

# The Impact of Learner-Centered Teaching on Students' Learning Skills and Strategies

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## Abstract

*Students become responsible on their own learning by giving them the chance to explore and be engaged in their own learning process. With this, the study investigated and analyzed the impact of learner-centered teaching in English classes on students' learning skills and strategies in relation to the extent of implementation of learner-centered teaching in the classroom.*

*The study was conducted to all English teachers and select First Year to Fourth Year high school students. There were 10 teachers and 900 students considered as respondents of this study. There were three visitations conducted for each teacher with a total of 30 classroom observations. The researcher and the Vice Principal for Academics observed the classes using the learner-centered teaching checklist. The students also rated their respective teachers on their observation of the level of learner-centered teaching implemented in the classroom.*

*Using regression analysis, it was found out that there was an impact on learner-centered teaching to students' learning skills and strategies which was highly significant. This implies that the more learner-centered the teacher is the more learning skills and strategies are developed among the students. This leads to the enhancement and reinforcement of some areas to be improved using Bekele and Melesse's framework on student-centered approach in teaching students [1].*

## 1. Introduction

To become competent, students should be equipped with the appropriate skills to deal with the different challenges that they may encounter inside and outside the classroom. In this light, learner-centered teaching serves as an approach allowing students to become responsible for their own learning by giving them opportunities to explore and be engaged in their own learning process.

To be engaged in learning, students will be given the chance to become active participants in the learning process by providing them with the avenues to become responsible learners equipped for college work, in their future careers and undertakings in life. The classroom serves is a venue for students' academic growth. Consequently, teachers play a vital role in the formation and learning of the students.

They serve as facilitators in the process and in the delivery of curriculum and instruction. They are also the key to guide, prepare and equip the students with the skills to face the real world. Learner-centered teaching should be integrated and sustained in the faculty development program for teachers to be updated on the current learner-centered teaching strategies and techniques so that students are engaged in meaningful activities from which they develop their knowledge and skills for life-long learning.

It is in this light that the objective of this study is to determine the impact of learner-centered teaching on the students' learning skills and strategies in the English classes from first year to fourth year levels.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the constructivism and experiential learning theories. Moreover, the principles of learner-centered teaching served as the framework of this paper.

### 2.1. Constructivism

Constructivism learning theory states that human beings produce or construct meaning, understanding and knowledge of the world from their own experiences. The benefits of this approach make learning more engaging rather than merely transferring of information [6]. Moreover, this theory explains how students construct meaning by linking existing knowledge with new information. Unlike in the past, it is believed that it is solely the teacher who has the body of knowledge. Nowadays, active interaction between the learner and the teacher as well as with their peers is highly encouraged. There is a good exchange of information allowing the students to discover, explore and experience skills and strategies in learning. Thus, learner-centered teaching allows the students to be engaged in their own learning process by developing their learning and skills and strategies as part of life-long learning.

### 2.2. Experiential Learning Theory

In like manner, Kolb's experiential learning theory defines learning as "the process whereby

knowledge is created through the transformation of experience, and knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience." It presents a cyclical model of learning, consisting of four stages. In facilitating the class, the teacher may begin at any stage, namely, concrete experience (or "do"), reflective observation (or "observe"), abstract conceptualization (or "think"), and active experimentation (or "plan") [6]. In this case, students do active learning by doing. It allows students to put into action or practice what they have learned in the classroom. It also provides opportunities for students to develop their own learning and skills and strategies.

### 2.3. Learner-Centered Teaching Principles

In addition, the paper's framework is also anchored on the Learner-Centered Teaching Principles [2]. The following principles served as a guide in this paper: Principle 1: The nature of the learning process is most effective when it is an intentional process of constructing meaning from information and experience and Principle 3: Construction of knowledge wherein the successful learner can link new information with existing knowledge in meaningful ways [4].

In the delivery of instruction for a learner-centered approach, it helps students to construct meaning if they themselves experience it. This is aligned to the constructivism and experiential learning theories wherein students are given the chance to be engaged in their own learning process. In addition, it is vital for the students to link their prior knowledge to relate to the new concepts and ideas presented in class. In this manner, learning is real and tangible among the students.

### 3. Conceptual Framework

This study made use of Bekele and Melesse's [1] study wherein the principles of learner-centered are espoused. The following framework was set for the investigation which was also used in this paper. The extent of learner-centered teaching was determined through the following: (A) Using students' prior and existing knowledge, (B) Encouraging students to generate explanations and alternative interpretations (C) Using discussion and thought-provoking questions, (D) Using instructional materials and activities, (E) Providing a learning environment conducive for discussion/group work, and (F) Providing opportunities for learners to utilize new ideas and to process information.

