

**OVERVIEW ON STUDENT-CENTRED  
LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN EUROPE**  
RESEARCH STUDY



# IMPRINT

## OVERVIEW ON STUDENT - CENTERED LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN EUROPE: RESEARCH STUDY

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

Student-Centred Learning -Toolkit for Students, Staff and Higher Education Institutions,  
European Students' Union and Education International, 2010

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## 1. FOREWORD

The future of our society is dependent upon democratic participation and the continuous development of the global knowledge base. Quality, accessible higher education equips the world with active, responsible citizens, ready to take on tomorrow's challenges, and student-centred learning is essential in ensuring this.

Student-centred learning has a long and inspirational history, starting with the massive student protests against the elitism of universities in 1968 and the need for universities to open their doors to all parts of society. This continued with the rise of critical pedagogy, which aimed at empowering students, especially from disadvantaged backgrounds, to build upon their experiences and perspectives and provide them with knowledge to challenge the common knowledge, perceptions and myths in society. This also based itself on the idea that students are not empty vessels waiting to be filled with knowledge.

The ineffectiveness of teaching through the transmission of knowledge has also been confirmed through years of pedagogical research. The massive protests, the rise of critical pedagogy and the research done on the teaching and learning process spawned the concept of student-centred learning; putting students in the driver's seat of their learning experience and facilitating the process of learning to learn.

The increasing student population and its growing diversity presents challenges to the traditional methods of teaching and learning, making it necessary to adapt the classroom to focus on the diversity of students' experiences, engage with many different types of learners and inspire students through a mutual learning experience.

Taking students seriously, by viewing them as co-producers of knowledge and a part of the academic community also means challenging the growing perception of students as customers to be provided 'customer service' that threatens the shift towards student-centred learning. Taking students seriously also means giving them real choices, autonomy and responsibility in their learning process and ensuring their voices are heard in the decision-making and feedback mechanisms. All of this serves to be empowering and will ensure that when students leave the university, they are ready to take on the world.

With its long history and having made it onto the agenda of the Bologna Process and the European Union, knowing where we are and where to go next is an important step in ensuring a full paradigm shift towards student-centred learning. By providing policy updates and understanding the different views of students and institutions, this publication will prove to be essential in evaluating the implementation of student-centred learning all the way into the classroom.

A big thank you goes to my co-authors, Tijana Isoski and Blazhe Todorovski, as well as Jussi Välimä, Therhi Nokkala, Anthony Camilleri, Pusa Nastase and Matyas Szabo and all of the others involved in the work behind this publication.

Erin Nordal  
Vice-Chairperson 2014-2015

## 2. INTRODUCTION

Throughout the years the European Students Union (ESU) has been focusing on student-centred learning (SCL), together with many educational stakeholders. Constant changes in societal and educational needs request that further emphasis is given to teaching excellence. ESU has been keeping a close track on the implementation of the SCL concept since the Leuven/ Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué through its project Time for Student Centred Learning (T4SCL) 2009/10, its publications Bologna at the Finish Line 2010 and Bologna with Students' Eyes 2012, and numerous surveys to the member unions in 39 countries.

Inspired by the growing interest and progress in implementing SCL, ESU developed a new project called Peer Assessment of Student-Centred Learning (PASCL), funded with the support of the European Commission. Started in October 2013, the project aims to re-evaluate the progress of implementation of SCL, highlight best practices and establish peer assessment procedures for the implementation of the concept in European higher education institutions.

Overall, PASCL aims at assisting in implementing sound SCL strategies and approaches at institutional level and fostering a culture of SCL in higher education institutions across Europe. The main outcome is the development of a framework of criteria for conducting peer-assessment of the student-centeredness of higher education institutions, which will be used in the awardment of a label for institutions fulfilling the framework criteria and focus on both enhancement and rewarding excellence. The project will deploy an online repository with case studies, practical advice for implementation of SCL and feedback from participating institutions and students. Joining ESU in the project are UNICA (Institutional Network of the Universities from the Capitals of Europe), The Finnish Institute for Educational Research at the University of Jyväskylä, Central European University, Melius and the Knowledge Innovation Centre, as project partners.

The project began by conducting a series of research and surveys, analysing state of play and highlighting best case practices in European Higher Education Area (EHEA), described in this publication. The research is focused on policies and efforts to introduce the SCL concept to three different levels: the European, institutional and student perspective, especially addressing the question of students' motivation in taking an active role in co-creating their learning experience. Each level has been explored separately; the European level through extensive desk research, the institutional through surveying member institutions of UNICA, and students themselves through a survey on their views of the implementation of SCL in the classrooms of institutions in the EHEA. Altogether this has provided an comprehensive overview of the matter.

### 3. THE CONCEPT OF SCL

Over the past years, the concept of SCL has made its way into the policy discourse on higher education. Commitments to its implementation can be found on the European level as well as in national plans for higher education and institutional strategies, and it has long been a prominent topic in higher education research.

SCL gained political recognition in the Bologna Process agreements in 2009 through the Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Ministerial Communiqué:

*We reassert the importance of the teaching mission of higher education institutions and the necessity for ongoing curricular reform geared toward the development of learning outcomes. Student-centred learning requires empowering individual learners, new approaches to teaching and learning, effective support and guidance structures and a curriculum focused more clearly on the learner in all three cycles. Curricular reform will thus be an ongoing process leading to high quality, flexible and more individually tailored education paths. Academics, in close cooperation with student and employer representatives, will continue to develop learning outcomes and international reference points for a growing number of subject areas. We ask the higher education institutions to pay particular attention to improving the teaching quality of their study programmes at all levels. This should be a priority in the further implementation of the European Standards and Guidelines for quality assurance.*

In 2012, the importance of SCL and learning-outcomes based learning was reiterated in the Bucharest Ministerial Communiqué and the European Commission's Communication on Rethinking education. That same year, the Bologna Follow-Up Group developed its working agenda with a specific focus on improving the social dimension in education through student-centeredness in teaching.

SCL is not limited to certain methodology; it is rather a cultural shift in the institution. It also builds up on the successful implementation of Bologna tools, such as recognition procedures and ECTS based on learning outcomes. Current quality assurance mechanisms emphasise the importance of teaching (interaction between teacher and student, students as co-producers of knowledge and members of the academic community curricula design with respect to learning outcomes), however current quality assurance procedures have their limitations.

Programme-level evaluation can give a better understanding on the methodological set-up of the individual study programme. However, institutional reviews performed by quality assurance agencies rarely treat teaching and learning as a core aspect, which gives a false signal to the institutional leadership about management priorities.

In reality it means that research activity is rewarded significantly more than excellence in teaching, and there are fewer incentives for academic staff to invest in development of their teaching skills, employ new methods of teaching and assessment, such as problem-based learning and project-based activities. At the same time, there are only a few good practices, which put emphasis on students and encourage them to take a more active role in designing their learning path, take advantage of collaborative learning methods and develop critical thinking through challenging established knowledge.

To map out what this notion means, and what would be required in terms of policy, ESU and Education International (EI) jointly undertook T4SCL that ran from 2009 to 2010. T4SCL aimed at evaluating the state of play among stakeholders and establishing common understanding of the concept by providing a common comprehensive definition, as well as guidelines and checklists for implementation of the concept. The implementation of T4SCL led to the definition that is now widely used by educational stakeholders and policy-makers. This definition adequately brings together a number of concepts, perceptions and tried and tested methods of SCL. It serves to enhance the positive effect of a SCL-approach within higher education, most importantly for individual students who are to use the good practices of the SCL approach in their daily lives (Time for Student-Centred Learning, Koen Geven & Angele Attard, 2010).

One of the main problems that the project partners faced was that despite its popularity, SCL is also a notoriously vague notion. Perhaps the best indicator of its vagueness is that there seems to be no one who strongly argues against SCL. Its opposite, teacher centred-learning, has been in some respects a stereotype of the method of provision of higher education for ages and is considered counter-productive to meeting the needs of increasingly diverse student populations. Moreover, SCL is often interpreted in many different and sometimes contradictory ways.

Examination of the theory behind SCL in intensive discussions with teachers and students on their interpretations of SCL took place at the conference launching the T4SCL project held in Bucharest in May 2010. As a result, a list of nine general principles underlying SCL was created, aiming to put forward a clearer understanding of the topic. These principles are as follows:

### **PRINCIPLE 1: SCL requires an on-going Reflexive Process**

Part of the underlying philosophy of SCL is that no one context can have one SCL style that can remain applicable through time. The philosophy of SCL is such that teachers, students and institutions need to continuously reflect on their teaching, learning and infrastructural systems in

such a way that would continuously improve the learning experience of students and ensure that the intended learning outcomes of a given course or programme component are achieved in a way that stimulates learners' critical thinking and transferable skills.

