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Teacher-Centred Learning and Student-Centred Learning in English Classroom: the Teaching Methods Realizing the Dreams of Language Learners

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ABSTRACT

Since the beginning of teaching English language, the language enjoying the status of the king of all languages in the present scenario, as one of the subjects included in the curriculum has been taught in a multiple ways of methods by the teachers. Of course, in fact, many of the methods followed by the language teachers are praiseworthy giving the entire credit to the teachers' innovative quest. There are some methods, however, considered the best and accepted through the implementation of the same techniques or methods in teaching English language by the novice English teachers.

'Student- Centred learning', the method which has got a great momentum in the teaching of this language, is one of the best methods which can realize the long cherished dream of the learners who want to be good at this language. Of the things which cannot be perceived by mere theoretical knowledge gained by reading a book like swimming, driving, cycling- the language learning requires the major involvement of students rather than the English teacher.

We, the teachers of English language and literature, welcome changes cheerfully when they are result oriented meeting the needs of the learner. We say no to the longstanding Teacher-Centred learning method when it is mandatory in the classroom. This paper brings up the benefits by following the teacher-centred learning and student-centred learning in in different conditions in English classroom. It also highlights some ways how the student can be made instrumental in the process of language teaching and learning.

KEYWORDS: Teacher- Centred, Student- Centred, Facilitator, Learner

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INTRODUCTION

The word Teacher-centred learning requires no definition and no explanation since it has been everything the movement learning got its birth. The learner requires a person who can guide him, advise him, motivate him, helping him achieve the objectives of education. Teacher has been the best option to make all these things happen to the student for centuries throughout the ages.

The term student-centred learning (SCL) is widely used in the teaching and learning. Many terms have been linked with student-centred learning, such as flexible learning experiential learning, self-directed learning and therefore the slightly overused term 'student-centred learning' can mean different things to different people.

The concept of student-centred learning has been credited as early as 1905 to Hayward and in 1956 to Dewey's work. Carl Rogers, the father of client-centred counseling, is associated with expanding this approach into a general theory of education. The term student-centred learning was also associated with the work of Piaget and more recently with Malcolm Knowles. Rogers, in his book 'Freedom to Learn for the 80s', describes the shift in power from the expert teacher to the student learner, driven by a need for a change in the traditional environment where in this so-called educational atmosphere, students become passive, apathetic and bored.¹

The paradigm shifts away from teaching to an emphasis on learning has encouraged power to be moved from the teacher to the student. The teacher-focused/transmission of information formats, such as lecturing, have begun to be increasingly criticised and this has paved the way for a widespread growth of 'student-centred learning' as an alternative approach.

This paper brings up certain ways mentioning the major points of student –centred learning. It also brings up the right situations where the two methods can be adopted. We should remember that no method is successful without the presence of Teacher.

THE ROLE OF TEACHER IN STUDENTS- CENTRED LEARNING

A ship without a *Captain*

A film without a *Director*

A Classroom without a *Teacher* are unimaginable and impracticable. The captain of a ship takes up the responsibility of ensuring a safe journey to the passengers voyaging in the ship. He guides the workers who work under his supervision. He doesn't throw coal into the fire

to generate energy to run the ship or operate steering like a driver. The employees bring a problem to the notice of the Captain who finds a proper solution for it.

Making a movie which requires lots of characters, technicians and the required amount is not possible without a Director. He is the one and only responsible for the entire credit and criticism. It is the brilliance of the Director what makes the movie successful by bringing out the requisite action from the characters but not the actors who act according to the instructions of the Director. If the actors are responsible for the success of a film, every film should get the same level of success with the team of actors- which is not really happening.

Believe, the classroom becomes a pandemonium of Children/Students without the presence of a Teacher. A classroom without a teacher can be imagined as the planet of Earth without water and air. Trust, teacher is not a dictator or the almighty God- but he is the one who is more important the people mentioned above in the classroom.

This method is absolutely needed when the classroom consists of a large number of students who are passive in taking part in group activities conducted in student-centred learning process. Teacher is inevitable and unavoidable in controlling class.

REASONS WHY STUDENTS USUALLY DON'T SPEAK IN ENGLISH:

Some students say: "Why do we have to do pair work and group work?"

"When I speak English, I feel stupid because I make lots of mistakes and don't know enough vocabulary."

"I don't want to speak English until my English is much better."

"I don't want to listen to other students speaking incorrect English because I'll learn their mistakes."

"My teachers speak the best English. I want to learn from them."

A Teacher doesn't want his students who

- Can't communicate in the real world
- Panic when they can't think of the right words to use
- Are tongue-tied because they're worried about making mistakes and losing face
- Can't survive without a teacher to help them and guide them
- Look away in embarrassment when someone asks, "Can anyone speak in English?"²

A student-centered approach helps students to develop a “can-do” attitude. It is effective, motivating, and enjoyable. This paper sets out to discuss how this approach can be implemented. It also deals with the problems that may arise.