With regard to learning skills and strategies, it is important that students know how to learn. Thus, the focus of learner-centered learning environment is that teachers serve as the facilitators of learning. For instance, the teaching-learning processes use a

variety of instructional materials and technology and a variety of strategies to make the teaching-learning effective. With this, students gain knowledge and skills which they can apply in varied contexts and situations. With this, students can become more responsible for their learning.

Pintrich et al. [5] manual served as a guide to construct the researcher-made questionnaire on learning skills and strategies. This instrument was used to evaluate students' level on their learning skills, collaborative learning, and study skills through learner-centered teaching.

### 4. Methodology

This study was conducted to all English teachers and select First Year to Fourth Year high school students. It made use of purposive sampling. There were 10 teachers and 900 students considered as respondents of this study.

There were three visitations conducted for each teacher with a total of 30 classroom observations. The researcher and the Vice Principal for Academics observed the classes using the learner-centered teaching checklist. It is composed of 42 indicators based on Bekele and Melesse's [1] study. It made use of the Likert scale highly evident, evident, less evident and not evident. This instrument was used to assess the learner-centered teaching practices in the classroom.

The students also rated their respective English teachers of their observations on the extent of learner-centered teaching implemented in the classroom. The instrument was pilot tested for reliability and validity. It has 15 indicators that contained the learner-centered checklist patterned after the classroom observation instrument.

With the extent of learner-centered teaching implemented in the classroom, the study would also like to determine if this approach helped students in developing their own learning skills and strategies. Hence, the researcher-made questionnaire adapted from Pintrich et al. [5] was used for this purpose. It is composed of 15 indicators which was also pilot tested for reliability and validity. It also made use of the Likert scale where students assessed and rated themselves whether they very much practiced, practiced, somewhat practiced or not practiced the skill or strategy indicated in the research instrument. In this regard, it was used to evaluate students' level on intrinsic goal orientation, cognitive and metacognitive skills and strategies, and resource management skills and strategies.

### 5. The Results of the Study

The study investigated and analyzed the impact of learner-centered teaching in English classes on students' learning skills and strategies in relation to

the extent of implementation of learner-centered teaching in the classroom. With this, the following results were obtained.

**Table 1. The overall extent of implementation of learner-centered teaching**

Range of Value	Scale	n=30
		Percentage
3.70 – 4.00	Highly Evident	10.00
2.80 – 3.69	Evident	53.33
1.90 – 2.79	Less Evident	33.33
1.00 – 1.89	Not Evident	3.33
Mean		3.03
SD		0.57
Qualitative Description		Evident

Table 1 shows the overall extent of implementation of learner-centered teaching in the First Year to Fourth Year classes as observed by the researcher and the Vice Principal for Academics.

It is presented in this study that majority of the teachers were evident in the extent of implementation of learner-centered teaching in their respective classes. Overall, it has also shown that the teachers were evident in their learner-centered teaching approach. In using Bekele and Melesse's [1] framework, the strength of the teachers is on using instructional materials and activities with the highest mean score 3.21 and its SD 0.71. On the other hand, the area to be improved is on providing opportunities for learners to utilize new ideas and to process information with the lowest mean score 2.75 and its SD 0.66.

**Table 2. The overall extent of implementation of learner-centered teaching as evaluated by the students**

Range of Value	Scale	n=900
		Percentage
3.70 – 4.00	Highly Evident	7.96
2.80 – 3.69	Evident	71.90
1.90 – 2.79	Less Evident	18.73
1.00 – 1.89	Not Evident	1.41
Mean		3.13
SD		0.27
Qualitative Description		Evident

As part of the English teachers' strength, they were evident in giving clear instructions, making students work independently, using teaching strategies that match the instructional objectives, and the like. This implies that teachers were creative

enough in allowing their students to work on authentic materials and be engaged in a variety of activities that stimulated the minds of the students. However, teachers are challenged in providing opportunities where students are engaged in self-assessment and peer evaluation, asking students to summarize or synthesize the concepts taken up at the end of the class, providing proper closure by guiding students to assess the day's lesson, and the like. This would greatly help students to refresh and process information what they have learned within the day.

Table 2 presents the overall extent of implementation of learner-centered teaching in the classroom as observed by the First Year to Fourth students. The students serve as the heart of the learning process. With this, their valuable assessment is considered in this study.

