

From the Culture of Silence to the Culture of Expression: A Meta-Analysis of the Pedagogies Adopted at Higher Education Institutions



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Pages: 307 – 315

DOI: 10.31703/gsr.2023(VIII-I).30

URL: [http://dx.doi.org/10.31703/gsr.2023\(VIII-I\).30](http://dx.doi.org/10.31703/gsr.2023(VIII-I).30)

Abstract: *The current study is a meta-analysis of the pedagogies adopted at higher educational institutions. The study focuses on learner-centered instruction, which leads to a culture of expression in contrast to teacher-centered learning, which creates a culture of silence. Students have the opportunity to critically evaluate prevailing educational, social and political structures and put their understandings of the subject matter. Social reality is constructed through active participation in higher education institutions and the presence of teachers. Students have liberty and freedom of expression in the discussion and critique of the issues. In critical pedagogy, students are encouraged to critically evaluate established patterns associated with educational institutions in particular and society in general.*

Key Words: Learner-centred Instruction (LCI), Teacher-centered Instruction (TCI), Critical Thinking (CT), Freedom of Expression, Culture of Silence

Introduction

Students are the future of society and culture; they reproduce their culture and rewrite their thoughts and practical experiences. The teacher creates confidence in the student to play an active part in this social reproduction in an innovative way. (Giroux, 1997). They help students that how to learn and understand each other with mutual agreement, and how to question the controlling power of the classroom and society (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011).

The 1974 UNESCO Suggestion on Education for International Understanding, Cooperation and Peace and Education on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms highlights the crucial role that education plays in fostering a culture of peace and human rights. The OSCE Ministerial Council's 2005 Ljubljana Decision promotes public and private education programs fostering equality and non-discrimination

and increasing public awareness of the presence and unacceptable intolerance and discrimination through education (OSCE/ODIHR, 2011).

Teacher-centered Instruction

In teacher-centred education, a teacher has a central and dominant role in the teaching and learning process. Students have low or no chance of asking questions and have a passive and subordinate part in classroom activities. Students are not allowed to convey their expressions and share their experiences. In this approach to education, students do not achieve their goals as compared to their knowledge creation (Otukile-Mongwaketse,, 2018).

It is related to a top-down approach, passive learning, and hierarchal teaching practices, hampering the development of critical and cognitive thinking and understanding. This style is authoritative and to

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produce submissive, subordinate, and passive citizens, unchallenged principles are imposed on students in the classroom. (Cristillo & Metcalf, 2010; Mpho, 2018).

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Learner-centred Instruction

This is in terms of the overall perception of the paradigm of teaching and learning as being contrasted as if they are two polar opposites that require two different sets of conditions for their success. While it is evident that the basic philosophies of the two are identical, Elen et al (2007) suggest that the progression toward student-centred learning contributes to a reform rather than a reduction in the tasks of educators. In fact, they argue that teachers in higher education have as much a role to play as teachers in SCL as they do in teacher-centred learning, so they require the same, if not more, effect from them. (Attard et al 2010).

Elen et al (2007) argue in favour of conveying a subtler message than a simple shift from teacher-centred to student-centred learning, instead addressing the need to develop challenging and safe higher education differentiated instruction, which they refer to as 'powerful' learning environments. Attard et al (2010) Students take full responsibility for building their knowledge ... in a comfortable environment that provides teachers with targeted support to make their activities as effective as possible.

Therefore, it is important to remember that while in some situations a complete overhaul of the method may be appropriate for a change from the teaching to

the learning model, this may not be the case in any situation. Rather, the emphasis should be one of transition' or' transformation' into a student-centred approach, which would allow the necessary change in approach through a gradual introduction of the above-mentioned elements. (Heise & Himes, 2010; Attard et al 2010).

In a student-centred approach, a learner has a significant role in decision-making. The paradigm shift from conservative learning to liberal makes a student more active and reactive in the learning process. Students learn more in an interactive session. This approach is based on the constructivist principle of learning, where learning is a shared pursuit in which knowledge is not transmitted from teacher to student but shared between learners and educators. In this approach, a classroom is like a community that shapes, shares and common understanding (Swart et al., 2004; Mpho, 2018).

