Developing a Structured Methodology for Institutional Evaluation of Student-Centred Learning and Teaching in UK Higher Education Using the Student-Centred Ecosystems Framework

Michael Monaghan

Liverpool John Moores University, United Kingdom

ABSTRACT

Student-Centred Learning and Teaching (SCLT) is widely recognised as fundamental for fostering deep learning, engagement, and inclusivity in higher education. Policy initiatives such as the European Commission's NESET Report in 2020 and the Student-Centred Ecosystems (SCEs) framework reinforce the importance of embedding student-centred approaches at an institutional level. However, while the SCEs framework provides structured performance indicators for evaluating SCLT, there remains no established methodology for applying this framework to systematically support institutional evaluation and implementation of SCLT. This paper introduces an innovative evaluation methodology designed to operationalise the SCEs framework, enabling institutions to assess how SCLT principles are integrated within governance, pedagogy, and student agency. The methodology follows a rigorous multi-method approach – integrating Theory-Based Evaluation Design (TBED), Delphi Consensus Methods, and Realist Evaluation (CMO Framework) – and allows for contextual adaptation in how institutions engage with and apply the SCEs framework. Stakeholder engagement – including students, academic staff, senior leadership, and learning support services – ensures that institutional perspectives inform the evaluation process. This systematic tool provides institutional leaders and policymakers with a structured yet flexible approach to examining and enhancing their student-centred learning environments. While still in the development stage, this methodology presents a theoretically robust and practically relevant model for institutional evaluation. This paper will: outline the theoretical and methodological foundations of the evaluation model; present the structured approach for applying the SCEs framework as an institutional evaluation tool; discuss potential challenges and opportunities in using this methodology for institutional self-assessment; explore implications for future empirical validation.

Keywords: Context-Mechanism-Outcome Framework, Delphi Method, Pragmatist-Constructivist Principles, Realist Evaluation, Theory-Based Evaluation Design