Shifting Education from Teacher-Centered to Learner-Centered Paradigm

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Shifting Education from Teacher-Centered to Learner-Centered Paradigm

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Abstract: For centuries, education has been teacher-centered, that is the classrooms have been dominated by teachers. All round the world, the educationists in conformity with tradition have emphasized transferring knowledge and skills from teachers to learners. In ancient Greek, Indian and Chinese societies, the mode of education was basically the same. Disciples used to gather around the gurus/philosophers to listen to their words in order to learn earthly and spiritual affairs. The scene was not changed much until the twentieth century, when education philosophers, psychologists, researchers, planners, managers and practitioners started to realize that too much teacher-dependence robs students of their creative and critical capacities. Therefore they made a plea that learning should be active rather than passive, interactive rather than lecture-based. Education becomes effective when students learn through problem-solving activities, in total self-engagement, with minimum intervention by the teacher. The teacher plays the central role in a teacher-centered classroom, but the learners’ role is central in a learner-centered classroom. In the former approach, knowledge is thrust upon the students whereby they receive it passively, but in the latter, knowledge is hidden from the students whereby they make active efforts to discover it. The principal objective of learner-centered education is to make students independent in their thoughts and actions through the institutional support. The move towards learner-centered education has been stronger in the twenty-first century. It is being practiced in many good educational institutions. But it must be admitted that learning is still mostly teacher-centered, not only in Bangladesh but also other parts of the world. We have to make further progress onto learner-centered instruction with a view to making education truly meaningful to those whom it is meant for. It is a big challenge for pedagogy today. Establishing student-centered educational system, away from the teacher-centered one, would be called a paradigm shift as it brings about fundamental changes in teaching/learning practices. This paper sheds light on various aspects of learner-centered education including its philosophy, characteristics, benefits and impediments to implementation.

1. INTRODUCTION

Learner-Centered Education (LCE), as the term implies, centers on learners. It builds around the learners’ needs and interests. Here education is seen from the perspective of learners rather than teachers. Learners remain at the center of all educational activities. Students learn through active engagement and interaction. The role of a teacher is only of a facilitator. He/she supervises and guides students’ learning progress in an enabling environment. He/she refrains from delivering lecture-feeds making students bound in note-taking. Rather he/she encourages students’ participation in class proceedings, making them responsible for their own education. Learner-centered education (LCE) is also called ‘student-centered education’. Instead of ‘education’ other terms are also used, such as ‘instruction’, ‘approach’, ‘method’, ‘attitude’ etc.

LCE is increasingly being encouraged in higher education. Traditionally instructors focused on what they did, and not on what the students did. The emphasis on what instructors do often leads to passive learning, whereby the learners do not take responsibility for their own learning. This traditional method is termed as ‘teacher-centered education’ or ‘instructor-centered learning’. In this method, the teachers decide what to be taught, how to be taught, and what should be the learning objectives (Armstrong, 2012). Here the focus is on teacher. In contrast, LCE occurs when instructors focus on student learning. Gunderman et al (2003, p. 15) strikes the contrast in the following terms:

Many instructors believe, perhaps implicitly, that learning depends primarily on the teacher. The teacher-centered model of education places all responsibility for decision-making about what is taught, how it is taught, when it is taught, and how
learner performance is measured squarely on the shoulders of the teacher. This model views teachers as active participants in the educational process and learners as passive receptacles of knowledge. Current educational theory, however, argues for a learner-centered rather than a teacher-centered approach. The overarching purpose of education is to produce educated learners, and teaching is a means to this end. With this view, teachers should place less emphasis on what they know and more on what learners bring to the educational encounter. For example, the concept of ‘fund of knowledge’ is a teacher-centered notion that derives from standardized testing. Educators who operate on this paradigm act as though they can put a dipstick in a learner’s head and measure the amount of knowledge the learner has acquired.

