

STUDENT-CENTERED LEARNING OR INDEPENDENT LEARNING: WHAT TO CHOOSE?

by:

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Today's students are largely independent in their learning. They are involved in classroom activities that are designed not only to help them learn but also to build relationships with their peers. They are given lessons, modules, and various activities, and are expected to produce meaningful results by the end of the semester or academic year. However, some people question whether this approach is necessary or not. They argue that students can achieve the same learning outcomes by simply sitting through a lecture or watching videos on TikTok and YouTube. This raises concerns about the role of teachers and whether their guidance is truly essential, especially when students can access quick, engaging content from online influencers. These videos are often short—sometimes just 30 seconds—and offer compressed lessons that can be consumed in under 10 minutes. While these formats are interactive, students may lose interest if there are no videos available or if teachers do not use similar engaging methods in the classroom. This has led to several questions: How can teachers keep students attentive? How can they support learning without causing boredom? Are there problems with the current trend of independent learning? If student-centered learning is enhanced, can it still be considered independent learning, or is true independence the key factor?

To answer these questions and establish a clear understanding of the differences between these learning styles, the author decided to gather opinions from teachers working in secondary, elementary, and preschool settings.

Some teachers from higher education were also included. Their responses varied, as shown below:

1. "As an elementary teacher in this country, I think student-centered learning is acceptable because that is the main goal of teaching—believing that learning happens through facilitation."
2. "We should not generalize. The learning style must depend on the students, regardless of their gender, age, or intelligence. They still need to be guided and facilitated, not left to learn independently."
3. "For me, the value of a teacher is not about the method but about the outcome—whether the student has actually learned."
4. "In my view, teachers still need to guide students, even in a student-centered approach, since the students remain the focus of the discussion. Independent learning is more common in higher education."

The interviewees believed that teachers can choose different teaching methods based on the lesson, strategy, and desired outcome.

Independent learning is possible, but the role of the teacher remains crucial, regardless of the students' age, gender, or background. Teachers use student-centered lessons or independent learning strategies depending on the needs of the lesson and the learning goals.

References:

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