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LEARNER-CENTRED APPROACH AS A TOOL TO IMPROVE LANGUAGE SKILLS

Mukhlisa Odilova
Yangi Asr University
Faculty of Western Languages and Literature
English Language Instructor
Email:muhlissodilova@gmail.com

Abstract: In this research, the researcher highlights the educational importance of learner-produced materials and deliberates the methods to encourage students to create materials. As they do, they appraisal pleased themselves, provide opportunities for peers to review content and engage in peer learning, and contribute to the collection of stored materials accessible to other classes and future students. Moreover, in this paper the researcher describes few material-development activities in order to inspire learners to practice and improve their English.

The purpose of this research study is to determine if student-centered learning produces a better result than teacher-centered in promoting critical thinking skills in a secondaryspecial education setting. After using some traditional student-centered methods and teacher-centered methods, results will be compared to realize if using student-centered methods aggregate critical thinking abilities in students.

Key words: Teacher-centred, student-centred, critical thinking, traditional method, material-development, face to face, individual work, based-learning, educational, researcher, classroom, active-learning, encourage, group-learning, cooperative learning.

УЧЕНИК-ОРИЕНТИРОВАННЫЙ ПОДХОД КАК ИНСТРУМЕНТ УЛУЧШЕНИЯ ЯЗЫКОВЫХ НАВЫКОВ

Аннотация: В этом исследовании исследователь подчеркивает образовательную важность материалов, созданных учащимися, и обдумывает методы поощрения учащихся к созданию материалов. При этом они оценивают себя, предоставляют однокурсникам возможность просмотреть содержание и участвовать в взаимном обучении, а также вносят свой вклад в сбор сохраненных материалов, доступных для других классов и будущих учащихся. Кроме того, в этой статье исследователь описывает несколько мероприятий по развитию материала, чтобы вдохновить учащихся на практику и улучшение своего английского языка.

Целью данного исследования является определение того, дает ли обучение, ориентированное на ученика, лучший результат, чем обучение, чем традиционный, в продвижении навыков критического мышления в условиях среднего специального образования. После использования некоторых традиционных методов, ориентированных на учащихся, и методов, ориентированных на учителя, результаты будут сравниваться, чтобы понять, объединяет ли использование методов, ориентированных на учащихся, способности к критическому мышлению у учащихся.

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Ключевые слова: Ориентированный на учителя, ориентированный на студента, критическое мышление, традиционный метод, разработка материала, лицом к лицу, индивидуальная работа, основанное на обучении, образовательное, исследовательское, классное, активное обучение, поощрение, групповое обучение, совместное обучение.

TIL KO'NIKMALARINI RIVOJLANTIRISHDA O'QUVCHILARNING O'ZARO ISHLASHI YONDASHUVI MASHQLARINING AHAMIYATI

Anotatsiya: Ushbu tadqiqotda tadqiqotchi, talabalar tomonidan yaratilgan materiallarning ahamiyatini ta'kidlaydi va o'quvchilarni materiallar yaratishga undash usullarini ko'rib chiqadi. Bunda talabalar o'zlarini ijobiy baholaydilar, tengdoshlariga materiallarni ko'rib chiqish va bir-birlarining yaratgan materiallarini baholash imkonini beradi. Bundan tashqari, ushbu maqolada tadqiqotchi, talabalarni ingliz tilini mashq qilish va yaxshilashga ilhomlantirish uchun bir nechta mustaqil ishlarni tavsiflaydi.

Ushbu tadqiqotning maqsadi o'rta maxsus ta`lim sharoitida, tanqidiy fikrlash ko'nikmalarini rivojlantirishda, o'quvchiga yo'naltirilgan ta'lim an`anaviy ta'limdan yaxshiroq natija bera oladimi yoki yo'qmi aniqlashdir. Ba'zi an'anaviy o'quvchiga yo'naltirilgan usullar va an`anaviy usullardan foydalangandan so'ng, natijalar taqqoslanadi, va talabalarga yo'naltirilgan usullardan foydalanish o'quvchilarning tanqidiy fikrlash qobiliyatlarini birlashtiradimi yoki yo'qligini aniqlash uchun taqqoslanadi.

**Kalit so`zlar:** Tadqiqotchi, rag`batlantirish, yuzma-yuz, yakka ishlash,kooperativ mashqlar, guruh bo`lib o`rganish, sinfxona, moddiy rag`batlamtirish, asoslangan ta`lim, tarbiyaviy,strategiya, faol o`rganish, an`anaviy o`qitish.

