
THE NOTION OF CHILD – CENTRE EDUCATION AND REASONS FOR IT BEING CONSIDERED AS ONE OF THE BEST METHOD IN THE CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

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Abstract: The write-up intends to elucidate and clearly examine the concept of child-centered education with a view to highlighting some of its intrinsic qualities which when viewed in the light of childhood education can't but justified the reason why the method is considered one of the best in childhood development. In addition, attempt is equally made to assess this method to prove its desirability or otherwise in the light of contemporary educational development.

Introduction

Child centered education, as we know it, was a reaction and a response to the strong behaviorism (Watson and Rayner (1920) that was (and still is in many countries) the dominant learning theory. Popularized in the 60's; as a result of the Plowden Report (1967) that sought to free primary education in Britain from the jug principles that characterized teaching and learning of the time child centered education was seen as a most attractive alternative to wrote learning. These behavioural models of education, based on specific objectives that Bloom, B (1959) and others identified as the acquisition of a hierarchy of skills were seen as problematic at the primary level. Child centered education, as proposed by the Plowden Report was intended to see childhood as more than simply a biological factor, but as based within particular social, emotional and spiritual as well as intellectual characteristics that are different.

Child centered learning; the notion of children is different from adolescents and adults and therefore with particular needs appears to be self evident ad certainly in Western thinking not a new idea. From Rousseau's "Emile" at the time of the French Revolution, to Dewey's theories of experiential learning in this century, the development and growth of children, while interpreted variously, was identified as something unique and special. Stage theorists, such as Erikson (1950) and Kholberg (1987) gave a scientific credibility to child centered education linking as they did child development to process of maturation. With this theory, of "the child" all that education system apparently needed to do was to establish what the needs of the child were. Needs once established could then be used to develop sets of aims and objectives that would guide educational practices towards their fulfillment. On the one hand, child centered theorists were attempting to break free from behavioural objectives models of teaching, while at the same time continuing to base those theories on the largely

behavioural ideas of maturation and on an aims and objectives driven curriculum. Child centre education was an attempt to provide an alternative approach to teaching and learning without questioning the fundamental principle that dominated educational thinking of the time. Generally speaking, a child centered teacher tries to create an environment which will motivate the children to discover new skills and knowledge. Teachers are no longer supposed to transfer facts into passive student's heads but rather facilitate their discovery of relevant information.

As a result, teachers rarely stand in front of the class and teach a lesson. Instead, activity centers may be set up around the room with the children moving from station to station, or students might be assigned to work together in groups on a project. Relatively little whole – class teaching takes place; rather teachers use methods such as peer tutoring, individual and group projects, and teacher conferencing with one student while the rest of the class works alone. All children have a right to an education that helps them grow and develop to their fullest; this basic premise is at the heart of our understanding of child – centered education. Therefore, daily interactions with children should be based on the fundamental question. Am I teaching and supporting all children in their growth and development across all domains – social, emotional, physical, linguistic and intellectual? Such teaching is at the heart of developmentally appropriate practice. Every child is a unique and special individual, consequently, we have to teach individual children and be respectful of and account for their individual uniqueness of age, gender, culture, temperament and learning style. Children are active participants in their own education and development. This means that they should be mentally involved and physically active in learning what they need to know and do.

Students – centered learning (otherwise called child-centered learning) allows students to actively participate in discovery learning processes from an autonomous viewpoint. Students consume the entire class time constructing a new understanding of the materials being learned without being passive, but rather proactive. A variety of hands – on activities are administered in order to promote successful learning. Unique, yet distinctive styles are encouraged in a student's – centered classroom. With the use of valuable skills, students are capable of achieving life-long learning goals which can further enhance student's motivation in the classroom.

According to Deci and Ryan (1985) "The Self – Determination Theory (SDT) focuses on the degree to which an individual's behaviour is self motivated and self determined "Therefore when students are given the opportunity to gauge his or her learning, learning becomes an incentive. Because learning can be seen as a form of personal growth, students are encouraged to utilize self – regulation practices in order to reflect on his or her work. For that reason, learning can also be constructive in the sense that the students is in full control of his or her learning. Over a few decades, a paradigm shift in curriculum has occurred where the teacher

acts as a facilitator in a student – centered classroom. Such emphasis on learning has enabled students to take a self – directed alternative to learning.