## PRINCIPLE II: SCL does not have a “One-Size-Fits-All” Solution

A key concept underlying SCL is the realisation that all higher education institutions are different, all teachers are different and all students are different. These all operate in very diverse contexts and deal with various subject-disciplines. Therefore, SCL is a learning approach that requires learning support structures, which are appropriate to each given context, and teaching and learning styles appropriate to those undertaking them.

## PRINCIPLE III: Students have Different Learning Styles

SCL recognises that students have different pedagogical needs. Some learn better through trial and error, others learn through practical experience. For some learners much is learned by reading literature, others need to debate and discuss theory in order to understand it.

## PRINCIPLE IV: Students have Different Needs and Interests

All students have needs that extend beyond the classroom. Some are interested in cultural activities, others in sports or in representative organisations. Students can have children or can be faced with psychological conditions, illness or disability.

## PRINCIPLE V: Choice is Central to Effective Learning in SCL

Students like to learn different things and hence any offer should involve a reasonable amount of choice. Learning can be organised in liberal formats, such as at colleges of liberal arts or choice can be offered in a more traditional, disciplinary style.

## PRINCIPLE VI: Students have Different Experiences and Background Knowledge

Learning needs to be adapted to the life and professional experience of the individual concerned. For instance, if students already have considerable experience in using information and communications technology, there is no point in trying to teach them the same thing again; if they already have considerable research skills, perhaps it would be better to help them in theory. Personal experience can also be used to motivate students, for instance, by allowing students to share a personal story to illustrate a point.

## PRINCIPLE VII: Students should have Control Over their Learning

Students should be given the opportunity to be involved in the design of courses, curricula and their evaluation. Students should be seen as active partners who have a stake in the way that higher education functions. The best way to ensure that learning focuses more on students is by engaging students themselves in how their learning should be shaped.

## PRINCIPLE VIII: SCL is about Enabling not Telling

In simply imparting facts and knowledge to students (telling) the initiative, preparation and content comes mainly from the teacher. The SCL approach aims to give the student greater responsibility enabling the student to think, process, analyse, synthesise, criticise, apply, solve problems, etc.

## PRINCIPLE IX: Learning needs Cooperation between Students and Staff

It is important that students and staff co-operate to develop a shared understanding both of the problems experienced in learning, as well as their problems as stakeholders within their given institution, jointly proposing solutions that might work for both groups. In the classroom, such cooperation will have a positive effect as the two groups increasingly come to consider each other as partners. Such a partnership is central to the philosophy of SCL, which sees learning as taking place in a constructive interaction between the two groups.

The concept as described in the definition and in terms of these nine principles has been the common understanding of the partners' consortium, therefore being the framework of all research, actions and outcomes covered PASCL.

## 4. BACKGROUND ON PASCL PROJECT PARTNERS' WORK ON SCL

ESU has been a strong advocate for interaction between the teacher and student and that students are co-producers of knowledge, which we consider crucial for the quality and relevance of learning outcomes. Also, SCL has an immense impact on the process of acquiring learning outcomes, responds to the diversity of profiles and needs of learners and therefore improves higher education retention rates. Learning outcomes are defined as custom formulated statements that describe minimum requirements of knowledge, skills, competences and attitudes, that the student is intended to acquire during the learning activity (Policy paper on Quality of Higher Education, European Students' Union, 2014).

T4SCL aimed at assisting in policy debates on SCL and concrete implementation on national, institutional and classroom-level. A comprehensive description of what SCL means in the Bologna context was developed, and its direct and indirect benefits and preconditions for its implementation were outlined (Student-Centred Learning: An Insight into Theory and Practice, 2010). A survey targeted at teachers and students in 22 countries helped map SCL-related policies and practices, showed their perceptions on the barriers for the implementation of SCL and identify key players, such as university leadership and quality assurance agencies. At a later stage, the T4SCL toolkit, an indicative SCL checklist, was published to empower higher education institutions, teachers or students to identify the gaps in implementing SCL and provide methodological recommendations for improving the situation. The toolkit has since been translated into more than 7 languages (French, German, Dutch, Lithuanian, Albanian, Hungarian and others).

Despite ministerial commitments and ESU's efforts to gain more attention to the concept and benefits of SCL, there has been little progress on the national level to introduce strategies for rewarding excellence in teaching in order to reaffirm the importance of the educational mission of higher education. Additionally, higher education institutions themselves have not sufficiently prioritised developing and implementing teaching staff development policies across the whole institution.

Following up on the success of T4SCL and realising the persistent challenges of implementation, PASCL was initiated with the aim of bridging the gap between policy and practical implementation by developing and testing a robust assessment framework that can be used to enhance the “student-centeredness” of European higher education institutions. Using the planned procedures and assessment, this action can lead to the award of a “Student-centred institution” for successful implementation.

The other partners of the PASCL consortium observed similar trends and challenges, especially UNICA, which also runs a Bologna experts' project. ESU has had longstanding cooperation with UNICA on promoting SCL, mainly through its Bologna seminars and bi-annual UNICA student conferences. The above mentioned T4SCL toolkit has been developed in close cooperation with experts from University of Jyväskylä, who expressed the interest to work on the next steps of promoting the SCL concept. Together with Central European University, ESU has been engaged in promoting the European Award for Excellence in Teaching in Social Sciences and Humanities and a number of Bologna process promotion activities. ESU also has collaborated with KIC and Melius on previous projects and showed an interest in SCL area.

## 5. STUDENTS PERSPECTIVE- SCL DOWN TO CLASSROOM LEVEL

The concept of SCL has a positive connotation among all educational stakeholders, regardless of the definition and understanding. At the same time, there is one area where all parties are conflicted and uncertain, and that is the final implementation at the classroom level. Given the fact that the main focus group here is students, the ones most affected by this paradigm shift, we turned to them to explain to us how everyday students see implementation of the SCL-concept possible in the classroom. Therefore, we conducted a survey of the student population through their representatives. A SCL questionnaire was sent out to student representatives from ESU's 47 member organisations in 39 different countries. These student representatives are all currently enrolled in European higher education institutions and members of either the democratic student councils of those institutions or student organisations active at those universities. Being active students gives them good insight into current classroom activities, and experience as student representatives information, knowledge and skills enables them to analyse and give rational conclusions about the overall state of implementation of SCL concept in a given higher education institution or country. We received 39 answers from 20 different countries: Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Israel, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and UK. Best practices students highlighted are described in this chapter and can be used as recommendations for other higher education institutions when planning an implementation of SCL strategy.

## RESEARCH RESULTS

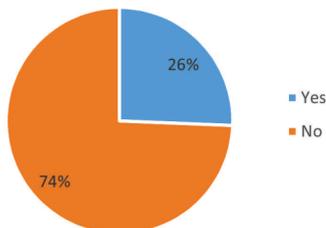
### STUDENT AWARENESS OF SCL

The questionnaire focused first on the term of SCL and familiarity of the concept. Results proved a poor level of general awareness among students on the topic, as 74% of the respondents stated that everyday students in their country are not familiar with the concept of SCL. Contrary to that, the answers from student representatives show a near perfectly opposite picture, as 77% of them are familiar with the concept of SCL.

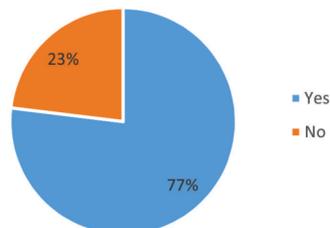
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\*All of the input referred to in this chapter has been provided by students and represents their view and understanding of the reality.

## General student population



## Student representatives



*Familiarity and understanding of Student Centered Learning concept among students*

These provocative results could lead to many various assumptions, so a closer analysis of the reasoning behind this was necessary. Over 80% of student representatives learned about SCL through their involvement in the student movement, during engagement, conferences, seminars or projects of local students' unions, national students' unions and ESU. Only four answers referred to teachers and educational studies or individual research conducted online. This leads to the conclusion that there is an alarmingly low awareness of SCL amongst everyday students. The responsibility for improving this situation lies on both student representatives and organisations to better disseminate projects and information, but at the same time on the higher education institutions who should take additional steps in developing and communicating a clear SCL strategy to students and informing them about possibilities for greater involvement and ownership of their learning experience.

### *Good practice:*

*Some universities recognised importance of SCL and have it deeply embedded in their strategies and priorities, as it is the case at the Uppsala University. CEMUS is a unique student initiated and primarily student-run university center with the explicit ambition to contribute to a better world. Since the early 1990's, CEMUS has offered interdisciplinary higher education and been a creative meeting place for students, PhD Students, researchers and teachers from Uppsala University and the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences. CEMUS three main pillars are: Student-Led Education, Collaboration & Partnership and Transdisciplinary Research. The education at CEMUS gives students the opportunity to study a wide range of courses within the environment, development and sustainability field. Their transdisciplinary courses aim to complement other courses at Uppsala University and the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences. They are built on a close collaboration between students, course coordinators, teachers, researchers, university administrators and societal actors.*

[www.csduppsala.uu.se](http://www.csduppsala.uu.se)

When asked to define SCL in their own terms\*, respecting national and institutional contexts, almost all respondents referred to a part of ESU's definition of SCL, and eight respondents quoted ESU's definition as their own understanding of the concept. Five respondents could not provide a definition or clear understanding of the term. When analysing the content of the definitions all respondents touched up to students being active participants and the ones responsible for their own learning experience. This feeds up to the focus on the needs of students, their learning styles and learning environment. Three respondents emphasised active participation and interaction in their definition. Every fifth respondent made a direct connection of SCL to the experience based knowledge. Modern technologies and teaching support systems were also mentioned in only a few definitions. Focus of three definitions was clearly teacher student communication and mutual respect.