Introduction. "To reach real scientific achievement the door to the world should be wide open. To be fully aware of these achievements is extremely important. That`s why it is important to master foreign languages."

I.A.Karimov.

Evidently, nowadays, learning foreign languages played a great role especially in the globalization process. Therefore we should pay extensive attention earnestly to the young generation`s occupation of foreign languages in order to make a tremendous progress in the future. The Presidential Decree №1875 "On measures for further improvement of the system of teaching foreign languages" contributes a noteworthy progress of teaching Englishas a foreign language in the educational institutions of Uzbekistan.

This research is titled "Learner-centered activities as a tool to improve language skills in English as a foreign language EFL classroom". As we all know, materialdevelopment tasks are usually initiated and conducted by the teacher, students are ultimately left alone to create and form their own learning. They brainstorm, plan, and make decisions as well as assess and improve their effort. In short, they use their English and critical-thinking skills. The nature of English also changes in such a context: it is not only a language to be learned but alsoa means of communication to complete a complex task.

Literature review. The National Institute for Educational Development defines "learner-centered" education as an approach where the teacher puts learners' needs at the center of what

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they do in class rather than the teacher being the central figure. It is also an approach where learners learn from the teacher, from one another andon their own. Lambert and McCombs believe that the approach is particularly appropriate to the learner of the twenty-first century. Lambert observes that this approach values the affective side of education, which focuses on quality interpersonal relationships, and fosters students' competence and sense of well-being. McCombs and Whisler define "learner- centered" as: "The perspective that couples a focus on individual learners (their heredity, experience, perspectives, backgrounds, talents, interests, capacities and needs) with a focus on learning (the best available knowledge about learning and how it occurs and about teaching practices that are most effective in promoting the highest levels of motivation, learning and achievement for all learners).[1] This dual focus, then, informs and drives educational decision-making."

Research Methodology. Learner-centered teaching methods shift the focus of activity from the teacher to the learners. These methods include active learning, in which students solve problems, answer questions, formulate questions of their own, discuss, explain, debate, or brainstorm during class; cooperative learning, in which students work in teams on problems and projects under conditions that assure both positive interdependence and individual accountability; and inductive teaching and learning, in which students are first presented with challenges (questions or problems) and learn the course material in the context of addressing the challenges. Inductive methods include inquiry-based learning, case-based instruction, problem-based learning, project-based learning, discovery learning, and just-in-time teaching. Learner-centered methods have repeatedly been shown to be superior to the traditional teacher-centered approach to instruction, a conclusion that applies whether the assessed outcome is short-term mastery, long-term retention, or depth of understanding of course material, acquisition of critical thinking or creative problem-solving skills, formation of positive attitudes toward the subject being taught, or level of self-confidence in knowledge and skills.

Learner-centered activities as a tool to improve foreign language-learners

According to the National institute for educational development the teaching activities used with the learner-centered approach put learners at the center of teaching. Learning must begin by using or finding out the learners' past experience and skills as well as their existing understanding of the topic. These activities are then used to build

on and to extend the learner's knowledge. Linking with the above observations, Freiberg and Driscoll (2000) state that one way teachers can foster and nurture link ages of old and new knowledge is by using cooperative activities, role-playing and simulations that make classroom teaching more student-centered (Freiberg and Driscoll, 2000).

In using these various activities, academic diversity and social exchange within a subject is brought about, increasing its proximity to real life student experience.

Furthermore, linking new information to past experience promotes the learning of difficult and remote concepts. Teachers, when using the learner-centered approach, guide learners in acquiring new knowledge and skills as they facilitate the learning process through the use of

[1] .McCombs, B. L. and J. S. Whisler (1997). The learner-centered classroom and school: strategies for enhancing student motivation and achievement.

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various learner-centered activities. This requires teachers to select activities appropriately so that they emphasize a variety of skills including problemsolving skills.

Consequently, students will be able to practice decision-making skills and be flexible in choosing methods that will make the learning experience more relevant and meaningful. Cooperative learning is one learner-centered strategy or pedagogical practice which promotes learning, higher level thinking, prosocial behavior, and greater understanding of students with diverse learning and social adjustment needs. Cooperative learning is similar to group work but more focused and structured. Gilliesand Ashman (2003) argue that tasks are completed more easily in a group than individually. In doing an activity group members provide each other with information, prompts and reminders as well as encouragement. As a result of this, learners have opportunities to model their thinking, reasoning and problem-solving skills and receive feedback, which will help them in constructing new understanding, knowledge and skills. Poel, Homan and Flaman observe that cooperative learning has been used for some time and is not a new concept. Johnson, Johnson and Stanne believe that cooperative learning requires and builds on the following critical characteristics that overlap:

- face to face interaction, which is brought about by the arrangement of learners in a small group, either inheterogenous or homogenous groups. This encourages learners to share and support each other
- each learner becomes responsible for the success and collaboration of the group together with mastering the assigned tasks (individual accountability)
- learners get taught, coached and monitored in the use of social skills which enhance the group work (cooperative social skills)
- learners also assist each other in completing the learning task by striving to achieve a common goal, having group rewards, role assignments and other means which assist the group (positive interdependence)
- they also reflect on how well they work as a group to complete the task.