Student-centred learning is the power shift in the student-teacher relationship. Learners are at the centre of the learning process and meet their need like what they want to learn, as investing in already learned things and knowledge or the non-interested themes are a waste of resources and time (Edwards 2001; O'Neill & McMahon, 2005)

The roots of Learner-centered learning are in the work of Hayward (1905) and Dewey (1934). The model of client-centred counselling by Roger is altered for education into student-centred learning (Burnard 1999; Rogoff 1999). Piaget and Malcolm's knowledge also made a great contribution to student-centered learning. Burnard (1999) and Rogers (1983) illustrate that the power is now shifted from the hands of the teacher to the learner enabling uninterested, lethargic and passive students into active and creative beings. The teacher is a guide and facilitator rather than interfering in the process of learning and imposing their thoughts on students (Simon 1999; O'Neill & McMahon, 2005).

Gibbs (1995) presents student-centred learning with more emphasis on the activity, where they learn more from live examples and personal experiences than course contents. Negotiation in the classroom with the teacher is very important for the active learning environment and embracing true knowledge. One of the foremost goals of student-centred learning

is how perceptions are built in the classroom and by whom these perceptions are built (O'Neill & McMahon, 2005). Constructivist theorists exert more stress on active, participatory and independent learning (Carlile and Jordan 2005) and cognitive theorists articulate that these activities are computed in the mind of the learners (Cobb, 1999; O'Neill & McMahon, 2005).

This type of approach to learning allows students to question and criticize injustice through freedom of expression, and respect the identity and integrity of students. For each student, inclusive classrooms should be exclusive, which through active learning supports the development of attitudinal changes in learners. Education's fundamental challenge is to stimulate the ability to think, query, and inquire, and raise students' self-confidence via dynamic syllabuses, and time-framed education. Teachers encourage students to think critically through which they can correlate one subject's knowledge with other subjects and practice what is preached. The classroom should be active and interactive. The classroom should be active, interactive and informative, encouraging students' critical thought and understanding (Mehta and Pandya, 2017).

According to social constructivists, knowledge is a product of interaction and activity within a social context and culture (Brown, Collins and Duguid, 1989; p. 32). A student-centred approach is known by different names like "self-directed learning", "co-operative learning", "self-regulated learning", "guided discovery", "scaffolding", "cognitive apprenticeship", "teacher-mediated dialogue", "independent group discussion", "problem-based learning", "project-based learning", and "knowledge building" (e.g. Evensen and Hmelo, 2000; Lee and Songer, 2003; Scardamalia and Bereiter, 2006; Vieluf, et al, 2012).

According to Giroux (2010), learners should be given space for critical thinking with practical experience to bring their understanding of culture and various aspects of the surroundings with subjective learning. It shows that experiences are an esteemed resource, giving learners the opportunity to bridge their social relations, views and narratives with the teacher's thoughts. Experience is indispensable for inquiry that can be used, affirmed and interrogated to develop critical knowledge and practical understanding of learners (Akyuz, Karli & Muderrisoglu, 2017).

Critical pedagogy works on diversity, multicultural, race education and cultural pluralism, with the hypothesis that one cannot understand another culture through their cultural lens. Nevertheless, mere knowledge about different cultures is not enough for understanding, as the goal of conscientization is to expand justice and equality and root out the causes of extremism and intolerance through education (Naseem, & Ayaz, 2016).

The Future of Humanity is a Future of Co-existence

The more a society offers opportunities for dialogue the greater the chance that trust, empathy, and appreciation for diversity can flourish for different groups to establish mutual understanding with each other. In comparison, their mates, families, and society no longer understand, support, or embrace most disaffected and alienated people. This is mainly due to the profound gaps generated by modern culture and technology in intergenerational communication. Approaches that focus on actively listening to their concerns, inclusive dialogue, and promoting active and open participation in public processes could have a transformative impact. However, it is not possible to manipulate critical changes in political and social attitudes and behaviours from the outside. They must emerge from a society's organic conditions. It includes reliable and trustworthy "insider mediators" capable of engaging relevant political, cultural, and community leaders, creating communication across conflict lines, and convening important discussions and promoting them (UNDP, 2016).

Reflexivity develops self-awareness in students about their judgments and reflections and improves education and its liberating potential. Furthermore, by learning critical consciousness about the "reality out there," teachers and learners will be abetted by reflexive pedagogy of their reactions to the competition and cooperation, authorization, and peace with the aim of gaining a deeper understanding and new skills for making and modelling others (Rothman, 2014).