STUDENT- CENTRED LEARNING:

“If you Listen – you forget

If you See- you understand

If you Do- you understand” said a great philosopher mentioning the importance of involvement in the process of learning. In a student-centered class, students don’t depend on their teacher all the time, waiting for instructions, words of approval, correction, advice, or praise. They don’t ignore each other, but look at each other and communicate with each other. They value each other contributions; they cooperate, learn from each other, and help each other. When in difficulty or in doubt, they do ask the teacher for help or advice but only after they have tried to solve the problem among themselves. The emphasis is on working together, in pairs, in groups, and as a whole class. Their teacher helps them to develop their language skills.

A student-centered classroom isn’t a place where the students decide what they want to learn and what they want to do. It’s a place where we consider the needs of the students, as a group and as individuals, and encourage them to participate in the learning process all the time. The teacher’s role is more that of a facilitator than instructor; the students are active participants in the learning process. The teacher helps to guide the students, manage their activities, and direct their learning. Being a teacher means helping people to learn – and, in a student-centered class, the teacher is a member of the class as a participant in the learning process.³

In a student-centered class, at different times, students may be working alone, in pairs, or in groups:

- Working alone, preparing ideas or making notes before a discussion, doing a listening task, doing a short written assignment, or doing grammar or vocabulary exercises.
- Working together in pairs or groups, comparing and discussing their answers, or reading and reacting to one another’s written work and suggesting improvements.
- Working together in discussions or in role-plays, sharing ideas, opinions, and experiences.
- Interacting with the teacher and the whole class, asking questions or brainstorming ideas.

Also in a student-centered class, students may be teacher-led:

- Before students work together, their teacher will help them prepare to work together with explanations and pronunciation practice.

- While students are working together, their teacher will be available to give advice and encouragement.
- After they've finished working together, and the class is reassembled, their teacher will give them feedback, offer suggestions and advice, make corrections, and answer questions.

ADVANTAGES OF STUDENT-CENTRED LEARNING

When students are working together in English, they

- Talk more
- Share their ideas
- Learn from each other
- Are more involved
- Feel more secure and less anxious
- Use English in a meaningful, realistic way
- Enjoy using English to communicate

DISADVANTAGES

The following are the disadvantages encountered during the implementation of the Student – centred learning.

- It takes more time
- Not suitable for large classes
- Not enough learning materials
- Feel nervous, embarrassed, or tongue-tied
- Speak English and make a lot of mistakes
- Speak in their native language, not in English
- Not enjoy working together

TEACHER'S ROLE VERSUS STUDENT'S ROLE

Students can't be "taught" – they can only be helped to learn. In a student centered classroom, our role is to help and encourage students to develop their skills, but without relinquishing our more traditional role as a source of information, advice, and knowledge. In a student-centered classroom, the teacher and students are a team working together. Teacher's role is to make sure everyone benefits from the lesson, supporting one another.⁴

At different times in a lesson, teacher's role may change as the lesson moves from teacher-led to student-centered and back again. Teachers' are responsible for helping students work

independently, monitoring them while they're working together, and giving them feedback afterward. In a whole-class activity, students and the teacher interact, and students accept the authority of the teacher as their manager. When working together, students will be responsible for their own behavior and learning while the teacher walks around the classroom monitoring.

At first, some students may be too dependent on teachers and expect to be helped, corrected, and encouraged all the time. To begin with, teachers can put them into groups with less teacher-dependent students, and not pair them up with equally diffident students. It may take some time before they become more independent.

As students become more independent and resourceful, they'll stop thinking "I don't know the right word, so I can't say what I want to say" but rather "I don't know exactly the right words, but I'll try to find other words to say what I mean." When in doubt, they'll ask one another for ideas and vocabulary before asking the teacher. They can also help one another by using dictionaries in class and looking up words. But they'll also ask "public" questions – questions directed to the whole class – so that everyone can benefit from hearing the answers.⁵

It may be hard for teachers to answer every question that comes up. Teachers may feel uncomfortable about letting our students down by not knowing enough, or about losing their respect. But Teachers can't know everything, and students shouldn't expect teachers to. If the teacher doesn't know answer for a question from a student, it's best to say, "That's a good question. I've no idea of the answer. I'll find out for you and let you know next time." The teacher then makes a note of the question in the class notebook so that teacher can research the answer before the next lesson. In a more advanced class, the teacher can say, "Good question! Does anyone know the answer?"⁶

Student-centred and teacher-centred continuum



Teacher-centred Learning
Low level of student choice
Student passive
Power is primarily with teacher

Student-centred Learning
High level of student choice
Student active
Power primarily with the student

CONCLUSION

The intentions of a teacher and Students should be similar in the process of Teaching-learning. It is no wrong to meet the objectives by following a fair method be it a Teacher-centred or student-Centred learning. These two methods, with a limited number of challenges, are always handy in meeting the objectives of Teaching and learning. Teacher is instrumental in any method what can realize the dreams of students. Teacher cannot do anything without the cooperation of the students in the classroom.

“A Teacher should not be a sage on the stage but he should be a guide standing aside.”

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