This model may also be used for integrated thematic instruction of which the major component is cooperative learning. Cohen etal (1994) declare cooperative learning as a pedagogical practice which promotes learning, higher level thinking, pro-social behaviour, greater understanding of children with diverse learning, social and adjustment needs. Further, Gillies etal (2003)argue that the increased emphasis on group learning is a reaction to societal changes including a new emphasis on team work in the business sector. Also, Thousand, Villa and Nevin observe that when using cooperative learning, groups are essential. In the use of groups, knowledge is learned first, then skills, strategies and procedures. Students apply each of these to show their individual mastery of the material since they learn together but then perform individually. She concludes that Piaget and Vygotsky identify this as away in which the mind constructs knowledge and invents learning. Researchers show that group learning leads to academic and cognitive benefits, promotes student learning and achievement and also increases the critical thinking skills which promote greater transfer of learning. Both Cheng and Warren (2000) and the National Institute for Educational Development (1999) argue that there is an increased emphasis on group learning as a reaction to societal changes, including a new emphasis on team work in the business sector. Group learning is believed to lead to academic and cognitive benefits, promote students' learning and achievement, increase the development

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of critical thinking skills and encourage discussion and communication skills. It allows learners of different abilities to work together and promotes greater transfer of learning. Group learning aids in the development of social skills like communication, presentation, problem solving, leadership,delegation and organization, and develops interpersonal intelligence. This is observed in being able to work cooperatively with others in a group or a pair and to communicate verbally and nonverbally with other people. Emotional intelligence which is the ability to motivate oneself, exercise self-control, manage one's emotions, and recognise others' emotions, feelings, belief sand intentions is also pertinent here. This will lead to understanding others, their feelings and being able to handle relationship. Gardner's classification of multiple intelligences considers spatial and visual intelligence to be focusing on visuals and pictures. Spatial and visual intelligence is observed in learners using visual images which help inconstructing knowledge. Learning is most effective in activities involving visualisation. These activities include watching movies, interpreting images, puzzles or games. Adding to theabove statements, Canning-Wilson observes that visuals are very important not only in learning but also in examinations. These visuals caninclude various forms of illustrations, pictures and figures. Canning-Wilson further states that visuals can enhance the clarity of any given meaningby creating joint links; they can help learners draw out language from their ownknowledge or personal experiences. This will then allow learners to organize knowledge into semantic or associative clusters. It is further observed that visuals are vital in a classroom as research has shown that imagery facilitateslearning significantly. When coupled with texts, visuals encourage learners tothink about the process of the language more fully as they help individuals tomake sense of surroundings in daily life. Therefore, all visuals provide room for prediction, inference and deduction of information from a variety of sources. As such, pictures frequently draw a response from learners. This response may notbe elicited through other methods. In march I finished a second edition of my Learner-Centered Teaching book. Revising it gave me the chance to revisit my thinking about the topic and look at work done since publication of the first edition ten years ago. It is a subject about which there is still considerable interest. The learner-centered label now gets attached to teaching strategies, teachers, classes, programs, departments and institutions. Like many trendy descriptors in higher education, with widespread use comes a certain definitional looseness. Active learning, student engagement and other strategies that involve studentsand mention learning are called learner-centered. And although learner-centered teaching and efforts to involve students have a kind of bread and butter relationship, they are not the same thing. In the interest of more definitional precision, there are five characteristics of teaching that make it learner-centered.

1. Learner-centered teaching engages students in the hard, messy work of learning. I believe teachers are doing too many learning tasks for students. We ask the questions, we call on students, we add detail to their answers. We offer the examples.We organize the content. We do the preview and the review. On any given day, in most classes teachers are working much harder than students. I'm not suggesting we never do these tasks, but I don't think students develop sophisticated learning skills without the chance to practice and in most classrooms the teacher gets far more practice than the students.

