

Investigating the Implementation of Student-Centered Learning in an EFL Class at an Indonesian Private School

Viona Fatimatul Qoiriah¹ Aziza Restu Febrianto²

¹Ekonomi, Bisnis, dan Humaniora, Universitas Nasional Karangturi, Semarang, Indonesia

E-mail, vionapio232@gmail.com

E-mail, aziza.restu@unkartur.ac.id

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Abstract

This research aimed to assess the effectiveness of student-centered learning (SCL) in increasing student participation and involvement in English language teaching. Student-centered learning is an instructional approach that positions students as active participants in the learning process through discussions, collaboration, and problem-solving activities. To explore this, a qualitative descriptive method was employed, involving classroom observation and interviews with students and teachers. The findings revealed that students demonstrated behaviors aligned with student-centered learning, including active engagement in peer discussions and participation in teacher-led questioning. The study highlights that the implementation of SCL fosters greater student involvement, independence, and the development of critical thinking and communication skills. These results underscore the potential of student-centered learning as an effective strategy in English language education.

Keywords: Student Centered Learning; Active Learning; Collaborative Learning; Self-Directed Learning

1. Introduction

Undoubtedly, teachers play a crucial role in the education process, particularly in classroom learning activities. A good teacher should direct, guide, inspire, and share knowledge and virtues with students, so competent teachers must effectively manage their students (Latif, et al., 2020). This highlights that, in a typical classroom, one of a teacher's most critical tasks is classroom management. According to the Merdeka Curriculum, the teacher's role is primarily that of a facilitator, emphasizing learning activities that focus on students. As facilitators, teachers guide students and provide resources to make the learning process more effective. They are no longer the sole source of knowledge and must apply teaching methods that utilize diverse learning resources (Retnaningrum, 2023).

In Indonesia, the recent curriculum named the Merdeka Curriculum has been implemented in schools since 2022. This curriculum serves as the foundation for various subjects, and its content must be implemented effectively to provide students with sufficient time to deepen their understanding of concepts and strengthen their competencies (Alimuddin, 2023). Additionally, the curriculum requires teachers to select diverse teaching methods and tools to tailor learning to the needs and interests of their students (Pertiwi, 2022). In short, the Merdeka Curriculum enables teachers to create quality learning experiences that align with their students' needs and classroom environment.

In contrast, the previous curriculum, Curriculum 2013 aimed to prepare Indonesians to become productive, creative, innovative, and effective individuals and citizens who contribute to society, the nation, and global civilization. But this curriculum is in line with the Merdeka curriculum in terms of the process of teaching and learning that places students at the central point of attention, known as Student-Centered Learning (SCL). SCL emphasizes the active role of students as learners. In this paradigm, each student is an active participant, while the instructor assumes the role of facilitator (Leo, 2007). Various teaching and learning strategies, including project-based learning, personalized learning, and social-emotional learning, fall under the umbrella of SCL. This approach empowers learners to take charge of their education, realize their full potential, and develop skills to apply theoretical knowledge to practical problems in supportive learning environments. Notably, SCL is not a new concept; it was first popularized by the progressive education movement in the late 1800s. This movement was profoundly influenced by renowned educational thinkers such as Lev Vygotsky, Jean Piaget, John Dewey, and Maria Montessori (Leo, 2007).

Student-Centered Learning (SCL) is a highly appropriate learning model as it places students at the center of the learning process. In this approach, "students are urged to study on their own, work hard, and discover a wealth of new concepts, information, and abilities based on intrinsic motivation" (Salay, 2019). Through this method, students undergo a learning process that prioritizes the development of creativity, skills, personality, and individual needs, while also fostering independence in seeking and exploring knowledge. In contrast, teacher-centered learning views

knowledge as something prepackaged, transferred directly from teacher to student, resulting in passive learning where students simply receive information in class. This prototype requires change to address current challenges effectively.