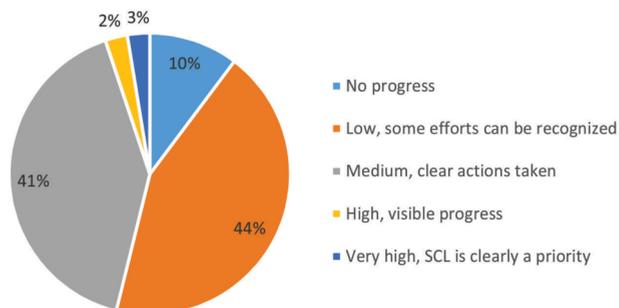
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*\*The list of answers to this question, in the native languages of respondents can be found in the Annex I of this publication.\**

## THE PARADIGM SHIFT IN PRACTICE

Almost 80% of respondents believe that there has been a shift in the degree to which students have a control over their educational process within the past years. 82% of surveyed students believe that there has been a positive change. Student representation is getting stronger allowing students to voice their opinions on their programmes, as a result of which course evaluations are taken more seriously, both by staff and students. At the same time, most of them see the gap between discourse and reality, stating that students tend to be more involved in the governance structures at all the levels, however they're still not considered as an equal partner in the process. Four respondents see negative change, where there have been new sets of rules imposed, making the learning experience harder for students. 21% of students involved in research have not noticed any kind of change.

When it comes to the implementation of SCL in higher education institutions, there has clearly been some progress in the past years, and 90% of our respondents agree with this statement. Half of them view progress as slow, but see indications of efforts by either national authorities or higher education institutions. In some of these cases, the only indication of progress is on the initiative of individual teachers. The other half see concrete actions taking place, but are still not convinced that SCL has been made a clear priority in higher education, and observe that SCL has still not been presented to students with all its characteristics and opportunities. 38% of student representative respondents have had direct influence in promoting the SCL concept through their respective organisations..



Progress in practical implementation of SCL

#### Good practice:

An example of how to expand learning activities in a way interesting for students and adjusted to their learning environments is the Model Conference in Slovakia. The primary aim of the Model Conference (realised within the course entitled Diplomatic Practice) was to provide 2nd year students of masters studies with an opportunity to expand their theoretical knowledge and have practical experiences in the field of negotiations, bilateral and multilateral diplomacy, diplomatic protocol and the application of foreign languages. Currently the Model Conference runs every year as a mandatory subject, with the course being based on SCL principles.

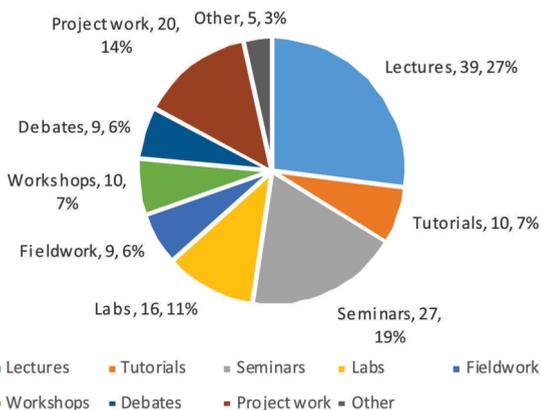
Such model-based conferences create a rare opportunity for practical training of students of international relations and diplomatic service in Slovakia. The organisers expect the main output to be the out-of-the-box ideas and visions of the young generation of future opinion leaders and representatives of the governmental, business and non-governmental sector on the most scalding issues in the security and economic fields of future international relations' alignment. Additional added value is provided by the expert feedback of the respective representatives of international organisations and diplomatic missions accredited in Slovakia, seeking answers for the most current issues and trying to create concrete standpoints on their future development in the above mentioned fields. At the end of semester the final conference takes place. The intention of the organisers is to provide students with a presentation of the conference findings together with the personal engagement of the invited representatives of international organizations, diplomatic missions, as well as academics, business corporations and journalists. Their role will be to enrich the event with relevant feedback on the conference findings in each section and to evaluate students' visions and ideas about the upcoming set-up of the rapidly changing international relations and global politics.



*Weekly negotiations during the semester*

## TEACHING METHODS

Despite new trends and signs of a shift, lectures remain absolutely the most typical way of teaching at the university, appearing in 100% of responses from our respondents. Noticeably, seminars and projects are also a part of respondents' learning experience, respectfully 69% and 51%. Labs are used in teaching according to 41% of respondents, while only one in five students report having debates, fieldwork, tutorials and workshops as a part of their learning experience.



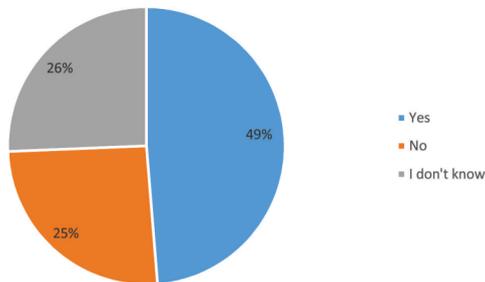
*Most common ways of teaching, answers overview*

When asked about project-based learning, the type of learning in which students work in teams to produce concrete outcomes with full support from higher education institutions, 72% of students confirmed having knowledge about such approaches of teaching and learning in their country. How common this approach is varies greatly.

Students perceive a considerable distinction between BA and MA curricula. While BA curricula are often based on teacher-centered lectures, MA curricula are often more student-centred and cater to students' research interests. Most students agree that it depends on the course, institution and programme, some fields focus more on project-based learning than others, depending on the subject: technical subjects tend to use this approach more than humanities and arts. It can also depend on teachers, their age, personality and experience abroad. Students in general welcome this approach, with respect to limitations and characteristics of a course and subject, show more interest and engagement in this type of learning and rate it as an overall highly positive and useful learning experience.

## TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

SCL focuses on empowering students, but does not by any means neglect the importance and need for constant professional development of teachers. Teacher support and training programmes must be an integral part of SCL-implementation in all higher education institutions. We asked students whether they were aware of teacher training programmes at their universities that focus on developing innovative teaching methods and if teachers are asked to take part in teaching quality enhancement programmes, i.e. in modules focusing on pedagogical enhancement. Nearly half of them were aware of the existence of these teacher support services.



*Are there teacher training programmes focusing on innovative teaching methods?*

44% of our respondents said that teacher training programmes are provided, either within the modules of higher education institutions or within traineeship programmes of different organisations.

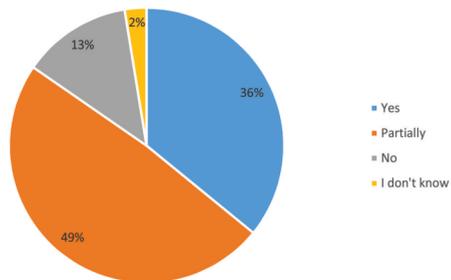
### *Good practice:*

*Austrian student representatives highlighted an example that some institutions offer a Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), which supports the instructors of curricula, working groups on curricula and teachers with different supplies for the improvement of teaching. The main goals are the improvement of the subjects and their execution, the second is the professionalisation of teaching competence. The programmes differ a lot between the institutions, some offer actual curricula in higher education didactics, that the teachers compete on a voluntary or mandatory basis. Then there are also those institutions, that – instead or in addition – offer support through projects, for instance to enhance the quality of teaching, to support the use of e-learning, to enhance the quality of exams. <https://ctl.univie.ac.at>*

## TEACHER AND COURSE EVALUATIONS

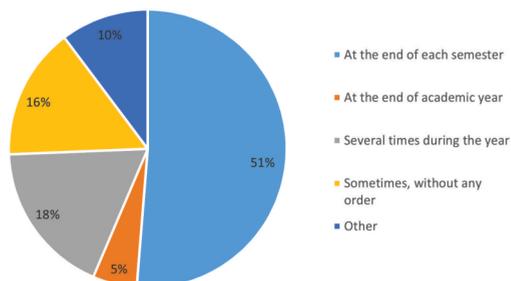
Teacher and course evaluations can assist in measuring student-centeredness and for putting students in the drivers' seat of their educational experience. In order to achieve those goals, evaluations need to be designed to allow students to express themselves in the best possible way, giving them the freedom to comment on and shape their learning paths. Results should be transparent, having direct and clear influence, empowering students to engage by seeing how their input can contribute to change.

