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PEDAGOGICAL INNOVATION: ONE FEATURE OF TEACHING EXCELLENCE

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Abstract:

Higher education teachers are increasingly challenged to adopt student-centered approaches. educators need to face and address today's higher education learning landscape offering new insights, and fresh ideas from different ideas from different educator perspectives. the purpose of this study is to determine the strategic guidelines (pedagogical strategies) which promote a conceptual change in higher education students, in the context of student-centered approaches to teaching. integrative literature review and exploratory research methodology is used here to analyze the data. data was collected from multiple sources such as journals, books and blogs to understand the teaching learning paradigm. the results found that i) innovative teaching strategies such as Z to A approach, collaborative teaching, case study method, Problem-Based Learning (PBL), screen casts and ii) innovative learning strategies such as flipped classrooms, mind mapping, experiential learning and MOOC can be used to face new challenges in higher education. conclusion: the use of new pedagogical practices promotes the involvement of students, improves critical and creative thinking, and contributes to peer-learning.

Key Words: pedagogy, problem-based learning, screencasts, flipped classrooms, mind mapping, experiential learning.

INTRODUCTION

Education is a very powerful instrument for social change and transformation and innovative teaching practice is the only way to enhance the quality of an education. A key performance indicator of any educational institution is the education quality especially in teaching and learning areas. Learning depends on the pedagogical approaches teachers use in the classroom. Here the pedagogy is the exploration of effective teaching and learning. Effecetive pedagogy can lead to a academic achievement, social and emotional development, and acquisition of technical skills.

The development of student learning in higher education in the context of teaching and learning is currently a global cause for concern. The large class sizes have led to an increased movement towards a lecture methodology for teaching which led to far less interaction between students and lecturers and learning quality is thus compromised. (Kezar and Kinzie, 2006). What is required is student centered conceptual orientation via the acquisition of problem solving skills rather than an overloading of students with only information.

Pedagogy is the study of being a teacher or process of education. It explores the process by which society deliberately transmits its accumulated knowledge, skills, and values from one generation to other. The major pedagogical question is how to enhance student learning and meet the needs of various types of learners hence the innovative pedagogy in which the educator reinvents the principles and practices education to make learning more responsive to learners' needs thus the essence of humanizing pedagogy. (Salazar, 2013)

Innovative pedagogy has the responsibility to prepare knowledgeable citizens, critical thinker, creative, problem solver, manage and analyze information. (Bozalek, 2013; UNESCO; 2015).

OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this article is

1. to understand the importance of pedagogy and its impact on learning
2. to describe teaching methods, to share these methods among teachers and continue to tryout new methods in their classrooms.

Sharing, co-creation, and putting new ideas into practice is a part of teachers' professional development. Without teachers development activities, it is not possible for an institution to develop as a community (Tarja Mykra, 2015). My hope is that this article will give teachers new ideas of different learner-centered teaching methods that can be used in different phases of learning.

The importance of Pedagogy:

Many lecturers have adoted conventional method of teaching and learning.The teaching is mainly based on the syllabus and prescribed textbooks. In many lecture rooms, teaching and learning techniques are outdated and theoritical knowledge is still dessiminated through the technique of talk and chalk.

Learnins is a process which should produce desired changes in the behavior of students. Consequently the learning situations utilized in the lecture rooms are important for the understanding of the concepts taught. Learning occurs place when insight is gained, and when the processes are understood, in short when interaction has taken place between the lecturer and the learners. Some lecturers still believe that knowledge is transferred to their students, but in reality students learn by doing and this is reinforced by the use of innovative teaching methodologies. However, it seems that when lectures try to be innovative in the learning environment, many fall short, and students thus often prefer to be assessed in a conventional manner. innovative methods are thus perceived to be a stumbling block for them. It is the task of a lecturer to facilitate learning and to motivate, encourage and mentor students to achieve academically with the use of innovative methods and to generally peomote interest in their subject which should go beyond the walls of a lecture room. (Nicolaides,A .,2012)

The must have not only a mastery of the content and curriculum, an awareness of assessment and the ability to organize the lesson but also be able to engage students- to know them well enough to make appropriate instructional decisions. It is through pedagogy, the science of teaching, that the skillful teacher tries these elements together. The ways in which a teacher interacts with students and organizes instructions are critically important aspects of helping each child learn. (Tharp, 1999; Tharp et al, 2003).