Bennett, Davis and Weddel (2010) present the differences between the teacher-centered and learner-centered approaches in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher-Centered</th>
<th>Learner-Centered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus is on instructor.</td>
<td>Focus is on both students and instructor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus is on language forms and structures (what the instructor knows about the language).</td>
<td>Focus is on language use in typical situations (how students will use the language).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructor talks; students listen (or take a nap).</td>
<td>Instructor models; students interact with instructor and one another.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students work alone.</td>
<td>Students work in pairs, in groups, or alone depending on the purpose of the activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructor monitors and corrects every student utterance.</td>
<td>Students talk without constant instructor monitoring; instructor provides feedback/correction when questions arise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructor answers students’ questions about language.</td>
<td>Students answer each other’s questions, using instructor as an information resource.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructor chooses topics.</td>
<td>Students have some choice of topics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructor evaluates student learning.</td>
<td>Students evaluate their own learning; instructor also evaluates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom is quiet.</td>
<td>Classroom is often noisy and busy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Difference between teacher-centered and learner-centered approaches

According to Pine and Boy (1977), learner centeredness is an attitude rather than a technique. They observe, “It is an attitude toward oneself, colleagues, administrators, and parents, as well as toward the learner. The essence of this attitude … is existential humanism, which asks that teachers become more sensitive to themselves as persons. They need the courage to make a view from within in order to change themselves and become facilitating individuals” (p. 1). In this paradigm the teachers will mostly facilitate students’ learning, ensuring development of their personality as self-reliant, critical and creative.

LCE is defined in various ways. We mention some of the authoritative definitions here. LCE is defined by McCombs and Whisler (1997) as: “The perspective that couples a focus on individual learners (their heredity, experiences, perspectives, backgrounds, talents, interests, capacities, and needs) with a focus on learning (the best available knowledge about learning and how it occurs and about teaching practices that are most effective in promoting the highest levels of motivation, learning, and achievement for all learners.) This dual focus, then, informs and drives educational decision-making” (p. 9).

Gibbs (1992) offers a useful definition of LCE. He states that LCE, “gives students greater autonomy and control over choice of subject matter, learning methods and pace of study” (p. 23). This view highlighted three core characteristics of LCE by promoting the idea that students should have more input into: i) what is learned, ii) how it is learned, and iii) when it is learned.

Shifting education from teacher-centered to learner-centered is the order of the day. Three changes are brought about when the shift takes place. The changes are visible in the process of instruction, the behavior of student and the behavior of teacher. The changes are as follows:

a) Instruction changes from being teacher-centered and content-driven to learner-centered and learning process-driven.
b) The student’s role changes from that of being a passive recipient or empty receptacle to that of an engaged learner and active agent in the learning process.

c) The instructor’s role expands from that of a knowledge-laden teacher, who professes truths and disseminates factual information, to that of being a learning mediator or facilitator.

LCE has close connection with the following teaching/learning strategies, which are much in vogue nowadays: Active learning, Cooperative/Collaborative learning, Inductive learning, Self-directed learning, Learner focused learning, Autonomous learning, Independent learning, Experiential learning, Authentic learning, and Problem based learning. (Sparrow, Sparrow and Swan, 2000)

III. LCE PHILOSOPHY

LCE is based on the learners’ capacities and activities. It is devoted to the enhancement of the learners’ knowledge and skills through all-out supports from the education providers. Learners’ individual characteristics and tendencies are taken into account when education is provided. LCE philosophy ensues from the individual nurturing of students through group dynamics. The major theme is one of focusing education around a set of realistic, intrinsically-motivating problems. Students work to solve these problems, often in groups, often over extended periods of time. Teachers carefully structure the problems so that the students naturally pass through and acquire all knowledge of relevance. The students might not even notice that they are undergoing instruction, for the education occurs naturally in the course of activity. Henson (2003) mentions five premises of LCE:

a) Distinctive Perspectives: Learners have distinctive perspectives or frames of reference, contributed to by their history, the environment, their interests and goals, their beliefs, their ways of thinking and the like. These are attended to by LCE.

b) Unique Individual Differences: Learners have unique individual differences, including emotional states of mind, learning rates, learning styles, stages of development, abilities, talents, feelings of efficacy and other traits. These are taken into account by LCE.

c) Relevance and Meaningfulness: Learning is a process that occurs best when what is being learned is relevant and meaningful to the learner and LCE ensures that the lessons are understood by the students.

d) Positive Interpersonal Relationships and Interactions: Learning occurs best in an environment that contains positive interpersonal relationships and interactions and in which the learner feels appreciated, acknowledged, respected and validated. LCE creates an atmosphere of valuation for the students.

e) Fundamentally Natural Process: Learning is seen as a fundamentally natural process. LCE views learners as naturally curious and basically interested in learning about and mastering their world.