For the past 20 years, the movement has gained momentum for two reasons. The first is the growing understanding supported by research that the skills and knowledge required for success in the twenty-first century differ greatly from those of the previous century. Second, research keeps supporting the claim that students learn best when they are actively and personally involved in their education. According to research, the student-centered learning paradigm connects the learner with a larger range of experiences than just listening, which makes it more successful for deep understanding. In Indonesia, the approach has been increasingly adopted in various educational settings for a recent decade, and the Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC) encourages the approach to be applied at all levels of education, particularly to succeed in the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum (MoEC, 2023).

"...since the 2013 curriculum, student-centered learning methods have been encouraged to be applied in learning. And until the emergence of the independent curriculum, student-centered learning methods were still being implemented. The government is gradually paying attention to the implementation of the curriculum by focusing on the active participation of students during the learning process with the aim of improving the quality of the process and the quality of educational learning in schools." (Pertiwi, et al., 2022).

The purpose of this research is to determine whether the teacher's methods or strategies focus on students or if they merely apply a teacher-centered learning approach. Many scholars in the field of education define student-centered learning as a method that requires teachers to consider their students' learning needs and goals. For instance, Nair (2019) points out that the student-centered learning paradigm connects the learner to a broader range of experiences than simply listening, making it more effective in fostering deep understanding. To achieve learning outcomes, students must actively participate in a learning process that prioritizes their development of creativity, skills, personality, and needs. Additionally, student-centered learning encourages independence by prompting students to find solutions to tasks assigned by their teachers, while teacher-centered learning focuses on the teacher providing instructions to students.

This study is inspired by my experience conducting classroom observations while working as an educational facilitator. In my observations, I noticed that some teachers applied a teacher-centered learning approach, where they primarily gave lectures and dictated instructions to students. In this model, students are expected to follow the teacher's instructions without being encouraged to take initiative or think independently. To implement the SCL effectively, both teachers and students need to put in considerable effort. Additionally, in practicing student-centered learning, teachers must be patient in facing differing views from school leaders, colleagues, and parents, as well as resistance from various situations. This research also aims to demonstrate why student-centered learning is highly recommended and to explore why there is limited research on student-centered learning at the elementary school level in Indonesia. I will also investigate the effectiveness of learning in both student-centered and teacher-centered approaches at the primary school level.

- 1) What practices and activities reflect the implementation of the student-centered learning approach in an English class?
- 2) What are the perceived benefits and challenges associated with implementing student-centered learning approach in an English class?

2. Literature Review

Student-Centered Learning (SCL)

American educator and philosopher, John Dewey made a significant contribution to educational theory. He believed that learning should focus on hands-on experiences and practice, where students acquire knowledge through investigation, action, and reflection. Dewey emphasized the importance of students' active participation in learning and advocated for education that is relevant to students' everyday lives (Dewey, 1938). According to this theory, teachers should assist in ensuring that students' processes of knowledge creation proceed smoothly (Wahyuningsih, 2023). Teachers do not transfer knowledge directly; instead, they help students develop their own understanding and gain deeper insights into their perspectives and ways of thinking (Schiro, 2012; Suranti, 2023). Student-centered learning is an approach where students not only decide what they learn but also how and why the material is engaging for them. This strategy, known as "student-centered learning," adapts instruction to each student's unique needs, interests, and background, fostering a competency-based, individualized, and real-world-relevant environment (Erwin, 2022; Schiro, 2012).

According to Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System of Indonesia, learning is an interactive process involving educators, students, and learning resources in specific environments (MoEC, 2004). Following this regulation, all SCL approach must include two key components: the teacher's role as a facilitator and motivator and students' demonstration of creative performance. Although teachers use various strategies, those implementing student-centered learning reported a more significant increase in pedagogical content knowledge compared to those using direct

instruction (Woods, 2024). This supports strategies like inquiry-based and collaborative learning, where students collaborate, share ideas, and reflect. They are taught how to communicate and apply their knowledge to assist their peers. Afterward, the teacher reviews the content and adapts the lesson based on new insights using a student-centered approach (Weda, 2020). In this context, the teacher directs the students' efforts, but students are given decision-making responsibilities whenever possible. This teaching approach ultimately encourages them to solve problems and make impactful decisions (Latif, et al., 2020).

