



## Role of Various Agencies and Persons in Learner-Centered Teaching

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### Abstract

*Although learner centred teaching has recently become one of the most prevalent educational ideas, the term LCT has long been in existence in the education setting. LCT is a very important teaching-learning process in the field of education. Studies and research are being done in this regard all over the world. Teachers have a very important role to play in LCT. In addition, parents seem to have a very important role to play in LCT. But in LCT, teachers, students, parents, headmaster, family and society have a very important role to play. In this context, this study analyzes the role of teachers, students, parents and educational materials in LCT. The IDR method has been used in this study. On the basis of the IDR, the role of teachers, students, parents and educational materials in LCT has been analyzed. This study includes various research articles, reports and dissertation published online in the different countries of the World. Results of the present study indicated that LCT is an important teaching learning strategies in the field of education. Without proper knowledge of LCT and its strategies, teachers' preparation, qualitative education is not possible. Accordingly, students has also great role in the implementation of LCT and parental involvement is also necessary in the effective classroom delivery of LCT. Thus, this study concluded that role of the teachers, students, parents and instructional resources should be considered while implementing LCT in the classroom.*

**Key Words:** learner centred teaching; role of teacher; role of learner; role parents; role of instructional materials; teaching; learning

### Context of Study

Learner-centred principles were found in apprenticeship learning models in many parts of the ancient world, and in thinkers as early as Socrates who millennia ago envisioned the teacher as an interlocutor guiding the student's own reasoning process, 'I shall only ask him, and not teach him, and he shall share the enquiry with me: and do you watch and see if you find me telling or explaining anything to him, instead of eliciting his opinion' (*Plato, 380 B.C.*) However it was not until recent centuries that learner centred teaching (LCT) became more fully developed as an educational philosophy. Although many consider Rousseau the first significant proponent of LCT (*Darling, 1994; Doddington & Hilton, 2007; Schweisfurth, 2013; Tabulawa, 2003; Thapan, 2006*), one could argue that over a century earlier, Comenius already emphasised many elements of modern-day LCT in his philosophy. Like Comenius, Rousseau advocated designing education around children's natural development, emphasising learners' own initiative and freedom to reason for themselves rather than relying on others' authority. In the century and a half that followed, several Europeans continued to build on this learner-centred foundation, most notably Pestalozzi, Frobel, Montessori and Susan Isaacs. By the early 1900s, learner-centred ideas were also taken up in the United States. Dewey in particular extended the learner-centred discourse by exploring the relationship between education and democracy, emphasising critical thinking skills to prepare students to actively participate in democratic life.

What some have marked as a transition from the learner-centred tradition to a more constructivist paradigm (*van Harmelen, 1998*) came with the advancement of cognitive psychology, particularly as elaborated by Piaget. Reacting to the earlier behaviourist understanding of learning as the result of conditioning demonstrated through outward behaviours, Piaget focused on understanding how the mind works to construct new knowledge, by using language to organise and restructure new experiences in light of prior experiences to create meaning out of them. Piaget became

central in shaping the early form of constructivist theory known as psychological constructivism, in contrast to later versions of social constructivism which emerged with theorists such as Vygotsky and Bruner (*Phillips, 2000; Richardson, 2003*). Vygotsky, a Russian 1920s contemporary of Piaget whose work only became known in the 1960s, emphasised the social dimensions of the construction of knowledge. He recognised knowledge as socially-and culturally-situated, constructed through interactions with one's social world in diverse settings. Building on Vygotsky's work, Bruner described 'scaffolding' as the process of building on learners' existing capabilities by offering nurturing support to help them attain their unique potential (*Schweisfurth, 2013*). Social constructivism moved beyond its predecessor to also look at critical theory issues of status, ideology, politics and power underlying different forms of knowledge, focusing on how the development of bodies of knowledge is socially constructed and shaped by economic, social and political forces (*Richardson, 2003*). This critical power analysis in education was taken considerably further by Freire, who as described earlier presented a radical analysis of how education contributes to social oppression. His proposed pedagogy embodied many principles of LCT, though going far beyond standard conceptions of LCT. *Weimer (2002)* goes on to say that the main idea of this approach is to involve learners during the learning process as opposed to having the teacher dominating the whole learning process, with learners playing a passive role as if the teacher is a fountain of knowledge and learners are empty vessels that need to be filled in with information.

