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AND PRACTICE: PROS AND CONS**

The paper analyses two “centred” approaches in contemporary education – the teacher-centred approach and the student-centred approach. In recent decades, these two educational approaches have been a point of analysis (and often even discord) among the scholars and writers who write on both the theory and practice of education in general or on a particular educational level – from the kindergarten to universities. The contemporary tendency finds more proponents of the student-centred education, as the teacher-centred education is being usually represented as an out-of-date educational practice, which is unable to bring any positive results in today’s classroom. The analysis of these discussions about the “centred” approaches in education shows that the very terms “the student-centred education” and “the teacher-centred education” are quite ambiguous and used with different meaning by different authors. Yet, the major tendencies of the issue allow to trace these discussions back to the same roots, which can be found in the standpoints of a number of the authors who called to reforms in education since the eighteenth century, such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Froebel, John Dewey, and some others. It results into conclusion that the “centred” approaches of today are the rudiments of the Modern project. A closer analysis of advantages and disadvantages of these approaches, stated by a number of authors (and which have already become a “common place” in writings on the issue), reveals behinds these formulae the mechanistic approach, which is one of the core characteristics of the Modern project. Both profound relatedness of these approaches to the Modern project and that they are founded on the mechanistic picture of the world necessarily call for their revision. The conclusion is drawn that the “centred” approaches in the proper meaning of the term are definitely the rudiments of the Modern project and therefore are incompatible with the contemporary education needs and social climate. On the other hand, it is clear that many recent publications understand under the name of the “student-centred” (in contrast with the “teacher-centred”) education, an absolutely different reality of education that recognises the abrupt brake with the modern tradition, and endeavours to construct new ways of teaching and learning. Therefore, today both the education theory and pedagogical practice need badly a revision to keep up with the realities of the contemporary world and the newest discoveries and achievements in humanities, science, and technology. It is also noted that the more rigorous language is needed to express the contemporary educational issues and needs, both in theory and practice.

Key words: educational approaches, learner-centred approach, student-centred approach, student-centred education / learning (SCE / SCL), teacher-centred approach, theory of education, educational practices.

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У статті проаналізовано два «центровані» підходи в сучасній освіті – підхід, орієнтований на вчителя, і підхід, орієнтований на учня. В останні десятиліття ці два освітні підходи є предметом аналізу (і часто навіть розбіж-

ностей) серед науковців та авторів, які пишуть як про теорію, так і про практику освіти в цілому, так і про окремі освітні рівні – від дитячого садка до університету. Сучасна тенденція полягає у тому, що освіта, орієнтована на учня знаходить все більше прихильників, тоді як освіта, орієнтована на вчителя, зазвичай представляється як застаріла освітня практика, яка не здатна принести жодних позитивних результатів у сучасному класі. Аналіз цих дискусій про «центровані» підходи в освіті показує, що самі терміни «студентоцентроване навчання» і «вчительоцентроване навчання» є досить неоднозначними і використовуються різними авторами у різних значеннях. Проте основні тенденції питання дозволяють простежити, що ці дискусії сягають одних і тих самих коренів, які можна знайти у низки авторів, котрі закликали до реформ в освіті, починаючи з XVIII століття, таких як Жан-Жак Руссо, Песталоцці, Фребель, Джон Дьюї та деяких інших. Звідси випливає висновок, що «центровані» підходи сьогодення є вкоріненими у проекті Модерну. Більш уважний аналіз переваг і недоліків цих підходів, про які говорить ціла низка авторів (і які вже стали загальником у працях на цю тему), виявляє за цими формулами механістичний підхід, який є однією з ключових характеристик проекту Модерну. Глибока спорідненість цих підходів з проектом Модерну і те, що вони ґрунтуються на механістичній картині світу, з необхідністю вимагають їхнього перегляду. Зроблено висновок, що «центровані» підходи у власному розумінні цього терміну, безумовно, є рудиментами проекту Модерну, а тому несумісні з сучасними освітніми потребами та суспільним кліматом. З іншого боку, очевидно, що в багатьох останніх публікаціях під «студентоцентричною» (на відміну від «викладацькоцентричною») освітою розуміють зовсім іншу реальність освіти, яка усвідомлює різке розрив з модерною традицією і намагається конструювати нові способи викладання та навчання. Тому сьогодні і теорія освіти, і педагогічна практика гостро потребують перегляду, щоб відповідати реаліям сучасного світу та новітнім відкриттям і досягненням у гуманітарних, природничих і технічних науках. Також зазначається, що потрібна більш сувора мова для вираження сучасних освітніх проблем і потреб, як в теорії, так і на практиці.

Ключові слова: освіта, освітні підходи, освітні практики, студентоцентроване навчання, студентоцентрований підхід, викладачецентрований підхід, теорія освіти.