At the time of our research, 13% of students claimed that there are no procedures in place for teacher evaluation set up by students. 50% of students believe that teacher evaluation systems are only partially set up by students.



*Are there teacher evaluation procedures set up by students?*

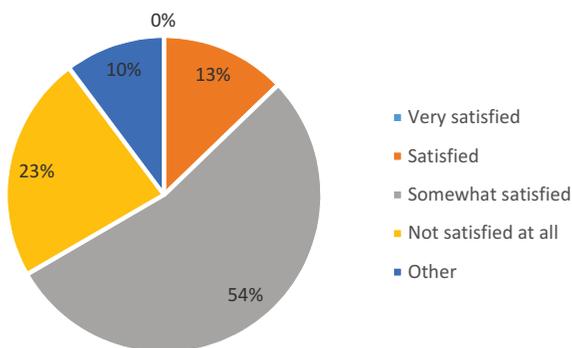
The frequency of conducting these evaluations varies greatly. One in two students responded that evaluations are conducted at the end of each semester, while 5% of respondents said they are conducted only at the end of the academic year. Only 18% of respondents said that constant feedback throughout the year is the norm, while 15% experienced that feedback is collected only occasionally and with no particular order.



*How often are evaluations conducted?*

According to 93% of respondents teacher evaluations are conducted by way of questionnaire. The majority of those surveys are online, distributed through university emails or special online systems and platforms established at universities. Questions are mainly quantitative, where students respond by using a numerical scale,, and are given the possibility of providing written comments. There are cases where evaluations are conducted orally, in the form of open questions to the entire class at the last session, and may also be conducted through interaction in smaller focus groups. Methods vary between universities, courses and teachers, but in some cases, like in Sweden, course evaluations are mandatory and conducted at the end of each course. There are often possibilities to comment about the teaching or make general remarks, however there are no evaluations directly dedicated to evaluate the teacher.

Generally speaking, students are satisfied with teacher evaluation systems at their universities. 67% of respondents expressed their satisfaction. Interestingly, not one respondent said they are very satisfied, while 23% were not satisfied at all with the teacher evaluation systems in place. Needless to say, there is still room for improvement, and the most mentioned reproach refers to the transparency of evaluation results and how they are used, giving students clear insight to the impact their input had. Closing the feedback cycle by informing students about the results and follow-up of evaluations are essential for ensuring valuable student feedback and a true student-centred approach.



*Are students satisfied with how results of the evaluation are used?*

Teachers and administrative staff are often concerned about whether students take teaching evaluations seriously, about the low response rates, and with how representative and honest results are. We therefore asked student representatives for their reflections on the general mood amongst everyday students and whether they take teacher evaluations seriously. 46% of respondents are not convinced that students take these evaluations seriously. Reasons cited were a lack of proper follow-up and the feeling that the evaluations are not read, there are neither positive nor negative consequences due to results, a lack of incentives for filling them out, poor design of the evaluation. Additionally, evaluations may be too long and complicated be

adequately answered, real issues are not being addressed, and students sometimes feel that universities themselves do not take them seriously when results are not followed-up with concrete actions. Those who do not take evaluations seriously, also believe that when students have a severe complaints about the teacher, they will use systems such as an ombudsperson in order to be heard.

Most students agree that putting evaluations online helped a lot in getting better responses, as it improves accessibility and students can complete them in a comfortable environment, which in turn improves the quality of answers. 33% believe that students take these evaluations seriously only to a certain extent, stating that those who do answer take it seriously, but when evaluations are not mandatory, those who do not care do not provide any feedback. 21% of respondents strongly believe students take evaluations seriously, the reason being that they can see results and are satisfied with the evaluation systems in place.

*Good case practice:*

*An example of a well-functioning teacher and course evaluation system is in Masaryk University in Brno, Czech Republic. Students there are highly satisfied with the transparency and the power and influence they have over their own learning experience at their university. The questionnaire in place is structured in 7 questions, using a scale of 1-11 with space available for comments. The questions are as following: 1. interestingness of the course; 2. contribution to your studies; 3. difficulty of the course; 4. demands on preparation for the course; 5. availability of study materials; 6. teaching style; 7. is teacher an expert in the area of a course. The results are only made available after the evaluation closes and to those students who answered questions for at least half (or ten) of the courses they had enrolled in. The results also are made accessible to the teachers listed in the course catalogue. Respondents' comments are never made public. These can only be accessed by the teachers of the courses they concern and their superiors. Only results based on information collected from at least 5 students (not less than 10 per cent of those enrolled) are made publicly available. The application only displays results for one course at a time and does so in a form that cannot be processed with common text-processing tools. Moreover, users batch-downloading the information are consequently denied access to it. Both aforementioned measures are taken to ensure that the course evaluation serves its primary purpose, i.e. that of providing staff with valuable tips on how their courses can be further improved and not that of producing some popularity charts of teachers. The average value is calculated based on all answers provided for a course and teacher. Students also provide answers to the questions related to the seminar groups in which they have enrolled. Provided a seminar group has several teachers assigned, they do so for these separately. If there is a seminar group which has no teacher specified, it is included in the evaluation as one with no teacher assigned.*



*Masaryk student representative*

## PROCEDURES, GUIDELINES AND LEGAL FRAMEWORKS FOR SCL

We explored institutional procedures and guidelines focusing on promoting SCL and only 24% of respondents were familiar with such practices in their respective country. Another 24% are not aware at all of existing procedures, nor did they know where to search for them, while 52% state that there are no such procedures established in their universities. Some respondents were aware of higher education regulations on national level, but could not identify concrete, comprehensive institutional guidelines and procedures.

When asked if a SCL definition is included in any legislative/normative framework at the national or institutional level, only 14% of respondents were familiar with some frameworks, but were not able to identify them. 52% students have never heard about those frameworks in their country or higher education institution.

## STUDENT IN DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES

Over 96% of respondents stated that students are involved in institutional decision-making structures (institutional level, faculty level, programme level). Students are guaranteed representation in decision-making structures either by law or internal policies of the institution. They are involved through student organisations, student parliaments, student boards, academic senates, quality assessment and other decision-making bodies within universities. The percentage of student representation varies between 20-25% mandatory student involvement in decision-making bodies. However the quality of involvement varies. While students from some countries are extremely satisfied with the impact and relevance they have in decision-making bodies, students from other countries lack a feeling of being an equal in the decision-making structures of the academic community. Students in Spain, are not satisfied with their involvement and claim that while in most of the higher education institutions, students are present in decision-making bodies, student perspective is often disregarded and not regarded with the proper importance. At the same time, these institutions do not provide adequate training to student representatives to have sufficient knowledge to be able to participate actively in these bodies, which in turn perpetuates the basal situation.

### *Good case example:*

*At the University NOVA in Lisbon, the Rector, a professor, together with assistant for social services meet with student representatives from each faculty once a month. This helps student representatives feel more comfortable and open while sharing their concerns and suggestions.*

## FLEXIBLE CURRICULA AND INDIVIDUAL LEARNING PATHS

Flexible curricula and individual learning paths are some of the main components of SCL implementation. At the same time, their implementation varies greatly from institution to institution and programme to programme. We asked student representatives to explain to us briefly to what extent there is centrally decided curricula for study programs at their university and how curricula are designed in general in their countries. The answers ranged all the way from very flexible with the possibility of choosing subjects in nearly every programme at the University College of Oslo and Akershus, to students not being able to shape their curricula, where professors decide curricula for them at the University of Zagreb. Again, it is a common perception that a master's degree comes with greater freedom, more choices and respect to personal preferences. This differs from one field of study to another; most students in humanities, arts and social sciences can combine majors and choose subjects, while students from medical studies and

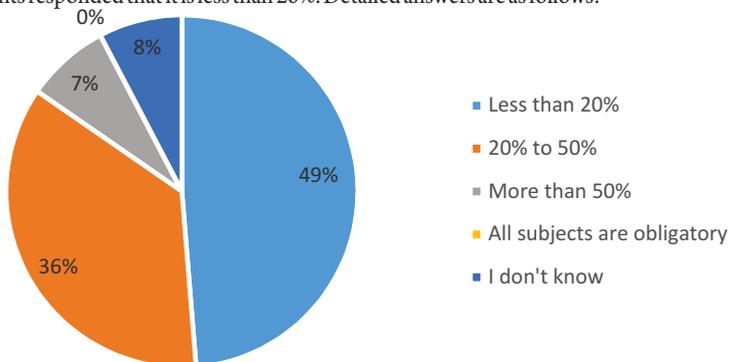
science have rather rigid curricula. Freedom in shaping curricula is limited to choosing a minor of 30 ECTS according to majority of respondents, but completely free, independently chosen credit makes up maximum 10% of study programme, while in some cases, with the example of the University of Miskolc, students can take an additional 10% of the credits without paying any extra fee. At Óbuda University a subject plan is always provided to students in the first semester. Flexibility comes later when students can choose between different teachers and different times for the lectures and labs. Centralised curricula can also be found at the West University of Timișoara where even electives are limited and students have the impression that they are somehow forced to choose one or the other subject.

A detailed example of how curricula are designed comes from the Polytechnique University of Valencia. The faculty board decides on the curricula based on subjects and materials, then the departments decide which courses fit with the materials proposed. Once the curriculum is defined, it is brought to the university board which sends it to the academic committee for review and back to the board with a report. Once approved by the board, it is sent to the National or Autonomic University Council which sends it to National or Autonomic Quality Assurance Agency and returns it to the Council with a report and then approves it. Students can typically choose certain components of their degree, such as a field of specialisation or within from a specified block of courses. Occasionally there are many subject choices, but courses can later be cancelled due to funding issues, while other times courses are presented as optional but are not as they become mandatory upon selection of a specific specialisation.

*Good practice:*

*In Tallinn University, TLÜ, students have a minimum of 24 credit points (48 ECTS) per degree, of freely chosen courses, giving the students the choice to take courses from other institutes, or anything from choir to football.*

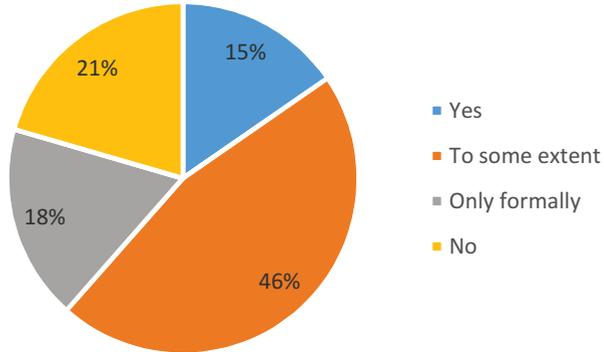
When asked to quantify the percentage of subjects in curricula chosen freely by students, one in two students responded that it is less than 20%. Detailed answers are as follows:



*Percentage of subjects freely chosen by students*

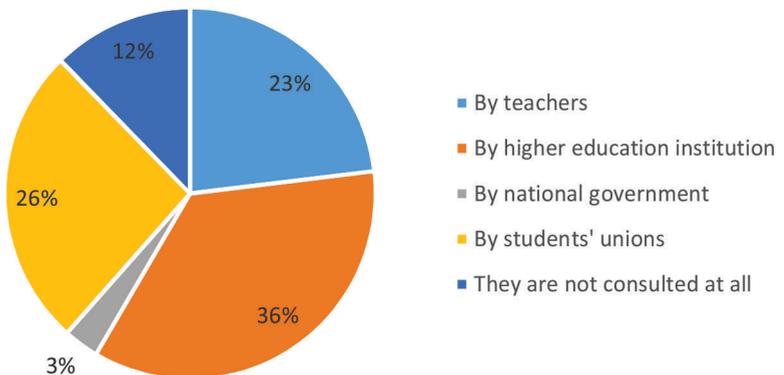
## STUDENT CONSULTATION IN CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

79% of student representatives stated that students are in some way consulted with regards to curriculum development. 18% of them believe that it is only formally, while 21% of students are not consulted at all.



*Are students consulted with regards to curricula development?*

Of the 79% consulted students, 59% report that they are consulted by the higher education institutions. Other stakeholders consulting students are the students' unions (44% of respondents), and finally teachers (38%). Students feel they are least consulted by the national government when discussing student involvement in curriculum design.



*Which stakeholders consult students in curriculum design*

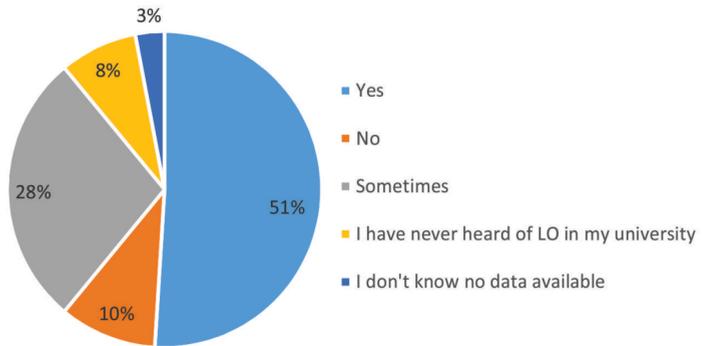
## LEARNING OUTCOMES

The concept of learning outcomes (LO) forms the core conceptual basis for a student-centred higher education system. A description in terms of expected or desired learning outcomes should be a statement of what a learner is expected to know, understand, and be able to do at the end of a learning process. It should not refer to input criteria, such as what exactly is taught or the mode of teaching. ESU believes that learning outcomes should accommodate the multiple purposes of higher education; including preparing students for active citizenship, creating a broad, advanced knowledge base and stimulating research and innovation. All study programmes should be designed with an intention to achieve certain learning outcomes.

Expected learning outcomes should be customly written for every course and programme and written before the learning activity begins and evolve through dialogue between teacher and student throughout the learning activity. They are a shifting category, depending on the expectations and satisfaction of both students and teachers involved in the learning activity. Describing minimum requirements ensures a common experience for all students and focuses on the concrete goals of the learning activity. At the same time, there is room for additional knowledge, skills, competences and attitudes to be acquired during the learning activity, dependent upon the individual students' experiences. Since these are individual and not mandatory for passing, such learning outcomes should be listed in the Diploma Supplement to be given to the student upon completion of the programme.

At the beginning of the learning activity, learning outcomes are formulated as intended. During the learning activity, the student acquires those learning outcomes with the teacher acting as a facilitator of the learning process, “enabling” not “telling”. Assessment at the end of the learning activity should be bidirectional. Through transparent feedback, students assess whether intended learning outcomes were achieved and actively participate in defining and re-defining them for the same learning activity in the future. Teachers assess if the student has acquired those minimum requirements, but also any additional learning outcomes to be presented in the Diploma Supplement. Students should be involved in the process of designing the study programmes and defining its learning outcomes. Where relevant, other educational stakeholders should be consulted in the process of designing learning outcomes. The learning outcomes should be formulated in clear and understandable way, transparent and accessible for students and other interested parties.

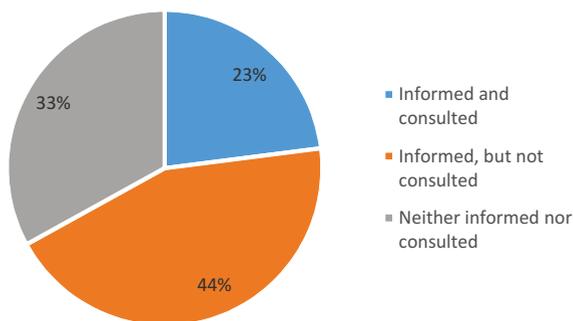
51% of students confirmed having results of study programmes defined in terms of learning outcomes. 11% of respondents have not encountered learning outcomes in their universities, while 28% believe that study programmes are only sometimes defined in terms of learning outcomes, depending on field of study and higher education institution.



*Are the results of study programmes defined and measured in terms of learning outcomes?*

Following this, 59% of respondents said that at least in some cases, students are evaluated in terms of those learning outcomes. 28% strongly believe that learning outcomes are not correlated with the assessment of students, while 26% support the statement that learning outcomes are a crucial factor in the assessment of students' achievements.

33% of student representative respondents pointed out that students are neither properly informed nor consulted with regards to outcomes of programmes and teaching and learning methods used at their higher education institution. According to 44% of respondents, students are only informed about these determinants of their higher education experience, but not properly consulted or having their input valued and recognised.



*Are students properly informed and consulted with regards to outcomes of programs and teaching and learning methods that are used in higher education institutions?*

## STUDENTS AS CHANGE-MAKERS

In the end, all of our respondents agreed that the main carriers and leaders of the change and implementation of this paradigm shift are students themselves. The efforts of ESU on European level the National Unions of Students and students' unions on institutional level, have been essential, however there are numerous success stories of cooperations and joint efforts of all higher education stakeholders to use in exploring and better defining this concept, and work together on its implementation for the benefit of all included parties. On this joint mission students have been and should remain at the steering wheel, with all the support and full engagement of all other educational stakeholders.