The Implementation of Student-Centered Learning in Primary Schools

As discussed earlier, the Student-Centered Learning (SCL) approach treats students as active subjects rather than passive objects. Through SCL, students are encouraged to study their own subject matter, leading to a deeper understanding (Mudhar, 2020). Moreover, student-centered learning is an educational approach designed to enable students to learn independently of their teachers. While many devices students own are intended to assist with immediate problem-solving, the rise of information technology has not significantly encouraged students to read and research topics. In fact, in this era of big data, students have become less inclined to read. Due to this disinterest in reading, students continue to rely heavily on teachers' instructions and often need to fully comprehend what is being said (Wirastania, 2020).

In this context, teachers often struggle to provide effective learning experiences while addressing the diverse needs of students in a single class, leading to less-than-ideal learning outcomes. The use of effective teaching strategies is crucial because it not only improves the classroom environment and offers numerous other benefits, but it also enhances student learning (Kamalia, 2023). Effective strategies can help students stay focused and better understand the information being delivered by the instructor (Pratiwi, 2022). Although there is growing evidence that student-centered learning activities foster the development of advanced skills like critical thinking and problem-solving, challenges still exist in supporting the implementation of SCL in classrooms (Wirastania, 2020). Additionally, the content and activities are often not designed to support student-centered learning in ways that help students complete assignments successfully, leaving them confused and frustrated. Therefore, students also need to develop metacognitive skills, such as self-monitoring, which are not necessarily innate, in order to actively engage in their own learning (Mudhar, 2020).

Despite its potential, teachers face challenges in developing and implementing student-centered learning, as it requires new roles and responsibilities. The criteria for managing learning activities within a student-centered learning system can be difficult for teachers to handle, which makes it challenging to fully adopt SCL in the classroom (Wirastania, 2020). Students may even resist these activities if teachers, who are not actively involved in planning, creating, and executing student-centered learning tasks, either overload them with work or provide little structure (Mudhar, 2020). For successful implementation of SCL, it is essential to integrate various factors such as the problem context, assessment procedures, and teaching tools, which require collaboration between curriculum developers and teachers (Wirastania, 2020). Furthermore, while student-centered learning activities offer multiple ways to meet learning objectives, successfully implementing this approach requires resources and skills that differ greatly from those needed for more traditional, teacher-centered learning methods (Mudhar, 2020).

SCL in the Merdeka Curriculum

The Merdeka Curriculum is a groundbreaking initiative proposed by the Indonesian Minister of Education and Culture, Nadiem Makarim. The main objective of this curriculum is "independent learning," which aims to create a positive learning environment. This educational approach, referred to as "freedom to learn," fosters an enjoyable and relaxed atmosphere for parents, teachers, and students. It promotes the development of students' character by providing opportunities for relaxed, enjoyable, and informal learning while considering their natural abilities. The curriculum enables students to design and develop learning strategies tailored to their needs and surroundings (Fauzan, 2023). It emphasizes skills such as critical thinking, adaptability, and the ability to work independently. Additionally, the Merdeka Curriculum encourages the integration of learning activities outside the classroom into teaching strategies, creating a more engaging and comfortable environment for students. This approach is believed to help students grow into autonomous, confident, bright, respectful, civilized, and capable individuals. Furthermore, the curriculum evaluates students based on their attitudes, aptitudes, and performance in specific areas, rather than solely on grades. Students are encouraged to explore their interests and abilities, making the Merdeka Curriculum a significant development in Indonesia's education system, influencing everything from teaching methods to learning outcomes (Fauzan, 2023).

To achieve the goals of learning, SCL-based classroom activities should be thoughtfully planned and effectively implemented. The Student-Centered Learning (SCL) approach is a term frequently used in educational contexts. Related concepts such as agile learning, experiential learning, and self-directed learning are often associated with SCL, and different educators may interpret and apply these terms in various ways (Pratiwi, et al.). This diversity in understanding can make it challenging to define SCL consistently. From a pedagogical perspective, teacher-centered instruction tends to result in passive, disinterested, and disengaged students. In contrast, the role of the facilitator should be to guide students' progress rather than hinder it. This demonstrates how educators can support students in need. Student-centered learning, on the other hand, encourages students to actively engage in independent research by focusing on their personal needs and interests, helping them gain a deeper understanding of themselves (Ghafar, 2023).