Problem statement. The present state of education is often described as a crisis. Any crisis, however, may bring one of the two following outcomes: there may be either the decline and fall or it may provide an opportunity to recovery and the better quality of education. In the contemporary studies on both the education theory and practice, one of the central places belongs to discussions about two “centred” approaches: the student-centred approach and the teacher-centred approach. In recent decades, these two educational approaches have been a point of broad analysis (and often even discord) among the scholars and writers, who write on both the theory and practice of education in general or on a particular educational level – from the kindergarten to universities. The relevance of the “centred” approaches, however, may be questioned as, it seems, they are based on opposing the teacher and student(s). This dichotomy (real or imaginable) seems irrelevant under the present conditions and realities of education, and moreover since it seems that today’s education theory and practice must be set free from the burden of the past.

Analysis of recent research and publications. A few recent decades in the education theory and practice are notable for increasing attention to the “centred” approaches. The ongoing debate on the subject covers a broad range of topics (Altun, 2023; Edmondson, 2006; Harmelen, 1998). A number of studies are focused in particular on the nature of these approaches (Blumberg, 2008; Hula, 2020; Shah, 2020) or on their advantages and disadvantages of the “centred” approaches (Azizova, 2023; Bilyakovska, 2023; O’Neil et al., 2005; Rao, 2020). There are a few

works focus on the multiple meanings that arise of the different interpretation of these approaches (Bremner, 2021; Shah, 2020). There are also a few general studies on the topic (Chung, 2000; Weimer, 2002).

Purpose statement. The purpose of the present paper therefore is to analyse two “centred” approaches in contemporary education – the teacher-centred approach and the student-centred approach.

General study. Any “centred” approach, whatever it may be the student-centred approach or the teacher-centred approach, shifts the “centre” of the classroom focus on the side of one or the other party. The problem is that the teacher and student(s) are being regarded as the opposite parties, though in reality the classroom does not require an opposition, but cooperation and fellowship for the common good of both teachers and students.

The contemporary tendency finds more proponents of the student-centre education, as the teacher-centred education is being usually represented as an out-of-date educational practice, which is unable to bring any positive results in today’s classroom. It seems, however, to be rather a matter of fashion, founded on a superficial desire of novelty and prompt changes which became a characteristic of common people in a few recent centuries or an unapt response to the challenges of the swiftly changing world that require the changes in education.

The analysis of these discussions about the “centred” approaches in education shows that the very terms “the student-centred education” and “the teacher-centred education” are quite ambiguous and used with different meaning by different authors.

Thus, Shah, focusing on the learners centred teaching (LCT), as he puts it, writes that “The LCT has been known by a variety of terms, including child-centered education; child-centered pedagogy; child-centered teaching; child-centered learning, learner-centered approach, student-centered teaching, student-centered learning; learner-centredness; or student-centered” (Shun, 2020: 46). So that, the plurality of terms used interchangeably reveals the ambiguousness of the terms and flawlessness of the definition. In the same vein a number of earlier studies maintain the thesis (see: Blumberg, 2008; Dupin-Brayant, 2004; Harmelen, 1998; Chung and Walsh, 2000; Leo et al., 2003; Mazumara, 2011; O’Neil and McMahon, 2005; Weiner, 2002). It should be said that any “centred” approach is a very dubious undertaking, which is very far from being of a common agreement on the educational stage. And it may seem (or even been the case) that everyone understands the term as broadly as one needs or indulges him- or herself to understand it.

Yet, the major tendencies of the issue allow to trace these discussions back to the same roots, which can be found in the standpoints of a number of authors who called to reforms in education since the eighteenth century, such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), Johan Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746-1827), Friedrich Froebel (1782-1852), John Dewey (1859-1952), and some others.

Rémi Brague in his book *Le Règne de l’Homme: Genèse et échec du projet modern* (2015) writes: “From the dawn of modernity, education was conceived as the object of a distinct discipline, and pedagogy assumed its independence. It found its theoreticians in Alberti, then Montaigne and Comenius. It flourished in the eighteenth century, after Locke’s *Some Thoughts concerning Education* (1693), with Rousseau’s *Émile* (1762), Kant’s *Lectures on Pedagogy* (published in 1803), then, also as practical, with J.H. Pestalozzi. Parallel to these, the “novel of education” became an independent literary genre, quite well represented ever since Fénelon’s *Telemachus*. Enlightenment utopias were “pedagogical poems.” Morelly has a very interesting formulation: man is to be “tamed by the mechanism of an education conformed to our principles.”” (Brague, 2018: 161).

Brague notes that “Rousseau formed the project of an absolute control of the child by the educator, which would be even more effective as the educator was to remain invisible to his charge” (Brague, 2018: 164). So, the modern pedagogic is essentially manipulative at its very foundation. “Pestalozzi, Froebel, and John Dewey extended this approach to thinking about children and their education, developing and revising existing ideas, and ensuring that the application of

these new approaches to education was sound” (Shah, 2020: 48).

