

Chapter 56

Teacher Directed Instruction for Student Engagement

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ABSTRACT

This article will define teacher directed instruction in light of a trend toward more learner-centered classroom experiences for 21st century students. The authors will identify the danger in creating an either/or paradigm but rather discuss what researchers have determined to be best practices in the teacher-centered context. Also, Hoyt and Perera (2000) surveyed faculty as to which type of instruction approach they incorporated into their practice. Forty-five percent identify some combination which used lecture as a primary approach. Thus the discussion of best practice will broaden the current conversation beyond what is good or bad but rather what supports student outcomes. Specific successful pedagogical strategies will be outlined including development of an engaging lecture, cooperative learning designed to enhance reading assignments, purposeful questioning, and using the Socratic Method.

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INTRODUCTION

Teaching incorporates more than the transmission of information but also the environment and culture of learning. Teacher directed instruction also known as teacher-centered pedagogy is under fire as students demand less lecture and rote memorization and more hands-on activities. This chapter will make the argument that a well-constructed teacher directed course can be extremely engaging. The authors will also warn against viewing pedagogy as either teacher-centered or learner-centered.

Huba and Freed (2000) contrast teacher and learner-centered instruction as a model or paradigm. Their research shifts the focus from what to teach to how students learn. They acknowledge that a teacher-centered methodology is not ineffective, but a shift from solely lecturing to a teaching style that incorporates more student interaction and a demonstration of learning beyond rote memorization supports long-term retention. Huba and Freed (2000) characterize a teacher-centered paradigm in several ways:

1. Content is primarily delivered by the instructor and students are solely learners.
2. Content is not contextualized but rather students passively receive the information.
3. Assessment is sole the responsibility of the instructor, requires only rote memorization and is summative in nature.
4. Learning is the responsibility of the individual and courses can be constructed in a competitive nature (p. 5).

These characteristics may be more evident in large, lecture style courses where individual interaction is more cumbersome. However, the challenge is for faculty to have a solid understanding of when teacher directed instruction is most appropriate and how to implement strategies to maximize learning. The next several sections provide a background for how content delivery, course environment and how student self-authorship all

play a role into the instructional decisions faculty make each semester.

BACKGROUND

Models, Space and Independent Learners

As faculty we design courses with a myriad of assumptions about teaching and learning. Those assumptions influence the decisions we make about how course time is used, assignments are structured and assessments are designed. Therefore, a theoretical background may provide a framework to place assumptions into a context for examination. Some assumptions that may be present include the student's lack of prior content knowledge; more content is equivalent to increased rigor and time constraints (it's faster to lecture). It may be assumed that teacher directed instruction requires less planning over time and is the format most appropriate in high education. The objective of this section is to provide three general models that incorporate the best of teacher directed and yet provide a space for the consideration of the learner.

Wink (2000) identifies three perspective models on teaching: the transmission model, the generative model and the transformative model. The transmission model instructionally is an instruction filling students with information and the students passively receiving that information. The instructor controls the scope and sequence of information. Evaluation of this type of instruction is typically an examination which requires students to repeat information in the form they were given it (p. 121). Researchers have come to know that students must construction knowledge from information which has lead to the generative model of teaching. This model provides a space for students to engaging in the learning in groups to build on their own learning. Learning is not longer passive. The role of the instructor is to structure

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