Teaching-Centered vs. Learning-Centered, What's the Difference?

	Teaching-centered Approach	Learning-centered Approach
Whose Knowledge Counts	Teacher's knowledge	Learner's and teacher's knowledge
Typical Methods	Lectures, slide presentation, question and answer at end of session	Active learning tasks: Learners draw from own experience; engage with new content; and reflect on its relevance to their lives
Responsiveness	Teaching plan is predictable—not highly responsive to what emerges in the moment	Learning is structured and intentional but flexible enough to respond to learners' needs
Monologue vs. Dialogue	Primarily monologue; passive receiving of information; one-way information sharing	Content taught by facilitator with meaningful opportunities for learner engagement with content
Accountability	Hierarchical: Learners are accountable to the teacher	Mutual: Teacher to learner; learner to teacher; learner to learner
Content vs. Process	Focus is on *covering* content or information	Focus is on engaging with content through an active process to make personal meaning
Points of Contact	Interactions are teacher-to-learner and learner-to-teacher. Teacher's perspective doesn't usually grow as a result of teaching	Interactions are multi-directional (learner-to-learner, teacher-to-learner, learner-to-teacher). Teacher's perspective grows as a result of teaching
Learning Preferences	Primarily auditory (passive listening); some visual (often slide presentations)	Visual, auditory, and kinesthetic – participants see, hear and do something with the content
Learning Domains	Usually cognitive (ideas) domain	Teach and learn holistically: Cognitive (ideas), affective (feelings) and psychomotor (skills) domains
Types of Objectives	Clear teaching objectives i.e. "Learners will learn…"	What learners *will have done* during the event to learn the content i.e. "Learners will have…"
Learner's Experience	Learning can be experienced as rigorous dull, even with a dynamic speaker. Retention of content may be minimal	Learning is experienced as rigorous AND engaging with personal application and use. Retention may be increased
Evaluation Methods	Evaluation of learners happens at the end — "Did you meet my standard?"	Evaluation of learning happens throughout — "Did you demonstrate that you've learned what you needed or wanted?"
Impact (Lasting Change)	Teacher hopes the content is relevant and useful but is usually unsure how it will be used	Teacher has worked to ensure the content is relevant. Time is often given during the event to plan next steps for how content will be used by individual learners – plan learning transfer

***Learners** = participants, staff, clients, customers; ***Teachers** = facilitators, leaders, trainers