Challenges of using innovative pedagogies

There are many barriers that prevent lecturers from using new pedagogies in the classroom.The majority of reasons are similar to the barriers preventing learners from using any type of technology in their learning method. Time constraints, lack of equipment, and the fear of trying of trying something new are some of the problems experienced by the lecturers in trying to implement innovative pedagogies. Todays' lecturers are willing to play a greater role in nurturing and shaping their students' personal, professional and academinc growth. To do so successfully requires a paradigmatic shift in their view of appropriate teacher student relations. They must serve as expert, nurturer, a facilitator of learning and a counsellor. (Gear,M.R, et al, 2009)

In innovative pedagogy, the taecher leads the students' academic and professional growth by providing varying forms of guidance. (Braskamp et al., 2006). In this case, the guidance is tailored towards each individual students' highest priority needs. It also requires that the focus be shifted to the needs of the students rather than on the opportunity for the teacher centered stage teaching (Kithar ans Hannay, 2008). Part of this shift includes switching from teacher centered to leaner centered teaching methods (Knowles et al.,2011). It is a transformative change which must have a possitive effects whilst innovation allows instruction to be improved leading to citizens who are knowledgeable. It does not constitute the solutionto a problem but demands creativity and originality (Solon,2007; Hannan,2005).

Why do we need learner-centered teaching methods?

The answer is that to engage the learner,Yes. Keeping learners engaged during the learning process is one of the most important considerations for the teacher. According to Marzano (2007), the dynamics of what causes or encourages learners to engage in classroom behavior are very complex. The teacher must be ready to employ different action steps at any moment when (s)he notices decline of engagement in a classroom. Variety is an important aspect; the more different teaching methods and techniques a teacher has, the better chances (s)he has to maintain and enhance learner engagement.

Learning as a process:

It is essential for teachers to know how learning happens as a process before it is possible to choose effective teaching methods. While teaching it is important for teachers to use various teaching methods that support different phases of learning and different learning styles. In a learning process information undergoes a series of transformations as it passes through the stages of memory, and finally becomes knowledge and skills as outcome of learning. Because learning takes place only when different processes are activated, the goal of learner-centered teaching methods should facilitate this activation. During the process of learning, teachers must be ready to employ any of the action steps at any moment. Students may need re-motivation, re-engagement, re-evaluation, or re-summaries while they are learning.

Learner-centered teaching and learning methods:

The aim of this section is to provide some examples of methods that teachers can use in their classrooms. I have choosen these methods from Learner-centered teaching methods- A toolkit for secondary education teachers" by Tarja Mykra. This methods can also be applied for higher education teachers. Most of the methods described are easy to use and dont require extensive preparation beforehand.

Teaching and learning methods includes six phases.:

I] Gaining Attention

Teaching methods connected to the phase of gaining attention in learning work well in the beginning of a new unit or lesson as warm-ups. Teachers can also use them during the lesson, if the level of activation among learners is getting low. Have You Ever and Forming Lines are described as learner-centered teaching methods for gaining attention.

HAVE YOU EVER:

Time needed : 5-7 mins

Procedure : Strat asking Questions: Have You Ever?

Questions can be connected to the subject you are tyeaching.You can ask your learners to ask Have You Ever from other learners. You get a lot of information about their interests and it makes this method even more learner-centered.

FORMING LINES

Time needed : 5-7 mins.

Procedure : Ask learners to form lines based on different questions:

- In which month were you born?
- From how far do you come to college?
- On a scale from 1 to 10, what is your number when it comes to..

You can take examples from your own subject area, like:when it comes to historical events, when it comes to Guide learners to form lines: Those who are born in january, start forming line here , Those who think they are number 1 on line, start forming line there. Guide your learners that they have to talk to each other to be able to form lines. When lines are formed, ask some questions: Who were born in January?, Who is number 7? Why did you end up in number 7? etc. If ther is little space in classroom or difficult to move the tables, you

can also use the corners of the room. Those who think that go to that corner of the room. And those who think that… go to that corner of the room.

II] Informing the learner of the objective.

Objectives define the outcome of learning and are connected to the content. Because learning is goal-oriented, the teacher has to present and inform learners of the objectives before learning. The better learners understand the objectives and their connection to real world, the more motivation is expected to awaken during the process of learning. Knows-Need to Know and Scavanger Hunt are described as examples of leaner-centered teaching methods for informing the learner of the objective.

KNOWS-NEED TO KNOW

Time needed : 20-45 mins

Procedure : Write on a black board two columns: Knows and Need to know. Go through objectives step by step in order to make clearer for learners what are the expectations in this unit. After each step ask students what they already know and what they need to know. Write down their comments on a blackboard. Discuss with the learners about Need to Know answers: What do they think is easy to learn, for what they need more time to learn, which of the matters Need to Know are interesting to them, how do the matters they are learning are connected to real world etc. Save the answers to be able to return to them later. You can activate learners more by asking them to write down their answers to the blackboard.

SCAVANGER HUNT

Time needed : 45-60 mins.

