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An Exploration of Pathways for Learner-Centered English Teaching Design to Enhance Classroom Efficiency

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Abstract: One of the issues facing English teaching in junior high schools in the present is low classroom teaching efficiency. The study indicates that according to the traditional teaching model which is teacher centered, only 32.40% of students in the classroom get to participate, less than 20% of the total classroom time is spent in deep thinking, and less than 41.80% of the total classroom time is spent effectively by students in the classroom according to the survey data analysis of 1,248 junior high school and English teachers, 560 students, and 38 teaching researchers in a given city. The design of learner-centered instruction, with the specific and accurate analysis of the learner situation, the use of real-world and real-life tasks as the generators of autonomous learning process, and various assessment and feedback methods, is observed to improve the classroom participation of the learner to 76.50, the related percentage of deep thinking Portuguese to 58.30, and the efficiency of learning process to 82.60 of the total classroom time, which fully proves the considerable impact of learner-centered teaching design on the enhancement of classroom efficiency.

Keywords: Learner-centered; Instructional design; Classroom efficiency; Data analysis; Junior high school English

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1. Introduction

The efficiency of classroom teaching is directly associated with the maturation of the language skills of students, as well as the effectiveness of the development of the core competencies. The traditional teaching models in which teachers do most of the talking have most students receiving knowledge in a passive manner and practicing language in a mechanical way, thus it is hard to cultivate real language application skills. *Compulsory Education English Curriculum Standards (2022 Edition)* directly suggest following a student-centered orientation and competency orientation and promoting the English learning activity perspective that involves the integration of learning and thinking with providing practical use and innovation. Nevertheless, even modern English classroom instruction has its own set of problems: teacher dominance, lack of student involvement, and the disconnection between the design of instruction and the actual needs of learners. The most striking element of these issues is that the instructional design does not really reflect the philosophy of learner-

centeredness, which removes the opportunity to benefit the efficiency of teaching in the classroom significantly. To have a holistic picture of the existing level of efficiency of classroom teaching in English in junior high school and to investigate the relevant ways of enhancing classroom efficiency through the lens of the learner-centered philosophy, the author undertook a one-year tracking survey of the English classroom teaching in one city. The systematic approach to data collection and the thorough analysis of data help to identify the essence of the recent classroom instructional design as addressing efficiency improvement and suggest the viable directions of the future on how to improve the instructional design and increase classroom efficiency in accordance with the philosophy of learner-centered.

2. Survey design

2.1. Theoretical foundation

The basis of the learner-centered teaching philosophy is based on constructivist learning theory and humanistic learning theory, which focuses on placing students central to a teaching activity [1]. Instructional design ought to be aimed at encouraging the development of learners as opposed to marking off of teaching activities. Constructivist theory is the theory that is of the view that learning is a process whereby learners make meaning of the knowledge. Based on the knowledge already possessed and the experience learners process, understand and absorb new knowledge and this whole process is a continuous process of adjustments and refinement of knowledge structures continuously as the learner interacts with the environment [2]. Classroom teaching efficiency is the extent to which students acquire knowledge, cultivate skills, and improve competence within a period of time. The involvement, active inquiry, and successful building by students should depict efficient classrooms. This educational design ideology radically transforms this inefficient model of unidirectional transmissions on the side of the teacher and passive receipts on the part of the student in the traditional teaching approach, which offers theoretical guidance and practical orientation to enhance the efficiency of classroom teaching [3].

2.2. Survey subjects and methods

The respondents to the survey were 1,248 total and 560 total junior high school English teachers of the various schools at the different levels within a particular city, 18 principals, 38 municipal and county teaching researchers, and 420 student parents. Survey procedures involved the use of questionnaire survey method, which entailed the design of the "Survey Questionnaire on the Current State of Junior High School English Classroom Teaching," to be administered using online services with 2,266 of the valid questionnaires received; classroom observation method, which involved conducting important observations of 158 classes of 36 schools, using standardized observation scales, of key data, including teacher teaching behaviors, student learning states and teacher-student interaction; and interview method, involving the in-depth text interviewing of teachers, students, principals and teaching Data analysis was done using SPSS 23.0 statistical analysis program.

