

A RADICAL ALTERATION IN SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING

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Abstract

Learning is a continuous process, right from birth to death; each and every one learns many things through acquisition, retention, perseverance, practice and so on. So, learning is a part and parcel of man's life. It is not that all learning is successful at the first attempt. For example, a child makes a perfect walk by practicing it many a time, where many attempts end up in failure too. But the persistence in oneself brings reward as success. In the same manner the students at the early stage of learning faces many difficulties at school level, where the teacher plays a vital role in imparting them learning skills. When students take the lead role in the process of learning – they enjoy learning by doing, by observing, by communicating, by discussing where the teacher becomes a facilitator. This paper is about the different useful methods of student centered learning and also exemplifies its pros and cons in applying it among the different learners.

"I never teach my pupils, I only attempt to provide the conditions in which they can learn." said Albert Einstein. Teachers had always been on the forefront in imparting knowledge and the needed skills for the overall development of the students. Though the roles of the teachers changed from the instructor to the facilitator still we find have a million dollar question in the mind whether the development of all the students in the classroom has been reached or not. In this modern technological world we find many students smart in knowing, creating, drafting, sharing and comprehending the needed information from far and wide. Hence, each and every child has started the learning habit right from the young age onwards. In this domain the teacher has to sharpen his/her knowledge and skill so that they are in a position to throw creative and critical thinking questions to engage the students in hands-on active learning. An attempt is made to bring out the few useful methods for student centred learning and teaching. Before discussing the methods to be applied in teaching, the teacher should develop a rapport with the students by asking them few simple questions, encourage each and every student to think individually, later the teacher's idea of sharing the knowledge can be incorporated in the methods adopted by the teaching according to the learning environment.

At the beginning level the teacher has to develop a rapport with the students. The teacher has to interact with the students and find out their knowledge related to the subject which helps the teacher in analysing the suitable method for effective teaching and learning. When the students enjoy learning, teaching becomes an easier task. So, the main pre-requisite in teaching is understanding the ability of the students and encourage learning by answering the queries of the students. In this platform, the students learn to connect the mental representation of the past and the present making cognitive connections among the incongruent ideas. Hence the generation of new ideas, identifying the various ways to solve the problem and applying the varied strategies for the overall development of skills begins with it.

A child should be encouraged in talking, listening, reading, judging, analysing, and interpreting so on. The teacher is forced to provide a conducive environment for the students that would help in the expansion of quantity and quality education to the students. Each individual experience should be much focussed on in the learning process by the teacher. Motivation of the students is the need of the hour in today's learning environment. A healthy classroom climate promotes risk-taking and allows the students to experiment. Positive experiences in

the classroom lead to an excellent attitude toward language and culture. According to Lowman (1995), classroom is not neutral ground; rather, it is emotionally charged. Thus, it is key that teachers proactively create a positive and supportive atmosphere that promotes students' sense of intellectual and emotional safety.

Only when the students experience such support, they enjoy participating in the entire task that is being provided with. In other words, learner's autonomy: learning to learn a method that used to encourage the students to become independent learners. Sarah Cotterell suggests students are unlikely to be able to manage their own learning if they have no idea of how learning works; it is by developing an awareness of language-learning theory that they are able to adopt learning strategies for themselves. Learner training, in other words, is a first step on the road to self-directed learning. Together with activities where students are encouraged, or even forced, to take responsibility for what they are doing, learner training gives those who are prepared to take it the possibility of real autonomy.

Think and Do

Students can be given activities where they think about what and how, analyse and interpret the given task to start learning. The students can be given a sample news article and ask them to read it and give a suitable title to the article. The student's participation in matching the headlines to the pictures/articles and guessing/designing suitable headlines for the articles develops the critical thinking ability. The students read, understand, judge, decides, or solves a problem involved in the newspaper-based activity. In general, the students figure out what to believe or what to do and do so in a reasonable and reflective way. These types of activities also develop the creative ability of the learner through which they can learn how with a few words a lot of meaning can be conveyed.

Focus to Draft

Listen to many and speak to few. As a part of developing listening among the learner the teacher can give few audio recordings and ask the students to listen to speech, conversations, announcements

and so on. They may be asked to rewrite the audio or can be asked to continue the abrupt endings. Sometimes, peer group discussion can also be encouraged before discussing the answers before the class.

Taking over

Assigning the students some case study, riddles, puzzles and asking them to find a suitable solution to it. Students are flexible enough to create hypothesis and get a solution for the problem before them. After few minutes, the students can be asked to present it before the class where there is scope of learning by doing, listening and interpreting things. The student become the decision maker of things and learns to find the facts in support of their points.

Start out and Keep going

Encourage the students to come out with new ideas and thoughts. For example, provide the students with sample piece of advertisement from the newspaper and ask them to analyse the same. After few minutes ask the students to draft a new advertisement on any product they like. The students take initiative and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse groups, tries to build on their ideas and express them clearly and persuasively. The students come out with different types of advertisement with images, catchy titles and so on. Discuss the same before the class highlight the creative minds.

There are still variety of new ways to inculcate learning habits among the students. Though we have ample methods for student centered learning, still they have its own draw backs.

- Ineffective teachers make ineffective teaching learning environment.
- Slow learners, less enthusiastic students remain dormant in learning and doing
- Introvert suffer from low self esteem.
- Ambivalent attitude towards learning ends in impasse.
- Poor learning environment
- Limited time, space and opportunity
- High expectations and low performance
- Internal and external obstacles in learning

- Unknown topic, subject and teacher
- Uninterested topics vague topics
- Discussion within the limited perspectives
- Misunderstanding and miscommunication.

Student centered learning is an effective methods of including knowledge among the students. They also develop different learning strategies, apply the knowledge to analyse and interpret the given information in a new dimension. To make this method more successful and effective, the teacher and the student should make a collaborative effort in teaching and learning experience. Teacher's active participation and student's active participation is needed to make any method of learning to be triumphant.

References

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