STUDENT-CENTERED LEARNING

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Abstract: *Student-centred learning, also known as learner-centred education, broadly encompasses methods of teaching that shift the focus of instruction from the teacher to the student. In original usage, student-centred learning aims to develop learner autonomy and independence [1] by putting responsibility for the learning path in the hands of students by imparting to them skills, and the basis on how to learn a specific subject and schemata required to measure up to the specific performance requirement.[2][3][4] Student-centred instruction focuses on skills and practices that enable lifelong learning and independent problem-solving.[5] Student-centered learning theory and practice are based on the constructivist learning theory that emphasizes the learner's critical role in constructing meaning from new information and prior experience.*

Keywords: *Student-centered learning, learner-centered education, etc.*

Student-centered learning puts students' interests first, acknowledging student voice as central to the learning experience. In a student-centered learning space, students choose what they will learn, how they will pace their learning,[6] and how they will assess their own learning.[4] This is in contrast to traditional education, also dubbed "teacher-centered learning", which situates the teacher as the primarily "active" role while students take a more "passive", receptive role. In a teacher-centered classroom, teachers choose what the students will learn, how the students will learn, and how the students will be assessed on their learning. In contrast, student-centered learning requires students to be active, responsible participants in their own learning and with their own pace of learning.[7]Usage of the term "student-centered learning" may also simply refer to educational mindsets or instructional methods that recognize individual differences in learners.[8] In this sense, student-centered learning emphasizes each student's interests, abilities, and learning styles, placing the teacher as a facilitator of learning for individuals rather than for the class as a whole.

Theorists like John Dewey, Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky, whose collective work focused on how students learn, have informed the move to student-centered learning. John Dewey was an advocate for progressive education, and he believed that learning is a social and experiential process. He believed that a classroom environment in which students could learn to think critically and solve real world problems was the best way to prepare learners for the future [6]Carl Rogers' ideas about the formation of the individual also contributed to student-centered learning. Rogers wrote that "the only learning which significantly influences behavior [and education] is self discovered".[9] Maria Montessori was also a forerunner of

student-centered learning, where preschool children learn through independent self-directed interaction with previously presented activities.

Self-determination theory focuses on the degree to which an individual's behavior is self-motivated and 'self-determined'. When students are given the opportunity to gauge their learning, learning becomes an incentive.

Student-centered learning means inverting the traditional teacher-centered understanding of the learning process and putting students at the centre of the learning process. In the *teacher-centered* classroom, teachers are the primary source for knowledge. On the other hand, in *student-centered* classrooms, active learning is strongly encouraged. Armstrong (2012) claimed that "traditional education ignores or suppresses learner responsibility".[10]

A further distinction from a teacher-centered classroom to that of a student-centered classroom is when the teacher acts as a facilitator, as opposed to instructor. In essence, the teacher's goal in the learning process is to guide students into making new interpretations of the learning material, thereby 'experiencing' content, reaffirming Rogers' notion that "significant learning is acquired through doing".[9]

Through peer-to-peer interaction, collaborative thinking can lead to an abundance of knowledge. In placing a teacher closer to a peer level, knowledge and learning is enhanced, benefitting the student and classroom overall. According to Lev Vygotsky's theory of the zone of proximal development (ZPD), students typically learn vicariously through one another. Scaffolding is important when fostering independent thinking skills. Vygotsky proclaims, "Learning which is oriented toward developmental levels that have already been reached is ineffective from the viewpoint of the child's overall development. It does not aim for a new stage of the developmental process but rather lags behind this process."[11]

Student-centered assessment :

One of the most critical differences between student-centered learning and teacher-centered learning is in assessment.[12] Student-centered learning typically involves more formative assessment and less summative assessment than teacher-centered learning.[13] In student-centered learning, students participate in the evaluation of their learning.[14] This means that students are involved in deciding how to demonstrate their learning. Developing assessment that supports learning and motivation is essential to the success of student-centered approaches.

Application to Elementary and Secondary Education :

The principles of student-centered instruction have been promoted as a way to improve engagement and boost achievement through their inclusion in the Common Core.[15] Student-centered instruction has been shown to be related to increased mathematics engagement, but the relationship might be different for each race.[16] Additionally there is evidence that using student-centered instruction raises mathematics achievement.[17]

Application to higher Education :

Student-centered learning environments have been shown to be effective in higher education.[18] They have been defined specifically within higher education as both a mindset and a culture within a given educational institution and as a learning approach broadly related to, and supported by, constructivist theories of learning. They are characterised by innovative methods of teaching which aim to promote learning in communication with teachers and other learners and which take students seriously as active participants in their own learning and foster transferable skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking, and reflective thinking.[19][20] The revised European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance, due to be approved by the ministers of European higher education in May 2015,[*needs update*] include the following passage on student-centred learning: "Institutions should ensure that programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process and [should ensure] that the assessment of students reflects this approach."

A research university in Hong Kong sought to promote student-centered learning across the entire university by employing the following methods:[21]

- Analysis of good practice by award-winning teachers, in all faculties, to show how they made use of active forms of student learning.
- Subsequent use of the analysis to promote wider use of good practice.
- A compulsory teacher training course for new junior teachers, which encouraged student-centered learning.
- Projects funded through teaching development grants, of which 16 were concerned with the introduction of active learning experiences.
- A program-level quality enhancement initiative which utilized a student survey to identify strengths and potential areas for improvement.
- Development of a model of a broadly based teaching and learning environment influencing the development of generic capabilities to provide evidence of the need for an interactive learning environment.
- The introduction of program reviews as a quality assurance measure.

The success of this initiative was evaluated by surveying the students. After two years, the mean ratings indicating the students' perception of the quality of the teaching and learning environment at the university all rose significantly.[22] The study is one of many examining the process of implementing student-centered pedagogies in large institutions of higher education.[23]

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