ANNA S. COHENMILLER
PhD, Assistant Professor
at Graduate School of Education
Nazarbayev University
United States

MARTHA MERRILL
PhD, Associate Professor
of Higher Education
at Kent State University
United States

DUISHON SHAMATOV
PhD, Associate Professor at
Graduate School of Education
Nazarbayev University
Kyrgyzstan

EFFECTIVE TEACHING STRATEGIES:
A BRIEF OVERVIEW

School is not preparation for life. School is life itself.
John Dewey

This article discusses and presents a brief overview for effective teaching strategies within the school or university classroom. As teachers know, teaching is a challenging task. There are many people who may know their subjects very well. However, not everyone is able to convey what he or she knows to others. In fact, despite the fact teachers know a lot, many struggle to explain their knowledge to others. The main reason is that those specialists do not have knowledge, skills and competencies of sharing what they know with others. Thus, this paper attempts to address the mismatch between having knowledge about a topic and being able to share it with others by providing an overview of effective teaching strategies.

Some key questions used to frame this overview of effective teaching strategies include: *What does student-center learning mean and how can it be implemented? What are the effective teaching strategies? What is "active pedagogy" and "active learning?" How can they benefit students?* This article provides a background on student-centred learning, provides a brief introduction to collaborative learning techniques, and suggests steps to enhance effective teaching strategies within the classroom.

Background of Effective Teaching Strategies
Effective teaching uses *teaching strategies* supporting varied learning styles. Defining teaching strategies varies in the literature. At times they are called 'teaching methods', 'techniques, 'styles', 'ways', 'practices' or 'approaches.' Silova (2010) argues, "teacher quality has a significant influence on student learning, and that raising teacher quality has the greatest potential for improving student performance" (p. 174). Thus, it is important to improve teaching so that it can bring positive learning outcomes.

Мұғалімнің кәсіби дамуы – білім беру жүйесін жаңартудың негізі
Профессиональное развитие учителя – основа обновления системы образования
Teachers professional development – basis of education system reform

39

While writing about teaching strategies or approaches, it is important to mention Paulo Freire who had a significant influence on the concept of student-centred learning. In his work, "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" (1970), Freire critiqued the "banking" model of education where teachers *deposit* facts in the heads of students. According to Freire (1970):

Education thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiqués and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat. This is the "banking" concept of education, in which the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits. They do, it is true, have the opportunity to become collectors or cataloguers of the things they store. (p. 72)

In the banking concept of education according to Freire, students passively receive information, where the main source of knowledge in the classroom is a teacher. This relies on a "traditional" method of teaching, one in which the teacher is the centre of all knowledge. These types of traditional or 'teacher-centred approach' are characterized by the "predominant use of traditional methods of teaching such as formal lectures, seminars and examinations; the teacher provides structured material during lectures, where students listen while taking notes…" (Sablonniere et al., 2009, p. 629). This means that teachers are the main source of information and there is little interaction between teacher and student in the classroom. Furthermore, teachers do not engage students in any classroom activities perceived as unnecessary. A teacher-centred approach concentrates on students to "adopt a surface learning" (Beausaert, et al., 2013, p. 2). As further stated by Beausaert, et al. (2013), a surface approach to learning refers to "students who do not seek further understanding of the learning material and only rely on memorization and reproduction" (p. 3). Fortunately there are ways to move beyond surface level learning and go deeper into knowledge production and understanding.

Conversely, a student-centred approach (also called a learner-centred approach), is the use of techniques, attitudes and behaviors (Sablonniere et al., 2009, p. 630) that differ significantly to the one that teachers have been using in a traditional class. This approach helps move beyond a focus on teachers filling students' minds with information, passively, as a surface level type of teaching method. As Silova (2011) argues, a "student-centred approach is better than just memorization of facts and rote learning of the teaching material" (p. 314). Likewise, Snyder and Snyder (2008) assert that traditional methods can be enhanced, as traditional teaching methods "use too many facts and not enough conceptualization; too much memorizing and not enough thinking" (p. 92). Ultimately, teachers need to promote students' independent thinking and their thorough understanding that may ultimately lead to better learning outcomes.

In the student-centred approach, "the teacher provides the necessary resources, enhances the quality of discussion by allowing the students to tap into their curiosity, engage in intellectual interpersonal discourse with their peers, and encourages them to discover vital information themselves" (Gonzales, 2014, p. 65). Students are encouraged and motivated to work either in pair or small groups; they interact with both teacher and student peers, ultimately leading to fruitful discussions and collaboration.

