

Changing Education Trends towards Formal to Non-Formal Learner's Centric Approach

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Abstract : This paper provides an insight into the changing paradigm from formal to non-formal education that supports the focus towards learners' needs to adapt to the rapidly changing technological advancements. The modern key technology is focused on automation, artificial intelligence, and machine learning. The shift from Information Technology to these new areas requires changing the focus more towards facilitating the students to self-adapt to the environment. Hence, this paper focuses on various ways we can collectively focus on shifting from the teacher-centric approach of traditional teaching and assessment to the new method of the learner-centric approach which is demanded in this era.

IndexTerms - formal education, non-formal learning, learner centric, teaching, assessment.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, especially in the period from 2001 to 2015, the world witnessed the information technology revolution. Computers and connected networks such as the internet and fiber-optic broadband telecom networks facilitated the IT boom and job opportunities. It was very difficult to find a job if we were illiterate in computer knowledge. The telecom, medical, industrial, BPO, and IT-enabled services, medical coding, and many more were the important sectors of business expansion and the students' focus towards employment. But now, artificial intelligence and machine learning have taken over all areas of our modern life. Industry, automotive, cyber security, medical technology improvements, and even education are slowly seeing teachers being replaced by online learning platforms and assessments. So, we need to introspect—by the next two decades, say by 2050—can we not imagine that there won't be much formal regular education and more focus towards non-formal education? Self-assessments, free and paid online learning platforms like Coursera, edX, FutureLearn, and many more allow students to select their core interest fields, get certified, and take automation courses with artificial intelligence and machine learning to adapt to the new job market. This is the time, and not far ahead, when teachers need to come out of the traditional teacher-centric mechanism and move towards learner-centric approaches. In this paper, the author is providing some methods we can adopt in the classrooms which will focus on current trends and learning strategies.

2. CRITICAL REVIEW

MOOC model and its importance (Shah et al., 2022) are discussed in the paper. The learners' active participation in the courses on online platforms is discussed. The LCM model and the wheel are discussed. In this paper, the critical steps of the LCM model of MOOC are discussed but still, a research gap is found regarding what other methods of learner-centric approaches we can still investigate.

The paradigm shift from teachers' requirement in the AI era is questioned (Gentile, Città, Perna, & Allegra, 2023) in this critical review paper. The role of teachers in the professional development and growth of students and the framework is established in the paper. However, more learner-centric methods are still an area of further requirement in the modern era.

3. LEARNER CENTERED METHODS

Learner-centric methods focus on the importance of active learning for students along with the teachers' guidance. Teachers are the point of contact and act as facilitators for the student learning environment. Classroom teaching needs to be restricted, and self-assessment and learning methods for learners are required to prepare the future generation to adapt to the new technological era. Some of the approaches in learner-centric styles are simulation-based, project-based, case studies, prototype building for start-ups and incubation cells, poster presentations, awareness week in the public, and the identification of campus- and community-based research problems. Each subject in the curriculum needs to undergo at least one of these methods in addition to the teacher-centric pedagogy of written end-semester exams. This means a student will be assessed with minimal direct teaching from teachers; however, fitting the course to any of the styles above will automatically follow the outcome of the course, and attaining all these course outcomes will support the shift from formal to non-formal learning.

4. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

The universities and the departments of education administration and leadership need to critically analyse the outcome of each course. Students' formal attendance to the classes and completion of course credits by attending end-semester or year exams will fairly fetch the graduate certifications. The skills of a particular discipline will be inculcated in students only if they undergo non-formal education practices. In the last decade (2010 to 2020), teachers and universities adopted the culture of introducing students to MOOC online learning platforms for up skilling in the particular course. But learner-centric methods discussed here will go

one step beyond mere learning. This will enable students to implement the design or at least perform a critical analysis of the subject, which will last throughout their lives.

5. CONCLUSION

This article provides a critical thinking about the need for a shift towards learner-centric and non-formal education. The need for the technology shift towards 2050 shows the requirement of AI and automation revolution. Teachers are required for professional and facilitation guidance to the students. Teachers cannot be replaced in this role. However, students need to invest their time beyond exams and the credit system. Educational leadership in institutions needs to strategically plan some methods in teaching, learning, and assessment decisions. Once the course is assigned, teachers may prepare a detailed course plan where learner-centric approaches are part of the study, so as to make students not just ready for industry jobs but also capable of accepting fast-paced technological advancements, being prepared academically as well as in intellectual and mental capacity.

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