Creating a Student-Centered Learning Environment to Promote Target Language Learning

NYC-NYSAFLT Annual Conference
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NYS Language Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network (RBE-RN)
1:45PM – 3:15PM
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NYC UFT

Agenda
• About the NYS Language Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network (RBE-RN)
• What does student-centeredness mean?
• Immersing in the target language and culture
• Activities that engage students in using the target language

A Learner-Centered Approach with Can-Do Statements
• I can give a brief description of the “Student-centered” approach of teaching languages.
• I can name and explain at least two activities that facilitate students learning the target language.

NYS Language RBE-RN

Teaching ≠ Learning
• The fallacy of “I teach; therefore, they learn.”
• “Teaching is what occurs outside the head. Learning is what occurs inside the head.” Ruby Payne
• The goal of effective teaching is to increase the input from outside the head to equate the intake from inside the head as much as possible.

Teacher-Centered Instruction (Authoritarian Approach)
• Focus is on instructor
• Instructor talks, students listen
• Students work alone
• Instructor monitors and corrects students
• Instructor answers students’ questions
• Instructor chooses topics
• Instructor evaluates student learning
• Classroom is quiet

routledge.com
Learner-Centered Instruction (Democratic Approach)

- Focus is on both students and instructor
- Instructor models; students interact with instructor and one another
- Students work in pairs, in groups, or alone depending on the purpose of the activity
- Instructor provides feedback/correction when questions arise
- Instructor is an information resource
- Students have some choice of topics
- Students and instructor evaluate learning
- Classroom is often noisy and busy

Teacher vs. Learner-Centered Instruction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Centered</th>
<th>Learner Centered</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus is on teacher</td>
<td>Focus is on both students and instructor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus is on grammar, form, and function</td>
<td>Focus is on language use in specific situations that students need for their daily lives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher models, students listen and learn</td>
<td>Teacher 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 student progress</td>
<td>Students self-monitor and correct their own mistakes, with instructor providing feedback as needed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Instructor focuses on student speaking</td>
<td>Students focus on listening, with instructor providing feedback</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brain compatible strategies</td>
<td>Differentiated instruction</td>
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</table>

Student-Centered Approach

In What ways?

- **Student-centered teaching approach focuses on students.**
  - What do students need to learn?
    - Standards-based, reflecting goals for learning languages
  - How do students learn?
    - Sociocultural theory and Constructivism
    - Multiple Intelligences
    - Brain compatible strategies
    - Affective Filter
    - Differentiated instruction

It is a continuum.

Examples of Student-Centered Learning Activities

- Communicatively purposeful, building toward proficiency
- Intrinsically interesting, relevant to learners
- Cognitively engaging, thematically focused

Heleena Curtain
**Some Suggested Activities to Enhance Learner-Centered Classrooms**

- KWL charts
- Admit and exit slips
- Pair work (e.g. Think-Pair-Share)
- Small group work (e.g. jigsaw)
- Interviewing native speakers
- Learner logs
- Journal writing
- Peer assessment
- Rubrics and self-assessments (A portfolio like LinguaFolio that shows what you can do with the language)

**THINK – PAIR – SHARE**

- **Think**: What made you decide to be a foreign language teacher?
- **Pair**: Exchange your thoughts with your “elbow partner.”
- **Share**: Share with the whole group what your partner has just told you.

**Let’s Learn Some Chinese**

我 喜欢 学 中文
Wo xi huan xue zhong wen

**Variations of Pair Work**

- Tell your partner that you like Chinese (in Chinese).
- Share one thing you just learned.
- Share one question you still have.
- Ask your neighbor a question about the topic and see if he/she can answer it.
- Tell your neighbor how you can use the information you just learned.

**JIGSAW**

- Each member of the jigsaw assumes responsibility for learning a specific part of the content. Each student/group must master the content to teach that content to others in group/class.
- **NOTE**: This could be done with an entire class with small groups teaching content to the rest of the class.

**Steps for Jigsaw Activity**

- **Task Division** – describing the given topic/pictures
- **Home Groups**
  - Each team consists of several team members (1,2,3,4)
- **Expert or Focus Groups**
  - Students assigned the same topic/picture meet in the Expert Group (by numbers 1,2,3,4) to discuss information, master the topic and plan how to teach the information to his/her Home Group.
- **Return to Home Groups**
  - Students return to home groups to teacher the information to their own group members.
- **Summary Activity**
  - All of the parts must be put together in the form of a report, a quiz, presentation, or completion of questions.
Art works by Picasso

- **Expert groups will work together** to complete a graphic organizer as they
  - Interpret the caption
  - Describe the painting
  - Tell how the group members feel about the painting and come to a consensus
  - Rehearse how the members will report back to the base group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Picasso Picture Reading Jigsaw Chart</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group Findings: Briefly describe the painting and how it makes you feel.</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**The Old Guitarist**
1903, Blue period

**Garçon à la pipe**
1905, Rose period

**Head of a Sleeping Woman**
1907, African-influenced Period

**Dora Maar au Chat**
1941, Cubism
Picasso Quotes

• “I paint objects as I think them, not as I see them.”
• “All children are artists. The problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up.”
• “He can who thinks he can, and he can’t who thinks he can’t. This is an inexorable, indisputable law.”
• “Action is the foundational key to all success.”

Pablo Picasso
A Prolific (and Wealthy) Artist

• He created oil paintings, sculptures, drawings, stage designs, tapestries, rugs, sketchings, collages, and architecture.
• It is estimated that Picasso produced at least 50,000 works of art:
  — 1,885 paintings;
  — 1,228 sculptures;
  — 2,880 ceramics,
  — roughly 12,000 drawings,
  — many thousands of prints, and numerous tapestries and rugs
• He also wrote plays and poetry.


Student-Centeredness
Keep Students Engaged

Brain Compatible Strategies - Appealing to the Brain
• Motivation
  — It’s important to me.
  — It’s fun.
• Attention span
  — Primacy-Recency
• Memory
  — The magic 7
  — Redundancy and repetition

Motivation – It is fun.

• Games/puzzles/mysteries

Motivation – It is novel.

• The WOW factor
What can teachers do with this knowledge?

- Using the Primacy-Recency Effect in the Classroom
  - Prime Time 1
  - Down-time
  - Prime Time 2

Memory Learning Pyramid

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Retention after 24 Hours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5% Listening to a lecture</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10% Reading</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20% Immersed in audio-visual</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30% Watching a demonstration</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50% Having group discussions</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75% Practicing by doing</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90% Teaching others</td>
<td>90%</td>
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Self Assessment and Evaluation

A Learner-Centered Approach with Can-Do Statements

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Contact Information

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