The LCT, is also defined by *Mayer (1998) cited in Barbara (2007)* as a learning process whereby learners work individually or in small groups to explore, investigate, and solve authentic problems and become actively engaged in seeking knowledge and information rather than being passive recipients. She continues to assert that, in traditional learning mode, the teacher basically controls the instructional process. The content is delivered to the entire class, and the teacher tends to emphasise factual knowledge, and the focus of learning is on the content, that is how much material has been delivered, and how much have students learnt. This shows that this traditional rote memorisation learning mode tends to be passive and learners play little part in the learning process. Contrary to what takes place in the traditional teaching and learning approach where *Donald (2008)* attests that teaching is concerned with the teacher being the controller of learning environment, and plays the role of instructor and decision maker with regards to curriculum content, specific outcomes and teaching methods, *Mayer (1998) cited in Barbara (2007)* assert that in the LCT, learners play an active part in the learning process. They become autonomous learners who are actively engaged in constructing meaning within the context of their knowledge, experiences and social environments. He continues to say that learners become successful in constructing knowledge through solving problems that are realistic, and they usually excel when they work collaboratively with others. All this means that the LCT is learner centred as opposed to teacher domination. This is in line with *Weimer (2002) and Kember & David (2009)* who argue that, the learner centred paradigm departs from traditional teaching models by focusing on learners more than teachers, and learning more than teaching. LCT represents a paradigm shift from traditional teaching methods by focusing on how students learn instead of how teachers teach. Teachers should therefore ask them-selves the following fundamental questions: How can I improve my students' learning? Instead of asking themselves how can I improve my teaching? This should be the case because in the child centered teaching what matters is how much have students learnt, as opposed to how much has the teacher taught? The teacher according to *Pederson (2003)* can teach through wrong methods for some hours and learners can still fail to grasp or to understand concepts being taught. *Pederson (2003)* goes on to suggest that the teacher has to be concerned about whether learners managed to grasp concepts than being concerned about how much chunks of information he/she has delivered in class.

In the quest of clearly highlighting what the LCT is all about *Newble (1995)* outlines the premises of the learner centered teaching. In the outline of his premises he argues that in implementing the LCT teachers should: assume that students are capable learners who will blossom as power shifts to a more egalitarian classroom; use content not as a collection of isolated facts, but as a way for learners to critically think about the big question in the field; change the role of teachers from sole authoritarian to fellow travelers in search of knowledge; return the responsibility of learning to learners themselves so that they can understand their learning strengths and weaknesses, and feel self-directed in their knowledge quest; and utilise assessment measures not just to assign grades, but as the most effective tool that promotes learning. This means that assessments promote learning through giving comprehensive feedback (*CAPS, 2012*).

This paradigm shift from the traditional approach to the LCT means that teachers become core-learners with students, thus in the process eliminates the distinction that has existed for a long time between these two groups. From the above assertions it can be said that in the LCT, learners are involved, and they play an active role rather than a passive one during the learning process. It can also be argued that the traditional rote memorisation mode of teaching is replaced by a more interactive approach where learners do things on their own and come up with new information and discoveries. This is in line with *Chan (2009)* who asserts that, instead of taking a centre stage and a dominating role during the lesson the teacher takes the role of a facilitator. *Smith (2003)* is of the opinion that the teacher guides and directs the lesson, and let learners take the centre stage during the learning process. *Smith (2003)* continues to assert that in order for all this to succeed the teacher must accept reality that learners are not empty vessels that need filling, but they are knowledgeable and creative thinkers who have rich information that is valuable for the lesson. The teacher must also appreciate that he is not the only fountain of knowledge in class, but learners also have valuable knowledge

that they can share with each other. *Donald (2008)* argues that nowadays the world is experiencing the revolution in Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Learners there-fore through this ICT revolution are better positioned to go and research on their own and bring a wealth of scientific knowledge in class that they can share with others. In the LCT lessons the teacher gives learners a chance to share such information. Doing so according to *Donald (2008)*, *Chan (2009)* motivates learners, and enables them to understand concepts better while enjoying the lesson at the same time. I shall present various role of the persons and agencies role in the coming sections. LCT. I shall describe about the methodology adopted in the present study in the next section.

### Methods and Materials

I have adopted In-depth Desk Review methods in the present study. In-depth Desk Review (IDR) is embarked on in cases where the researcher does not have the resources to be physically at the sites of data collection. However, the use IDR can be a very tedious process; as a researcher you need to be decisive in terms of the selection of the data you amass to your desktop. When approaching IDR, the researcher should be aware that their role is to review previous research findings in order to gain a broad understanding of the field. IDR can assist the researcher in searching for relevant information, thereby minimising the risk of omitting any core publications. This issue has been elaborated by *Sicinska et al. (2018, p. 83)*, who suggest ways of utilising desk research in seeking information and publications on official websites, with particular reference to the main scientific societies and, in this case, organisations concerned with LCT. The researcher visited the three selected countries, namely, USA, UK, China, Australia and India, by means of the IDR method, which led to the assessment of documents such as policies, reports, speeches, secondary sources and oral texts with a view to analysing them in the light of the research topic. In this context, different strategies were used in order to collect all the relevant information for the desk research to minimise the risk of omitting any core publications. First, information and publications were sought for on official websites, especially the main journals websites concerned with LCT. Secondly, fruitful sources of information were articles, reports, books and documents. Finally, all the potentially important documents was the reference hand search within scientific papers and books were gathered. This study is carried out to analysis the role of various agencies and persons in LCT

### The Role of Teachers in the Child Centered Teaching

*Chan (2009)* argues that, in the LCT the teacher assumes the role of the facilitator in class. This means that the teacher's role is not to dominate learning in class, but he has to guide and direct learning. Doing so allows learners to be more involved and do the rest. This assertion is in line with *Weimer's (2002)* assertion, where he contends that in the LCT, the role of the teacher is similar to that of a guide, facilitator or coach. He proceeds to assert that it has to be how-ever stated that on the surface, the LCT may seem to simplify the roles and responsibilities of teachers, but it actually requires teachers to put more effort and work. As the approach focuses on learners and what they are doing, teachers have to put more time and effort in designing instructional activities and assignments that are to become vehicles through which learning occurs. *Weimer (2002)* continues to attest that, teachers also have to organise learning content, generate examples and craft questions. They have to create and maintain classroom conditions that are conducive for the LCT and activities.