2. Learner-centered teaching includes explicit skill instruction. Learner-centered teachers teach students how to think, solve problems, evaluate evidence, analyze arguments, generate hypotheses—all those learning skills essential to mastering material in the discipline. They do not assume that students pick up these skills on their own, automatically. A few students do, but

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they tend to be the students most like us and most students are not that way. Research consistently confirms that learning skills develop faster if they are taught explicitly along with the content.

3. Learner-centered teaching encourages students to reflect on what they are learning and how they are learning it. Learner-centered teachers talk about learning. In casual conversations, they ask students what they are learning. In class they may talk about their own learning. They challenge student assumptions about learning and encourage them to accept responsibility for decisions they make about learning; like how they study for exams, when they do assigned reading, whether they revise their writing or check their answers. Learner-centered teachers include assignment components in which students reflect, analyze and critique what they are learning and how they are learning it. The goal is to make students aware of themselves as learners and to make learning skills something students want to develop.

4. Learner-centered teaching motivates students by giving them some control over learning processes. I believe that teachers make too many of the decisions about learning for students. Teachers decide what students should learn, how they learn it, the pace at which they learn, the conditions under which they learn and then teachers determine whether students have learned. Students aren't in a position to decide what content should be included in the course or which textbook is best, but when teachers make all the decisions, the motivation to learn decreases and learners become dependent. Learner-centered teachers search out ethically responsible ways to share power with students. They might give students some choice about which assignments they complete. They might make classroom policies something students can discuss. They might let students set assignment deadlines within a given time window. They might ask students to help create assessment criteria.

5. Learner-centered teaching encourages collaboration. It sees classrooms (online or face-to-face) as communities of learners. Learner-centered teachers recognize, and research consistently confirms, that students can learn from and with each other. Certainly the teacher has the expertise and an obligation to share it, but teachers can learn from students as well. Learner-centered teachers work to develop structures that promote shared commitments to learning. They see learning individually and collectively as the most important goal of any educational experience. In the traditional approach to college teaching, most class time is spent with the professor lecturing and the students watching and listening. The students work individually on assignments, and cooperation is discouraged.

Learner-centered teaching methods shift the focus of activity from the teacher to the learners. These methods include active learning, in which students solve problems, answer questions, formulate questions of their own, discuss, explain, debate, or brainstorm during class; cooperative learning, in which students work in teams on problems and projects under conditions that assure both positive interdependence and individual accountability; and inductive teaching and learning, in which students are first presented with challenges (questions or problems) and learn the course material in the context of addressing the challenges. Inductive methods include inquiry-based learning, case-based instruction, problem-based learning, project-based learning, discovery learning, and just-in-time teaching. Learner-centered methods have repeatedly been shown to be superior to the traditional teacher-centered approach to instruction, a conclusion that applies whether the assessed outcome is short-term mastery, long-term retention, or depth of understanding of course material, acquisition of critical thinking or

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creative problem-solving skills, formation of positive attitudes toward the subject being taught, or level of self-confidence in knowledge and skills.

Student-centered learning, also known as learner-centered education, broadly encompasses methods of teaching that shift the focus of instruction from the teacher to the student. In original usage, student-centered learning aims to develop learner autonomy and independence by putting responsibility for the learning path in the hands of students. Student-centered instruction focuses on skills and practices that enable life long learning and independent problem-solving. 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. 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 learn, and how they will assess their own learning. 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.

Usage of the term "student-centered learning" may also simply refer to educational mindsets or instructional methods that recognize individual differences in learners. 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 studentcentered learning. 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". 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 student sat the centerof 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 claimed that "traditional education ignores or suppresses learner responsibility". A further distinction from a teacher-centered

classroom to that of a student-centered classroom is when the teacher acts as afacilitator, 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". Through peer-to-peer interaction, collaborative thinking can lead to an abundance of knowledge. In placing a teacher closer toa peer level, knowledge and learning is enhanced, benefitting the student and classroom overall.

CONCLUSION

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At the core of this research study the researcher put was the aim of seeing if learnercentered activities can produce a better outcome in ESP classroom than teacher-centered learning can. According to investigation, it is found out that students who only received instruction by learner-centered methods but it is important that all students experience are totally based on different learning styles and have opportunities to use critical thinking skills. While various learner-centered methods are used, teachers note that learners are very observant, as they are able to detect the overlaps in content and ideas before the teacher can outline them. Because of the language learning policies, teachers have begun to make a connection of learner-centered strategies to teaching and cultural heritage. Using the learner-centered approach produces learners who can work in a variety of environments, in pairs, groups and independently, and who can build knowledge and understanding by connecting learning from different contexts. This leads toa conclusion that using a variety of these methods, coupled with discussion, is helpful in daily learning.

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