

Student-Centered Education in the XXI century

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More than half of the articles in this issue are in some way related to the topic of student-centered education, this is why the editorial also deals with it. There are various reasons nowadays why education has to be student-centered:

- In the market-based economy which is widespread all over the world today, the customer is the king, and who are customers in education if not students (and their parents, for those who are not of-age yet)?
- A democratic society has to involve all education process participants in its management, and who are the most numerous group in the process, if not students?
- According to post-modernist philosophy, the goal of education should be to empower the powerless, and who were the most powerless in the education system until student-centered was introduced, if not students?
- Constructivist educational psychology tells us that knowledge is not transferred from teachers to students by lecturing, but co-constructed by them in the process of collaborative learning, dialogue, brainstorming, team-work, etc.

The Nobel Prize laureate in Economy Michael Friedman (1955) wrote that reforming education according to the laws of market economy would stimulate competition and thus provide the variety of schools and the quality of education. According to Dudley-Marling & Baker (2012):

Educational policies in the US and in other countries around the world have been strongly influenced by market-based reforms including accountability, high-stakes testing, data-driven decision-making, charter schools, deregulation, and competition among schools. (p.1)

Contemporary society positions itself as democratic. According to Dewey (1916), "a democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experiences". The best way to develop democratic mentality in society is through education. Educational institutions play a leading role in raising democratic citizens and forming a democratic culture (Apple & Beanne, 2011). In democratic classrooms teachers learn to treat students as partners in knowledge creation and students learn how to make decisions autonomously, how to lead, how to tolerate different opinions, and how to collaborate with and respect the rights of others in the classroom (Matusova, 1997).

First published in Portuguese in 1968, one of the foundational texts in the field of critical and humanistic pedagogy, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* was translated and published in English in 1970. He writes: "Teachers and students (leadership and people), co-intent on reality, are both Subjects, not only in the task of unveiling that reality, and thereby coming to know it critically, but in the task of re-creating that knowledge" (Freire, 2000, p. 69). According to him, "education must begin with the solution of the teacher-student contradiction, by reconciling the poles of the contradiction so that both are simultaneously teachers and students" (ibid, p. 72). In the traditional, "banking" education (the one in which teacher's bank of knowledge is poured into the student's bank of knowledge), according to Freire, the students are "receiving objects". In the new, "liberational" education, the students are critical thinkers, they are active and committed participants of the educational process, knowledge and learning strategies are shared by them. Dialogical relations between teacher and students, as well as among students are essential. Problem-posing is the most important activity:

Banking education treats students as objects of assistance; problem-posing education makes them critical thinkers. Banking education inhibits creativity and domesticates (although it cannot completely destroy) the intentionality of consciousness by isolating consciousness from it. Edmund Husserl, *Ideas—General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology* (London, 1969), pp. 105-106. 84-PAULO FREIRE the world, thereby denying people their ontological and historical vocation of becoming more fully human. Problem-posing education bases itself on creativity and stimulates true reflection and action upon reality, thereby responding to the vocation of persons as beings who are authentic only when engaged in inquiry and creative transformation. (ibid, p. 83)

According to constructive psychology, knowledge is constructed:

- physically by active learning;
- symbolically by the creation of mental representations
- socially by sharing understanding; and,
- theoretically by explaining things having incomplete understanding. (Tom, 2015, p 23)

The articles in this issue deal with the following aspects of student-centered teaching:

The article by Bunyamin Çelik "Comparing the Effectiveness of Form-Focused and Meaning-Focused Instructions in EFL Teaching" deals with the need to take into consideration the foreign language students' need in using not only meaning-focused teaching (which is widely advocated today, due to the authentic and communicative approach), but also the form-focused approach.

Maia Chkotia's article "The Case of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning among Undergraduate Language Learners in Georgia" views mobile-assisted language learning as a student-centered way of learning, which develops students' autonomous working skills and prepares students for life-long learning. Learning with mobile devices lets students study anywhere, and removes the classroom boarders.

Gulseren Sekreter's and Natela Doghonadze's article "Applications of Goal Theory to Teaching Mathematics" emphasizes the need for the students to have a mastery-approach goal orientation, which requires from students to take the responsibility for their own learning. The performance approach is criticized, as being teacher-centered (even, course-centered).

In Aziza Kavlu's article "The Effect of Project-Based Learning on Undergraduate EFL Students' Reading Comprehension Ability" one of the most popular student-centered methods – projects – is tested for efficiency for reaching reading. It is shown that projects support knowledge co-construction, they develop team work, sharing and developing higher-order cognitive strategies, etc.

Nino Tvalchrelidze's article "The importance of raising teacher awareness of culture-sensitive English language teaching" underlines the need to take into consideration students' native culture while teaching English. The comparison of native and target cultures enables students to develop their critical thinking skills, so important for the student-centered education.

Tahsin Yahci's article "Undergraduate Iraqi Students' Awareness of Social Mobile Media and Their Attitudes to Mobile Learning", like Maia Chkotia's article, underlines the role of mobile devices in autonomous learning.

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