

## **TEACHERS' ROLE IN 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY: TEACHER IS A FACILITATOR, NOT A DICTATOR**

**Kartika Ajeng Anggraeni**  
(ms.kartikaajeng@gmail.com)

SMK Negeri 12 Malang

**Rani Yusnita**  
(raniyusnita22112004@gmail.com)

Prodi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris  
Pascasarjana Universitas Negeri Malang

**Abstract:** Teachers' significant contribution to the success of their students learning leads to some consequences, among those relate to their role and also the teaching-learning process they endorse. Facing the challenges of the 21st century where the teacher is no longer as the sole source of the information for the students impact on the necessity to adjust their role from a 'dictator' to a facilitator. This also brings changes to the method on how the teaching-learning process should be conducted. Teacher-centered learning which opened the opportunity for the teacher to act as a 'dictator' is no longer appropriate to implement. Rather, teachers should act and position themselves as a facilitator and the appropriate learning method would be student-centered learning. This synergy would enforce the students to be active, critical, independent and creative to face the challenges in their future.

**Key words:** teacher's role, facilitator, student-centered learning.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The success of education is partly influenced by teachers' role in the teaching and learning process. Teachers give significant contribution to education when they do their role properly and professionally.

Brown (2007: 251) said that teachers can play many roles in the course of teaching and this might facilitate the learning. Their ability to carry the roles out effectively will depend to a large extent on the rapport they establish with their students, and on their own level of knowledge and skills. According to Government Regulation No. 74/ 2008, chapter 1 , Article 1, teachers are professional educators whose main duties are to educate, teach, guide, direct, train, assess, and evaluate students in formal early childhood education, primary education, and secondary education.

The above teachers' roles give impact on how they teach and treat their students. Generally, there are two main teaching and learning activities that are influenced by teachers' role. They are teacher-centered learning that position the teacher as a 'dictator' and student-centered learning that positions the teacher as a facilitator. For decades we were accustomed

to teacher-centered learning process which was also believed to be the best teaching methods. However, by times it is proven that there is a better strategy of teaching-learning process which then also changed the role of the teacher to be more as a facilitator rather than ‘a dictator’. This relates to the research findings showing that teacher-centered learning did not foster the students to be critical thinkers, independent and creative learners. While the student-centered learning has proven vice versa. Therefore, we believe in student-centered learning where the teacher takes a role as a facilitator as the best practice for better education which promotes the students to be critical, independent and creative. To be able to understand and internalize the role of a facilitator in teaching-learning process, teachers have to comprehend the characteristics of student-centered learning, its practices, and its differences from teacher-centered learning. By having the sufficient knowledge of these factors, teachers will be able to properly do their role as facilitators in their teaching-learning process.

### **TEACHER-CENTERED LEARNING**

Teacher-centered learning is inspired by behaviorism theory that focuses on environmental factors such as reinforcement, feedback and practice. Rote learning and role modeling by teachers are the examples of behaviorism approach in teaching-learning process. Students are to be directly corrected each time they make mistakes since it is a ‘sin’ and perfection can only be achieved by constant and continuous correction. This is in line with Skinner’s (1968 in Rhakmi, 2011) concept that teaching is the arrangement of emergences of reinforcement under which the students learn. Some of the behaviorism applications in the teaching-learning process are:

1. Directed instruction where the teacher provides the knowledge to the students
2. The use of exam to measure observable behavior of learning
3. The use of rewards and punishments at school
4. The use of audio-lingual approach to language teaching

From the examples above, we can conclude that behaviorism theory leads to teacher-centered learning which refers to methods, activities, and techniques where the teacher decides what is to be learned, what is to be tested, and how the class is to be run. Often the teacher is in the center of the classroom giving instruction with little input from students. The teacher decides the goals of the class based on certain criteria.

