A qualitative research on teacher’s in the TRNC towards the situation on learning the usage of student centred education

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Abstract

The basic aim of this study is to find out perceptions of the students of the teachers apply situation about student centered learning. Qualitative research method was used for this study and data were analyzed through “content analysis”. The perceptions of the students were gathered by the “semi structured interview Form”. The form was developed by the researchers. The interview form consisted of the questions including 2 parts which were, learning-teaching period and evaluation. The sample of the study consisted of 10 students from different primary schools of TRNC. The results of the study some of the teachers partly used student centered learning at learning process nonetheless none of the teachers used student centered learning at learning evaluation in class.

Keywords: Student centered learning, learning process, evaluation

1. Introduction

Today, in the society of information education systems based on memorizing have to deceive their validity. Oppositely, complex thinking, problem solving ability and life long active learning has taken has reached an important situation. Sharing of information and technology has today become an important factor, not only should schools stock up information for the individuals, but also they should present a fundamental healthy character and suitable environments for them to adapt in. For this reason, the main aim of education should be to bring up individuals such as; being interactive with the environment, to be able to reach information, to combine the information with their previous knowledge, be able to ask questions, and to make a discussion. These individuals who should have these abilities will be teenagers of the future where they will guide the world, but these will not become realistic and a teaching method if most of the time teachers stand at the pulpit and convey information from books and want students to repeat these (Raborife, M., & Phasha, N. 2010).

Today, the job for designing teaching and learning is; learning the information instead of getting the information; effective learning rather than traditional passive learning; from teacher centred to student centred; previously defined as strict education programs to flexible and changeable learning living. It is found more suitable for; new paradigm assumptions, individual discriminations, learn through living, be in cooperation with others, learning from the environment, to concentrate more on classroom atmosphere and interaction (teacher-student interaction and student-teacher interaction) and the family (Peck, B., Deans, C., & Stockhausen, L. 2010).

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In short the teacher’s roles are,

a) Making learning easier rather than making decisions,

b) From didactic to cooperative and

c) Changing from expert to being a learner (Siu, 1999).

Student centred education; by taking into consideration the individual’s qualifications, to have a scientific thinking ability, learnt learning, creative, use reached information, to have the ability to communicate, become familiar with universal values, using technology effectively and individuals who have proved themselves to provide student participation in the education process for re-construction (MOE EARGED, Student Centred Education Application Model, 2004).

A teacher teaching student centred education needs to make research on individual needs and interests, and to plan, apply and evaluate teaching which will include these needs and interests. To be able to perform this, firstly education targets, content, approaches that will be used in the learning environment teaching-learning, and also evaluation should be stated together with the students. In the level of every teaching-learning process students should participate in decision making. This is because, it is seen that student centred education “learning on which topic, when and how it will be is a referee in the related decisions” (Driscoll, 1994). Also, teaching plans should include the students’ activeness in teaching-learning methods and techniques.

Most of the developed countries make changes in technology and the society of information passing the path of education systems constantly changes to adapt to the developments in the education process, types of schools and up to the education programs so, in all fields reforms are taking place.

Today, education in EU country members and other developed countries approaches with “life-long learning for everybody”; the path through reaching information and teaching its methods, to become familiar with the understanding of student centred education, an effective guidance service and production is being organized to in a way to emphasize more on education. In this way, in the Turkish Republic of North Cyprus also aims to adapt to the changes being make around the world by organizing the IV. National Education Council and to review the Cyprus Turkish Education System.

The general aim of the Cyprus Turkish Education System is to train individuals as; a knowledgeable person, awareness in information, knowing how to reach information, learning how to elaborate the meaning of the reached information, to create new information from the prior learnt information and to use the created information in problem solving (TRNC MOE, Cyprus Turkish Education System, 2005).

Again, on the contrary of the IV National Education Council Cyprus Turkish Education Systems they targeted the 21st Century human characteristics as follows;

- Developed in the abilities of thinking, understanding and problem solving,
- Be able to use data in a creative way,
- Know how to reach information,
- Design the data and create it,
- To question, be able to openly express its thoughts, etc. types of qualifications are found (TRNC MOE, Cyprus Turkish Education System, 2005).

