RESISTANCE TO LEARNER-CENTERED APPROACHES

Why do students resist?
- Learner-centered approaches require more work
- Learner-centered approaches are threatening
- Some students are not ready for some learner-centered approaches

What does student resistance look like?
- It may be passive and nonverbal
- It may be partial compliance
- It may be open resistance

What are the best ways to overcome student resistance?
- Explain the rationale for using learner-centered approaches
- Offer encouragement and positive reinforcement
- Regularly solicit feedback on their learning experiences
- Resist their resistance

Two excellent articles on student resistance:

Why do faculty resist?
- They think that these methods take too much time and course content won’t get covered
- They think these methods pander to students and diminish academic standards
- They worry that giving students control may result in the teacher losing classroom control
- They find these methods threatening

What are the best ways to respond to faculty resistance?
- Learn more about learner-centered approaches
- Try some strategies and see how if they help your students learn
- Document the impact of your approaches
- Find like minded colleagues

These features of learner-centered teaching and this information on resistance are discussed more fully in the second edition of Maryellen Weimer's book, Learner-Centered Teaching (available at www.josseybass.com).