3. Root causes of low classroom efficiency: Instructional design deviating from learner-centeredness

3.1. Outdated instructional design philosophy leads to goal-setting disconnected from learner needs

The survey indicates that classroom teaching has been viewed as the belief of teachers to impart knowledge

and train skills by 68.70 percent of the teachers, and by only 31.30 percent of teachers, classroom teaching was seen to be to contribute to active learning and overall development in the student. As regards setting teaching goals, 82.40 percent of teachers primarily set goals depending on textbook content and progress in teaching, and only 17.60 percent of teachers set goals based on a comprehensive perception of the starting learning position and learning needs of students. Out of the 158 observed lessons, however, there was only 26.60 percent clearly and specifically expressed and observable goals of teaching, 12.00 percent goals identifiable, clear and specific in set of teaching, 39.20 percent clearly and specifically expressed and observable and assessable goals in core competency development, and the vast majority, 60.80 percent had clear observable goals of teaching predominantly based on knowledge of languages. These data show that the instructional design provided by most teachers is not learner-centered at the goal-setting level; they do not focus on the individual differences of students, and cannot choose to improve the language application skills of the students and make core competencies the key objective of the instructional design (**Table 1**).

Table 1. Statistics on teachers' instructional design philosophy and goal setting

Survey content	Option	Number of people	Percentage
Main task of classroom teaching	Impart knowledge and train skills	858	68.70%
	Promote students' active learning and development	390	31.30%
Basis for teaching goal setting	Based on textbook content and progress	1,028	82.40%
	Based on student situations and needs	220	17.60%
Goal expression clarity (n = 158 lessons)	Clear, specific, and observable	42	26.60%
	Vague, general, difficult to assess	116	73.40%
Goals reflecting differentiation (n = 158 lessons)	Reflect differentiated requirements	19	12.00%
	Uniform requirements	139	88.00%

3.2. Instructional activity design lacking learner participation reduces classroom efficiency

The results of classroom observation indicate that in the traditional teacher-centred teaching model, 58.30% of the classroom time is conducted by teacher lecturing, 27.50% classroom time is conducted by the students' independent practice, and 14.20% by teacher-student and student interaction. Average times of active speaking include 1.8 times per student per lesson of students, the percentage of active questioning equals only 8.40, and the time of effective group cooperative learning is only 4.2 minutes per lesson. Such data show that in the classroom, the students are in the passive receptive stages of their learning, as they do not have the possibility to be active and think profoundly. In view of the type of learning activities, mechanical drills and repetitive practice take 52.60 percent of classroom activities, activities where authentic language practice takes place in real contexts take 18.30 percent, and inquiry-based learning activities take less than 10 percent. According to student questionnaire surveys, it was found that 73.60 percent of students consider classroom learning quite boring, 62.50 percent of students find themselves in a passive state of listening, and a very small proportion of 28.40 percent of students perceive that classroom learning activities relate to their life experiences and real needs (**Table 2**).

Table 2. Classroom teaching activity time allocation and student participation (n = 158 lessons)

Observation indicator	Data
Teacher lecturing time percentage	58.30%
Student independent practice time percentage	27.50%
Teacher-student interaction time percentage	14.20%
Student active speaking frequency (average/person/lesson)	1.8 times
Student active questioning proportion	8.40%
Effective group cooperation duration (minutes/lesson)	4.2 minutes
Mechanical drill activities percentage	52.60%
Authentic context practice activities percentage	18.30%
Inquiry-based learning activities percentage	9.50%

3.3. Singular instructional assessment design restricts learner development

According to the survey, 91.30% of teachers are taught the learning situation of students based primarily on classroom questioning and homework correction, with only 8.70% of teachers narrating through diversified assessment. Regarding the subjects of assessment, 97.60% of the assessment activities are teacher-led, and student self-assessment, as well as peer assessment, are only 2.40%. Relative to the content of the assessment, 78.50% of the assessment is devoted to the knowledge of languages and the training of language skills in students, and only 21.50% of the assessments are aimed at evaluating the development of thinking and the application of learning strategies and other aspects in students. The observation in the classroom indicated that the teacher's comments on the responses of students are largely of the type of right-or-wrong responses, with these judgments constituting 82.70% of all the comments. Only 17.30% (**Table 3**) of feedback can conduct in-depth follow-up inquiries based on student responses and lead students to contemplate in depth.