Support for LCE comes principally from the Constructivist Theory. T. M. Duffy and D. H. Jonassen (1992) make the Constructivist Theory particularly relevant to education. Constructivism contends that to learn anything, each learner must construct his or her own understanding by tying new information to prior experiences.

LCE also get philosophical backing from Progressivism, Pragmatism and Existentialism. Progressivism claims that learning takes place progressively through the active search of knowledge by the learners. The teacher will facilitate learning by helping students formulate meaningful questions and devise strategies to answer those questions. Progressivism is the educational application of a philosophy called Pragmatism, which lays utmost importance on the practical value of an idea. Existentialism places the highest degree of importance on student perceptions, decisions and actions. Individuals are responsible for determining for themselves what is true or false, necessary or unnecessary. It is up to the student to make all relevant educational decisions, and to evaluate those decisions.

Self-Determination Theory also focuses on the degree to which an individual’s behavior is self-motivated and self-determined. Therefore, when students are given the opportunity to fashion their
learning, learning becomes an incentive. As learning is seen as a form of personal growth, students are encouraged to utilize self-regulation practices in order to reflect on his or her work.

According to perceptual psychologists, LCE is essential for healthy development of students. Self and personality emerge from experience. Experience moulds up the self when a person is involved in what is going on in life, calling for his/her own role to play. Combs (1962, p. 198) says, “Adequate persons usually possess a deep sense of duty or responsibility and are likely to be democratic in the fullest sense of the word.”

IV. HISTORY OF LCE

One of the desired attributes of an engineer If we trace back history, we will see that Chinese philosopher Confucius and Greek philosopher Socrates emphasized the development of learners’ reflections on moral characters and knowledge in a conscious way, though the teaching was not learner-centered as we see it today. English philosopher and educationist Francis Bacon (1561-1626) introduced the experience and experiment-based scientific method as a way of thinking and learning. The trend was strengthened through the enlightenment era with the contributions of other philosophers like John Locke, Jean Jacques Rousseau and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel.

LCE emerged from changing understandings of the nature of learning and, in particular, from the body of learning theory known as Constructivism (Krause et al, 2003; Jadallah, 2000). With the advent of progressive education and the behavioral psychology, some educators largely replaced traditional curriculum with hands-on activities and group work. After the works of John Dewey, Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky and Carl Rogers, the educational institutions started to move towards LCE.

John Dewey became a champion of Pragmatism and Progressivism. He said that people learn best through social interaction in the real world. He saw education as an opportunity to learn how to apply previous experiences in new ways. He believed that students, facing an ever-changing world, should master the scientific method: (1) Become aware of a problem; (2) define it; (3) propose various hypotheses to solve it; (4) examine the consequences of each hypothesis in the light of previous experience; and (5) test the most likely solution.

During the early part of the twentieth century, Russian psychologist and sociologist Lev Vygotsky studied children’s interactions. He saw that students collectively solved problems more efficiently than they could solve them when working alone. He called this ‘negotiating meaning’. His theory later came to be known as Cooperative Learning, in which students cooperate with one another within learning groups.

Swiss psychologist and educator Jean Piaget focused his attention on the learner as an individual. He gave students problems to solve that encouraged them to manipulate concrete objects. He watched the ways they manipulated the objects and saw that each learner made assumptions and drew right or wrong conclusions about the objects. His theory has been elaborated in his book ‘To Understand is to Invent’.

American philosophers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries realized the importance of learner’s role in education and patronized it. Of them, apart from John Dewey, important are Charles Peirce and William James. Different educational institutions started to adopt LCE programs from the middle of the twentieth centuries. Today institutions like University of the Sciences in Philadelphia, University of Southern California, Curtin University of Technology, Edith Cowan University, to name a few, follow the LCE models. This paradigm shift can be understood from the activities of American Association of Higher Education (AAHE). It organized two large scale conferences – in 1986 it made the conference theme “Taking Teaching Seriously” and in 1998 “Taking Learning Seriously”.