Likewise, in contrast to the traditional teaching strategies, the teaching strategies emphasizing a student-centred approach provide students with a degree of freedom in choosing their learning path. Having a level of autonomy within the classroom and beyond can provide a sense of ownership of learning materials and improved learning in general (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule, 1986; Perry, 1970). As such, students become active participants in teaching and learning process. Ideally, teachers would then have knowledge and practice in using various effective teaching methods for employing a student-centred classroom. For instance, teachers should have a sound knowledge of active and interactive teaching and learning methods and use them in their practices regularly. Likewise, teachers should learn and have a good understanding of higher order thinking skills as recognized in Bloom's Taxonomy (not only lower and middle order) and promote higher order thinking of their students by asking open-ended or conceptual questions (see Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001; Bloom et al., 1956). Thus, teachers would then encourage discussions and ask students for their views and opinions, encouraging students to work in pairs and small groups in their classes. These types of processes promote students' independent

Methods of cooperative learning

learning which, ultimately, leads to better learning outcomes (Shamatov, 2012).

The Learning Paradigm. Barr and Tagg (1995) proposed that educational institutions refocus their policies and practices to be based on a learning paradigm rather than a teaching paradigm. In their analysis, everything from the scheduling of classes to the way teachers are compensated to classroom layouts reflects a focus on teaching, rather than on learning. Teachers may not be able to totally restructure their schools, but if they are clear about the learning outcomes they want students to achieve, they can try all kinds of ways to help students get there.

As the Learning Paradigm suggests, within student-centred teaching, there is a focus on the learner. The student is the emphasis and thus the classroom experience is *learner-centred.* Teaching methods adjust to the needs of the students, emphasizing techniques that produce learning. Therefore, is it important that professors are clear about what they want students to learn. These desirable outcomes follow the concept of "backward design" created by Wiggins and McTighe (2005). In "backward design," the teacher starts at the end, with the results or outcomes that are desired. Next, the teacher considers what evidence would prove that the student has met the outcome. Then the teacher designs activities that will provide students with the skills needed to produce that evidence. The identified results/ outcomes become what you want your students to know or be able to do by the end of the course, skills that are new to the students, something they could not do previously.

The focus on learning outcomes reflects changes in the way that educational institutions are evaluated, including in the Bologna Process countries. Evaluation used to focus on inputs, like the number of books in the library or the number of professors or the amount of space per student. The assumption was that good results come from good inputs. However, many evaluators decided that assumptions weren't enough; evidence of student achievements and other characteristics were needed. So evaluators began to focus on outputs: how many students graduated, compared to the number who entered; how many got jobs in their field; how many went on for higher degrees, etc. But that still didn't provide evidence of what was learned. Now, almost all US and European-based accrediting agencies require evidence of students' achievement of learning outcomes. The following provides three tips/questions for determining/ developing student learning objectives:

• What learning outcome would it help students achieve?

• Use active verbs to introduce the learning objective (e.g., students will **define**, students will **demonstrate**, students will **illustrate**, students will **explain**, students will **create**).

Use words that will let you determine whether or not the student has completed the objective. For example, stating that the student should "know" material does not indicate *how* you will determine this. However, indicating that the student should be able to create a story or construct a particular outcome using the indicated material would provide a specific measurable outcome.

Cooperative Learning Techniques

After developing student learning outcomes, an effective teaching strategy to emphasise student-centred learning is the use of cooperative learning— a group strategy with clear steps, roles and elements. Students work in small groups to achieve their learning and increase their own and each

Мұғалімнің кәсіби дамуы – білім беру жүйесін жаңартудың негізі
Профессиональное развитие учителя – основа обновления системы образования
Teachers professional development – basis of education system reform

41

other's learning by hearing diverse opinions. Ultimately the success of group work depends on the success of each student. The origins of cooperative learning rely upon rejecting competitive environments where students do not share their knowledge with each other eagerly. Instead, in cooperative learning environments, the group as a whole constructs knowledge, necessitating contributions from each member.