In the 21st century students learning process would be planned, applied and evaluated for them, it will be very difficult to see how to bring up teachers in such education environments through accepting what others would say (teacher), being individual is that do not question the information before taking it. Oppositely, they should be able
to make decisions for themselves, they should be able to solve the problems by themselves and in the teaching-learning process they should actively be able to participate in an environment which offers this education. In the decision made on the contrary of TRNC IV National Education Council a newly developed education system has aimed to accept that everyone will be able to learn at their own speed, appreciate very human, the path to reach information and teaching the methods, include an active guidance service, give opportunities for horizontal and vertical passes, and to reform a constructions equally of the opportunities viewed. Forethought of this construction, student centred education has been accepted as a new teaching application model. To form this type of teaching-learning environment the teacher is in charge of a large duty. In this new practice the teacher needs to be on the front plan for the application. For this model to be an active part of life the teacher needs to really acknowledge and become familiar with student centred education and it will be possible to apply it. In connection to this and based on the given information, it is of importance for the teachers of TRNC to evaluate the situation of Student Centred Education.

1.1. Aims

The general aim of this study is for the teachers in the TRNC to apply and evaluate the situation of student centred education through the views of the students. To be able to recognize the answers for the questions were asked below:

1- During the teaching-learning process of the teachers application to student centred education what were the views of the students in relation to this situation?

2- In the process of the teacher’s evaluation for the application of student centred education, what were the views of the students in relation to this situation?

2. Methods

2.1. Sample of Research

2.2. Instrument and data collection

This study has utilized from qualitative research methods. The method through collecting information for this qualitative research was applied through observation, interviews and the study of documents, perceptions were made natural and putting it forward in an holistic way towards a qualitative process that can be defined as an opportunity of an observed research (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2005). A qualitative research through data collecting method on interview technique was used in this study. In this study 12 primary school 5th form students participated and the sample of this study was randomly selected from three different primary schools in the TRNC. The chosen group was asked questions developed by researchers as “semi constructive veiw form” tool where prepared questions were asked towards Social Studies Lesson on the learning-teaching and evaluation process. To provide content validity of the developed form during the development 2 experts analysed and views were taken into consideration before it was finalized. It was aimed to state after a piloted interview with three students, wheather the questions were open and understandable, wheather the answers were reflected through the questions or not, during the interviews the voices were recorded and through the computer whatever was spoken was converted into written documents. It was asked by another expert to control the written documents were analyzed wheather the questions asked were open and understandable, wheather the subject in hand was valid to the content or not and wheather it provided the necessary information. At the end of this study the validity of the question statements were determined. The received information given in the interviews were added to the data collecting process, after all the views were recorded on a voice recording unit results taken into hand were solved through analyzing.

2.3. Data analysis

The answers given to the questions through the data collecting tool was qualitatively analyzed and in this analysis “Conventional Content Analysis” technique was used (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2000).
The content analysis process is as follows:

A code number was assigned to every student in the study group. In this way the data’s were traced and instead of using the participants name as qualitative data analysis, these code numbers were used. In this way, during the interviews of the content analysis researchers concluded that students thought about the effects on positive and negative thoughts were minimized.

The interview form was categorised according to the questions.

- The collected data through voice recordings were transferred to the computer and transformed into a text.
- The formed written text was separately read by two researchers. For the security of the data the researchers collected and categorised each answer of the statements. Later, by getting together they made discussions on the similarities and differences and reached a consensus.
- The exit frequency; meaning the frequencies of the answers to the questions were counted. These frequencies reveal how many students stated the answers.
- The obtained data in hand was argued, discussed and supported by a literature review.

3. Findings

The findings in hand were collected under two different headings towards the findings as Teaching-learning process and Evaluation process.

1. Findings towards Teaching-learning process

1.1. Making Group Studies Based On Cooperation

As a result of the interview, 6 out of 12 students stated that they were constantly involved in group studies, 4 students stated that they sometimes participated in group studies. 2 students stated that they never participated in group studies. According to students forming groups can be made in different ways. While occasionally teachers form the groups themselves, sometimes the group forming job should be left to the students.

8 students said that making group studies they allocate job roles and form a mutual product.

“Our teacher gives us the topic. We search for pictures about the topic, find some information and stick it on a piece of carton. We present the information we find and share our ideas.”

“During the group studies we firstly name our group. Each member of the group is allocated a job role. The necessary materials are shared. Some of us make searches from encyclopaedias’ and some through the internet. We bring all the information together and write it on paper.”