It is a fact that the lecture method still remains the dominant pedagogical strategy in higher education (Bligh, 2000; Costin, 1972; Marris, 1964; Nance and Nance, 1990). But the situation is changing. The world is gradually shifting toward LCE. The major force propelling the movement toward LCE is the well-documented ineffectiveness of the lecture method for promoting
higher learning outcomes. Blumberg and Pontiggia (2010) observe that within the last decade, administrators and faculty in higher education have been trying to move from a more instructor-centered model to more learner-centered teaching for various reasons. There are strong educational and psychological research-supported rationales for adopting learner-centered teaching approaches (Alexander and Murphy, 2000; Bransford et al, 2000; Lambert and McCombs, 2000). When faculty members focus on student learning, more students graduate and are better prepared for their professional and personal adult lives (Matlin, 2002; Sternberg and Grigorenko, 2002). Further, regional and professional accreditation agencies are encouraging colleges and universities to implement more learner-centered approaches (Middle States Commission on Higher Education, 2003).

V. CHARACTERISTICS OF LCE

LCE has some characteristics which make it distinct from teacher-centered education. Its three main characteristics are:

i. Students rather than teacher take the central role in the class.

ii. An emphasis is laid on process rather than content.

iii. Students become active agent in learning process.

Pine and Boy (1977) identifies the following characteristics of LCE:

a. **Respect for Students:** In LCE, the teacher respects learner’s individuality, complexity, uniqueness, capacity for making choices, right to govern their own life and select their own values and idiosyncratic potentials. Respect for the learner is based upon the teacher’s recognition of the dignity of the learner. It is easier for the teacher who has respect for his/her own intrinsic value to deeply respect students. And because of the reciprocity of the teacher-student relationship, if the teacher values the students, a deeper appreciation of intrinsic self-worth evolves in the students.

b. **Acceptance of Students:** In LCE, the teacher accepts the student as he/she is. Accepting the student gives him/her the opportunity to express his/her meanings without ridicule, attack or pressure of memorization. It allows him/her to see things the way he/she does. Accepting the student is offering unconditional positive regard for him/her. The teacher neither approves nor disapproves of feelings that are expressed. There are no reservations, conditions, evaluations or judgments placed on the student’s feelings. Acceptance does not depend upon the students acting or taking a certain way, his/her socio-economic background, religion or IQ.

c. **Effective Communication in the Classroom:** LCE fosters effective communication in the classroom. Effective communication occurs when the teacher receives what his/her students want to communicate. Communication between teacher and students is expressed through affective, cognitive, verbal and nonverbal means. Effective teaching requires open communication, and this is encouraged by a non-threatening atmosphere that fosters teacher and student resonance to each other’s existence. To be resonant to another, a teacher must be reasonably free from the influence of his/her own needs and anxieties, which distort perceptions.

d. **The Needs, Problems and Feelings of Students:** In LCE, the teacher addresses the needs, problems and feelings of students. The more the teacher focuses on the needs, problems and feelings of the students, the more he/she emphasizes the existential character of learning. Focusing on the individual frame of reference enables students to become more aware of their internal resources and helps them gain an understanding of the reality of self in the school and home as well as the world. In this kind of atmosphere the students begin to feel that real learning comes from within their self.

e. **Permissiveness:** LCE is permissive, that is here the students feel free to behave in their own way. Students can explore their capacity for self-directive growth when they experience permissiveness. A permissive atmosphere requires emotional security and self-acceptance on part of the teacher. The teacher will be tolerant of the differing of the individual students. The emergence of the authentic self, the evolvement of self-
understanding and the exploration of the external world of the student come about when the student knows he/she can remove the protective layers that cover his/her inner feelings.

VI. TEACHER AND LEARNER T Raits IN LCE

LCE teachers and students have their own traits. Students play a more active role than a teacher. Their roles and traits in the instructional system are discussed below.

5.1 Teacher Traits: The teacher’s role expands from that of a knowledge-laden professor to that of being a learning mediator or facilitator who assumes the following roles:

(a) Educational architect: designing learning tasks and creating a classroom environment that are conducive to student participation;
(b) Educational consultant/facilitator: serving as an experienced coach working with or along side of students during the learning process, i.e., the ‘sage on the stage’ becomes the ‘guide by the side’; and
(c) Educational assessor: evaluating student outcomes and using this assessment information as feedback to improve the learning process.

