Fill in the blanks. Use pronouns from Gebre’s story.

I, me, my, they, them

_____ bring _____ things.

_____ teach _____ English.

_____ kids make _____ happy.

Maybe _____ will take care of _____ when _____ grow old.

2. Show a classmate. Do you have the same answers?

3. Circle the verbs. Which ones do you know? Tell a classmate.
Playing With Language

• Cloze activity with one word per phrase
• Dictation and other optional adaptations
• Adjusting the task instead of the text

See “Neighbors” in Stories to Tell Our Children, pg 26
Story Language

1. Listen and look. Your teacher will read the story.
2. Dictation. Listen to the story again. Write the missing words.

   a. My next door neighbors are _____ people.
   b. They _____ two children.
   c. _____ are friendly.
   d. Every time we _____ I say “hi.”
   e. They _____ “hi” back to me
   f. and they _____ smile.
   g. Sometimes they lend _____ to us.
   h. Sometimes I _____ milk from them.
   i. My _____ are nice people
   j. but we haven’t talked_____
   k. because my _____ isn’t very good.
Story Language Contd.

3. Circle six new words. Copy them here.

_________________  ___________________  ______________
_________________  ___________________  ______________

4. Ask a classmate about the words.
Martha Gonzales
Playing With Language

• Strip story: Sentence order

See “Hot Music” in Stories to Tell Our Children, pg 14
Put the sentences in the right order.

1. I think the Mexican music I heard on Jose’s cassette is romantic.
2. But now I feel sad because he is dead.
3. My husband sang these songs in those times.
4. I remember when I was twenty years old.
5. I felt happy because we loved each other.
Playing With Language

• Index card game: Word order

See “Sunny Day” in Stories to Tell Our Children, pg 20
1. Put the words in the right order.

a. sky  Blue

b. grasses  Many

c. air  Clear

d. to deep  Want  breaths  take
Story Language Contd.
1-Contd. Put the words in the right order.

   e. bit      A      cold      little

   f. sleepy   bit    little    A

   g. beautiful But    season    very

   h. keep     I      can’t      quiet

2. Read your answers to a classmate. Do you agree with the word order?

3. Which words are new? Circle them. Ask a classmate about them.
Word Building and Language Play

1. Which words do you know? Circle them.

happy angry homesick afraid sad excited surprised calm worried lazy

2. Which words are new? Ask a classmate about them.
Word Building and Language Play Contd.

3. Put the words into two groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good Feelings</th>
<th>Bad Feelings</th>
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4. Brainstorm with your classmates. What other words for feelings do you know? Your teacher can write them on the blackboard.

5. Copy six new words for feelings.
Generating New Words to Tell New Stories

- Word lists
- Sort words, and add new words

See “Hot Music” in Stories to Tell Our Children, pg 16
Generating New Words

- Word web

See “Fast Cars” in *Stories to Tell Our Children*, pg 70
1. Talk with your classmates.
   a. What do you see in this picture?
   b. What do you think happened?

2. Brainstorm. What do you think of when you hear the word car? Someone can add your ideas to a word web on the blackboard. For each word on the inner web, think of three more words.

   accident
   speeding
   ticket
   policeman
3. Copy the words from the blackboard onto the word web above.

4. Tell a classmate something about yourself. Use words from the word web.

5. Tell the class about your classmate and cars.
1. Complete these sentences.  
   Example: I feel lazy *when it’s hot outside*.  
   a. I feel happy when…
   b. I feel angry when…
   c. I feel homesick when…
   d. I feel afraid when…
   e. I feel excited when…
   f. I feel surprised when…

2. Show your sentences to a classmate.  
   Are they the same or different? How?
Sharing Stories Contd.

3. Read your first sentence to the class. Listen to your classmates’ sentences. Who has the same sentences? Repeat for sentences b – f.

4. Choose one feeling. When did you feel that way? Tell a classmate your story.

5. Write a story on a piece of paper. Read it to a different classmate. Listen to your classmate’s story.
1. Think about neighbors here and in your homeland. Write *Yes* or *No* in each Column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What do friendly neighbors do?</th>
<th>In the U.S.</th>
<th>In my homeland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Say hi or good morning</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Sit on the porch together</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Drink coffee together</td>
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<tr>
<td>d. Watch TV together</td>
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<table>
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<th>How do neighbors help each other?</th>
<th>In the U.S.</th>
<th>In my homeland</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Lend and borrow food</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Watch each other’s children</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Feed animals when one is away</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
1-Contd. Think about neighbors here and in your homeland. Write Yes or No in each Column.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>How do neighbors fight?</th>
<th>In the U.S.</th>
<th>In my homeland</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Yell at each other</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Turn music up very loud</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Kill each other’s pets</td>
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2. Think about your neighbors. Tell your classmates.
   a. Are your neighbors friendly to each other? How?
   b. Do your neighbors help each other? How?
   c. Do your neighbors fight? What happens?