“We do projects in group studies. All the group studies are made together with the group. Everyone finds something by themselves. We share all these ideas together. We put forward the ones that we like or that are better.”

On the other hand two students stated how they perform their group studies:

“We are divided into groups of three or four. Everyone does their own study.”

“Sometimes every member of the groups makes their own study. The areas that we do not understand we help each other.”

Some students stated positive views on group studies. In a way that: “When we perform group studies our teacher believes that our relationship with our friends will be better.”

“When we perform by ourselves it will not be enjoyable. Getting together with the class will be much better.”

There may be some deficiency when we study alone. Being in cooperation may complete this.”

A student had stated a negative view in group studies. In a way that: “Our teacher makes us perform group studies. But I love to work by myself.”
1.2. Using Student Centred Activities

All the students stated that they had used discussion, journey-observation, term mapping and role play type of activities. 5 students stated that they mostly used the discussion method and 5 students stated that they used term mapping method. They also stated that role playing and journey observations were the methods they least used.

1.3. Provide All Students Learning

As a result of the interviews, it was determined that teachers were using student centred techniques. But, despite the use of these techniques lecturing it was proved that the traditional teacher centred teaching method was mostly used. It was stated that students in the classroom asked the teacher to repeat the topic for those students who did not understand. During the repetition stage it was said that for the students to be able to understand the topic better it was explained through giving more concrete examples. It was put forward that the teacher would get involved one-to-one with those students who did not clearly understand. It was voiced by students that some teachers especially would not go onto a new topic without understanding the previous topic.

1.4. Using Information and Communication Tools

As a result of the interviews made with the students, 11 out of 12 students stated that their teachers do not use TV, computer, internet, educational CD’s. Only 1 student: 

“Our teacher does not often use the television. She/he inserts a CD in their computer and shows us information from that.” In this way stated the teacher’s situation.

All the students also stated that they did not use a different course books or other references.

1.5 The Content to be Useful in the Students Daily Life

The interviews made with the study group students stated that all the teachers formed the content so that it will be useful in their daily lives. It was also put forward that the teachers would give examples from the students’ environments and lives in order to support the content of the topic.

1.6. Making Researches for Homework

All the students who participated in this study stated views that the teacher would researches for homework. It was stated by 5 students where their teacher would give them research homework once a week, 4 students stated that it was twice a week and 3 students stated that it would be once a month.

The students’ research topics were said to be: the various specifications of the country they live in, scientists’ lives, environment, people, the place and importance of technology in our lives type of topics. 8 students stated that as a result of their research homework they would discuss the materials they had found and 2 students stated that the information which they found would be put up on the panels to share with their friends.

“In class we would discuss what we found. In this way we can complete each other’s deficiencies.” In this way a student had expressed the importance of discussion as a result of the data obtained in the research.

All the students had stated that the teacher had also been a guide for them in finding resources for their research. A student had expressed their view in this way:

“Our teacher would warn us and say that for this homework you can find information from the internet on this site or you can find wide information about this topic from this reference.”

Though, only 5 students had voiced what their teachers expectations were from them.

“While our teacher would give us our research homework he/she would say you will make a research on this topic, what you find you will write on a piece of paper. They would tell us that we were able to benefit from encyclopaedias or the internet.”

“They would tell us to benefit from encyclopaedias, books and the internet. Then, after they brief us on the topic and give examples they would tell us to collect information.”

As a result of the interviews a student has stated its view by “Even if our teacher does not give it to us if a topic draws our attention we will make a research on it.”
It just shows that this type of thinking may turn into a habit and a lifestyle for the student.

1.7. Different Ways and Effective Ways of Asking Questions To Make Students Think (Criticism or Creative).
It was stated by 4 students from the students who participated in the study that teachers would ask open-ended questions. Only 4 could give examples for this. The given example questions are:

“For instance, in a book an activity showed that a child did not keep its promise given to his/her mother. Our teacher asks us what would we do if we were in this child shoes or if you were the mother or father what would you do?” type of questions were asked.

“What would happen if the world did not revolve?” type of questions would be asked.

“For instance why does it rain more in the Kyrenia area and it rains less in the Mesarya area?” type of question.

“Is olive oil useful or is it harmful?” type of questions would be asked to form a debate in the classroom.