Learner-centered teachers can nurture the development of positive self-concepts by assigning problems that challenge students but are within their abilities, encouraging them to succeed, and recognizing their successes. Pine and Boy (1977, pp. 6-7)) list the following ten characteristics of the learner-centered teacher:

1. He/she thinks well of himself/herself.
2. He/she is unified and integrated.
3. He/she thinks well of others.
4. He/she develops, holds and lives by human values.
5. He/she sees himself/herself in the process of becoming.
6. He/she sees the value of mistakes.
7. He/she trusts himself/herself.
8. He/she is open to experience.
9. He/she is initiatory.
10. He/she is spontaneous, vibrant and responsive.

5.2 Learner Traits: LCE stresses the need for students to assume a high level of responsibility in the learning situation and be actively choosing their goals and managing their learning. They can no longer rely on the lecturer to tell them what, how, where and when to think. Students spend less time being ‘instructed’, i.e. lectured to or at, and more time engaged in learning activities that involve them is doing something other than the rote recording of lecture notes. Pine and Boy (1977) mention the following traits of learner in LCE:

a. He/she assumes the responsibility for his/her intellectual growth. Since the teacher has freed him/her to learn, he/she learns.

b. He/she is accepted in the classroom as a contributor to learning process. As a result, he/she feels comfortable and his/her emotional development occurs.

c. He/she is motivated to learning. He/she senses a value in knowledge and makes utmost drive to acquire it.

d. He/she is actively involved in the process of growth. An active, participatory involvement makes education meaningful to the learner.

e. He/she interacts with the learning process on a human level. He/she reacts to learning at an emotional level, for which real learning becomes possible.

f. He/she exists in a safe atmosphere of educational institution and hence feels a kind of self-urge to inquire into knowledge.

g. He/she is properly understood by the teacher so that he/she becomes confident, aware and courageous in taking initiatives in learning.

h. He/she is self-disciplined. He/she finds the resources within himself/herself to be his/her own master and takes a control of his/her own behavior.

i. He/she verbalizes with ease. He/she communicates with the teacher comfortably and honestly without being defensive at all.

j. He/she discovers the fundamentals of learning and achieves insight into himself/herself, bringing meaning into experiences.

k. He/she is more aware of appropriate attitudes, which enhances his/her learning and ultimately helps him/her to function effectively in society.

l. He/she is valuing, that is, he/she becomes involved in the development, processing and
synthesizing of values beneficial to his/her functioning.

m. He/she assesses the genuine quality of a teacher and responds by expressing his/her own genuineness, in order to accelerate his/her progress.

n. He/she evaluates the interaction with the teacher. The evaluation is positive when he/she finds significance in his/her relationship with the teacher.

Bennett, Davis and Weddel (2010) differentiate between the teacher and student traits in learner-centered and non-learner-centered approaches in the following table:

Table 2: Teacher and learner traits.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-Learner-Centered</th>
<th>Learner-Centered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The teacher is active, students are passive. The teacher transmits knowledge and students receive it.</td>
<td>Students participate actively. The teacher facilitates and monitors the learning process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teacher talks; the students listen. Teaching is a process of transmission.</td>
<td>The teacher models; students practice on their own. Learning is a process of discovery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teacher monitors and corrects student errors.</td>
<td>The students develop self-correction skills. The teacher monitors from a distance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teacher is the focus in the classroom and it is his/her job to teach the students.</td>
<td>The students and teacher share responsibility for learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teacher decides what the students need to be taught.</td>
<td>The students’ backgrounds, needs and goals are taken into consideration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students read a textbook and write in a notebook.</td>
<td>Students engage in a variety of formats (written, aural, oral, visual, kinesthetic)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

VII. BENEFITS OF LCE

LCE offers a splendid array of benefits, particularly for the learners. It makes education effective and meaningful to them. Here are some points of benefits:

a) Strengthens student motivation
b) Promotes peer communication

c) Reduces disruptive behavior
d) Builds student-teacher relationships
e) Promotes discovery/active learning
f) Responsibility for one’s own learning

