

Teacher–Centred and Student–Centred Learning Environments

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Abstract: This article discusses two different approaches: student-centered and teacher-centered. This is approached through first examining the general differences between the two learning approaches in terms of the activities involved, the learning environment, and positions held by either the teacher or student in either approach. The advantages of both approaches, the role of these methods in the field of education are comprehensively considered and extensively illustrated through examples.

Key points: student-centered approach, teacher-centered method, assessment, collaboration, cooperative learning.

The student-centered approach is a teaching and learning method that places the student at the center of the educational experience. In this approach, the focus is on the needs and interests of the students, and the teacher acts as a facilitator of learning rather than the sole source of knowledge. Students are encouraged to actively participate in their own learning, engage in critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration, and take responsibility for their own learning. The learning environment is often more flexible and interactive, with opportunities for student choice, exploration, and creativity. Assessment in a student-centered approach may involve a variety of methods, including projects, presentations, and self-assessment, to evaluate students' understanding and application of concepts. Learning focused on the student stimulates students to take an active part in the independent research that they perform by pushing them to concentrate on their requirements. This is because learning centered on the student encourages students to learn about themselves. On the other hand, in teacher-centered approach, the curriculum relies on the teacher to use their expertise in helping the learner understand and make connections where the students take in a receptive role in the learning. While the teacher acts as a knowledge transmitter, the student acts as the receiving end.

In a traditional classroom, students become passive learners, or rather just recipients of teachers' knowledge and wisdom. They have no control over their own learning. Teachers make all the decisions concerning the curriculum, teaching methods, and the different forms of assessment. Duckworth (2009) asserts that teacher-centered learning actually prevents students' educational growth. In contrast, in a learner-centered classroom, students are actively learning and they have greater input into what they learn, how they learn it, and when they learn it. This means that students take responsibility of their own learning and are directly involved in the learning process. Learner-centered teaching style focuses on how students learn instead of how teachers teach. Student centered teaching is adaptable to meet the needs of every student (1).

When it comes to the differences between student-centered and teacher-centered, there are a number of ways in which they differ, each with its own strengths and weaknesses. Firstly, there is a difference in the two on how the student works. Considering the teacher-centered approach, the students do their work alone where they do exercises related to the teacher's presentation during or after the lesson while on the other hand, in the student-centered approach, the students work together in groups or pairs as per the demand and purpose of the activity. In this way, teaching and learning becomes a fun and friendly, active and useful activity, thus making it easier for students to understand the lesson because they are actively involved in learning.

Regarding the differences related to communication and cooperation, in a teacher-centered classroom, the teacher speaks, while the students continue to listen and remain silent. In contrast, student-centered learning encourages student-student and teacher-student collaboration and communication.

Another major difference between the two approaches is that in the teacher-centered approach, there is little or no classroom noise. The reason is that the information is transmitted by the teacher himself, the students are automatically silent to get the necessary language knowledge from the teacher. On the contrary, in the learner-centered approach, the classroom situation is busy and noisy, as it mainly manifests itself in groups and discussions(2). In this approach, the teacher has to be comfortable with the fact that the students are more likely to make mistakes that they do not hear and cannot correct. The teacher-centered approach focuses on desires and, where the teachers support them.

In a teacher-centered approach, there is a separation of teaching from assessment or testing. In this approach, teaching is done first, and then assessment is done as a way to determine whether or not students have mastered the knowledge imparted by the teachers. Unlike the teacher-centered approach, the student-centered approach integrates teaching and assessment. As the teaching continues, students do exercises in pairs or groups.

Learning is most meaningful when topics are relevant to the students' lives, needs, and interests and when the students themselves are actively engaged in creating, understanding, and connecting to knowledge(3).

Cooperative learning, which is a type of student-centered instruction, involves small groups of learners who work together as a team to solve problems, complete tasks, or accomplish a common goal(4). The purpose of cooperative learning is to give authority to the students in the learning process, a form of student empowerment that is more difficult in a lecture format(5).

Students working in groups of two or more mutually search for understanding, and solutions can make learning more meaningful. Studies by Johnson found students who participate in cooperative learning have higher achievement, greater productivity, longer retention, and increased intrinsic motivation, more motivation to learn, more time on task, and higher-levels of reasoning and critical thinking than students who are taught through other formats. The use of cooperative learning has changed how students perform in class and has transformed the traditional style of teaching, teachers talk, and students listen pattern of instruction.

While in teacher-centered method, when students receive positive feedback from teachers during teacher-centered styles of instruction, such as lecture, students can be academically successful. There are some teaching and learning styles that reflect the behaviorist theory. These are for example, memorization and the positive reinforcement teachers provide when students show mastery. Sharon (2008) also states that "Teachers who have students participate actively in the lecture have more academically successful students".

In conclusion, student-centered learning is an important part of education. If the teacher does not engage the students in the lessons, then he will not create a generation of talented people who can lead the future and solve complex problems to make this world a better place. Fortunately, student-centered teaching with the right activities makes learning more effective and equips young people

with all the necessary skills. On the other hand, the teacher-centered learning approach can reduce student performance, so it is better not to use it in traditional and virtual classrooms.

References

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