In a student-centered classroom, the teacher takes on the role of a guide—motivating students and supporting their learning process. Rather than simply delivering lessons from the front of the class, teachers also assist students in addressing learning challenges as they arise. According to Self-Determination Theory (SDT), a teacher's motivation can influence student motivation indirectly, particularly when teaching practices fulfill students' basic psychological needs (Ahn, 2021). Although this relationship is promising, further research is needed to fully validate the mechanism. Active participation and meaningful discussions are central to student-centered learning, with the teacher acting as a facilitator. Students who are actively involved in this process are expected to develop stronger creative thinking and problem-solving skills.

Research on SCL

Experiential Learning Theory, as proposed by John Dewey, underscores the importance of firsthand experience, inquiry, and active student engagement in the learning process. He is widely recognized for his progressive contributions to education, which laid the foundation for student-centered learning. This concept aligns with recent studies, particularly in the Indonesian context. A case study by Padmadewi (2019) demonstrates that a student-centered approach is evident when teachers provide immediate and constructive feedback after students present their work, aiming to improve performance and boost engagement. Within the classroom, teachers play multiple roles, with classroom management being one of the most critical. Studies have reported increased student motivation and interest in school and specific subjects, with Bremner (2022) noting that poorly managed classrooms can significantly undermine the effectiveness of both teaching and learning.

Classroom management encompasses a broader scope compared to classroom discipline, as it pertains to the organization of procedures, routines, and overall structure within the classroom. The traditional approach views students primarily as passive recipients of information, with the teacher's role limited to providing information and evaluating learners based on their ability to provide correct answers, in a classroom centered around students, it's essential for students to engage actively in the learning process rather than merely absorbing information from lectures passively. Additionally, students should actively communicate, collaborate, and learn from their peers to acquire all the essential knowledge and information. Student-centered learning (SCL) is characterized by active participation, emphasizing deep understanding and learning. This suggests that while the student-centered approach prioritizes student autonomy and involvement, it still involves teacher-student interactions, with teachers playing a vital role in guiding and supporting students as they learn to become more self-directed and the importance of student interaction in deepening understanding and creativity, as well as evidence that this model significantly improves academic performance and critical thinking skills, has been highlighted. Successful implementation requires support from teachers, active student participation, effective time management, and technology integration (Siregar, 2024).

Assessing Student-Centered Learning

Robert C. Pianta, a renowned educational psychologist, is best known for his work on the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), an observational tool designed to evaluate the quality of teacher-student interactions in the classroom (Pianta, 2013). This system assesses key dimensions of these interactions, such as emotional support, classroom organization, and teacher-student communication. Emotional support focuses on fostering warmth, positive interactions, and encouragement to create a supportive learning environment. Classroom organization emphasizes maintaining discipline and ensuring a well-managed, structured setting conducive to learning. Effective teacher-student communication is central to Pianta's approach, as it plays a crucial role in fostering both academic and social growth. Pianta argues that the quality of these interactions strongly predicts students' developmental outcomes, making the teacher-student relationship a critical factor in promoting meaningful learning and overall student success.

3. Method

Research Design

This research employs a qualitative approach. Sugiyono (2018) defines qualitative research methods as those grounded in philosophical frameworks and applied to scientific settings where researchers themselves act as instruments. This approach enables in-depth exploration of context, meaning, and qualitative characteristics to better understand social phenomena and human behavior. It emphasizes interpreting meaning and is often exploratory and descriptive in nature, typically involving data collection in the form of text, images, or sounds. Researchers use qualitative methods to provide detailed descriptions of participants' perspectives, generating descriptive data in written or spoken form and observable behaviors. This approach adopts a holistic view, analyzing the research subject as an interconnected whole rather than isolated parts, examining everything that occurs and relates to the subject comprehensively (Waruwu, 2024).