### *Good practice:*

*Students have been leading the paradigm shift, but also recognising and rewarding the efforts of other stakeholders, firstly teachers. A great example is the Bologna Teachers' Gala, a project of The National Students Union in Romania (ANOSR), an annual tradition that began seven years ago. The Bologna Professor project allows Romanian students to annually give awards to the top values of Romanian higher education, represented by teachers the students appreciate for their involvement, devotion and commitment to the act of teaching. The professors are proposed by their students, their classes are subsequently attended and they are monitored and interviewed about their scientific and didactic activities by a commission made up of students from other cities. Thus, society acknowledges the professors' contribution to the development and implementation of quality education in Romanian universities. The 2010 Bologna Professor Gala awarded prizes to 116 out of the almost one thousand teachers proposed and heard by the student juries.*



Bologna teachers gala, Romania

## 6. SCL ON INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL- HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS' EXPERIENCES

Focusing on the institutional level implementation of SCL concept, research was conducted with guidance and insight of UNICA. A survey exploring best practices and implementation processes was sent to UNICA members and 15 responses were received, including universities from Poland, Estonia, Finland, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Cyprus, Slovenia, Belgium, Denmark, Switzerland, Sweden, and Portugal. Respondents were asked to reflect upon 21 questions covering different aspects of their strategies, policies and practice, all in relation to teaching and learning and student-centeredness.

The most prominent guiding principle for SCL at participating institutions concerns the quality of teaching and research. There is a strong opinion that through improving the quality of teaching and research students will be able to improve their critical thinking and professional knowledge. A smaller number of universities said that effective learning and practical education is part of their basic mission.

Almost all respondents stated that the process of developing teaching and learning is guided by a set of rules formed by the rector's office or an internal committee. The way the certifications and assessments are applied vary from faculty to faculty and are mostly implemented by accredited academic scholars or doctoral students. All of the Universities involved have few offices or panels involved in the teaching and learning process. The structure of these offices vary from university to university.

When defining learning outcomes at the programme level of the institution, the highest body deciding on this matter is the national ministry or through a set national regulations, where performance is measured by the number of credits, final exam and presentation grades. Professors and university committees often abide by these same principles. This leads to the conclusion that in most cases the number of credits and workload determine learning outcomes, and not vice versa. Learning outcomes at course level are mostly defined by professors themselves, however there are also few cases where students or students' bodies evaluate the outcome of courses.

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A majority of the participating institutions support teaching staff through different kinds of trainings, workshops, seminars, etc. Only one respondent mentioned that financial support is made available for teachers in their teaching and learning activities, while some do not have any kind of development system. Pedagogical trainings are available for teachers, but most respondents consider them voluntary.

When exploring how widely teachers are participating in the pedagogical training programme, the responses were very diverse. Some respondents stated that they are mandatory, while a smaller proportion expressed a lack of interest these activities. However, half of the institutions stated that they face a heavy demand for these programmes.

Teaching performance is assessed by students' interest in a specific course and students' evaluation in form of questionnaires in all mentioned institutions. Feedback is collected regularly, either annually or at the end of semester. The feedback is usually discussed by departments within the faculties. Results are used in various processes: re-accreditation, improvement of quality of courses. Teaching activities are taken into account in job promotions, according to our respondents. The results varied among the respondents: some are based on the titles of academia, while some are connected to outcome results and student evaluations.

Students can sometimes influence the content and methods of their learning, but most faculties take student evaluation only partially into account. When it comes to the development of

curriculum, students are involved according to university respondents, and mostly by being part of the university's or students' bodies. Students are elected to be part of different boards, where they can directly or indirectly be part of the decision-making process. Most universities do not involve students in the development of syllabi, however there are some indications of a change, where this is done indirectly through the professors themselves. In general, students are not involved in the development of teaching and assessment methods among our respondents.

The main internal and external factors contributing to the development of teaching and learning identified by our respondents are quality assurance, values and grants of university, word amongst students, mass and digital media. However, the main factors impeding the development of teaching and learning were finances, technology and the traditional perception of teaching process.

## 7. SCL IN EUROPEAN POLICY

Student-centred learning, diversified student populations and new modes of delivery have in recent years set in motion profound changes in higher education. This paradigm shift towards SCL, as opposed to traditional teacher-centred teaching and learning methods, has been the most talked about trend in higher education in Europe in the past years. Under this project we have conducted extensive desk research to identify initiatives on the European level to support this paradigm shift. This chapter will accentuate those initiatives and summarise the positions on SCL of some of the most important higher education stakeholders in Europe.

### The Bologna process and the EHEA

After first committing to the full implementation of SCL at the Ministerial Conference in Leuven in 2009, EHEA ministers reiterated their commitment to SCL in the Bucharest Communiqué (2012). Ministers agreed to “Establish conditions that foster student-centred learning, innovative teaching methods and a supportive and inspiring working and learning environment, while continuing to involve students and staff in governance structures at all levels”. Bologna tools also support the implementation of SCL through providing more choices for students, mobility opportunities and extracurricular activities.

### The European University Association (EUA)

The EUA believes that SCL, diversified student populations and new modes of delivery have in recent years set in motion profound changes in higher education. Students are increasingly expected to be autonomous learners, and teachers to use innovative teaching methodologies and develop assessment methods that reflect this change. As a consequence, teacher-student interaction is changing, and institutional student support services need to evolve in order to facilitate a quality learning experience.

### The European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE)

Student-centred learning and the teaching mission of higher education institutions are, both as concepts and as realities, closely intertwined with all the previous themes, i.e. the social

dimension, the qualifications frameworks, employability and lifelong learning, according to EURASHE. Since the beginning of the Bologna process the role of students, teachers and their learning environment has already undergone significant change in accordance with the relatively new concept of student-centred learning. The learning society in a globalised world requires a number of competencies that are universally accepted, such as interpersonal and intercultural competencies, multilingualism, international awareness, ICT-skills, and – perhaps most important – the ability to learn how to learn in different formal and informal settings, including autonomous learning processes with adequate support and guidance structures.

The vision for 2020 is an EHEA where the transition to student-centred learning has been completed in all Bologna countries and where HEIs have redefined and implemented curricula in line with their mission and profile, but entirely based on students' learning outcomes. This requires not only the dedication of all institutional staff and management, but also the full involvement of students in program design, institutional governance and quality assurance. We advise governments to establish the legal frameworks for this purpose. EURASHE commits itself to encouraging and assisting all its members to develop an overall approach to teaching, learning and assessment, where the student-centred approach is the rule, rather than the exception, and where the will to seek feedback from students and to learn from it, is a prevailing force.

### The European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)

ENQA states that QA agencies cannot ignore student-centered learning and learning outcomes, which are part of the Bologna reform agenda. The importance of learning outcomes will increase for several reasons. Firstly, learning outcomes make qualifications more transparent for students. Then, the range of graduates is becoming wider and thanks to learning outcomes, employers may have a better understanding of the acquired knowledge, skills and competences in order to recruit the most suitable candidate. Learning outcomes benefit quality assurance as they increase transparency and comparability between qualifications standards. Learning outcomes are also valuable in terms of course design. Naturally, objections have also been expressed with regard to SCL and learning outcomes. They mainly question the focus on the individual learner, the difficulties in the formulation and implementation, and the inappropriate approach to higher education and academic study.

### European Quality Assurance Forum (EQAF)

For nine years, the E4 (ESU, EUA, EURASHE and ENQA) have organised an annual EQAF, providing a unique platform for the higher education and quality assurance communities to monitor, shape and anticipate developments in the field. The paradigm shift to SCL was identified as one of the main priorities for both organisers and participating stakeholders, which led to it being the topic of the ninth EQAF organised in 2014 at the University of Barcelona, entitled “Changing education – QA and the shift from teaching to learning”. They concluded that

SCL, diversified student populations and new modes of delivery have set in motion profound changes in higher education, and that it is of high priority for all education stakeholders to closely



*EQAF 2014*

### Education International (EI)

EI believes that quality teaching is essential for quality learning. In view of the global challenges that the teaching profession is facing, such as the misuse of standardized testing to gauge teaching standards, EI feels strongly that educators should lead the debate about what quality and excellence are when it comes to teaching. In their Global Policy on Education, it is underlined that teachers at all levels of education must be appropriately trained and qualified, so as to achieve

any form of quality teaching. The teaching and learning environment should be designed in such a way that it supports teachers and education employees in their missions.

Teachers should maintain high professional standards and should be accountable to society. To this end, professional standards should be established with the full involvement of the teaching profession in each country, so that teachers feel confident that both their professional standards and their professional development are relevant to their teaching. EI has also been very active and supportive in defining SCL concept, working together with ESU on T4SCL project and establishing ground stone for development of the concept.

### European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)

As the biggest accomplishment on the European level, much attention is placed on the “European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area”, commonly known as the ESG, as they now, for the first time include, support and promote SCL as a standard.

The newly revised version of the ESG is one of the most important documents produced in 2014. The revised version was proposed by the E4 in cooperation with EI, BUSINESSEUROPE and the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR) following the mandate given in the Bucharest Communiqué by the ministers. As requested by the ministers, the revision makes the ESG clearer, particularly in terms of their structure and in order to avoid potential confusion in their interpretation. The revised ESG also makes a more explicit link to the learning and teaching process in the section on internal quality assurance, and defines the relationship of quality assurance with other Bologna Process developments that have occurred since 2005.