*Blumberg (2005)* accentuates that when using the LCT, the teacher has a role to create an environment that fosters student learning, accommodate different learning styles, and motivates students to accept responsibility for learning, and as well inspire and encourage student ownership of learning. *Blumberg and Everett (2008)* continues to argue that in a LCT the teacher also has a responsibility to explicitly align learning objectives, teaching methods and assessments, design activities in which student interact with the material, the teacher and each other, utilise multiple teaching techniques as appropriate for student learning goals. In a LCT, the teacher does not sit back and leave learners alone, but he has a lot of roles to play if child centred teaching methods are to succeed. The teacher has to see to it that the lesson is well planned for, all or the majority of needed materials and resources are available (*Blumberg and Everett, 2008*). Similarly, *Hadson (2008)* argues that the new roles assigned to teachers in the LCT require teachers to develop certain skills that would enable them to be effective in the implementation of the child centred teaching methods. *Hadson (2008)* proceeds to argue that, teachers need skills that would make it possible for them to: give useful practical examples during the lesson; improvise where there are shortages of resources and materials. For example in Natural Science when there is no proper laboratory, no adequate apparatus and chemicals, the teacher has to improvise and make the lesson a success; monitor and assess learners' work; and give learners constructive feedback after assessing their work, because feedback is of paramount importance in the LCT due to the fact that learners learn from it; be able to correct their mistakes and improve when they are given next tasks; cope with learners who have different learning needs and styles; and create their own teaching material.

*Hadson (2008)* is of the opinion that, the teacher has to make sure he creates a learning environment that is conducive for all learners despite their different learning abilities and backgrounds. This can be made possible by preparing tasks and activities that accommodate different abilities of learners. These activities and tasks must range from low order to high order in order to accommodate and involve every learner during the learning process. *Fry, Ketteridge & Marshall (1999)* believe that if teachers develop the skills of creating their own material they become effective implementers of the LCT, because learning materials are the ones that stimulate learners to participate in an active manner in class.

Teachers therefore must not fold their hands and wait for the school to provide them with materials and equipment, because in most cases schools are ill equipped, so teachers have to use their creative skills and produce their own learning material that would involve and motivate learners in class. If the teacher has good interpersonal and public relations skills, he/she can go an extra mile and approach the community as well as the corporate world for assistance. In Natural Science for example the teacher can approach the corporate world in order to be assisted with chemicals and apparatus that are used during scientific experiments. Companies can also co-operate during educational trips and allow learners to tour their premises in order to physically experience scientific activities such as electricity generation, coal mining and the like. In LCT, *Fry, and Ketteridge (1999)* are of the opinion that the teacher has a vital role. His role ranges from preparing an inspiring and motivating lesson, assessing learners' work and giving them constructive feedback, right up to sourcing relevant resources and materials that will make the lesson more interactive, meaningful and a success.

A teacher is an agent of change and has considerable influence over the community. The teacher should not only be able to teach the students. But should also be able to interact with the community in order to understand and know its needs. In addition, teachers should make the community at large aware of how it can potential benefit from education. In creating opportunities for parental involvement in educational activities, teachers or teacher educators should first examine their own attitudes and practices, beliefs and biases, to see how they fit with those of the community. Human beings or even animals are influenced by the culture and environment in which they grow up or are raised in (*Kellaghan et al., 1993*). *Rocwell et al., 1996* making suggestions as to how teacher educators can welcome different culture into their own culture, proposes: develop an awareness of your own cultural and family values and beliefs, and a recognition of how they influence your attitude and behaviors and develop an understanding of the cultural values and lifestyle choices of your students' parents and how those values influence their attitudes and beliefs.

To successfully implement the program that is to be free from bias, new Namibian teacher education according to ethnicity, gender, and social-economic background, teachers should be knowledgeable or aware of different cultures within the community or country. The researcher believes that if schools, teachers, students /learners, communities/parents and curricula planners work together, they will form a society which has common aims and goals towards education. *Dewey (1990:14)* believes that "A society is a number of people held together because they are working along common lines, in a common spirit, and with reference to common aims." He continues arguing that the common needs and aims demand a growing interchange of thoughts and growing unity of sympathetic feeling (*Dewey, 1990*).

There is no doubt that the new teacher education program is trying to bridge the gap that was created by the former colonial education system. This is not an easy task because more support is needed for schools, learners, teachers, and communities so that they can all work together towards the goal of effective learner-centered education. Teacher education is rapidly changing throughout the world and now seeks to avoid working in isolation. Efforts are currently being made in Namibia to train teachers who will be effective both in the classrooms and outside the school and strategies are being planned as to how the community can find its way into school classrooms, school activities, and policy making (*Greenberg, 1989*). The efficacy of the teacher education system may be improved through discussions and sharing ideas with the community, students, teachers and teacher educators.

