

Concepts of Child Centered and Progressive Education

Child-centered is a widely used term that is often misinterpretation of instructional practices. It will be helpful to keep these guiding principles about child-centered education in mind as you work with children, parents, and colleagues:

- All children have a right to an education that helps them grow and develop to their fullest; this basic promise is at the heart of our understanding of child-centered education. Therefore, daily interactions with children should be based on the fundamental question, Am I teaching and supporting all children in their growth and development across all domains – social, emotional, physical, linguistic, and intellectual? Such teaching is at the heart of developmentally appropriate practice.
- Every child is a unique and special individual. Consequently, we have to teach individual children and be respectful of and account for their individual uniqueness of age, gender, culture, temperament, and learning style.
- Children are active participants in their own education and development. This means that they should be mentally involved and physically active in learning what they need to know and do.
- Children's Ideas, preferences, learning styles, and interests are considered in the planning for and implementation of instructional practices.
- Child-centered education has been an important foundation of early childhood education since the time of Froebel. As a professional, you will want to make your teaching and practice child centered. In addition, you will want to advocate for the inherent right of every child to a child-centered education.
- A reemphasis on child- centered education is occurring as society in general is becoming more interested in the whole child and efforts to address all of children's needs, not just their academic needs. As a result, there is much more concern for encouraging children to be healthy and lead healthy lifestyles. Providing children with medical immunizations and seeing that all children are fully immunized by age two have received a lot of attention, and programs to help children be free of drugs are common in early childhood and primary programs. Concern for the welfare of children in all areas of their growth and development is evident and attests to the public's growing awareness of their basic rights.

- All great educators have believed in the basic goodness of children; the teacher is to provide the environment for this goodness to manifest itself. A central theme of Luther, Comenius, Pestalozzi, Froebel, Montessori, and Dewey is that we must do our work as educators well, and we must really care about those whom we have been called to serve. This indeed is the essence of child-centered education.

Preparing for Meaningful Learning

“Meaningful learning” means that we link what is being learned (the topic or content) and how it is taught to the everyday lives of children and their families. As we all know, teaching is a complex activity. We must consider many things when preparing for meaningful learning. Above all, no one can make children. Children will learn when they are motivated to learn. They will learn when given opportunities to learn effectively and when they feel that the skills they have will lead to success. They will learn when they receive positive feedback from friends, teachers, and parents who compliment them on how well they are learning. How can we prepare for meaningful learning? Here are some questions to ask yourself in preparing your lessons

- **Motivation.** Is the topic meaningful and relevant to the children? Are they interested in what they are expected to learn?
- **Opportunities.** Are the opportunities suited to the development level of the children? For instance, is the topic too hard or too easy for many of the children? Are the activities appropriate for both girls and boys? Are they appropriate for children with diverse backgrounds and abilities?
- **Skills.** Do the children have the skills to achieve the expected result?
- **Feedback.** Is the type of assessment and feedback given to the children designed to increase motivation to continue learning?

What is “Learning-Friendly”?

Many schools are working to become “child-friendly,” where children have the right to learn to their fullest potential within a safe and welcoming environment. The aim is to improve every child’s participation and learning in school, rather than concentrating on the subject matter and examinations. Being “child-friendly” is very important, but it is not complete.

Children come to school to learn, but as teachers, we are always learning, too. We learn new things about the world to teach our students. We learn to teach more effectively –and joyfully – so that all students learn how to read or do mathematics, and we learn new things from our students as well.

A “learning-friendly” environment is “**child-friendly**” and “**teacher-friendly**.” It stresses on the importance of students and teachers learning together as a learning community. It places children at the centre of learning and encourages their active participation in

learning. It also fulfils our needs and interests as teachers, so that we become capable of, giving children the best education possible.

It is the child who has to learn. The teacher only helps him to learn. Therefore, what the child has to learn, the teacher is only to help him in learning that. But, what child has to learn, should be judged according to the ability, interest, capacity and previous experience of the child. Is he mature enough to understand the new material or do the assigned task? Does he possess necessary skills and abilities for doing the present task?

According to NCF 2005 Major Shifts

| Form | To |
|--|---|
| Teacher centric, stable designs | Learner centric, flexible process |
| Teacher direction and decisions | Learner autonomy |
| Teacher guidance and monitoring | Facilitates, supports and encourages learning |
| Passive reception in learning | Active participation in learning |
| Learning without the four walls of the classroom | Learning in the wider social context |
| Knowledge as "given" and fixed | Knowledge as it evolves and is focus |
| Disciplinary source | Multi-disciplinary, educational focus |
| Linear Exposure | Multiple and divergent exposure |
| Appraisal, short, few | Multifarious continuous. |
| | |

Is he mentally prepared for the present learning? These are some of the questions which should be kept in mind while asking the child to learn something new or problem some assigned task. The learning material or experiences should always be assigned according to the needs, interest and abilities of the child.

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