<http://bogglesworldesl.com/glossary/teachercentered.htm>

IB organization (2007:60) gives clear characteristics of teacher-centered learning as follows:

1. The teacher makes all the decision.
2. The teacher ignores students' prior knowledge and experience when doing the planning.
3. The teacher plans a large number of activities that will be covered superficially.
4. The teacher is over-reliance on a limited set of teaching strategies.
5. The teacher is viewed as the sole authority.
6. The teacher focuses on what students do not know.
7. The teacher is over-reliance on one teaching resource from one culture.
8. The teacher teaches about responsibility and the need for action by others.
9. The teacher views assessment as the sole prerogative of the teacher.
10. The teacher is over-reliance on one strategy of recording and reporting.
11. The teacher seeks student responses solely to identify the right answer.

University of South Carolina Board of Trustee describes the role of teachers as the formal authority where the teacher feels responsible for providing and controlling the flow of the content and the student is expected to receive the content. One type of statement made by an instructor with this teaching style is "I am the flashlight for my students, I illuminate the content and materials so that my students can see the importance of the material." Teachers with this teaching style are not as concerned with building relationships with their students nor is it as important that their students form relationships with other students. This type of teacher does not usually require much student participation in the class.

<https://www.sc.edu/cte/guide/teachingstyles/index.shtml>

In teacher-centered learning setting the role of the teacher used to be as "the gate of information." This was because the teacher was the only access for the students to get information. A classroom was the central point of information. Students did not have opportunity to access internet, 24-hour cable news, or mobile phones to access excessive amounts of information instantly. Therefore, the teacher was the only source who held the students to the knowledge. (Johnson and McElroy, 2004)

There were (are) some reasons why teachers prefer to apply teacher-centered learning:

1. A large amount of information can be shared in a short amount of time
2. The teacher has control of organization
3. The teacher has control of pacing and content
4. Accommodates large numbers of students
5. Allows for quick and easy assessment methods

<https://www.sc.edu/cte/guide/teachingstyles/index.shtml>

According to Paul (2003: 12) teachers can plan a lesson carefully, they can use time efficiently, they can teach clearly and logically and children behave well and do not chat so much

## **THE CHALLENGES OF THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY**

According to Law No. 20/ 2003 article 1 verse 2, National Education is education based on the five pillars of the Republic of Indonesia (Pancasila) and the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, which is rooted in religious values, Indonesian national culture and responsive to the demands of the changing times. The phrase “responsive to the demands of the changing times” gives impact on teaching and learning activity.

Time has changed. Teachers should be aware of the demand of 21<sup>st</sup> century. Nowadays, students do not lack information. They can browse the internet, access 24-hour cable news, or mobile phones to access excessive amounts of information instantly. They are also overwhelmed with information from television, radio, magazines, movies, video games and other technology. This means that teachers are no longer function as the sole source of information for the students as in the teacher-centered learning. Moreover, teacher-centered learning foster the students to be passive learners, afraid to make mistakes, being not confidence in sharing ideas, being afraid to be different and think ‘out of the box’, dependent too much to their teachers and not being creative. University of South Carolina Board of Trustee stated that in teacher-centered learning, knowledge is controlled by the teacher. There is only one-way communication. Moreover, this method promotes passive learning and not necessarily conducive to critical thinking. Therefore, it is not an optimal way of learning for many students.

Johnson and McElroy (2004) argue that this excess of information also means that teachers must strive for the students’ attention. Since students are overwhelmed with so many information, they might quickly lose their attention if it does not relevant. Therefore, the aim of education today should be on the personalization and application of relevant knowledge rather than simply filling them with random facts. It is obvious that the role of teacher today has to meet the needs of current century and the teacher-centered learning is no longer appropriate for this century. These challenges can be solved by applying student-centered learning where the teachers function as facilitators.

## **STUDENT-CENTERED LEARNING**

Nowadays many teachers use interactive approaches in their teaching-learning process as an effort to be responsive to a variety of learning styles. Student-centered approaches require active participation from teachers and students, putting much of the responsibility for learning on the student.