Rothman (2014) advocated pedagogy that provokes liberal thoughts,

"Students will eventually be able to engage as professional third parties or educators, or simply

thoughtful citizens, by reflexively studying their subjectivity and using it to more deeply empathize and build bridges with others through it. When we, students and teachers, can engage our thinking critically and explore assumptions, values, and encounters reflexively, the conflicts we encounter and help to address creatively will increasingly become windows for insight and constructive change" (p. 127).

In the culture of silence, people do not say anything, consequently, their ability to think and creativity dimension. The urge for change in society is suppressed and elements of transformation are sabotaged. Power is in the hands of a few oppressed people who try to maintain the status quo in society. Freire compares this general concept of the culture of silence to educational institutions, where the same thing is used to suppress learners' personal experiences and perceptions about realities (Nyirenda, 1996).

Education tries to tame learners to the culture of silence. This culture taught people to accept what should be given to them without asking any questions and challenging the situation. Thus, understanding of their social reality is limited to the extent of what they are taught, imparted, believed and accepted (Nyirenda, 1996).

In underdeveloped countries such as Africa, this kind of education system has not yet been achieved, as the patterns of subordination and domination are instituted and reproduced through educational institutions. These unequal distributions of power between the oppressed and oppressor are intentionally or unintentionally, perpetuated through education. As a result, a dialogical education, which liberates, challenges and disrupts these embedded structures of exploitation and domination, leads to structural changes. Liberating education develops just social structures for society on the whole and the individual as well (Nyirenda, 1996).

Kessing-Styles (2003) argues that teachers should encourage students to ask questions and guide them to think critically in their practices. Educators should challenge the status quo, reject the prevailing culture of silence and give up the power and imposed authority over students, that is given to them (Foley, 2007). Critical teachers are involved in emancipatory knowledge that helps learners understand the relations of authority, power and privilege that distort

and manipulate social relations and help oppressed students by identifying with them. Students get ready to compare their experiences and skills to the new and challenging situations of their lives (Degener, 2001; Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011).

Learning is not only a theoretical or intellectual activity rather it is a practical and collective process that encompasses various forms of awareness, emotion, desire, feeling and knowledge. The new knowledge should be judged by teacher and student dialogical self-experiences to make it more authentic and practical. Action in teacher-centred education is the control of thoughts, actions and realities by the teacher (oppressor). It protects the rights of the dominating and ruling class over the oppressed class through the culture of silence (Cesaire, 2000). Students can ask questions with limited content when the teacher permits them rather than when the learner wants to (Isah & Omori, 2018).

Freire's concept of dialogue and conscientization is linked with liberating education with a strong belief in equality and justice. Liberating education is a reliable source for achieving peace and sustainable development. As it frees the people from the servitude of a culture of silence, which makes them mute. Freire education is concerned with the development of a just and free society (Nyirenda, 1996).

In contrast to the culture of silence, liberating education assures individual freedom and develops their ability and capacity to decide their destiny. Liberating education can shatter and overcome the culture of silence in the learning process and hence society. This kind of education is the cry of today all over the world particularly in Africa (Nyirenda, 1996).

In critical pedagogy teacher has the authority over the course and subject matter, however, everyone in the classroom is free to take part in the discussion and he or she should be open to accepting the new realities (Horton and Freire, 1990). As a critical, reflective role of a teacher, he guides students to the culture and prepares them for society. Students through critical reflection, improve the living conditions of the oppressed and exploited clusters. (Ohara et al., 2000; Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011).

Democratic Environment

A democratic environment in the classroom not only speeds up the learning process but also helps them in

their lives, and out of the classroom. In the democratic classroom, the student should actively participate in class activities, learning human rights, freedom of expression, directive for realism, creation of awareness sense, importance to critical education, development of power, increase the power of comprehension, uplift of humanity and rise of morality, preparation for practical life, and awareness should be integrated for social change and development (Mehta and Pandya, [2017](#)).

Learner-centred learning is essential for developing democratic thoughts in students. In students learning emphasis is given to democratic and interactive learning, respecting and accepting diverse ideas, whether from the students' or teachers' side, liberating education, discussion and dialogue between teacher and students and among students, creation of active classroom, friendly environment and reassurance of independent and critical thinking among students (Mehta and Pandya, [2017](#)).

