The changing face of the education

Dear Readers,

In the information age that we live in, there have been many changes in many fields mainly with the technological, political and economic changes. In this age, information has been the focus of all fields. Thanks to internet, information can spread to many parts of the World very quickly. Therefore, the people can reach the information that they need without having time and place limitations as long as they have the access to the information and communication technologies. As a result, people can find the information in any part of the World. People face very rapid changes and it becomes very difficult to determine the needs of the people. Therefore, it becomes very important to raise the people in a way that they will comply with these changes. This only becomes possible with the arrangement of the education systems in accordance with todays' requirements.

Today, people are expected to have many skills and competences. If the people want to be successful against the changes, they should learn continuously, produce information and improve themselves. Moreover, it is very important for the people to have some skills such as critical thinking, information and technological literacy, creativeness, flexibility, self-directness, being a leader, taking responsibility, life-long learning. Therefore, it can be said that with all these changes the face of education has changed a lot and the roles of students and teachers have also changed. With these changing roles, there must be a shift from teacher-centered classroom environment to student-centered classroom environment.

It is known that student-centered education depends on the constructivism theory which argues that learners can learn when they gain the information in an active way by exploring. In student-centered education, there is a shift from passive learning to active learning and learners can decide what to learn, when to learn and how to learn. Learners do not gain the new information by listening passively. In contrast, they gain the information by exploring and deep learning. Therefore, they take their own learning responsibilities. As a result, they become autonomous learners. In student-centered environment students and teachers help each other in the learning and teaching process. The mutual relations between students and teachers depend highly on respect, communication and cooperation. Learning and teaching are carried out in a reflective process. As a result, learning becomes more effective and deeper for both learners and teachers.

In the other side of education, there are teachers. The roles of the teachers have also changed in student-centered environment. In traditional classes teachers are responsible for all the things occurring in the classroom environment. Moreover, they are regarded as the only information source. However, the control of the teachers hinders learning. On the contrary, in student-centered classes, teachers are not in the position of leader or authority. In contrast, they act as guides and try to learn with their students instead of trying to teach all the things to the students. In this process, teachers should use some methods and techniques which will help students to gain the behaviour, skills and competences required to be successful in life. Moreover, teachers should encourage students to express their ideas and think critically. Therefore, it can be said that the power dynamics have changed with student-centered classroom environment. So, the question of "how can teachers help their students to become independent learners?" becomes very important in terms of both educators and learners.

In student-centered classes, it is seen very important to share the power with students. Power can be regarded as the authority of the teachers. In traditional classes, teachers have the power and give all the decisions for their students. However, with power sharing a classroom environment in which all the decisions are not taken by the teachers, in contrast the opinion of the students is given a great importance is meant. The classes should be carried out depending on the cooperation between teachers and students. To share the power with students, teachers should give more responsibilities to their students instead being the only authority in the class. To do this, students and the other collogues should also take part in learning process. With the changes in power dynamics, students can participate actively and more in the learning process can take their own learning responsibilities and can be independent learners.

It can be said that power sharing helps students to become more motivated and eager for learning, which are among the most important factors affecting the success. When some responsibilities are given to the students, they can fell more involved and therefore a positive learning environment occurs. They become self-disciplined learners and can make the correct decision for themselves. Even if their decision is not correct, they can face the results of their decision without blaming others. As a result, they learn more about themselves, their capacities and potentials.

Power sharing is also beneficial for teachers. In classes where power is shared with students, the responsibilities of the teachers in decreased. Therefore, teachers can feel more relaxed since they are not expected to solve all the problems. Students are also involved in solving the problems. Moreover, teachers do not have to deal with the demotivated and noisy classes since when the power is shared students can focus on learning and their duties more. Classroom management becomes easier. As a result, learning and teaching process becomes more effective.

Teachers should not be afraid of having student-centered classes and sharing their power with their students. These two terms do not mean that teachers give all the authority to the students. Teachers may fell that they lose the control if they share the power.

However, with power sharing teachers can decrease their responsibilities and spend more time on making plans for their students in determining how the students can learn better. As a result, when the teachers make plans and design the classes, they should be more careful about giving responsibilities to their students. By doing so, learning and teaching process can be carried out in an effective way for both teachers and students.

Sincerely,

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