Strong research evidence exists to support the implementation of learner-centered approaches instead of instructor-centered approaches. A task force of the American Psychological Association integrated this research into fourteen Learner-Centered Psychological Principles which can be summarized through the following five domains (Lambert and McCombs, 2000; Alexander and Murphy, 2000; Springer, Stanne and Donovan, 1999):

a) The Knowledge Base: The conclusive result of decades of research on knowledge base is that what a person already knows largely determines what new information he attends to, how he organizes and represents new information, and how he filters new experiences, and even what he determines to be important or relevant. LCE makes a bridge between the past and new knowledge.

b) Strategic Processing and Executive Control: The ability to reflect on and regulate one's thoughts and behaviors is an essential aspect of learning. Successful students are actively involved in their own learning, monitor their thinking, think about their learning, and assume responsibility for their own learning. LCE establishes student’s control on the learning process.

c) Motivation and Affect: The benefits of LCE include increased motivation for learning and greater satisfaction with school; both of these outcomes lead to greater achievement (Johnson, 1991; Slavin, 1990). Research shows that personal involvement, intrinsic motivation, personal commitment and confidence in one’s abilities lead to more learning and higher achievement in school.

d) Development and Individual Differences: Individuals progress through various common stages of development, influenced by both inherited and environmental factors. Changes in how people think, believe, or behave are dependent on a combination of one’s inherited abilities, stages of development, individual differences, capabilities, experiences, and environmental conditions. LCE values both inheritance and environment.
e) **Situation or Context:** Theories of learning that highlight the roles of active engagement and social interaction in the students’ own construction of knowledge strongly support LCE paradigm. Learning is a social process. Students gain best knowledge through social interaction.

**VIII. HOW TO MAKE A CLASS LEARNER-CENTERED**

It is a challenge in front of the education managers and teachers to make the classrooms learner-centered under assorted curricular frameworks. Weimer (2002) described five learner-centered practice areas that need to change to achieve learner-centered teaching:

a) the function of content,

b) the role of the instructor,

c) the responsibility for learning,

d) the processes and purposes of assessment, and

e) the balance of power.

a) The functions of the content in learner-centered teaching include building a strong knowledge foundation and to develop learning skills and learner self-awareness.

b) The roles of the instructor should focus on student learning. The roles are facilitative rather than didactic.

c) The responsibility for learning shifts from the instructor to the students. The instructor will create learning environments that motivate students to accept responsibility for learning.

d) The processes and purposes of assessment shift from only assigning grades to include constructive feedback and to assist with improvement. Learner-centered teaching will use assessment as a part of the learning process.

e) The balance of power shifts so that the instructor shares some decisions about the course with the students such that the instructor and the students will collaborate on course policies and procedures.

Henson (2009) suggests several dispositions important for LCE: (1) education should be experience-based, (2) each individual learner’s own unique qualities and dispositions should be considered when planning experiences, (3) the learner's perceptions should shape the curriculum, (4) learner's curiosity should be fed and nurtured, (5) learning is best when it involves the emotions, and (6) the learning environment should be free from fear. Following is a brief discussion of each of these dispositions.

Various kinds of measures can be taken to make a class learner-centered. Here I put forward some techniques:

a. **Brainstorming:** Before initiating a lesson, the teacher may ask the students to brainstorm for a few minutes on the general aspects of the topic. It will make the students aware of the problem and orient them to what is going to be discussed.

b. **Pairwork/groupwork:** The teacher may divide the whole class into several groups consisting of two to five members and involve them in tasks which they can work on collaboratively.

c. **Project:** Where possible, the teacher may involve the students in relevant projects, in which they will explore on a problem or phenomenon individually or in group and come out with new findings or feasible recommendations.

d. **Presentation:** The teacher may ask the students to present on what they have learnt from time to time, giving them a scope of reassessing their learning and further improvement.

e. **Exhibition/exposition:** The teacher may organize semester-wise exhibition/exposition, where the students will display their learning outcomes in a concrete way. From this they will be aware of the practical value of education.

f. **Debate:** The teacher may organize debates in the classrooms on a debatable topic and ask the students to put forward their views and argue for or against the topic. This will help develop their critical faculty.

g. **Workshop:** The teacher may organize workshop on an area of the subject they are studying, in which a resource person or expert, preferably from outside the institution, will interact with the students closely and provide hands-on training or useful tips for them.

h. **Counseling:** The teacher will counsel the students outside the class whenever they approach with a problem. This frequent interaction between teacher and students will provide them guidance for go-ahead, giving students a good feeling of learning.
IX. HURDLES OF SHIFTING LCE FROM TEACHER-CENTERED INSTRUCTION