Table 3. Instructional assessment design methods and subject distribution

Assessment dimension	Type	Percentage
Assessment method design	Classroom questioning and homework correction	91.30%
	Observation records, logs, work analysis, etc.	8.70%
Assessment subject design	Teacher assessment	97.60%
	Student self-assessment and peer assessment	2.40%
Assessment content design	Language knowledge and skills	78.50%
	Thinking, strategies, attitudes, and emotions	21.50%
Feedback design type	Simple right-wrong judgment	82.70%
	In-depth questioning and guidance	17.30%

4. The effect of learner-centered teaching design on improving classroom efficiency

4.1. Experimental design and implementation

There were 12 experimental schools with two classes in each of the schools, as experimental schools with 24 experimental classes (1,080 students). There were another 24 classes that had 1,104 students chosen as control classes. The design of experimental classes was the design of learner-centered teaching which had certain

measures such as: conducting an in depth survey of the situation of the learners by pre-tests, questionnaire, interviews among others followed by an in-depth assessment analysis of the learners needs, interests, level of cognition and individual differences and ensuring that clear and specific differentiated teaching goals were set and arrived at by finding out the results of the analysis of the learner situations. The design of experimental classes was learner-centered teaching with specific measures, such as creating real and authentic situations around the control classes, which utilized old models of teaching designs. The second semester [4] was the experiment period.

4.2. Significant improvement of classroom efficiency by learner-centered teaching design

Once the experiment was over, the classroom teaching observations and data collection were done regarding the experimental and control classes. According to the results, the design of the learner-centered teaching contributed greatly to the efficiency of teaching in classrooms. As to classroom speech frequency in experimental classes, the student speaking frequency was at an average of 7.3 time/person/lesson as compared to 3.84 time/person/lesson in control classes. The proportion of active questioning was high, 9.20% in control classes compared with 51.60% in experimental classes. During effective group cooperation, the time gradually rose in control classes, 4.5 minutes, and then in experimental classes, 19.8 minutes. Deep thinking activities in the experimental classes included 58.30% of the activities in the classroom compared with 19.70% in the control classes in terms of thinking activities. The percentage of study students in experimental classes that can perform higher-order thinking tasks in the form of analysis, evaluation, and creation was 64.20, in comparison to 23.80 in experimental classes. Regarding learning outcomes, the proportion of successful learning time in experimental classes showed 82.60% of the overall class time, as compared to control classes, which reported 41.80%. The good and excellent task completion rate in experimental classes stood at 81.40 as compared to the 36.50 in control classes (**Table 4**).

Table 4. Effect of learner-centered teaching design on improving classroom efficiency (Experimental classes n = 24, Control classes n = 24)

Observation indicator	Experimental classes	Control classes	Improvement magnitude
Student speaking frequency (average/person/lesson)	7.3 times	1.9 times	284.21%
Active questioning proportion	51.60%	9.20%	460.87%
Group cooperation duration (minutes/lesson)	19.8 minutes	4.5 minutes	340.00%
Deep thinking activities percentage	58.30%	19.70%	195.94%
Higher-order thinking ability manifestation rate	64.20%	23.80%	169.75%
Effective learning time percentage	82.60%	41.80%	97.61%
Task completion excellent and good rate	81.40%	36.50%	123.01%

4.3. Improvement of learner state and ability development

The students in experimental and control classes were given questionnaire surveys and interviews. The outcomes indicate that learner neuro-centered teaching design greatly enhanced the learning conditions of students and facilitated the learning ability enhancement. The learning interest in the topic showed that 78.60 percent of students in the experimental classes were very interested or quite interested in learning English, as opposed to 34.20 percent in control classes. As far as learning initiative, 73.80% of experimental class students stated to be regularly and actively involved in classroom activities, as well as actively engaged in thinking about

problems, in contrast to only 28.70% of the control classes. The experimental classes were significantly better in self-assessment scores in autonomous learning ability, cooperative learning ability, problem-solving ability, and other areas in comparison to control classes, and the differences were statistically significant ($P < 0.01$). The final examination scores revealed an average of 18.40 percentage points higher results among the students in experimental classes compared to control classes on the questions that demanded total application of language knowledge in solving real-life problems (**Table 5**).