One of the new standards introduced in the revised version of the ESG is the Standard for internal quality assurance is Standard 1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment:

*“Institutions should ensure that the programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and the assessment of students reflects this approach.”*

This is mainly because SCL and teaching play important roles in stimulating students' motivation, self-reflection and engagement in the learning process, which means careful consideration of the design and delivery of study programmes and assessments of learning outcomes is necessary. The implementation of SCL and teaching enables the use of flexible learning paths, considers and uses different modes of delivery, flexibly uses a variety of pedagogical methods, encourages a sense of autonomy in the learner, promotes mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship and has appropriate procedures for dealing with students' issues.

Currently, the revised version of the “European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance

in the European Higher Education Area” has been endorsed by the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG) in September 2014, and is now subject to approval by the ministers of the EHEA in May 2015 in Yerevan, Armenia. ESU has been one of the driving forces promoting for the inclusion of SCL as one of the standards in the revised version. The rest of the E4 partners and also the other stakeholders that have been included in the revising the ESG agreed and were also in favour of including a new standard.

The main idea for including SCL in the revised version of the ESG was an outcome of one of ESU's main projects, QUEST (Quest for Quality for Students), completed in 2013, and mentioned in the last publication of the project “A Student Quality Concept”. According to this, students expect first and foremost to gain a personal growth from higher education and learn more about issues that they find interesting, taught by specialists in each field. Quality education provides the right tools for students to meet future challenges in their lives. A good quality higher education system is characterised by removing all obstacles to access, and facilitating progress and completion; implementing a student-centred approach to learning and fairly assessing students, braced by adequate student support services; ensuring links between learning, teaching and research activities; individual social and civic training for responsible and active citizens; mobility opportunities; academic freedom; and where students are considered as full members of the academic community and competent constructive partners.

Relevant aspects that should be considered in order to understand how quality is perceived, are the following:

- ◉ an adequate curricula (organised in learning outcomes);
- ◉ the learning and teaching process (SCL);
- ◉ the learning environments (responding to students' needs); and
- ◉ the resources and facilities (including student support services).

From the whole this there has been some policy recommendations regarding QA and SCL.

- ◉ Quality assurance activities should not be limited to the teaching and learning process, as quality is also influenced by surrounded factors.
- ◉ A student-centred learning approach should be adequately implemented by higher education institutions. Public authorities should support and promote the implementation of the student-centred learning approach.
- ◉ Student participation at all levels of quality assurance and decision-making in higher education is needed in order to pursue quality in higher education.

## European Commission

The European Commission's High Level Group on the Modernisation of Higher Education, highlights the needs of students throughout its report on “The new modes of teaching and learning in higher education”. The conclusion is that the future of education is blended and student-centred. The High Level Group highlights how the higher education landscape is undergoing significant changes in the way higher education is regarded and in the way students learn. A key to moving toward the implementation of new modes for learning, teaching and assessment, is keeping in mind that the student population and students' needs are diverse. In report it was stressed that governments are responsible for defining the policy, legal and funding contexts which impact on the motivation and ability of institutions to integrate new modes across higher education provision, while pedagogy and curriculum design are matters for institutions. The integration of digital technologies and pedagogies should form an integral element of higher education institutions' strategies for teaching and learning. Clear goals and objectives should be defined and necessary organisational support structures (such as the European Academy of Teaching and Learning) established to drive implementation. Among the recommendations was that all staff teaching in higher education institutions should receive training in relevant digital technologies and pedagogies as part of initial training and continuous professional development.

Full report can be found at:

[http://ec.europa.eu/education/library/reports/modernisation\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/library/reports/modernisation_en.pdf)

## 8. CONCLUSION

Through the research done in this publication on the grassroots level by surveying students and higher education institutions and gathering the different policies of essential European stakeholders, there are clear signs of progress in the implementation of SCL. We have also identified a plethora of different perspectives on what SCL is and where to go from here.

Students need to be consulted, to have real choices in their study paths and curricula – giving them more responsibility for their learning processes. Learning process should be described in terms of learning outcomes, which should be developed and monitored with constant evaluation and consultancy of students.

Even though the SCL concept involves putting students in the focus, that does not by any means diminish the role and importance of teachers. There is great need for further development of teaching methods, teacher support and professional training, as quality teaching is essential for a quality learning experience for all students. The enhancement of teaching should find its base in the needs of students, which are best assessed through teacher and course evaluation. Student feedback must be used actively in the development of curricula, learning outcomes and assessment procedures, closing the feedback cycle and taking action as a result.

In order to ensure mutual understanding and devotion, SCL should be embedded in institutional strategies, procedures and frameworks. The involvement and representation of students in governance, viewing students as equal partners, as a part of the academic community and co-producers of knowledge, is essential for giving students ownership and responsibility for their learning.

Clear interest of all stakeholders on the topic has proven that it is the right time for a project like PASCL, which will now establish a framework and guidelines for the implementation of SCL concept and assessment procedures. The research has provided us with a number of best practices and real life examples that can be used for learning and inspiration for further work with the implementation of SCL.

## 9. ANNEX I – SCL THROUGH EYES OF STUDENTS

Answers from respondents to PASCL students perspective questionnaire to the enquiry to describe SCL in their own terms, national or institutional contexts and native languages.

### Czech

SCL představuje jednak myšlení a kulturu v rámci dané vysoké školy, a jednak přístup ke vzdělávání, který je široce propojen a podpořen konstruktivistickou teorií vzdělávání. SCL je charakteristický inovativními metodami výuky, které mají za cíl podpořit vzdělávání v komunikaci s učiteli a ostatními studenty, kde studenti jsou bráni vážně jako aktivní účastníci svého vlastního vzdělávání, které podporuje přenositelnost dovedností, kterými jsou řešení problémů, kritické a reflexní myšlení.

### Danish

SCL repræsenterer både et mindset og en kultur på en given uddannelsesinstitution og en tilgang til læring, som er relateret til, og støttet af, konstruktivistiske teorier om læring. Det er karakteriseret ved innovative undervisningsmetoder, som sigter mod at fremme læring gennem kommunikation mellem undervisere og andre lærende, og som tager studerende seriøst som aktive deltagere i deres egen læring, hvilket giver tværgående kompetencer såsom problemløsning, kritisk tankegang og refleksion.

### Dutch

Leren waarin de wensen en behoeften van studenten centraal staan.

Een manier van leren die de student centraal stelt in de stof die hij/zij wil leren. Maar ook in de manier waarop de student wil leren en het tijdstip waarop deze wordt geleerd.

Studenten weer centraal, verantwoordelijk voor hun eigen proces.

Student gecentreerd leren is een visie op leren die focust op de lerende en zijn behoeftes, terwijl andere visies uitgaan van de input van de docent.

## English

Students are responsible for their own learning, and teachers are responsible for facilitating the best ways of learning.

SCL is an innovative educational approach where there is an emphasis on student involvement. It is a method and mindset that aims at strengthening the learning process by participation of the students.

Experience-based learning with innovative learning methods.

Simply defined, a method when the students are not just sitting in the classroom, but participate actively.

Student Centered Learning represents both a mindset and a culture within a given educational institution. This program makes easier to the students' opinions to be published.

Students own their education and choose the subjects they favour. The whole system should be more equipped to this.

Interactive learning with specific goals and outcomes and using a modern teaching aids and with adequate mentoring professors. Gaining practical and applied knowledge through the education system.

## Finnish

Opiskelijakeskeisyys yliopiston opetustehtävän perustana tarkoittaa sitä, että opiskelijoiden oppimisen laatu ja oppimistulokset ovat opetuksen onnistumisen mittana. Periaate velvoittaa ottamaan huomioon opiskelijat yksilöllisinä ja erilaisina oppijoina. Opetussuunnitelmatyön tueksi tarvitaan tietoa opiskelijoiden opintojen etenemisestä ja esteistä.