Procedure : Divide learners into groups of 4-6 make sure they have access to a computer and internet. Share them the objectives. Bring up some key concepts they have to learn. Explain the idea of Scavanger Hunt:

- In Scavanger Hunt learners try to find information from internet based on the key concepts or words you give to them.
- They have to figure out hoe they can use thisinformation in their lives and write it on a paper.
- Give groups 10-15 mins for Scavanger Hunt.
- Ask each group to present the ideas they found. You can allow students to use their own smartphones for finding information.

III] Stimulating Recall or prior learning

Contemporary perspectives on learning includes the idea that new knowledge is built on previously constructed concepts and mental models. Learners are not blank slates upon which learning can be scrawled by teachers. Teachers can use different learner-centered methods to find out what previous learners have. Mind Mapping and Use of Videos in Flipped Classroom are described as examples of learner-centered teaching methods for stimulating recall or prior learning.

MIND MAPPING

Time needed : 20-45 mins depending on the task.

Procedure : Think what is the central concept or subject you want to mind map and write it in the middle of the blackboard. Ask learners what they know about the subject and build subtopics as branches around mind map. Ask learners more questions concerning each sub topic.

- If you are doing mind mapping with computer, there are several free applications available.
- You can do several mind maps in a classroom, when learners move one mind map to another and add things they know about the topic.
- The advantage of mind mapping is that it allows learners to make connections they might not normally see in a traditionally outline by allowong them to see the big picture.

USE OF VIDEOS IN FLIPPED CLASSROOM

Time needed : 10-15 mins the day before face-to-face lesson.

Procedure : Choose the video from your subject area. Plan the survey for learners:

- Learner's Name
- What questions do you have from the content of the video
- assess your level of knowledge after you have watched th video:
  - i) Advanced : I understood almost everything about the topic.
  - ii) Intermediate: I understood partly what it was about on the video, but there were some points that was not clear to me.
  - iii) Novice : I had difficulties understanding anything about the topic.
- Download video or add link to the video on the learning platform.
- Add your survey on the learning platform.
- Present the assignment for students in the end of the previous lesson:
  - i) Watch the video before the next lesson
  - ii) Fill in the survey and send it to the platform the night before the next lesson.
  - iii) Show them where they find materials.
- Go through the results of the survey before your lesson.
- Plan your lesson based on the results of the survey.
- If there is not a survey tool available in your learning platform, you can use free survey tools like Google Forms, SurveyMonkey, Surveyplanet.
- When you start using Flipped Classroom, be prepared to use more time for planning in the beginning- especially if you are making your own videos.
- If you cannot use a learning platform, you can ask learners to send the survey to you by e-mail.

IV] Presenting the stimulus.

Active learner participation in responding to instructional stimulus is more effective than passive observation of instruction. Information should be presented in small amounts so that responses to questions about the information can be reinforced frequently. Jigsaw and Learning Stations are described as examples of learner-centered teaching methods for presenting the stimulus.

JIGSAW

Time needed: 60-90 mins.

Procedure : Divide your lesson into 5-6 segments and prepare materials for these segments. For example in history Mesopotamian Trade Routes and Resources:

i) Resources in Mesopotamai
ii) Trading Partners
iv) Trade Goods
v) Preparation of Trade Goods
vi) Transportation of Trade Goods

- Prepare your questions for every segment; What do learners need to know? Build connections to real world situations.
- Present the procedure of jigsaw method for your learners. Emphasize the responsibility of each member of the gropup: Everyone must be able to present answers to the questions from stage 1 in a new group in stage 2. Ask learners to make notes on the questions sheet that has been giving to them.
- Divide learners into 5 jigsaw groups and ask them to be seated on their tables (stage 1)
- Give each group the material and questions of their segment.
- Ask learners to read over the material before they start the discussion.
- Set time limit, 15-20 mins, for this group work.
- After stage 1 is finished, divide your learners into new groups (stage 2) and ask them to move to new tables. Now in these new groups is a member of each group from stage 1.
- Share materials and questions of the whole material for new groups.
- Ask learners in the new groups to give a presentation (2-3 mins each) of their segment. Ask number 1 to start, then number 2 etc.
- Ask learners to make notes during the presentations.
- Ask learners to return to the stage 1 group.
- Give groups a piece of paper and ask them to summerize what they learned from this lesson.
- Number the table with a piece of paper or sticky note. It helps learners to find their table and to avoid disorder in a classroom.

LEARNING STATIONS

Time needed: 45-90 mins

Procedure : Arrange tables in groups for 4-6 learners.