1.8 The Most Effective Ways For Teachers Teaching-Learning Process
All the students stated that teachers were very good in conveying the topic. Only 2 students expressed that teachers would show interest in the students ideas. They also voiced that they were happy that they were given the opportunity to share their own ideas. These two students’ views were as follows:

“While the teacher explains the topic we are also able to express our ideas.”

“On the contrary of our teacher explaining we enjoy that our teacher listens to our ideas.”

2. Findings During the Evaluation Process
2.1. Using Alternative Measuring Tools For Diverse Evaluations
All the students who participated in the study stated that their teacher made evaluations only through verbal and written examinations and that alternative methods (observation, interview, portfolio) were not used.

2.2. Active Participation Situation During The Students Evaluation Process
All the students in the research group expressed their views in this way: “Our grades were always given by our teacher; I have never graded myself or my friends.”

2.3 The Use of Portfolios
As a result of the interviews made with the students showed us that all students had a folder where they kept their documents in. Though, these folders stated that they do not carry the features for the basics in student centred evaluation, students learning targets, for them to do self evaluation, and family dialogues fundamental product choice folder.

2.4. To Be Aware Of the Individuals Differences in the Evaluation Process
According to 10 students individual differences in the evaluation process is not used towards various activities (composition, poem, drama, songs, etc). These types of activities are aimed to only be used during the teaching-learning process to reinforce the topic.

4. Conclusion
Today, it is important that students are rapidly developing in the information society in order to have new information and become an expert in the field of abilities, and have qualifications in analysis and decision making. For this situation to occur, instead of teacher centred understanding learning centred active learning model should be applied. Therefore, 21st century new information and abilities should be gained for the students. In gaining these abilities cooperative learning plays an important role. Based on cooperative learning, students will learn these within groups and self experience. In this way students communicate more actively and the learning environment turns into a student centred structure.

In this study, during group work studies it is stated that partly is based on cooperative learning method. It is important that students believe that helping each other will make their learning more effective where positive
attitudes towards cooperative based learning are the most important indicators. Alongside with group work in the classroom, research activities were given as homework in scheduled time for the students. Though these studies are made as homework and the research topics are stated by the teachers. Teachers’ state references so students do not study much outside of the given references so they do not include their personal lives which is the total opposite to student centred education application.

By organizing the method, technique and strategies used in student centred learning it ensures an important role in individuals’ development and participation. According to the research results, it is determined that teachers use discussions, term mapping, role play and journey observations in student centred learning activities. With a course book prepared by TRNC MOE for 5th form Social Studies that includes activities with these techniques it is natural that the use of these activities by teachers show an increase. Together with this, it is lecturing method which is the main method used in teacher centred education is constantly used in the classrooms which is a fact that cannot be ignored. It uncovers the truth that the lecturing of teachers is the most effective aspect for the students.

Education in schools that are dependent only on books is one of the important factors that guide the student into being committed to memorizing. While carrying out student centred learning, each book should convey means of attributes. To increase the impact of student centred learning it is important to bring students to meet references that have different features. Using information and communication technology that is aimed to help students gain thinking abilities. Despite all the scientific facts research findings show the insufficient use of information and communication technologies. The reasons for teachers not using these tools should be searched and it should be stated whether the reason for this is either through the insufficiency of references or is it the lack of ability to use them. After the reasons are stated studies should administered to eliminate the deficiency.

Today in the information society, the studied and which can be questioned is developing individuals who have scientific and consistent thinking abilities is important to gain critical and creative thinking abilities. In gaining these abilities, it is required that the teacher guides the student through various questions. It is stated that when looking at the research findings from this point of view, in the teaching-learning process teachers are insufficient. However, in today’s requirements it is necessary to examine and bring up people to reach information and create new information, besides on the decision made by the IV. National Education Council the 21st century human specifications are among the targeted by the Cyprus Turkish Education System. With this aim drawing the students’ attention to learning actions, making their learning environments more dynamic and forming more attractive environments. Within the light of the research findings, by totally keeping to the traditional methods in the evaluation process it is determined towards teacher centred written and verbal examinations. At this point, teachers’ part of the TRNC National Education, Ministry of Youth and Sports should be given in-service training program should be organized on Student Centred teaching-learning process and evaluation topics and opportunities should be provided for teachers to develop and apply these teaching abilities.

References