The above explanation is based on constructivism approach where students have beliefs about how the world works based on their experiences and prior knowledge. These beliefs, models or constructs are revisited and revised based on new experiences and further learning. William and Woods (1997 in IBO, 2007) quoted Vygotsky concept of learning as “the creation of meaning that occurs when an individual links new knowledge with existing knowledge”. Therefore, in the planning of teaching-learning process, it is important for teachers to determine students’ prior knowledge and give opportunities to the students to relate their background knowledge to current knowledge through learning activities implied in the curriculum, and let the students to construct their own meaning. This concept can be achieved by implementing students-centered learning.

In this 21<sup>st</sup> century, the learning process must be based on student-centered learning. Teachers, according to Johnson and McElroy (2004), are no longer function as lecturers or in our terms, a dictator, but as facilitator of learning. For example, students are learning by doing, teachers act as coaches where they help their students when they work on projects only when necessary. Students learn to use inquiry method and to collaborate with others. Learning activities are contextual with the real world the students are facing.

IB organization gives clear description of student-centered learning as follows:

1. The teacher involves students in planning for their own learning and assessment.
2. The teacher does the planning that builds upon students’ prior knowledge and experience.
3. The teacher plans fewer inquiries, to be explored in depth.
4. The teacher uses a range and balance of teaching strategies.
5. Students are viewed as thinkers with emerging theories of the world.
6. The teacher builds on what students know.
7. The teacher uses multiple resources representing multiple perspectives.
8. The teacher empowers students to feel responsible and to take action.
9. The teacher involves students in self-and peer-assessment.
10. The teacher uses a range and balance of recording and reporting strategies.

11. The teacher seeks student responses in order to understand their current understanding.

University of South Carolina Board of Trustee describes the role of teachers in student-centered models as follows:

1. **Facilitator:** These teachers tend to focus on activities. There is much more responsibility placed on the students to take the initiative for meeting the demands of various learning tasks. Teachers typically design group activities which necessitate active learning, student-to-student collaboration and problem solving. This type of teacher will often try to design learning situations and activities that require student processing and application of course content in creative and original ways. While course content is obviously essential, the facilitator does not make them the principal focus of the course goals. Rather, the goal is to learn how to use the content in a problem-solving way.
2. **Delegator:** Places much control and responsibility for learning on individuals or groups of students. This type of teacher will often give students a choice designing and implementing their own complex learning projects and will act in a consultative role. Students are often asked to work independently or in groups and must be able to maintain motivation and focus for complex projects.

According to Harmer (2007: 108), the term ‘facilitator’ is used by many authors to describe a particular kind of teacher, one who is democratic (where the teacher shares some of the leadership with the students) rather than autocratic (where the teacher is in control of everything that goes on in the classroom), and one who fosters learner autonomy (where students not only learn on their own, but also take responsibility for that learning) through the use of group work and pair work and by acting as more of a resource than a transmitter of knowledge.

Harmer (2007: 108-110) also elaborates the role of a teacher into several roles of teacher, such as:

1. **Prompter:** The teacher encourages students to participate and makes suggestions about how students may proceed in an activity. The teacher should be helping students only when necessary.
2. **Assessor:** The teacher assumes this role to see how well students are performing or how well they performed. Feedback and correction is organized and carried out.

3. **Organizer:** Perhaps the most difficult and important role the teacher has to play. The success of many activities depends on good organization and on the students knowing exactly what they are to do. Giving instructions is vital in this role as well as setting up activities.
4. **Tutor:** the teacher acts as a coach when students are involved in project work or self-study. The teacher provides advice and guidance and helps students clarify ideas and limit tasks.

Using student-centered learning will bring many advantages both for the teacher and for the students. As stated by University of South Carolina Board of Trustee, it engages students in the learning process, encourages student ownership of knowledge, provides real life connections, promotes active learning, fosters critical thinking, addresses multiple learning styles, and allows for varied assessment strategies. Moreover, Paul (2003:12) said that using student-centered will make students enjoy themselves, learn naturally and actively, spontaneous and their eyes shine brightly.