## German

Beim Konzept des Student Centered Learning verschiebt sich der Fokus der Aufmerksamkeit im Hochschulwesen vom Lehren auf das Lernen und die Studierenden: Bedürfnisse und Interessen der Studierenden stehen im Mittelpunkt und die Individualität jeder/jedes Einzelnen wird berücksichtigt (Soyka, 2011, S. 275f.). Dabei ist zu beachten, dass jedeR Studierende unterschiedliches Vorwissen und Interessen sowie einen unterschiedlichen sozio-ökonomischen Hintergrund hat und unterschiedlich lernt. Aus diesem Grund ist eine Abkehr von der klassischen, wörtlichen „Vorlesung“ notwendig, weil Studierende mit eindimensionalen Vorträgen in eine passive Rolle gerückt werden. Nur durch aktive Partizipation und Interaktion

können auch tatsächlich alle Beteiligten einen Lernprozess erfahren. Studierende müssen als aktive PartnerInnen im Hochschulwesen fungieren und Mitbestimmungsrechte bezüglich der Gestaltung des Hochschulalltags, der inhaltlichen und didaktischen Gestaltung der Lehre und der Studienstruktur haben. Die Beziehung von Studierenden und Lehrenden muss auf gegenseitigem Respekt und Austausch basieren, Hierarchien müssen abgebaut werden. Lehrenden muss bewusst sein, dass Studierende keine reinen WissensempfängerInnen sind, sondern sie ebenfalls voneinander lernen können – auch Lehren ist als Lernprozess zu verstehen. Im Rahmen eines studierendenzentrierten Ansatzes ist es des Weiteren notwendig, das Prinzip der reinen Wissensvermittlung zu überwinden und sich die Befähigung der Studierenden zum Ziel zu setzen: Der Fokus muss darauf liegen, Kompetenzen zu erwerben und Erkenntnisse zu gewinnen und nicht darauf, wie heute oft üblich, Fakten zu vermitteln, die dann eins-zu-eins wieder-

Gegeben werden sollen. Kritisches Denken, Hinterfragen und die Förderung von Neugier und Experimentierfreudigkeit müssen zentrale Ziele der Hochschullehre sein (ESU, 2010, S. 2ff.). Ein weiteres Grundprinzip ist die Gestaltung der Lehre auf einer diversitygerechten Basis. Die Diversität

Von Studierenden muss anerkannt und akzeptiert werden und Chancengleichheit und Gleichberechtigung unabhängig von Herkunft, sozialem Hintergrund, Geschlecht, Sexualität, Behinderung, Alter etc. forciert werden. Sowohl in den Lehrveranstaltungsinhalt als auch in die didaktische Gestaltung und den Umgang mit Studierenden muss Diversität als Thema und als Prinzip einfließen (Czollek & Perko, 2008, S. 6ff.)."

## Hungarian

A SCL egy olyan gondolkodásmódot, kultúrát képvisel egy adott felsőoktatási intézményen belül, valamint olyan tanulási megközelítést ad, amely széleskörően támogatja a tanulási konstruktív elméleteket. Ezt azok a tanítási módszerek jellemzik, amelyeknek a célja, hogy előmozdítsa a kommunikációt a tanárok és tanulók között, a diákok a saját taníttatásukban aktív résztvevőként mozdítsa elő, valamint erősítse a tanulók problémamegoldó képességét, a kritikus gondolkodást és a reflektív gondolkodást.

Diákközpontú oktatás: a hallgatói érdekek az elsők, és a hallgatók értékelhetik oktatóikat, valamint intenzíven bekapcsolódhatnak aktívan az oktatásba, kutatásba.

A hallgató központú tanulás - ahogy a neve is mutatja - az oktatás középpontjába a tanulót (és annak tanulását) helyezi. Konstruktivista alapokon nyugodva elismeri, hogy a tudás megkonstruálása mindenki számára egyéni folyamat, amelyben az oktatónak mint facilitátor, a folyamat segítője kell részt vennie, nem mint az egyetlen és valódi tudás kizárólagos tulajdonosa. Fontos eleme a differenciálás, az, hogy a diákok saját képességeihez mérten értékeljük.

## Norwegian

Studentsentrert læring representerer både et tankesett og en kultur innenfor en gitt høyere utdanningsinstitusjon og har en tilnærming til læring som er relatert til, og støttet av konstruktivistiske teorier om læring. Det preges av innovative metoder for undervisning som tar sikte på å fremme læring i kommunikasjon med forelesere og andre studenter og som tar studentene på alvor som aktive deltakere i egen læring, bidrar til overførbare ferdigheter som for eksempel problemløsning, kritisk og reflekterende tenkning.

Studentsentret læring innebærer at studentene tas inn i det akademiske fellesskapet og blir en aktiv del av læringsprosessen. De bruker sine egne erfaringer og sin egen kontekst til å forstå, heller enn å være passive mottagere av lærerens kunnskap. Dette krever blant annet, bruk av varierte undervisnings- og vurderingsformer, forskningsbasert utdanning og student-aktiv forskning, tettere og mer personlig oppfølging, fleksibilitet i læringsprosessen (valg av emner, fritt pensumvalg, deltidsstudier, osv)., samt studentvelferdsordninger som sikrer bredest mulig deltagelse i høyere utdanning.

## Polish

SCL reprezentuje zarówno mentalność i kulturę w danej instytucji szkolnictwa wyższego, będąc zarazem podejściem do uczenia się, które jest w dużej mierze związane z konstruktywistyczną teorią edukacji. Charakteryzuje się wykorzystaniem innowacyjnych metod nauczania, które mają na celu promowanie uczenia się w komunikacji z innymi uczniami oraz nauczycielami, traktującymi studentów jako aktywnych uczestników procesu uczenia się między innymi poprzez wykorzystywanie umiejętności rozwiązywania problemów oraz myślenia krytycznego i refleksyjnego.

## Portuguese

O Ensino Centrado no Estudante é um método de estudo construído com base nos educandos com base na construção do seu próprio conhecimento de forma a adquirirem conhecimentos de forma mais eficiente. É um processo de aprendizagem contínuo capacitando o estudante com espírito crítico, quer pelo desenvolvimento de destrezas, atitudes e capacidades mais consonantes com as atuais exigências de transformação que se colocam na generalidade dos contextos de trabalho, em particular nos domínios da educação e da formação.

## Romanian

Învățământul Centrat pe Student este bazat pe constructivism ca o teorie a învățării care este clădită pe ideea că cei care învață trebuie să construiască și reconstruiască cunoștințele pentru a învăța în mod eficient, cu învățarea fiind cea mai eficientă atunci când, ca parte a unei activități, cel

care învață experimentează construind un produs semnificativ. Învățământul Centrat pe Student este, de asemenea, înrudit învățării transformative care contemplă un proces de schimbare calitativă în cel care învață, precum un proces continuu al transformării, care se concentrează pe întărirea și creșterea puterii celui care învață, dezvoltând abilitatea lor critică.

### Serbian

Princip "Student u centru učenja" koji podrazumeva takav pristup u kojem student kroz aktivno učenje usvaja znanja i veštine koji ga na jedan širok i sveobuhvatan način pripremaju za buduće poslovne izazove. Sistem učenja je koncipiran tako što se studentu pomaže da razvije efikasne oblike učenja, da bude samostalan i da upravlja sopstvenim procesom učenja. Učenje na taj način znači razumevanje i odnosi se na otkrivanje smisla, dovođenje u odnos sa ranije stečenim znanjima i povezivanje sa praksom u realnom poslovnom okruženju.

### Slovakian

Vzdelávanie orientované na študenta (SCL) predstavuje spôsob myslenia aj kultúru v rámci danej vysokej školy. Vzdelávanie orientované na študenta (SCL) je prístup k štúdiu široko prepojený na konštruktivistické teórie učenia, ktoré ho podporujú.

Charakterizujú ho inovatívne metódy výučby, ktoré majú za cieľ podporovať štúdium v komunikácii s učiteľmi a ostatnými študentmi, a ktoré berú študentov vážne, ako aktívnych účastníkov ich vlastného učenia, podporujúc prenosné zručnosti, akými sú riešenie problémov, kritické myslenie a reflexívne myslenie."

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### Slovenian

Student centered learning is known as "Na študenta osredotočeno izobraževanje". Koncept lahko označimo kot izvedbo študijskega procesa na način, ki čim bolj vključuje študente v procese soustvarjanja študijskih vsebin. Interaktivno poučevanje, sodelovanje med študenti, med študenti in profesorji ter interdisciplinaren pristop k poučevanju so ravno nasprotje klasičnemu ex-catedra poučevanju. V središče se postavlja študenta, njegove pravice in dolžnosti ter ga pojmuje kot soustvarjalca terciarnega izobraževanja, ne pa prejemnika.

SCL predstavljaja miselnost in kulturo visokošolskega zavoda. Predstavlja tudi nekakšen pristop k učenju.

### Spanish

Aprendizaje Centrado en el Estudiante: Es una filosofía y una metodología educacional que permite centrar la formación y aprendizaje en la figura del estudiante. De esta manera se desarrollan nuevas formas de entender la educación creando nuevas metodologías siempre entorno al estudiante. Con todo ello, se promueven las capacidades del estudiante y se entra en una dinámica más participativa y activa dentro de la enseñanza.

El aprendizaje centrado en el estudiante es una concepción del modelo de enseñanza en el cual, se traslada el foco de la misma desde las instituciones y el docente al estudiante. Cambiando de esta manera tanto los roles de los agentes implicados hacia procesos más activos e individualizados de aprendizaje y basados en la facilitación en plano la enseñanza. A su vez se apoya en nuevos mecanismos y herramientas de aprendizaje tanto en lo que a nuevas metodologías docentes se trata como a la inclusión de las nuevas tecnologías.

### Swedish

SFS vill att hörgskolan ska sätta studenten i centrum, vilket innebär att gå bort från ett utbildningskoncept där studenten ses som en passiv mottagare av kunskap.

