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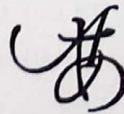
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## 5. Effective Teaching Methods in Higher Education

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### Introduction

A teaching method comprises the principles and methods used by teachers to enable student learning. These strategies are determined partly on subject matter to be taught and partly by the nature of the learner. For a particular teaching method to be appropriate and efficient it has to be in relation with the characteristic of the learner and the type of learning it is supposed to bring about. Suggestions are there to design and selection of teaching methods must take into account not only the nature of the subject matter but also how students learn.<sup>[1]</sup> In today's school the trend is that it encourages a lot of creativity. It is a known fact that human advancement comes through reasoning. This reasoning and original thought enhances creativity.

The approaches for teaching can be broadly classified into teacher centered and student centered. In Teacher-Centered Approach to Learning, Teachers are the main authority figure in this model. Students are viewed as "empty vessels" whose primary role is to passively receive information (via lectures and direct instruction) with an end goal of testing and assessment. It is the primary role of teachers to pass knowledge and information onto their students. In this model, teaching and assessment are viewed as two separate entities. Student learning is measured through objectively scored tests and assessments.<sup>[2]</sup> In Student-Centered Approach to Learning, while teachers are the authority figure in this model, teachers and students play an equally active role in the learning process. The teacher's primary role is to coach and facilitate student learning and overall comprehension of material. Student learning is measured through both formal and informal forms of assessment, including group projects, student portfolios, and class participation. Teaching and assessments are connected; student learning is continuously measured during teacher instruction.<sup>[2]</sup> Commonly used teaching methods may include class participation, demonstration, recitation, memorization, or combinations of these.

Rapid changes of modern world have caused the Higher Education System to face a great variety of challenges. Therefore, training more eager, thoughtful individuals in interdisciplinary



fields is required. Thus, research and exploration to figure out useful and effective teaching and learning methods are one of the most important necessities of educational systems. Professors have a determining role in training such people in the mentioned field. A university is a place where new ideas germinate; roots strike and grow tall and sturdy. It is a unique space, which covers the entire universe of knowledge. It is a place where creative minds converge, interact with each other and construct visions of new realities. Established notions of truth are challenged in the pursuit of knowledge. To be able to do all this, getting help from experienced teachers can be very useful and effective.

Given the education quality, attention to students' education as a main product that is expected from education quality system is of much greater demand in comparison to the past. There has always been emphasis on equal attention to research and teaching quality and establishing a bond between these two before making any decision; however, studies show that the already given attention to research in universities does not meet the educational quality requirements.

Attention to this task in higher education is considered as a major one, so in their instruction, educators must pay attention to learners and learning approach; along with these two factors, the educators should move forward to attain new teaching approaches. In the traditional system, instruction was teacher-centered and the students' needs and interests were not considered. This is when students' instruction must change into a method in which their needs are considered and as a result of the mentioned method active behavior change occurs in them. Moreover, a large number of graduated students especially bachelor holders do not feel ready enough to work in their related fields. Being dissatisfied with the status quo at any academic institution and then making decision to improve it require much research and assistance from the experts and pioneers of that institute. Giving the aforementioned are necessary, especially in present community of Iran; it seems that no qualitative study has ever been carried out in this area drawing on in-depth reports of recognized university faculties; therefore, in the present study the new global student-centered methods are firstly studied and to explore the ideas of experienced university faculties, some class observations and interviews were done. Then, efficient teaching method and its barriers and requirements were investigated because the faculty ideas about teaching method could be itemized just through a qualitative study.



The study was conducted with a qualitative method using content analysis approach. The design is appropriate for this study because it allows the participants to describe their experiences focusing on factors that may improve the quality of teaching in their own words. Key participants in purposeful sampling consist of three nationally recognized professors introduced based on the criteria of Ministry of Science, Research and Technology (based on education, research, executive and cultural qualifications) and seven other locally recognized professors according to Isfahan University of Technology standards and students votes. The purposive sampling continued until the saturation was reached, i.e. no further information was obtained for the given concept. All the participants had a teaching experience of above 10 years. They were first identified and after making appointments, they were briefed about the purpose of the study and they expressed their consent for the interview to be performed.

Teachers participating in this study believed that teaching and learning in higher education is a shared process, with responsibilities on both student and teacher to contribute to their success. Within this shared process, higher education must engage the students in questioning their preconceived ideas and their models of how the world works, so that they can reach a higher level of understanding. But students are not always equipped with this challenge, nor are all of them driven by a desire to understand and apply knowledge, but all too often aspire merely to survive the course, or to learn only procedurally in order to get the highest possible marks before rapidly moving on to the next subject. The best teaching helps the students to question their preconceptions, and motivates them to learn, by putting them in a situation in which their existing model does not work and in which they come to see themselves as authors of answers, as agents of responsibility for change. That means, the students need to be faced with problems which they think are important. Also, they believed that most of the developed countries are attempting to use new teaching methods, such as student-centered active methods, problem-based and project-based approaches in education. For example, the faculty number 3 said:

The faculty number 8 noted another project-based teaching method that is used nowadays especially to promote education in software engineering and informatics is FLOSS (Free/Liber Open Source Software). In recent years, this project was used to empower the students. They will be allowed to accept the roles in a project and, therefore, deeply engage in the process of software development.

In Muslim Countries , many studies have been conducted about new teaching methods. For example, studies by Momeni Danaie Noroozi and Zarshenas have shown various required methods of teaching. They have also concluded that pure lecture, regardless of any feedback ensuring the students learning, have lost their effectiveness. The problem-oriented approach in addition to improving communication skills among students not only increased development of critical thinking but also promoted study skills and an interest in their learning

### **Conclusion**

In the present study, it was illustrated that a good teaching method helps the students to question their preconceptions, and motivates them to learn, by putting them in a situation in which they come to see themselves as the authors of answers and the agents of responsibility for change. But whenever the teachers can teach by this method, they are faced with some barriers and requirements. Some of these requirements are prerequisite of the professors' behavior and some of these are prerequisite of the professors' outlook. Also, there are some major barriers some of which are associated with the professors' behavior and others are related to laws and regulations. Therefore, to have an effective teaching, the faculty members of universities should be aware of these barriers and requirements as a way to improve the teaching quality.

Effective teaching also requires structural changes that can only be brought about by academic leaders. These changes include hiring practices reward structures that recognize the importance of teaching expertise, quality assurance approaches that measure learning processes, outcomes in a much more sophisticated way than routine methods, and changing the way of attaining university accreditation.

The nationally and locally recognized professors are good leaders in providing ideas, insight, and the best strategies to educators who are passionate for effective teaching in the higher education. Finally, it is supposed that there is an important role for nationally and locally recognized professors in higher education to become more involved in the regulation of teaching rules. This will help other university teachers to be familiar with effective teaching and learning procedures. Therefore, curriculum planners and faculty members can improve their teaching methods



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