Stories To Tell Our Children, "Neighbors" Pg 28
Comparing Experiences for Reflection or Action

• Comparisons with yes/no chart

See “Neighbors” in *Stories to Tell Our Children*, pg 28
Comparing Experiences

• Opinion poll (with raising of hands)

See “Marriages in Pakistan” in *Stories to Tell Our Children*, pg 57
Talk It Over

1. Talk with your classmates
   a. What are the advantages for a man to have two wives? (Why is it good?)
   b. What are the disadvantages? (Why is it bad?)
   c. What are the advantages for a woman to have two husbands?
   d. What are the disadvantages?
Talk It Over Contd.

2. Tell your opinion. Check one answer only.

Men: I want to have one wife__________

I want to have more than one wife_______

Women: I want to have one husband _________

I want more than one husband _________

I don’t want to have a husband _________
Talk It Over Contd.

3. Tell a classmate. Which one did you check? Why?

4. Count your classmates.

   How many men are in your class? __________

   How many want to have one wife? __________

   How many want more than one wife? ______

   How many don’t want to have a wife?_________
Talk It Over cont’d.

4. Count your classmates.
   How many women are in your class?_______
   How many want to have one husband?_____  
   How many want more than one husband?__
   How many don’t want to have a husband?__

5. Do the men and women in your class agree?
   Why? Why not?
Comparing Experiences

• Chart: Same or different, better or worse

See “Marriages in Pakistan” in Stories to Tell Our Children, pg 58
…for Reflection or Action

• Chart: Reflection with compatriots

See “Marriages in Pakistan” in Stories to Tell Our Children, pg 59
Word Building and Language Play

1. Brainstorm with your classmates. What customs are different in your homeland and in the United States?
2. Make a chart. Compare customs in your homeland and in the U.S. Then, add two customs to the chart.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Customs</th>
<th>Same</th>
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<th>Worse in U.S.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Getting married</td>
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<tr>
<td>Having a baby</td>
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<td>Raising children</td>
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3. Look at your classmate’s chart. Write one interesting thing you learned. In my classmate’s country, ________

4. Tell the class about your classmate.
...or Action

• Sentence completion
• Identifying potential audiences

See “Escape Story” in *Stories to Tell Our Children*, pg 83
Sharing Stories

1. Complete these sentences.
   a. (Tell why) I came to America because_____
   b. (Tell how) I came to America__________

2. Make two class lists on the blackboard.
   a. Why we came to America
   b. How we came to America
3. Write a group story on the blackboard. Write two paragraphs.

   *We came to America for many reasons. Some of us…*
   
   *We came in many ways. Some of us…*


5. Make changes to your story. Think about these questions. What do you want your audience to know about your experiences? Do you need to add more details? Do you want to change the way you said it?
Learning About Our Learners

A. The writing process
B. Anatomy of a learner-centered lesson
C. Learning about our learners
   ✓ Identifying themes or hot topics
   ✓ Collecting narratives
   ✓ Creating learner-centered language lessons
Some Features of Learner-Centered Practices

1. Require on-going inquiry
2. Build on what learners know
3. Balance skills/structures with meaning making/creation of knowledge
4. Strive for authenticity
5. Foster learner agency within classroom and beyond
6. Build communities of learners and practitioners
7. Other (s)?
1. Require ongoing inquiry (listening to/learning about learners)

- Identify learners’ interests and needs
- Identify learning styles and preferences
- Learn about learners’ contexts: issues and challenges
- Learn about learners’ contexts: resources and possibilities
Learner-Centered Practices

2. Build on what learners know

✓ Identify learners’ current knowledge and skills
✓ Honor and celebrate language and culture
✓ Provide opportunities to integrate the past with the present
✓ Nurture intergenerational transmission of culture and values
Learner-Centered Practices

3. Balance skills and structures with meaning making and knowledge creation

✓ Provide information about how the language works
✓ Develop skills for addressing learners’ purposes
✓ Provide opportunities to address those purposes
✓ Provide learners with opportunities to create and transmit knowledge
Learner-Centered Practices

4. Strive for authenticity

✓ Provide access to authentic texts, authentic tasks
✓ Move beyond “rehearsal” to authentic interactions in pursuit of real purposes
✓ Employ project-based learning
✓ Aim for measurable linguistic and non-linguistic outcomes
Learner-Centered Practices

5. Foster learner agency - within the classroom and beyond

✓ Build in learner choice over what to learn and how
✓ Nurture mentoring opportunities for more proficient learners to help less
✓ Foster learner initiative in setting goals and monitoring progress
✓ Provide opportunities to apply new knowledge outside the classroom, and to report/document results
Learner-Centered Practices

6. Build communities of learners and practitioners

- Create opportunities for sharing stories and experiences
- Provide support for analysis of situations
- Create opportunities to collectively develop strategies for action
- Provide opportunities for reflection and planning for further action
Creating a plan of action

Three Action Steps to take what you’ve gotten and run with it:

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<th>When?</th>
<th>With Whom?</th>
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Other notes and Inspirations:
Bright Ideas

• What will you do with all this information?
• How will you plan for successful implementation of these new ideas?