*NNIED, (2003)* stated, "Teacher is the key to LCT". A quality teacher could take characteristics of curriculum and syllabus and materials to produce a better outcome (*NNIED, 2003*). Therefore, the learner-centered teachers: included learners in decisions about how and what they learned and how that learning was assessed; valued each learner's unique perspectives; respected and accommodated individual differences in learners' backgrounds, interests, abilities, and experiences; and treated learners as co-creators and partners in the teaching and learning process (*McCombs, 2000*). By employing the LCT. *Weimer (2002)* mentioned that teacher played a role as facilitator, resource person, mentor, instructional designer, and master learner, which was guided by the seven established principles. The seven principles were: teachers doing the learning tasks less; teachers doing less telling, students doing more discovering; teachers doing more design work; faculty doing more modeling; faculty doing more to get students learning from and with each other; faculty working to create climates for learning; and faculty doing more with feedback. Moreover, *NNIED* also described theoretical framework for teachers in the application of learner-centeredness. First, teachers had to create a relationship of care with the students and their learning. By doing so, a meaningful teaching would occur because students would have strong determination and be present in schools every learning hour. Second, teachers had to be able to feel the needs of learners and the nature of learning and established the learning experiences accordingly. Teachers had to distinguish when to teach students directly and when to allow students to learn by discovering and exploring. Last, teachers had to be able to identify what and how learning occurred and created as real contexts as possible to assess and record achievements and to provide feedback into teaching/ learning process.

Communication between the teacher and the learner is extremely important, and the teacher should keep the communication process positive and alive. Poor communication can affect the performance of learners, especially if the teacher and the learner are on bad terms or if the teacher uses unclear language. In addition, communication must

go beyond the classroom and the school premises, extension, communication must go beyond the classroom and the school premises, extending as far as the community in which the children live. The teacher should communicate with the parents of the children in order to keep them informed about the performance of their children in school. If there is positive communication both in the classroom and in the community, the teacher and parents can work together in order to help promote the individuality of each child, so that his or her unique characteristics can be recognized and acknowledged both at school and the community. It is the teachers' responsibility to guide the learning process and to assist learners when they face problems in their tasks.

A number of studies were conducted to examine the roles of teachers and their teaching in the LCT. The study by **Pedersen (2003)** indicated that it was important for teachers to interact with students and supported the students' high order thinking. The findings further reported that teachers described their roles as facilitators in regular class, and in many cases, their facilitation involved with giving direction and structure. The study undertaken by **Nonkukhetkhong et. al. (2006)** revealed that teachers changed the role from an information transmitter to a facilitator. Moreover, **Matsau (2007)** conducted a study to investigate the use of LCT in the teaching of English languages in Lesotho secondary schools. The result also showed that teachers changed their role to be facilitators. The result further indicated that in the process of their teaching, teachers had to be close to the students in order to offer an assistance if needed. Moreover, the study by **Tongpoon-Patanasorn (2011)** showed that most of the teachers transformed their roles from being the sole source of knowledge to facilitators, advisors, and consultants. In summary, many important roles of teachers were identified in the LCT. These roles included supporters, facilitators, assistants, advisors, consultants, and communicators. The teacher should also be able to guide learners in acquiring the social skills that are necessary to help settle conflicts at school and in the community; these skills will help the learners to grow up to be responsible adults and loyal citizens who will be in a position to constructively take part in nation building.

Teachers should be able to facilitate the learning of the learners in a fruitful manner by organizing learning activities and making sure that learning is taking place. They should make sure that the lesson and the associated activities are of interest to the learners, so that they are motivated to learn. For the learners to be motivated, the teachers themselves should be motivated and should be a model to the learners. It is important to bear in mind that teaching is an art that depends on how teachers would like to teach; at times, the nature of teaching comes to resemble the attitude of the teacher (**Alexiou, 1995 and Pomuti, 1996**).

It is the teachers' responsibility to guide the learning process and to assist learners when they face problems in their tasks. The teacher should also be able to guide learners in acquiring the social skills that are necessary to help settle conflicts at school and in the community; these skills will help the learners to grow up to be responsible adults and loyal citizens who will be in a position to constructively take part in nation building. If learner are exposed to techniques for resolving conflicts, and are familiar with strategies for collaboration amongst themselves and others, they will be more capable of dealing with the conflict faced in their own country (**Callahan et al. 1995 and Alexiou, 1995**). **Alexiou (1995: 23)** points out that:

*The stress children feel from conflict situations will always have some impact on other areas of their lives. Children need reassurance that they can deal with any situation that arises. They need to be encouraged to see themselves as capable problem solvers ... adults must teach children the skills necessary to solve conflicts.*

The role of the teacher in LCT guides the learners in acquiring new knowledge and skills. This does not mean that the teacher is the source of knowledge, but rather that s/he facilitates the learning processes of the learners. When learners come to school, they come with a certain amount of knowledge that they have acquired in their informal education and in their life cycle learning. The teacher should respect and acknowledge these informal skills, which learners have learned outside of the school situation, because they form the foundation for further learning (**Greenberg, 1989 and Kindsvatter, et al. 1996**). Also learning cannot take place in a vacuum, which means that, for learning to be effective, the learners should be engaged by something challenging and of interest. The teacher, in this case, has to plan activities that will motivate learning. The **Ministry of Education and Culture, Namibia (1994:2)** points out that:

*The teacher must meet the challenges of the realities of an educational system in change and development. The teacher is a key person for the development of the nation, and has a lot of potential as a local resource for the community. It is therefore essential that the teacher relates closely to the community and can integrate school and life outside the school for the learner.*

This is another role that teachers should play in addition to structuring the learning to make it effective and meaningful. Teachers should assist the learners to become responsible citizens who will foster the constitution of their own country and hopefully be able to resolve conflicts through negotiations and collaboration. By presenting the learners with the tasks of conflict resolution, the teacher can prepare the learners to be able to handle their own problems and those of others. Efforts to improve conflict resolution can be implemented if teachers and the community work together in partnership (**Anderson, 1993 and Alexiou, 1995**). The effectiveness of any education system is critically affected by

the degree of open communication among teachers, school, the community and learners. There are many roles for the teacher in a LCT, but one of the problems in moving from a teacher directed approach to a

One of the roles of the teacher in LCT is to assist the learners to see the relationship between what they learn and what is going on outside the classroom. In addition, the teacher should help the learners to relate what they see, hear and learn at school to what is happening in the community where they live and to help the learners interpret their experiences and make connections between their culture and their formal education (*Farrant, 1980*). However, teachers should not feel threatened by the concept of LCT, thinking perhaps that it implies that the learners are taking away the responsibilities of the teachers. In fact, a LCT implies that teachers have more responsibilities in that they are held accountable for the outcome of the learning experiences of the learners. Also, the concept of learner centered education implies that instead of having teachers perform roles and activities for the learners, the learners should be now be responsible for carrying out these activities while the teachers monitor how well the learners are performing those activities.

Another role of the teacher is that of manager of the learning and teaching situation. Teachers should make sure that all the materials and resources needed for the lesson or for the education of the learners are available. They should also help the learners to manage their time and show them how to plan their programs. *Farrant (1980:6)* indicates that the teacher "is a resource person providing his/her students with information and able to give guide them to other fruitful sources." Teachers should be able to facilitate the learning of the learners in a fruitful manner by organizing learning activities and making sure that learning is taking place. They should make sure that the lesson and the associated activities are of interest to the learners, so that they are motivated to learn. For the learners to be motivated, the teachers themselves should be motivated and should be a model to the learners. It is important to bear in mind that teaching is an art that depends on how teachers would like to teach; at times, the nature of teaching comes to resemble the attitude of the teacher (*Alexiou, 1995 and Pomuti, 1996*).

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Since much of the success in online education rests on encouraging an active role of the learners, the responsibility of the faculty shifts from a knowledge provider to more of a facilitator and guide for the students to self-discovery by encouraging application of the concepts learned. The traditional teacher-directed instruction, often called didactic teaching, is replaced by new strategies that are more learner-centered and technological. Table 1 summarizes the differences between teacher-directed and learner-centered, technological instructional strategies.

Table 1

Teacher-centred and learner centered and technological instructional strategies

S.N.	Teacher centred	Learner centred	Technological centred
1.	Didactic teaching	Student exploration	Online instruction
2.	Short blocks of instruction	Extended blocks of multi-disciplinary instruction	Online application
3.	Passive or one-way modes	Active and interactive modes	Web-based learning
4.	Individual effort	Collaborative/cooperative	Individual or collaborative or cooperative
5.	Teacher as knowledge provider	Teacher as facilitator/guide	Teacher and online resources as facilitator/guide
6.	Ability groups	Heterogeneous groups	Heterogeneous groups
7.	Knowledge/skill assessment	Knowledge/Skill and cognitive performance assessment	Knowledge or skill and cognitive performance interactive assessment

According to Table 1, the LCT considers students as active, collaborative contributors and the role of the teacher is more of a facilitator rather than a knowledge provider. Knowledge/skill and cognitive performance needs to be augmented by interactive online assessment techniques. Another difference in the role of faculty is the shift from the

person-to-person communication to different types of communication with the students. Although the face-to-face teaching efforts in online settings were almost none (except for the rare occasion of helping the student on the phone), the online instruction required much effort in areas of communicating via e-mail, interacting with the proctor, updating and administering the Web site, grading student assignments, and preparing exams. At the same time, the online setting provides flexibility and convenience not provided by traditional classroom courses. Inputs in online education can take various forms including written information posted on a server as lecture notes, web pages, video images, audio segments, or dialogues with other students and the professor through discussion rooms. Similarly, outputs of learning can be diverse including individual papers, assignments, projects, journals, homework problems, portfolios, article reviews, reflective written assignments, and presentations. In a LCT, students are expected to assume a more active and participatory role than is usual in traditional teacher-centered approaches. Logically, however, student roles cannot be redefined without a parallel redefinition of teacher roles in the learner-centered classroom. There are two main roles that teachers perform in most traditional modes of teaching:

- *Knower*: the teacher is a source of knowledge in terms of both the target language and the choice of methodology; the teacher is a figure of authority who decides on what should be learnt and how this should be learnt.
- *Activity organizer*: the teacher sets up and steers learning activities in the right direction, motivates and encourages students, and provides authoritative feedback on students' performance.

In the learner-centered classroom teachers should welcome their new functions as information-gatherers, decision-makers, motivators, counselors and so on. New teaching capacities include identifying students' needs, interests, and learning styles and strategies, conducting training on learning strategies, and helping learners become more independent. In the learner-centered classroom our starting point is not the textbook but the learners. There should be always ongoing dialogue between teachers and learners. There are a variety of roles that teachers are expected to play.

**Information-gatherer**: In response to students' ever-changing needs, teachers constantly collect information about them, analyze their language behavior, and observe ongoing interactions. Also, language teaching is a complex social and cultural activity. Teachers need to understand students within their socio-cultural context, asking the following questions: "How motivated are my students?" "How mature are my students?" "What are my students' cultural attitudes to language study and to the roles of teachers and learners?" "Are there any external constraints that place limits on learner direction?"

**Decision-maker**: Teachers make decisions on a moment-to-moment basis. Their knowledge of learning theory and educational practice allows them to plan flexible learning experiences and to respond sensitively to learners of differing language ability levels and varying backgrounds, interests, and needs. While providing the necessary linguistic and emotional support, teachers encourage students to use their abilities to the utmost. As for involving learners, **Tudor (1996: 279)** suggests that teachers may find it helpful to draw up a list of decisions they have to make, and then select from this list the areas where their students seem most likely to be able to make a sensible contribution to decision-making. Such a list might include: course structure, goal-setting, choice of methodology, choice of materials, activity selection and organization, evaluation and so on.

**Motivator**: Teachers motivate students to acquire English. They arouse and maintain their students' interests by constantly assessing the needs and goals of their students and tailoring their instruction accordingly. They provide stimulating, interesting lessons that respond to the emotional, cognitive, and linguistic needs of the learners. **Dornyei and Csizer (1998: 215)** offered a set of ten commandments" for motivating learners, based on a survey of Hungarian foreign language teachers. All the following items focus on what the teacher can do to stimulate intrinsic motivation: set a personal example with your own behavior; create a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere in the classroom; present the tasks properly; develop a good relationship with the learners; increase the learner's linguistic self-confidence; make the language classes interesting; promote learner autonomy; personalize the learning process; increase the learner's goal-orientedness; and familiarize learners with the target language culture.

**Facilitator of group dynamics**: Teachers have strong skills in group dynamics that help them to provide efficient classroom routines and smooth transitions. They organize instructional tasks logically and understand how to use different types of grouping (including individual, pair, small group, and large group work) to encourage specific types of learning. While there are differences among the models of cooperative/collaborative learning (CL), **Johnson and Johnson (1999)** and other researchers suggest that the following are key elements of CL: positive interdependence, individual accountability, face-to-face promotive interaction, social skills, and group processing. CL should be evaluated as a culture-sensitive approach to developing communicative competence and learner autonomy.

**Provider of opportunities for communicative and authentic language use**: English is not just a series of word lists or grammar forms, but a living language for communication. Teachers provide students with materials from video clips, casual conversations, newspaper extracts, interview-type activities, photographs & pictures, maps & charts and so on. To help students understand and use authentic language. Various types of language assistance are provided by the

materials. Teachers bring objects from the real world into the classroom. Invite native speakers to class, and arrange field trips for students so that students encounter a variety of native speakers.

**Counselor.** Teachers know when to serve as counselors. They provide emotional support just when it is required and help learners feel secure and confident about second/foreign language learning. They recognize psychological problems that may hinder their students' progress acquiring English and help students overcome these difficulties. Teachers monitor students' learning progress regularly. The feedback that they provide learners is timely and constructive. Students value the incentives that teachers regularly provide.

**Promoter of a multicultural perspective.** Teachers expect their students to take a multicultural perspective. They encourage students to be tolerant of cultural conflicts, to respect those of diverse cultures and to avoid stereotyping others. Through team-teaching with a native speaker, teachers develop various materials for cross-cultural communication. They need to remember a healthy balance between the necessity of teaching the target culture and validating the students' native cultures.

**Reflective practitioner and researcher.** A reflective practitioner is a professional practitioner. The notion of reflective practice places as much emphasis on teachers' own evaluations of their practice as on the planning and management skills into which such evaluations feed and has spawned a considerable volume of theory and publications devoted to its elaboration and promulgation (*Schon, 1987; Wallace 1991*). Reflection is not just about self-improvement and self-development but also about understanding and questioning the contexts in which teaching and learning take place. One of the fundamental purposes of reflective practice is to improve the quality of teaching and learning in educational contexts. Critical reflection questions the means and ends of education and needs to be a judicious blend of sensitive support and constructive challenge. The interdependence of reflective research and teaching is a foundation stone of education. Precisely because research into student learning has studied and described the conditions that are necessary for changes in student understanding. It provides a promising source of ideas for teaching. These insights help us to decide on the best ways to organize the curriculum, evaluate teaching in order to encourage improvement, and plan satisfactory programs for helping individual teachers teach better.

### **The Role of the Learner in the Learner Centered Teaching**

In the LCT, according to *Hadson (2008)* learners have a great role to take full responsibility of their learning by taking the centre stage during the lesson. The teacher is supposed to tell learners to investigate certain topics, so that during the lesson they become active participants who play a vital role than being passive listeners who always wait to be spoon fed by the teacher. *McInnis (2000)* argues that in a child centred scenario learners cease to be notes takers as the case is in a traditional approach. Instead they take control and full responsibility of their learning in class. *McInnis (2000)* proceeds to assert that, in the LCT learners take a centre stage by carrying out research, writing their own notes, and going further to make presentations and demonstrations in class. Learners are also seen by him as having a responsibility of studying on their own, in pairs and groups in their homes and libraries. They are not supposed to wait for the teacher to spoon feed them, but they are supposed to study on their own and come to the teacher only for guidance and consultations. Doing so grooms learners to be responsible future adults at work places and in their communities.

*Morrison (2010)* contends that in a LCT the focus is on each student's interests, abilities and learning styles, placing the teacher as a facilitator of learning. This classroom learning method acknowledges student voice as central to the learning experience for every learner, and differs from many other learning methods like traditional ones where the teacher dominates the whole lesson in class. In a LCT, according to *Morrison (2010)* students choose what they will learn, how they will learn, and how they will assess their own learning. This is opposed to the teacher centred classroom where the teacher chooses what the students will learn, how the students will learn, and how the students will be assessed on their learning. *Morrison (2010)* goes on to assert that the LCT requires students to be active and responsible participants in their own learning. The above notion is supported by *Armstrong (2012)* who attests that, in traditional education methodologies, teachers direct the learning process and students assume a receptive role in their education, because traditional education ignores or suppresses learner responsibility. Contrary to this *Armstrong (2012)* argues that, with the advent of progressive education in the 19th century, and the influence of psychologists such as Vygotsky and Piaget the traditional curriculum approaches have been replaced with hands-on activities and group work, in which students determine on their own what they want to do in class. Key among these changes is the premise that students actively construct their own learning *Armstrong (2012)*. On the other hand *Jaques (2000)* highlights that in a LCT classroom students: take responsibility for learning; are active knowledge seekers; construct knowledge by interacting both with his/her teachers and the data gathered through different sources, with the purpose in mind of solving a problem/task that they have been given; work at stations with access to multiple resources; work individually at times but often also need to collaborate in small groups under the teacher's supervision; are not considered to be empty vessels; and construct their own meaning by talking, listening, writing, reading, and reflecting on content, ideas, issues and concerns.

Since LCT help learners construct knowledge and comprehension by themselves, learners are autonomous for learning (NNIED, 2003). This means that learners are given more freedom to learn based on their own styles and are actively involved with different learning activities. In the process of learning, learners were encouraged to participate more and more in decision-making depending on the level of responsibility they could take (NNIED, 2003). Learner has curiosity and eagerness to learn to investigate and making sense of a widening world. Children learn best when they are actively involved in the learning process. They respond best when they are interested in which they are learning. Learner brings to school a wealth of knowledge and social experiences gains from the family, community, and interaction with environment. Learner is the individual with his/her own needs, pace of learning, experiences, and ability (p. 7). Moreover, *Kain (2002)* discovered that in the learner-centered approach, students constructed and shared their knowledge, and their learning was achieved via their engagement with activities in which they invested.

Several studies were conducted to find out what students should do in the learner-centered approach. For example, *Neo and Kian (2003)* conducted a study to investigate the impact of a student-centered learning environment on student learning via a multimedia project. A survey was used to gather data from 46 students. The result showed that students actively took part in their learning process and determined how to reach their own learning outcomes by themselves in the student-centered learning environment. Moreover, *Nonkukhetkhong's (2006) and Matsau's (2007)* studies found that teachers allowed their students to take more accountability for their own learning in the learner-centeredness. Nonkukhetkhong's study further revealed that students were taught to think and learn by themselves. To sum up, in the LCT, teachers perceived that their learners had to construct and share their own knowledge, involve with learning, be responsible for their own learning, be independent, and be autonomous.

### Role of Parents in the Learner Centered Teaching

Parents often follow their child's development, interests, and skills closely, encouraging them to pursue their passions and dreams, positioning them to play an instrumental role in student-centered learning. When a child begins their education, it's crucial for the school to take on this role, too. "The education system was created to churn out certain types of workers and has not moved with the times. A culture of innovation and creativity is needed, this can start at home but needs to be followed through at school and for the less privileged children, and there is an even bigger reliance on the school system." Student-centered practices foster student engagement and facilitate learning that is relevant to students. While some educators found that this approach took more time, they asserted that such practices foster the development of important skills and knowledge. But where do parents fit into this? Students want their parents and family to be more involved in their education. It shouldn't surprise anyone that teens don't want their parents in school! But parental involvement can be subtle but powerful, cheering on the efforts of their children and forming behind the scenes working relationships with teachers. Parents and schools have a shared responsibility to make learning a success. Getting families involved in education is a vital part of the puzzle that is student-centered learning, but it seems that many parents still feel frustrated at the lack of inclusion. Being bold in the pursuit of student-centered learning can help students, parents, and educators to collaborate effectively towards the same aim-engaged young people who are flourishing in their education and prepared to thrive in the future. "What would happen if schools worked with parents around each and every student's interests and choices?"

*Lemmer and Van Wyk (2010)* contend that extensive research has shown that schooling alone cannot provide all learners with the personal and cultural competencies necessary for success. For learners to be successful, schools need the involvement of parents in children's education. They continue to argue that when schools work together with families to support learning, children tend to succeed not just in school, but throughout life. *Lemmer and Van Wyk (2010)* are of the opinion that, parents' involvement result in decreased truancy, improved attitudes of learners to their studies, improved behaviour and a decrease in dropout rate. This is the case because children learn best when they benefit from good teaching and a supportive home environment. Parents' involvement also helps parents to understand and gain confidence on what is happening at school. This assertion is supported by *Peters (2008)* who contends that learners who enjoy parental support tend to be motivated and participative in class. This shows that in social science the implementation of the child centred approach can become effective if parents become involved and supportive. This would be the case because *Epstein (2002)* asserts that if parents are involved they tend to buy learners equipment and materials. In Natural Science these may range from buying learners text books, note books, laptops, scientific calculators and dictionaries. Parents can also take their children to scientific museums, zoos, monuments, craters, and planetariums, as well as other scientific areas of interest. Doing so would inform and enlighten learners about scientific activities. If learners are more enlightened and exposed to more scientific knowledge and information, they tend to be more involved and participative in class during lessons.

*Peters (2008)* contends that, parents can help supervise children's work at home. They can also guide children on how to conduct research. He goes on to say that the School Development Committee (SDC) can help the school to raise money to build laboratories, libraries, classrooms, as well as to buy apparatus and chemicals for social science subjects. The SDC according to him can also encourage parents to sponsor their children's educational trips. If parents give all this support it becomes easy to implement the child centred teaching methods in class when teaching Natural Science, because children will have something to say in class after an educational trip such as visiting a crater or any other place

that is of scientific interest. *Peters (2008)* also highlights an important issue pertaining to parents' involvement in schools. He asserts that parents' interference must not be confused with parents' involvement. He proceeds to assert that the SDC needs to educate parents about how they are supposed to be productively involved in schools so that they wouldn't interfere in the name of involvement. Parents' interference according to *Peters (2008)* is dangerous because it inhibits or totally hinders the implementation of the LCT in schools. He however sees informed and positive parents involvement as enhancing the implementation of the child centred approach in schools, because parents tend to be a stimulating factor that provides motivation, assistance, resources and materials that are needed in the implementation of the LCT for example in social science classes.

In light of above arguments it is imperative to state that we cannot talk about the LCT without mentioning that parents are an important stakeholder, and they play a vital role in the implementation of the LCT in social science by providing the vital resources and support that is essential for the successful implementation of the LCT in teaching social Science.

### **The Roles of Instructional Materials in Learner Centred Teaching**

Learning and teaching operating effectively and fruitfully can be the product of availability of teaching/ learning materials. In LCT, all materials made for teachers or students were to support the learning process or, where essentially, for learning to take place (*NNIED, 2003*). These teaching materials were used, depending on syllabus objectives, detailed content and sequence, tasks for mastery learning, activities to engage learners, and assessment. NNIED added that the materials led the program and were ready-made, and they were put under the management of the teachers. Three domains, including teacher, learners, and materials, were contributing to the zone of proximal development in the LCT (*NNIED, 2003*). Moreover, it suggested that the learning support materials had to be reliable, up-to-date, and available to teachers and students.

A number of studies showed that the teaching/learning materials played important roles in the learner-centeredness. *Gravoso, Pasa, Labra, and Mori (2008)* conducted a study on the design and use of instructional materials for LCT: a case in learning ecological concepts. The data were collected from a state university in the Philippines by using the discussion with teachers and students, video recording, and pre- and post-tests for students. The result showed that by using supporting materials such as video documentary in the learner-centered instruction, students were challenged to explore information, consult with teachers, and read handouts and other materials given. The challenges allowed them to use the knowledge they had learned from other subjects and even their experiences outside the classroom. The finding further indicated that students felt empowered and encouraged as they were given the opportunity to control their own learning with those materials. Furthermore, *Kheam and Maricar (2012)* did a study on biology teacher beliefs and practices on learner-centeredness: perspectives from lower secondary schools, Cambodia. The purpose of the study was to investigate teacher beliefs regarding learners, learning and teaching, classroom practices, competencies and adolescences as well as the translation of beliefs into their teaching practices. The result indicated that the LCT may occur only if there were the availability of the supporting materials. In summary, in the LCT, teaching materials helped teachers and learner engage with their tasks, improve students' performance, and promote the implementation of the approach.

### **Conclusion**

It is clear from the above deliberation that there is vital role of teachers, learners and parents in the effective implementation of the LCT in the classrooms. Accordingly, instructional materials has also play important role in the LCT. LCT adds a number of responsibilities not normally found in traditional approaches-these responsibilities relating to the development and channeling of students' human and experiential potential. It has been suggested that teachers who envisage adopting a LCT should think carefully of the implications of this choice in terms of the extra work and responsibilities it entails. To begin with, as has already been pointed out, LCT is not an all-or-nothing affair: the teacher need never feel obliged to go further in involving learners in decision-making than his or her professional judgment says is appropriate. LCT is not a method, nor can it be reduced to a set of techniques. In the first instance, it involves a recognition of students' potential to contribute meaningfully to the shaping of their learning programme, and then a willingness to accommodate this potential as far as the situation will realistically allow. This is clearly an educational product, and helping students to acquire it can be very rewarding for teachers in both personal and professional terms.

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