Inquiry-based learning instills a democratic attitude in students through abstract thinking and pragmatic experiences, and clarity of concepts through asking questions. Furthermore, this kind of learning develops the quest for curiosity, active participation and interaction, and freedom for sharing personal and life experiences in the classroom to understand, hence inquiry-based learning creates a democratic environment in the classroom (Mehta and Pandya, [2017](#)).

Mehta and Pandya ([2017](#)) describe a democratic classroom environment as:

“Positive response towards every question posed, conducting group discussions, organization of debates, encouragement to think and act critically, sensibly and innovatively, appreciation of creative thoughts, increase in student's imagination and thinking process, allow students to disagree critically, confidently and freely, maintenance of fair approach toward students and safeguarding their rights unselfishly generates optimal democratic classroom settings.” (p. 82)

One of the indispensable goals of education is to produce such students who can raise their voices against any kind of iniquity and make them change agents. Prerequisites of a teacher in the deterrence of the banking concept of education are to be democratic

and dynamic, and view students as active learners, critical thinkers, and co-teachers (Mehta & Pandya, [2017](#)).

Learner-centred education supports a democratic approach in the classroom, where teachers have a peripheral position rather than a central one. In this approach students actively participated in knowledge creation in the classroom, shared learning with other classmates and applied this self-directed learning outside (Wright, [2011](#)). To be active members of society, learners should develop critical, independent, and reflective thinking (Dollarhide et al., [2007](#); Moate & Cox, 2015).

National Commission on Education, the Republic of Botswana with the collaboration of UNESCO found that education in Botswana is anti-dialogue and anti-democratic and students are less critical in the absence of vertical and horizontal cross-curriculum teaching. The commission suggested the student should be treated as an equal partner in the learning process, not treated as an object to be filled by teachers. (UNESCO, [2008](#):19; Tabulawa, [2006](#); Mpho, 2018).

The creation of democratic behaviour and attitude of the masses is the central point of the learner-centred approach Dewey ([1916](#)) clarifies democratic behaviour “as the process in which the individual can recognize mutual interests and interaction among social groups changing and readjusting new situations” (p. 13). Educational institutions are the best place where students can rightly be trained for the challenges and opportunities of their future life (Mendoza, [2016](#)).

In his words, it is “an active educational method which helps a person to become consciously aware of his context and his conditions as a human being a subject, it will become an instrument of choice” (Freire, [1974](#): 56). Shor ([1993](#)) explained the concept of Freire's learner-centred educational approach as dialogic, participatory, dissocializing, situated, creative, critical, democratic, multiethnic, research-oriented, innovative and effective (Saleh, [2013](#)).

Education is essential for social justice, and democracy (Freire, [2007](#)), and through this, students can achieve physical, and intellectual freedom as it is imperative for human accomplishment. It is the primary aim of problem posing learning process to liberate people from oppression. In general, education

is used for liberating or domesticating teachers and learners, for this cause education is always used for maintaining the status quo, particularly in relations of power. Freire uses education for transformation and challenging the status quo. Education is nothing without power, however, is not to acquire, but to redesign the power dynamics. (Freire, [2007](#); Rozas, [2007](#); Freire & Faundez, [1989](#); Evans, Evans, & Kennedy [1987](#); Tapper, [2015](#)).

Learning freedom and autonomy is in the hand of students in a learner-centred approach to education by making them responsible. The skills and knowledge of this approach are not only for the classroom environment but for their entire life, which makes their lives independent and problem-solving. This instruction aims to make the student more critical and challenging through prior experiences and new knowledge (Tursunov, [2016](#)).

Conclusion

A culture of silence is a very effective tool for the authority through which they control masses and implement their self-structure norms and values. In underdeveloped countries culture of silence is somehow institutionalized through education and teacher-centered instructions. The culture of silence is criticized by student-centred instruction, where student cannot share their experiences and observed knowledge with the teacher and even with other classmates. The student-centred approach in education develops a culture of expression with socio-cultural limitations and encourages students to participate actively in the classroom learning process, where their needs, interests and personal experiences are kept on top. Student can express their viewpoint on the issue and share their experiences with classmates and teachers.

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