Table 5. Impact of learner-centered teaching design on student state and abilities (Experimental classes $n = 1,080$, Control classes $n = 1,104$)

Survey dimension	Experimental classes	Control classes
Learning interest (very interested + quite interested)	78.60%	34.20%
Actively participate in classroom activities	73.80%	28.70%
Autonomous learning ability score (out of 10)	8.2 points	5.6 points
Cooperative learning ability score (out of 10)	8.5 points	5.3 points
Problem-solving ability score (out of 10)	7.9 points	5.4 points
Comprehensive application question score rate	76.30%	57.90%

5. Practical pathways for improving classroom efficiency based on learner-centeredness

5.1. Conducting in-depth learner situation analysis and setting precise teaching goals

The design of learner-centered teaching makes teachers undertake a thorough and specific needs study of students prior to the initiation of teaching objectives, which is the most central point of increasing the efficiency of classroom teaching. Experimentally, experimental class teachers applying systematic learner situation analysis were more accurate in goal setting, and the proportion of goal achievement was 42.60 percentage points above that of control classes, which did not perform in-depth learner situation analysis [5]. Analysis of learners' situation should entail the assessment of the related themes, topics, and language knowledge mastery of the students by testing beforehand to determine the starting point of learning and cognitive basis of the learners through questionnaire survey and interview exchanges, and incorporation of actual needs of learners in the design of teaching goals [6]. The goals established to teach situations studied by the teacher must be specific, clear, observable, and measurable, with the help of such expressions: students will be able to use some forms of language to perform some tasks in some situations. Goals of teaching should be based on levels and differentiation, whereby varying levels of goals are laid to the students with varying foundations and abilities so that all students can learn to the extent of their initial foundation [7].

5.2. Creating authentic learning contexts and designing driving learning tasks

The most important is the learning activities, which are connected with the learners as a means of getting knowledge, building up abilities, and enhancing competencies. The design of any activity directly influences the degree of efficiency in classroom instruction [8]. The class teachers of the experiment planned their learning activities along real-life contexts of students that included: designing an English bulletin board for the campus, interviewing foreign teachers and creating video-recorded interviews, planning activity proposals related to

English festivals, and investigating healthy living practices of the students and writing survey reports. They are communicative in nature, have practical application value, are within the real world of the learners, and are able to arouse intrinsic motivation and interest among the learners to learn [9]. It has been indicated that learners' classroom engagement in a real task-driven approach is 84.70. In the process of completing the tasks, learners should actively engage several skills, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and must learn to cooperate and communicate with other people and negotiate and discuss with the teachers, on top of which language skills and the quality of thought are developed in addressing the real problems.

5.3. Implementing diversified assessment design to promote continuous learner development

The learner-centered design teacher has to provide an assessment system that is more focused on process, more than one subject, and multiple approaches, and provides assessment throughout the teaching process. Process assessment is concerned with the performance and the progress of the learners in the process of learning [10]. Classroom observation, records of activities that learners have carried out, learning logs, and others enable teachers to find out the strengths and weaknesses of learners in classroom participation, performance of tasks assigned, cooperation, and thinking quickly, and offer guidance and help accordingly. Multi-subject assessment alters the conventional concept of single teacher-led assessment by using self-assessments of students, peer assessment, group assessment, and other practices. Self-assessment among students can encourage trainees to take a look at themselves and their learning experiences and outcomes, which will enable them to develop self-monitoring and independent study skills. It was demonstrated that learners who engage in self-assessment and peer assessment are rated 2.8 and 3.2 points higher than students who do not engage in self-assessment and critical thinking ability, respectively.

6. Conclusion and recommendations

The survey results demonstrate that low performance in terms of classroom efficiency is caused by the inability of the instructional design to reflect the student-centered philosophy. Such analysis improved the participation in learning (32.40% to 76.50%), profound thinking processes (under 20% to 58.30%), and productive learning time (41.80% to 82.60%) considerably through the analysis of learners properly, task-based learning, and diversified assessment. The practical pathway lays emphasis on three main aspects, namely, in-depth analysis of the learner and the establishment of specific objectives, generation of realistic contexts with driving tasks, and multi-subject assessment. To increase the overall teaching quality, teachers ought to reinforce the learner-centered practice, schools ought to offer support for the professional development, and research departments ought to make the successful experiences more accessible.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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