

## The Comparison between Teacher Centered and Student Centered Educational Methods

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### Abstract

**Background and Purpose:** Various approaches to learning are suggested & practiced. The traditional medical education were more teacher centered oriented . In this method the students' involvement in the process of learning is not remarkable, but the new approach to medical education supports the students involvement. This study evaluated the various method of lecturing considering students involvements.

**Methods:** One hundred two first year medical and nursing students involved in this study and their opinion about these two methods of learning were obtained by filling of a questionnaire. The subject of the lectures was "general psychology" which was carried out 50% by the students and 50% by the teacher. The statistical analysis was carried out by SPSS program.

**Results:** Considering students opinion in student-centered method the various aspect of learning such as mutual understanding, use of textbooks and references were significantly increased , whereas other aspects of learning such as self esteem, study time, innovation, and study attitude though were improved, but were not significant as compared with teacher centered method. In teacher-centered method the understanding of the subjects was significantly increased . Other aspects of learning such as motivation and concentration were improved but not significantly as compared with student-centered method.

**Conclusion:** As the result showed student centered method was favored in several aspects of learning while in teacher centered method only understanding of the subject was better . Careful choice of teaching method to provide a comprehensive learning experience should take into account these differences.

**Key words:** TEACHER CENTERED, STUDENT CENTERED, LEARNING

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### Introduction

Today various approaches in learning are suggested and practiced including lecturing, group discussion, problem based sessions, integrated

learning etc. In the past, lecturing was the main method of teaching that could not cover all aspects of learning. The new approach is to apply various methods, and shift teacher centered teaching to more student centered approaches; this improves the students' presentation skills and communication styles. There are many reasons to shift to student-centeredness. Student-centered learning is more aligned with the life long learning skill which is essential for the

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workforce in the information era. It includes learning how to learn, team skills, communication skills, problem solving, interacting and processing information. In student centered teaching, we focus our planning, teaching, assessment around the needs and abilities of our students. Student centered teaching helps us design effective instruction for every member of the classroom, no matter what his or her diverse learning needs. Student centered teaching is adaptable to meet the needs of every student (1). In order to plan any lesson, the teacher must first think of the students, rather than the content, and so we are assured that the students' needs are being considered. Student centered teaching has been proven effective in its ability to teach students the material they need to know (2). Students taught in a student centered classroom retain more material for longer periods of time. In order to learn, the brain cannot simply receive information; it must also process the information so that it can be stored and recalled (3). The teacher is not obliged to be the sole, infallible source of information and the students are allowed to explore, experiment, and discover on their own. The students are not just memorizing information, but they are allowed to work with and use the information alone or with peers (4). For this, the teacher must design activities that let students take initiative and that let students discover meaningful information on their own. They must also get to know the students on an individual basis so that they can better respond to the individual needs and interests of the students. In general, teachers need to focus on the student's needs, abilities, and interests (5). They need to "look at how students learn. This study is an attempt to find out the students opinion about the teacher centered and student centered approaches after experiencing both during three consecutive term.

### **Material and methods**

The subject of this study were 102 first year medical and nursing students. A questionnaire, was prepared and its reliability and validity was confirmed. It consisted of several question

such as, students' concerns, understanding of the subject, concentration, self esteem, mutual understanding, use of textbooks and references, study time, and innovation. The questionnaires were given to students after completing the general psychology lectures. The questionnaire used a 5-choice Likert's scale. Fifty percents of lectures were carried out by teacher and fifty percent by students under their teacher's supervision. Students were given choices and were included in the decision-making processes of the classroom. The focus in these classrooms was to offer options, rather than following a uniform set of activities. At the end the students' opinions regarding both methods were compared by SPSS.

### **Results**

There was significant differences between various features of two methods. Understanding of the subjects was higher in teacher centered approach ( $2.93 \pm 1.25$  vs  $3.52 \pm 0.06$ ,  $p < 0.005$ ). On the other hand self-esteem was significantly higher in student-centered approach in comparison with teacher centered method ( $3.55 \pm 1.05$  vs  $2.69 \pm 1.10$ ). The results of this study is summarized in the table.

### **Discussion**

The pervious study showed that students had higher achievements, when they had confidence in themselves and when they attributed success to their own abilities (6).

In general considering students marks given to both type of lecturing, the effect of teacher centered method on some aspects of learning such as understanding, motivation, concentration, was more than students centered method. However this difference was only significant for understanding of the subjects.

The effect of student centered approach on other aspect of learning such as self esteem, mutual understanding, use of references, study duration, innovation and study attitude was more than that of teacher centered approach, and these differences were significant for mutual

understanding and use of references.

Learning is most meaningful when topics are relevant to the students' lives, needs, and interests and when the students themselves are actively engaged in creating, understanding, and connecting to knowledge (2).

According to this study active learning hinges on the student's participation in the learning process. Although student centered method was preferred in some aspect of learning but we should not forget the vital importance of teacher centered method, careful choice of teaching method to provide a comprehensive learning experience should take into account these differences. However, this study was carried out with a particular subjects like general psychology, and if the study was carried out with some other subjects, different group of students and teachers may lead to different results. Therefore further study should be under taken with other subject to reach certain

judgment on this issue.

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**Table.** The average score given by students to various learning features in student-centered (sc) and teacher-centered (tc) methods

Aspects of learning	Mean score (s.c)	SD. (s.c)	Mean score (t.c)	SD. (t.c)	P Value
Subject understanding	2.93	1.252	3.52	1.056	0.005
Motivation	3.00	1.069	3.70	1.132	0.759
Concentration	2.72	1.461	3.17	1.071	0.153
Self- esteem	3.55	1.055	2.69	1.105	0.003
Mutual understanding	3.48	1.214	3.00	1.165	0.021
Use of textbooks and references	2.69	1.466	2.24	1.244	0.046
Duration of study	2.69	1.514	2.48	1.271	0.337
Inovation	2.76	1.380	2.31	1.228	0.094
Study attitude	2.66	1.317	2.60	1.323	0.590

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