Learning outcomes are enhanced through student development of social skills and learning from one another in a cooperative learning activity/classroom. This type of learning is shown to increase student retention of information in comparison to other classroom teaching techniques, such as lectures (Brooks and Brooks, 1993). In cooperative learning, the professor is not the only source of knowledge, instead students learn how to evaluate others' contributions. In cooperative learning, students have a chance to work at higher levels of Bloom's taxonomy than they do when they are passive recipients of knowledge. They need to apply concepts, evaluate other students' contributions, and create something new. Students can become more aware of each other's formal and informal knowledge, or what can also be referred to as 'funds of knowledge' (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992). Ultimately, with cooperative learning, students perform better when they work together and share ideas.

> « *Within a cooperative learning classroom or activity, the professor functions as a guide and not as an evaluator* »

Roles within a cooperative learning class. Within a cooperative learning classroom or activity, the professor functions as a guide and not as an evaluator. Instead, the professor tries to get students to understand the advantages and disadvantages of various solutions so that they develop skills in problem solving. Skills in problem solving may be enhanced by group members taking on specified roles, such as facilitator, scribe, and speaker (Mannis, 2012). The facilitator ensures all are heard and the group remains on task. The scribe takes notes on what was said and the speaker presents ideas to the full class. The professor provides a clear outcome for the group work, models how to listen reflectively, and asks questions to make the students think more deeply.

Jigsaw method. Another classic collaborative learning technique for small groups is the 'jigsaw' method. In this approach, students go from an original group and are assigned to become 'experts' in a special topic group. As experts, they then re-form the original groups with new ideas and knowledge. In the original groups, the expert students teach their new knowledge to others, thus enacting higher order thinking. The jigsaw method encourages contributions from all, where each student contribution is valued.

Classroom Assessment Techniques (Angelo & Cross, 1993). At times, what we *want* to teach our students is not what they learn. To address this potential mismatch between what you want students to learn and what they learned, various techniques can be used. For example, teachers can implement a full group reflection at the end of the class period, as a form of assessment in practice. Using a few minutes, students are asked to write down on a piece of paper *the three most important words they heard that day*, and then to *write a few sentences explaining why one of those words was important to them*. This student feedback acts as a way for teachers to assess their own teaching (i.e., Did students learn what I intended them to learn?) and a way to move forward with the following lesson.

Conclusion
Moving from a teacher-centred classroom to student-centred one presents great opportunities for teachers within any subject matter. This article discussed a few effective teaching strategies that can be incorporated within the school or university classroom to enhance student learning. In particular, we presented the ideas of developing student learning outcomes using a backward design to determine what you want students to know by the end of the course and the use of cooperative learning to support varied learning styles and greater depth of knowledge. The description and examples provided present a basic overview of effective teaching strategies institute a student-centred classroom. •

REFERENCES:

Anderson, L. W., & Krathwohl, D. R. (Eds.). (2001). A taxonomy for learning, teaching and assessing: A revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of educational objectives: Complete edition, New York: Longman.

Angelo, T. A. & Cross, K. P. (1993) Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers 2e San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Barr, R. B. and Tagg, J. (1995) From Teaching to Learning: A New Paradigm for Undergraduate Education Change v.27(6), 13-26

Belenky, M.F., B.M. Clinchy, N.R. Goldberger and J.M. Tarule. (1986) Women's Ways of Knowing. New York: Basic Books

Bloom, B. S. et al (eds.) (1956) Taxonomy of Educational Objectives. Vol. 1: Cognitive Domain. New York: McKay

Dewey, J. (1916). Democracy and education: an introduction to the philosophy of education. The Macmillan company. Retrieved from http://books.google.com/books?id=yGxIAAAAMAAJ

Killen R (2003). Effective teaching strategies. Lessons from research and practice. Social Science Press. Australia.

Manis, Chad. (2012) Cooperative Learning: How to Assign Meaningful Tasks to Group Members. Daily Teaching Tools. http://www.dailyteachingtools.com/cooperative-learning-tasks.html

Moll, L. C., Amanti, C., Neff, J. D., & Gonzalez, N. (1992). Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. Theory Into Practice, 31(1), 132–141.

Perry, W. (1970) Forms of Ethical and Intellectual Development in the College Years: A Scheme New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston

Shamatov, D., Merrill, M., & CohenMiller, A. S. (2017). Effective Teaching Strategies in Higher Education. Astana, Kazakhstan: Eurasian Higher Educational Leadership Forum (EHELF).

Wiggins, G. and McTighe, J. (2005) Understanding by Design. 2e. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD).