

A STUDY ON THE NEED FOR TRANSITION FROM TEACHER CENTERED LEARNING TO STUDENT CENTERED LEARNING



Education

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ABSTRACT

Student-centered learning is the most effective method used to impart knowledge to the learners. This paper describes and compares the different types of student-centered approaches with their effectiveness to the teacher-centered method. Ideally, the paper reflects different studies with mixed results pertaining to these two approaches to learning and teaching. The teacher-centered is found to be very effective in primary schools where the learners have not developed higher order cognitive skills. More importantly, student-centered methods provide emotional and social value to the learners as well as improving creativity and reasoning ability in secondary education

INTRODUCTION

Numerous debates have risen over the past decades over which method best suits learners in the classroom environment. While some educators are pro teacher-centered methods, some back up the idea of student-centered approach to instruction and learning. However, most educators will agree that, what should be considered is the main aim and goal of providing education to the children. The method of learning and teaching should promote learning of students to become useful members of the society. This is an argumentative paper trying to discuss the demerits of the traditional teacher-centered teaching and learning method as a means of imparting knowledge to students. Next, the paper discusses the

effectiveness of student-centered approach to teaching and learning. More precisely, some aspects of student-centered approaches such as cooperative learning; inductive

learning and active learning are discussed to put more light on the efficiency and the effectiveness of this method of learning.

Student-centered methods vs. Teacher Centered Learning Method

Most educators must admit the need for considering the main objective of schooling children. The education system must embrace the best method to enable students grow and develop to become productive members of the society. Even though, this debate has raged over a hundred years in our education system, is time to distinct what is true and what is stereotyped. The statistics showing how the children struggle to achieve the same content as those of the industrialized nations has fueled more debates over the suitable method to pass the knowledge to the students. High achievement rates in content should be the basis of legislative strategy to transform the education system. It is possible that the two methods have a place in the current school system. However, let's first highlight what encompasses each method.

Teacher-centered approach to teaching and learning is one of the traditional methods used to impart knowledge and skills to the learner. The teacher solely acts as the primary source of the content and knowledge while the learner or student acts as the passive recipient of this content. The pro teacher-centered method argues that, this method is fascistic, knowledgeable, and authoritarian and content-centered (Trilling & Fadel, 2009). However, this method is far much ineffective and inefficient in the modern classroom learning system. First, the approach makes students passive in the classroom. They do not get the opportunity to participate or find more information on the content (Princes & Felder, 2007). In fact, the students only act as receivers of the knowledge and the teacher as the transmitter of the material. With this, it clearly shows that this learning approach is not interactive and can only impart less content

to the brains of the students. According to Harris and Cullen (2010), teacher-centered learning approach limits learning to the specific content as proposed by the instructors. This further requires the teacher to do more research on the content as they are expected to deliver everything to the learners. Besides, this type of approach does not facilitate higher cognitive and meta-cognitive skills to the student. Dantonio and Beisenherz (2001) argued that, learning should engage questioning and evaluation of the validity of arguments, but teacher-centered approach does not cater for this. In fact, teacher-centered in most cases do not address the significance of open inquiry in the learning process.

Student-centered method represents a progressive, permissive, democratic, effective and student growth methodology to teaching and learning (Trilling & Fadel, 2009). Ideally, the method shifts the learning activity from the teacher to the learner. This is consistent with major aim and goal of the education. Chall (2000) argues that, the teacher and the students both combine the effort to knowledge and skills. The students or learners actively engage themselves in seeking the materials by that addressing their needs in turn. According to **Anderson and Krathwohl (2000)**, the learner-centered approach entirely focuses on improving the cognitive ability of students. In test and assessments, the correct answers are not given priority but the adequacy of the questions to address or discover difficulties in the material or content. The approach emphasizes the development of the learner's capacity and intelligence. Most importantly, student-centered focuses on nurturing the student's original thinking, connecting learners to their individual need and give students diverse experiences. The instructors only direct the learners during the learners actively participate in the learning process. According to Sharan (1994), learner-centered method entails a variety of learning approaches that ensure the education objective is successfully achieved. This includes cooperative, inductive and active teaching and learning approaches.

Case Study

Case studies conducted on these methods have realized differences in achievements. A similar study carried by Prince and Fielder concurred by their study on tests related to creativity and reasoning. However, they noted that, the test scores in teacher-centered classrooms were higher for overall achievements. Though this may be the case, the teacher-centered methods are only effective particularly with the children with low socioeconomic status (SES) and the attention shifts to student-centered methods in secondary schools and colleges. At this stage, learning focuses on the use of more reasoning and problem solving as found by Chall (2000).

Discussion of Results

There is no doubt that, student-centered methods play a critical role in higher levels of education. Despite the debate on the best method to use, the numerous student-centered approaches

can set up students for better and brighter future. The researchers carried over the past sixty years identifies that, the learner-centered methods are quite effective and efficient for the education of children. More particularly, the student-centered is quite effective at the secondary and college levels of education. This is the technical levels that the students thrive both creatively and socially to retain more knowledge.

Active Learning Approach

Schraw (2011) noted that, active learning approach entails students solving problems, formulating their questions, answering questions and brainstorm to acquire knowledge. This method effectively allows the students to carry out research into the content, and this enables them to conceptualize the knowledge (Schon, 1983).

Inductive Learning Approach

Inductive learning entails the teacher engaging students in solving problems on their own based on the subject given to them. The study carried out by Trilling and Fadel (2009) found that, inductive learning is quite effective in teaching medical, sciences and other health related topics in colleges and secondary schools. This method allows students to dig into content and discover for themselves. It enhances creativity and reasoning.

Cooperative learning Approach

Cooperative learning, on the other side, involves learning working cooperatively in groups or teams to solve problems or work on projects. McKeachie (1952) purports that, cooperative learning creates interdependence and accountability to promote individual learning. Additionally, Inductive learning involves the teacher presenting learner's with a specific problem to interrogate.

Conclusion

In summary, the teacher-centered teaching and learning method is ineffective and runs into numerous bottlenecks. With the modern life world and globalized education environment, student-centered learning proves to be the most effective. Advanced cross-cultural and communication skills, problem-solving as well as long-lived learning skills are the modern learning requirements that can only be achieved through personal effort (learner-centered learning) (Markusic, 2010). In fact, the traditional passive learning method cannot suit the changing learning needs in the global context.

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