It is revealed that students rated their teachers as evident in teaching them with the learner-centered approach. It is also consistent with the results in Table 1 wherein most of the strength among English teachers were on using instructional materials and activities. On the students' observation, the only less evident was on eliciting ideas from them before the lesson was presented and involving them to talk about what they have already known or experienced.

In the classroom observations, there were attempts; however, these were not sustained. This prompts for more avenues for students to talk more about their prior knowledge. In this connection, teachers may integrate more cooperative learning activities for students to share with their peers. Even if they are not called in the class, there will still be an opportunity to express oneself through dyad, triad or small group sharing. It has been shown that giving enough time for the cooperative learning in the classroom gives more effective outcomes [3].

**Table 3. The overall level of learning skills and strategies of first year to fourth year students**

Range of Value	Scale	n=900
		Percentage
3.70 – 4.00	Very Good	1.32
2.80 – 3.69	Good	57.07
1.90 – 2.79	Fair	41.25
1.00 – 1.89	Poor	0.36
Mean		2.86
SD		0.37
Qualitative Description		Good

Table 3 reveals the overall learning skills and strategies of the First Year to Fourth students.

It shows that majority of the students rated themselves as *good* in their own learning skills and strategies. Its mean score also obtained *good* level.

This implies that students were able to develop some learning skills and strategies in the extent of implementation of learner-centered teaching in the classroom. This includes making use of the resources available for them, exerting some effort to learn the lesson, balancing academics and involvement with clubs, and the like.

On the other hand, many students also rated themselves only as *fair* in some areas such as making graphic organizers like charts or diagrams, creating one's own ideas and examples to be prepared for class, reading ahead of time and the like. This challenges the teachers to make students practice these learning skills and strategies that they may use in their daily tasks. To illustrate, students may use the Venn diagram in giving comparison and contrasts as a graphic organizer. In this way, students may see relationships on the given topic. Thus, providing them more opportunities will help them to enrich their learning skills and strategies.

**Table 4. Regression model showing the impact of learner-centered teaching with learning skills and strategies**

Ind Var (x)	Dep Var (y)	Reg Model	Reg Coe	Mul R	Adj R	F Value
Learner-Centered Teaching	Learning Skills and Strategies	$\hat{y}=1.8366 + 0.3215x$	0.3215	0.58	0.3364	9.13 HS

Table 4 shows the regression model on the impact of learner-centered teaching with learning skills and strategies. The effect of learner-centered teaching on the students' learning outcomes was highly significant. Thus, there was a high impact of learner-centered teaching to the learning skills and strategies of the students. This means that the more learner-centered teaching skills implemented in the delivery of curriculum and instruction the more learning skills and strategies will be developed. This implies that the learner-centered strategies of the teachers have an impact on the development of the learning skills and strategies of the students.

The way teachers teach creates impact on the development of child's learning. In one way or another, the teaching approaches and strategies of the teachers influence the students' learning skills and strategies. For instance, if teachers are organized when they teach, students are able to develop this skill. When teachers use more of learner-centered teaching in class, the learning skills and strategies of students develop or increase significantly because teachers serve as models in the learning process of the students. Hence, the learner-centered approach is just apt for students to make them learn by doing. It is very important that students are engaged and involved in their learning process so that they can

adapt the skills and strategies for them to become responsible learners.

In this light, teachers are challenged to become more learner-centered in their delivery of the curriculum and instruction. It was shown in the survey on the learning skills and strategies that only a very few have achieved *very much practiced* or *very good* rating as evaluated by the students themselves. This implies that there is still a room of improvement to integrate more learner-centered teaching approach in the classroom. It is important that students will develop their learning skills and strategies because these are life-long learning skills that they can use not only in college but in their future endeavors in life.

## 6. Conclusion and Recommendation

The way teachers teach creates impact on the development of child's learning. In one way or another, the teaching approaches and strategies of the teachers influence the students' learning skills and strategies. Thus, the teacher is encouraged to become more learner-centered in his or her teaching.

Making the students master their learning skills and strategies should be implemented in the classroom learning. With this, they can be taught how to learn on their own. For instance, if teachers have organization skills in the preparation and delivery of instruction, students are more likely able to develop this skill. When teachers use more of learner-centered teaching in class, the learning skills and strategies of students develop or increase significantly because teachers can provide more opportunities for the enhancement of the learning skills and strategies of the students.

Hence, the learner-centered approach is just apt for students to make them learn by doing. It is very important that students are engaged and involved in their learning process so that they can adapt the skills and strategies for them to become responsible learners. It is important that students will develop their learning skills and strategies because these are life-long learning skills that they can use not only for higher learning but in their future endeavors in life.

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