Present world economy is knowledge-based. It is not so easy to move LCE from teacher-centered instruction. The move often hits a snag. Difficulties may grow from many sides, lying on the levels of administration, curriculum, teaching and learning. These are discussed below:

a. Administrative hurdles: The authorities may find student’s learning freedom rather chaotic and contrary to discipline. Administration may not be convinced with the idea that the students will work themselves without little feeding from the teachers, who are paid for their knowledge supposed to be delivered through series of lectures.

b. Curriculum: It is often difficult to incorporate the principles of LCE in curriculums and put them into practice. LCE requires task-based syllabus, which needs innovation and hard work on part of the teacher. The institutions often lack apt syllabus designers or curriculum developers.

c. Teachers’ Inertia: Teachers often show reluctance in adopting LCE as they lose their authoritative position in this system. They feel that depriving them of delivering lectures is an attempt to undermine their noble responsibility of teaching. They often find it as an extra hazard to prepare problems or tasks for the students and monitor their activities outside the classes.

d. Students’ dilemma: Students also get perplexed when they are left to themselves for learning. Many students, in particular surface learners, tend to want to be told what to do and what to think. There is often a feeling among students that the lecturer has been paid to teach and should set about teaching. They are often far away from the concept of guided self-learning.

The administrative and academic staffs have to ponder several questions as listed below. A successful LCE depends largely on addressing these issues effectively.

a. How to engage students deeply, working in ways like adult humans learn – multi-sensory, collaborative, solving real problems?

b. How to empower students by giving them control and choice?

c. How to focus on student needs rather than what one wants to give them?

d. How to acknowledge individual differences in students?

e. How to identify strengths, weaknesses and prior learning and incorporate these into a course?

f. How to find out what the students want to know and how they want to learn it?

g. How to work with individual goals and pathways?

h. If diversity of student knowledge and needs are acknowledged, then how does one teach classes where each person has a different set of strengths and weaknesses and prior learning?

i. Where is the balance between what is good for them to learn and what they want to learn?

How does one support LCE? Does one establish individual goals and pathways in negotiation with the student or keep it open, with the student deciding what to learn, when to learn it and how it might be assessed?

X. IS DIU’S EDUCATION LEARNER CENTERED

Whether the education at Daffodil International University is LCE cannot be decided immediately. A careful examination of its curriculum and teacher and learner behavior is necessary for this. We may consider the LCE-potentials of DIU, weighing against the central LCE criteria, such as student-to-student interaction, consideration of the students’ backgrounds and experiences, meaningful and relevant lessons, real-life tasks, consistency with students’ lives and goals, integrating a variety of technical skills, etc. It is also convenient to look at the teaching practices.

First and foremost, DIU’s instruction is mostly lecture-based, which goes against the basic tenet of LCE. However, it has some positive sides that are conforming to the philosophy of LCE. It has the provisions of presentation in classroom and counseling outside the classroom. In several disciplines, project work is mandatory. Moreover, workshops, debates and exhibitions are held in many departments, though on an irregular basis. These traits make DIU a strong candidate for an LCE university.
The increasing use of IT may help DIU in its journey to learner-centeredness. For example, the students and teachers take part in Learning Feedback System and Forum and communicate with each other through e-mail. Through these, they interact with one another on relevant topics, enhancing an environment of participatory and collaborative learning. At the present state of affairs, we can say, DIU is a half LCE institution, but has all potentials to be a real LCE one.

XI. CONCLUSIONS
Bangladesh is lagging behind in respect of implementing LCE on wide spectrum. It is necessary to introduce LCE to make education meaningful and effective. LCE is also consistent with the democratic spirit existing in our politics. Therefore, the government should formulate proper education policy for introducing LCE in the country. The education boards and UGC have great responsibilities in this regard. The government can form an education commission and elicit recommendations for implementation. Authorities of educational institutions can also come forward to find ways to incorporate more learner-centered elements in their syllabuses. To reap the benefits of LCE, it is not necessary to adopt all of the action steps at a time. Instead, small pilot programs may be encouraged by universities. A true education must be learner-centered to benefit the learners and the nation as a whole.

REFERENCES