### **CHALLENGES OF STUDENT-CENTERED LEARNING AND THE SOLUTION**

Some teachers argue that student-centered teaching will be difficult to implement especially with large numbers of students. The other reason is that it can be more time consuming than traditional lecturing, it is not effective to be implemented in all subject areas, and that students may resist new approaches.

However, there are some strategies which teachers can do to cope with these challenges in order to position themselves as a facilitator in a student centered learning. Dealing with a large number of students in a class, the teacher can propose several activities (3-4 different kinds of activities) which will be conducted at the same time. There must be activity(ies) that can be done independently by the students without teacher's support, and one activity that may require teacher's assistance. The students are grouped based on their preference activity and rotate within a certain period of time. This may last up to several meetings until every student finishes all of their tasks. The main role of the teacher here is to be the facilitator to maintain the smooth transition between activities and support students who need more assistance.

Dealing with the argument that student-centered learning is more time consuming, the teacher can anticipate this by prior information to the students on next meeting planning and require them to find information needed (from the internet, encyclopedia, English books, etc.) and make a summary or mind web of it. Therefore, students are more prepared and are

building their background knowledge that can be elaborate more together with the teacher and their classmates in the class. By doing this strategy the teacher does not have to start from “zero point”, but rather than build on the students’ background knowledge. The teacher can then focus more on explaining aspects that the students still need to learn/to understand more.

Student-centered learning can actually be applied in every subject areas as long as the teacher comprehend the variety of task-based learning and implement, adopt or adapt the task based on the students’ need and the materials to be taught. Student-centered learning which enables teacher to be the facilitator of the learning activities does require much preparation done by the teacher to cope with the specific subject areas to be learnt, the different tasks to be given and different styles of learning the students have. However, when teachers are well-prepared, they then only have to run the activities which will last for the whole week or even more, depending on the length period of the subject.

The implementation of the new paradigm and strategies of student-centered learning (if the teacher used teacher-centered learning previously) relies more to the teacher’s attitude, enthusiasm and comprehension on the ‘new’ method itself rather than students’ reaction. Transition process is never an easy road to take, especially when the teachers themselves show pessimism, doubt and unsure that this ‘new’ method will work. Pessimism is contagious, so does optimism. Gaining as much as possible information and practices on student-centered learning is a must. Site visiting to other schools which are believed and proven apply this method will be beneficial for teachers. Teachers’ training, workshop and also sharing session with the ‘facilitator’ teachers will also help teachers to gain fully comprehension on what it means to be a facilitator rather than a dictator teacher. Last but not least, practices make perfect. Teachers should do the transition process from teacher-centered learning to student-centered learning smoothly. It can be done by doing the changes gradually, for example rather than dictatorly assign the students to do certain task with certain form of activities, the teacher can give the students options in what do they want to do and how they want to do it. Positive reinforcement from the teacher, seeing mistakes as part of learning process, feeling owning the learning process and the lifelong learner modeled by the teacher will minimize the rejection from the students on the implementation of student-centered learning.

Below are some alternative strategies proposed by Veira (2010) that can be implemented by teachers to change from teacher-centered learning to student-centered learning:

<b>Change From</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Change To</b>	<b>Description</b>
Teacher-centered	Teachers spend time disseminating information to students through direct instruction.	Student-centered	Teachers act as facilitators, coaching students as they work on authentic projects
Content Coverage	Teachers cover content through direct instruction.	Learning and Doing	Teachers design projects to address essential academic standards. Student performance on projects demonstrates proficiency or deficiency with respect to standards. Intervention is done for students not meeting standards
Memorizing information	Teachers spend most time involved in direct instruction, with assessment occurring as a test at the end where recall of information is tested.	Using information	Teachers have students use information to develop authentic projects where mastery of information is demonstrated in the way information is used in the project.
Lecturer	Teachers spend most of their time involved in “stand and deliver” knowledge comes from teacher.	Facilitator	The teacher provides projects that involve students doing research and assimilating the knowledge themselves. Teacher act as coaches and provide support as needed by students. They take on the role of project manager.
Whole Group Configuration	All students receive the same instruction. One size fits all	Flexible grouping configuration based on individual Student needs	Teachers group students based on needs. Instruction seldom is to the whole group. Rather, instruction occurs with individuals, pairs, or small groups as needed
Isolated	Students are encouraged to work individually	Collaborative	Teachers allow students to work collaboratively on projects and network with others in the class, as well as experts outside of school
Quiz and Test Assessments	Students are assessed through tests only	Performance-based Assessment	Teachers utilize projects as well as other products and performances as assessments to determine student achievement and needs. Assessments are tailored to the talents/needs of the students

<b>Change From</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Change To</b>	<b>Description</b>
Textbook Dependent	The teacher may follow the textbook chapter by chapter, page by page. Textbook is the major source of information.	Multiple sources of information including technology	Teachers use the textbook as just another resource, which is used in conjunction with the internet, journals, interviews of experts, etc.
Technology as a luxury	The teacher is the main user of technology, primarily as a means of presenting information	Technology fully integrated into the classroom	Teachers have students regularly use technology to find information, network/communicate with each other and experts, and to produce and present their projects, assignments, and performances
Teachers teaching to the one learning style	Teachers teach to one learning style (almost) all the time. Teachers also expect student submissions to always be the same most or all the time.	Teachers addressing the learning styles of all learners	Teachers use different means of presenting information. Methods are based on the preferences of individual students or groups. Students are able to convey information to the teacher via their projects/performances/assignments in a variety of modalities, based on their preferences.
Learning content	The focus is in covering content	Learner-directed learning	Through projects, teachers have students learn how to ask the right questions, do an appropriate investigation, get answers, and use the information so they can continue to learn all their lives
Teaching in such a way as to disengage students	Students become bored because school is not engaging and they feel they have to power down	Engaging the 21 <sup>st</sup> century student	Teachers consider how to utilize the unique characteristics of the 21 <sup>st</sup> century brain and the habits of the 21 <sup>st</sup> century digital native to provide engaging and effective instruction.

**Table 1. Strategies to change from teacher-centered learning to student-centered learning**

## **CONCLUSION**

We strongly believe that in order to respond to the challenges in 21<sup>st</sup> century related to the role of teachers, it is obvious that the main role of teachers is as facilitators. Therefore, the method that enables the teachers to do their role is student-centered learning. The teachers function as facilitators that enforce students' critical thinking, creativity and independency. Teachers involve students in designing the learning activities and assessments. Teachers also give opportunity to students to choose the preferred activities based on their learning styles.

**REFERENCES**

- Brown, H. D. 2007. *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy*. White Plains: Pearson Education.
- Harmer, J. 2007. *The practice of English language teaching*. White Plains: Pearson Education, Inc.
- IBO.2007. *Making the PYP happens: A curriculum framework for international primary education*. Chippenham, Wiltshire: Anthony Rowe.
- Johnson, B, and McElroy, T. M. 2004. *The changing role of the teacher in the 21st century*. (retrieved on February, 6, 2014 from [www.educationsspeakersgroup.com/edutainers.html](http://www.educationsspeakersgroup.com/edutainers.html))
- Paul, D. 2003. *Teaching English to children in Asia*. Quarry Bay: Pearson Education Asia.
- University of South Carolina Board of Trustee.2014. *Teaching styles: 7 things to consider about teaching styles*. (retrieved on February, 6, 2014 from <https://www.sc.edu/cte/guide/teachingstyles/index.shtml>)
- Veira, I. 2010. *Roles of teachers in the 21st century*, (retrieved on February, 6, 2014 from [http://www.pearsonclassroomlink.com/articles/0910/0910\\_0502.htm](http://www.pearsonclassroomlink.com/articles/0910/0910_0502.htm))