In the teacher – centered classroom, teachers are the primary source of knowledge. Therefore, the focus of learning is to gain information as it is proctored to the student. Also, rote learning or memorization of teacher's notes or lectures notes or lectures was the norm a few decades ago, on the other hand, students – centered classroom are now the norm where active learning is strongly encouraged. Students are now researching material pertinent to the success of their academic and knowledge production is seen as a standard.

In order for a teacher to veer towards a student's – centered classroom, he or she must become aware of the diverse backgrounds of his or her learners. To that end, the incorporation of a few educational practices such as Bloom's Taxonomy (1959) and Howard Gardner's (1983) Theory of multiple intelligence can be very beneficial to student – centered classroom because it promises various modes of diverse learning styles. These changes have impacted educator's methods of teaching and the way students learn. In essence, one might say that we learn in constructivist learning paradigm. It is important for teacher's to acknowledge the increasing role and function of his or her educational practices. As our educational practices changes; so also our approach to teaching and learning change. Therefore, the mindset about learning is constantly evolving into new and innovative ways to reach diverse learners. When a teacher allows their students to make inquiries or even set the stage for his or her academic success, learning is more productive. With the openness of students – centered learning environment, knowledge production is vital when providing students the opportunity to explore their own learning styles. In that respect, successful learning also occurs when learners are fully engaged in the active learning process. A further distinction from a teacher – centered classroom to that of a student – centered classroom is when the teacher acts as a facilitators. In essence, the teacher's goal in the learning process is to guide students into making new interpretations of the learning materials.

In terms of curriculum practice, the student has the choice in what they want to study and how they are going to apply their new found knowledge. According to Ernie Stringer, "student learning processes are greatly enhanced when they participate in deciding how they may demonstrate their competence in a body of knowledge or the performance of skills. This pedagogical implication enables the students to establish his or her unique learning objectives. This aspect of learning holds the learners accountable for production of knowledge that he or she is capable of producing in this stage and timely feedback on individual progress. Building a rapport with students is an essential strategy that educators could utilize in order to gauge student growth in a student's – centered classroom. Through effective communication skills, the teacher is able to address student's needs, interests and overall engagement in the learning material.

It's desirability as one of the best method: Some of the reasons why the method (Child-centered) is considered as one of the best method in teaching programme could be summarized as follows:

1. **It trains children in cooperatives and mutually helpful living:** Joyous participation of children in the educational activities would bring about a sense of social harmony. The idea of the child interest, active interaction and cooperative endeavours is the beginning of the elevation of the value of social cooperative among children.
2. **Behaviour modification:** The child activities in classroom were "hyperactive, disruptive and difficult to control. They include screaming throwing things, biting, hitting, grabbing, wobbling and not responding to instruction. So by virtue of child centre education these attitudes were giving treatment by removing the child from the classroom following the disruptive behaviour, reinforcing socially acceptable behaviour. The demand for conscious moulding on the part of the teacher is hard to reconcile with the lack of imputing conscious behaviour on the part of the child.
3. **It strengthens the intellectual ability of the child:** Young children found little effort to utilize their knowledge and promote their creative thinking. Because of many necessary condition which form creative endeavour for the children than expose to fundamental part of their developmental characteristics. Characteristics such as openness to experiences, freedom to experiment, spontaneous, flexibility and of course curiosity. The central task of child education is to keep the creative potential alive for learning.
4. **Improving language skills of the child:** It helps the economically deprived child adapt his language to a pattern of school modeling. The lessons comprise a fifteen – minute segment of a young child's day in a day care centre. Small group of children are taken out of their classroom setting for these lesson given by a trained personnel. Through the active relationship with the people it is known and felt and understands as person that the child's basic curiosity and interest in the world begin to develop.
5. **Providing independent thinking and problem solving:** Children learn to think by thinking. All through the day there are problems that require though. The child zone of action may encompass reading, writing, authentic or dramatization but education centered the child to think independently together with his ability to solve problems.
6. It also provides him with the strong social consciousness to help him set up standards for himself in his relationship with other people. Therefore child-centered education provide intellectual, social and emotionally upright individual to become a member of a society.

Conclusion:

Thus far, the write – up has strived to explore the very root of the educational phrase – "child centered" to its psychological background (it's being a development in reaction to

behavioural theorists) its main features and benefits to its beneficiaries – (the child or learners). Bearing in mind the stated reasons, one can plausibly see reasons with the proponents of this teaching device that so far this method undoubtedly constitute one of the best approach to teaching in the modern and contemporary world.

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