

LEARNER-CENTERED TEACHING

- An approach to teaching that focuses on the learners and their development rather than on the transmission of content; it addresses the balance of power in teaching and learning, moves toward learners actively constructing their own knowledge, and puts the responsibility for learning on the learners.
- A teaching approach where students are required to take on active learner roles and responsibilities beyond listening passively to instructors' lectures and taking notes.
- It means doing whatever it takes to ensure that every child is achieving and ever moving toward realizing her or his potential.

Five (5) Characteristics of Learner-Centered Teaching

1. Learner-centered teaching engages students in the hard, messy work of learning.

In a teacher-centered classes teachers are working much harder than students. In a learner-centered teaching it's the other way around.

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.

3. Learner-centered teaching encourages students to reflect on what they are learning and how they are learning it.

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.

4. Learner-centered teaching motivates students by giving them some control over learning processes.

Learner-centered teachers search out ethically responsible ways to share power with students.

5. Learner-centered teaching encourages collaboration.

Learner-centered teachers work to develop structures that promote shared commitments to learning.

LESSON 2

Paradigm Shift: From Teacher-Centered to Learner-Centered Teaching

Philosophical Perspectives

Let us explore the different philosophical perspectives in education. The teacher-centered philosophies and the student-centered philosophies.

A. Teacher-Centered Philosophies

The teacher-centered philosophies are essential for the longevity of education and the continued influence of teachers in the classroom. Teacher-centered philosophies are those that transfer knowledge from one generation of teachers to the next. In teacher-centered philosophies, the teacher's role is to impart a respect for authority, determination, a strong work ethic, compassion for others, and sensibility. Teachers and schools succeed when students improve, typically through taking tests, that they have mastered the objectives they learned. In this unit two teacher-centered philosophies will be reviewed which are essentialism and perennialism.

Essentialism

Essentialism is the educational philosophy of teaching basic skills. This philosophy advocates training the mind. Essentialist educators focus on transmitting a series of progressively difficult topics and promotion of students to the next level or grade. Subjects are focused on the historical context of the material world and culture, and move sequentially to give a solid understanding of the present day. This philosophy stresses core knowledge in reading, writing, math, science, history, foreign language, and technology. The tools include lecturing, memorization, repetition, practice, and assessment.

William C. Bagley (1874–1946) was one of the most influential advocates of essentialism. Bagley believed that education was not supposed to change society but to preserve it. At a conference for the American Association of School Administrators in 1938, Bagley “urged schools and educators to create what we know today to be vigilant in sticking to the core curriculum.” Other proponents of Essentialism are: James D. Koerner (1959), H. G. Rickover (1959), Paul Copperman (1978), and TheodoreSizer (1985).

Perennialism

Perennialism is the educational philosophy that the importance of certain works transcends time. Perennial works are those considered as important and applicable today as they were when they were written, and are often referred to as great books. Common examples include Melville's *Moby Dick*, Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, Dickens's *Great Expectations*, and