John Dewey, in his *School and Society* (1899) draws a direct analogy with so-called the Copernican revolution in astronomy in the sixteenth century: “Now the change which is coming into our education is the shifting of the center of gravity. It is a change, a revolution, not unlike that introduced by Copernicus when the astronomical center shifted from the earth to the sun. In this case the child becomes the sun about which the appliances of education revolve; he is the center about which they are organized” (Dewey, 1913: 51).

The classical “centred” approaches of today, therefore, are the rudiments of the Modern project with the mechanistic way of thinking and crave for domination over nature, things, and other human beings. It is clear enough that the mechanistic foundation of the “centred” approaches in education also necessarily presupposes the subject-object perspective that was fully developed and explained within the philosophical framework of German idealism (see Brague, 2018: 161-162).

A closer analysis of advantages and disadvantages of these approaches, stated by a number of authors (and which have already become a “common place” in writings on the issue), reveals behinds these formulae the mechanistic approach that is one of the core characteristics of the Modern project. Both profound relatedness of these approaches to the Modern project and that they are founded on the mechanistic picture of the world necessarily call for their revision. On the other hand, the other authors endeavour to fill the old terms with new meaning, bringing the educational agenda to the enquiries and requirements of today.

N.K. Rao, for instance, says that “Student centered learning theory and practice are based on the constructivist learning theory that emphasizes the learner’s critical role in constructing meaning from new information and prior experience” (Rao, 2020: 132). But the rise of the constructivist learning theory is normally connected with the name of Jean Piaget (1896-1980) and Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934), who pioneered new approaches to education, more or less definitely breaking with the modern educational paradigm (e.g., see Vygotsky, 1962; Vygotsky, 1978).

Shahlo Azizova notes that “Student-centered approach focuses on the needs and interact of the students. The role of the teacher is facilitating, coaching and guiding. Teachers help students to find their own way of learning effectively. By utilizing this method during the learning process critical thinking, problem solving and creativity can be improved. Students are able to learn to collaborate with others. This can develop the teamwork and social skills”

(Azizova, 2023: 139). In contrast, the author mentions that this “communitarianism” in education has its weak sides both for students, who are introverts or prefer to work independently, and in majority of cases also for teachers as this approach requires smaller classes, a broader range of different resources, the use of various technologies to meet the needs of every student in the classroom. Another threat in using this approach is that students can miss or misinterpret some essential information, which may slow down their learning or even prove it ineffective. So, the final decision on the student-centred approach is that “utilizing student-centered education depends on the students potential and the topics, because some of the themes and information should be clarified by the teacher in a traditional learning environment. According to the available resources, subjects, contexts and students this method can be used.” (Azizova, 2023: 139). This proves that the student-centred approach cannot be considered the only and universal solution of classroom issues and requires a deep consideration before applying it in a particular classroom and for particular student groups.

Geraldine O’Neill and Tim McMahon say that “Another concern regarding student centred learning is the belief that students hold in relation to their learning. Students who value or have experienced more teacher–focused approaches, may reject the student–centred approach as frightening or indeed not within their remit. Prosser and Trigwell’s work in higher education emphasises the different belief systems held by staff and students (2002). They found that lecturers with a teacher–centred approach to teaching held views that students should accommodate information rather than developing and changing their conceptions and understanding. The reverse was true for those with more student–centred approaches to their teaching. Perry’s work on the development of University students highlights how students move from a dualistic view that knowledge is right or wrong to a relativist view that all answers are equally valid (Perry 1970). This study highlights that even during

the University years, students can change their view on learning and as they move through the years so to may their views on student–centred learning change. In support of Perry’s work, Stevenson and Sander (2002) highlighted that 1st year medical students were suspicious of the value of student–centred learning methods” (O’Neil, 2005: 36).

They also add that “The changing demographics of the student population and the more consumer/client–centred culture in today’s society have provided a climate where the use of student-centred learning is thriving. The interpretation of the term ‘student-centred learning’ appears to vary between authors as some equate it with ‘active learning’, while others take a more comprehensive definition including: active learning, choice in learning, and the shift of power in the teacher–student relationship. It is used very commonly in the literature and in University policy statements, but this has not necessarily transferred into practice.” (O’Neil, 2005: 37).

Conclusions. Thus, the conclusion can be drawn, concerning the “centred” approaches in the education theory and practice:

First, the “centred” approaches in the proper meaning of the term are definitely the rudiments of the Modern project and therefore are incompatible with the contemporary education needs and social climate. Therefore, today both the education theory and pedagogical practice need badly a revision to keep up with the realities of the contemporary world and the newest discoveries and achievements in humanities, science, and technology.

On the other hand, it is clear that many recent publications understand under the name of the “student centred” (in contrast with the “teacher-centred”) education, an absolutely different reality of education that recognises the abrupt brake with the modern tradition, and endeavours to construct new ways of teaching and learning, so a new, and more rigorous language is needed to express the contemporary educational issues and needs, both in the area of theory and practice.

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