- Plan assignment for each station. Plan how learners will return the assignments they are working on: do they download them on the learning environment or do they return the answer sheet.
- Plan when learners will return the assignments: after every station or after they have completed the assignment.
- Take hardcopies of materials for each learner.
- Plan for howmany stations learners can attend during their period.
- The amount of the stations depends on the length of the period:
  i) 45 minutes: 2 stations/20 mins each
  ii) 60 minutes: 3 stations/18 mins each
  iii) 85 minutes: 4 stations/20 mins each
  iv) 90 minutes: 4 stations/20 mins each
- Decide what are the stations: for example, in a foreign language teaching, stations during 90 minutes period could be:
  i) Reading
  ii) Listening
  iii) Grammar and Writing
  iv) Speaking
- Prepare materials and assignment for each station. Start the period telling learners the goals and procedure of the period (5 mins)
- Divide learners into groups of 4-6 and ask them to be seated on their stations and to start working.
- Facilitate learners while they are working on stations. when there are 2 mins left in stations, say aloud, “Two minute warning”. It means learners have two minutes time to finish what they are doing and move to another station.
- Repeat as many times you have time on your period (2-4)
- In the end of the period, be sure learners have returned all the neede assignments.
- If you use similar stations regularly, you can prepare laminated cards, where instructions what to do in each stations , are provided.

V] Providing learner Guidance and Eliciting Performance:

Teachers cannot teach learners directly, they can only facilitate their learning. By facilitating learning teachers can help learners to increase their motivation and engagement through curiosity. Teachers should also scaffold learners as they construct new knowledge. Scaffolding involves providing learners with just enough help that may be needed in a new context and then gradually removing the support as the learners make progress. Muddiest Point Paper is described as example of learner-centered teaching methods for providing learner guidance and eliciting performance.

MUDDIEST POINT PAPER

Time needed: 2-4 minutes

Procedure : Ask any time during the lesson learners to sum up briefly what is unclear to them, what are the muddiest points. Explain to learners that the term muddiest means most unclear or most confusing”. Give them 2-4 minutes to finish their papers. Collect papers and go through them. Based on this muddiest points papers, provide more guidance for the whole group or for individual learners during the

rest of the lesson or during other lessons. If learners can write their muddiest point papers annonymously, you may get answers that are true and you will be able to provide learner guidance to these authentic muddiest points.

VI] Providing Feedback

Providing feedback of learning is one of the most important phases of learning. Success builds a strong belief in the learners self-efficacy, which in turn is connected motivation. Positive learning experiences are expected to enhance learner motivation and engagement. Critical Friends" is described as example of learner-centered teaching methods for providing feedback.

CRITICAL FRIENDS

Time needed : 30 minutes or more, depending on the task.

Procedure : Dicide when you want to use Critical Friend method

i) after presentation in a classroom
ii) after learners have completed assignments or project
iii) other

- Prepare feedback sheet and dicide what the feedback is about; how it is connected to standards.
  i) keep feedback sheet short enough to be completed in ashort time.
  ii) you can add both grading and open ended questions to the feedback sheet. for example: PMI for open ended questions
    a) Plusses
    b) Minuses
    c) Interesting
- Dicide hoe you collect feedback sheets
  i) do you collect feedback sheets for yourself first?
  ii) do you let learners see feedback sheets first?
- Dicide how you use Critical Friends feedback in your assessment
- Present the ideas and procedure of Critical Friend for learners. Remind learners what are the characteristics of good feedback.
- Ask learners to complete feedback sheet after every presentation/ assignment that is on hand.
- Collect feedback sheets and tell how they are going to be used.
- Learners might be interested to get the Critical Friends feedback as soon as possible.

VII]Assessing Performance, Enhancing Retention and Transfer:

Knowledge and skills should be learned in contexts much like the real world situations. Transfer of learning from one context to another is not easy and that is why it is important help learners to assess how knowledge and skills they have learnt will eventually be applied. Brainstorming is described as the example of learner-centered teaching methods for assessing performance, enhancimg retentgion and transfer.

BRAINSTORMING

Time needed : 30-45 minutes

Procedure : Divide learners into groups of 4-6 and ask them to be seated on their tables. Give each group a hardcopy of standards. Explain to learners the goal of the session and the basic idea of brainstorming.

i) Express no negative evaluation of any idea presented.
ii) Work for quantity, not quality- the longer the list of ideas, the better.
iii) Expand on each others ideas, piggyback, hitchon, elaborate whenever possible.
iv) Encourage many, far-out ideas.
v) Record each idea, at least by a keyword or phrase.

Ask groups a question: How can we use the knowledge and skills you have learned during this term/ period? Ask them to use handouts of standards. Ask groups to record each idea on a paper(one idea). Set a time limit of 10 minutes. After 10 minutes ask groups to evaluate their answers and come up to 3 ideas. Set a time limit of 5 minutes. After 5 minutes ask groups to share the ideas with the class. Elicit conversation in a classroom. You can ask each group to give stars for the best ideas on the blackboard. Each group has for example 3 stars, which they can give to three different ideas.

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