In this study, observations were selected as a primary technique to capture a thorough explanation of events, including what happened, when, where, and for how long. The research focuses on exploring the implementation of Student-Centered Learning (SCL) in English class activities. Observation includes various dimensions, such as emotional support—characterized by warmth, emotional care, positive interactions between teachers and students—and classroom organization, ensuring a well-ordered and effectively managed environment. Additionally, teacher-student communication is emphasized, as the quality of these interactions is a key predictor of students' social and academic development. Classrooms that prioritize engaging, responsive teaching and offer opportunities for active student participation foster more effective learning environments (Pianta, 2020). The researcher observed English classes for grades 5 and 6 to evaluate the effectiveness of teachers' implementation of SCL versus Teacher-Centered Learning (TCL). During these observations, the researcher noted teaching practices, students' participation, and overall classroom dynamics. After the observations, interviews were conducted with teachers to gather insights into their instructional and managerial approaches. These interviews included general questions about teaching methods and specific queries about the implementation of formative assessments. The researcher also analyzed lesson plans to compare instructional practices with document indicators (Astari, 2023).

Interviews were structured to delve into teachers' use of formative assessments and students' ability to engage in student-centered learning. Drawing on Glaser's (2017) grounded theory approach, the researcher began analyzing transcripts from the first few interviews early in the process, asking probing questions to refine and adapt the interview strategy. This iterative process allowed for the development of a deeper understanding of emerging themes, which were tested with subsequent participants. By combining observation, interviews, and document analysis, this qualitative study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of how SCL is implemented in English classes and its effectiveness in fostering student learning and engagement.

4. Findings and Discussion

Participants involved in the study were 28 sixth-grade students, 27 fifth-grade students, and 1 English teacher. They are selected based on the criteria required for this research. Besides students as the participants, there was 1 English teacher with around three years of teaching experience who participated in the research. All participants are Indonesian, comprising Javanese and Chinese ethnicities.

Table 1. Profile of the Participants

| No | Grade 5 (28 EFL students) | Grade 6 (27 EFL students) | Teacher |
|----|---------------------------|---------------------------|---|
| 1 | 16 females | 15 females | Age: 32 years old Gender: Female Teaching experience: 3 years Degree: Bachelor's Degree in English Education Language: Indonesian and English |
| 2 | 12 males | 12 males | |

Data Analysis

The collected data was analyzed by employing Adler & Adler (1987), who stated that observation is one of the fundamental bases of all data collection methods in qualitative research, particularly concerning the social sciences and human behavior. Observation is also understood as "the mainstay of ethnographic enterprises" (Werner & Schoepfle, 1987: 257). This means that observation is the systematic process of observing human activities and the physical settings in which these activities continuously take place, naturally focusing on the activities to produce facts. The categories used in observing students in the classroom are student activities data. First of all, the data obtained from the observations were classified into themes related to the characteristics of SCL, which consist of several categories such as student activities, teacher's role, classroom/physical condition, assessment process, and questions and discussion. Next, classroom observations were conducted and analyzed to determine the number of instances of student-centered learning and teacher-centered learning, which were then classified into several themes. The number of participants fitting into these themes was also analyzed. In addition, the transcribed data from the interviews were analyzed following the steps introduced by Steinar Kvale (2012). The interview is a specific form of conversation where knowledge is produced through the interaction between an interviewer and an interviewee.

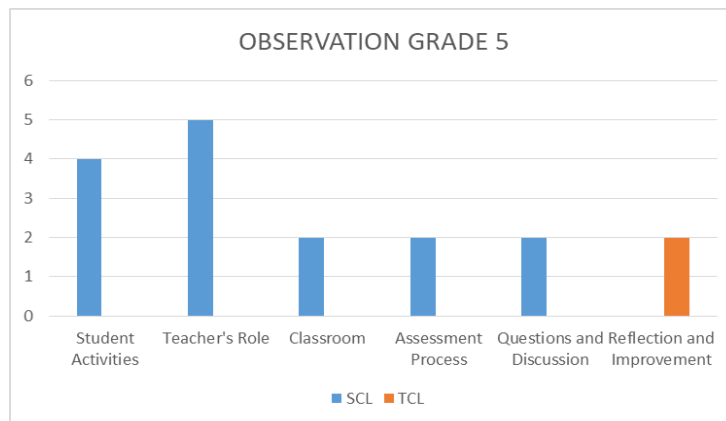
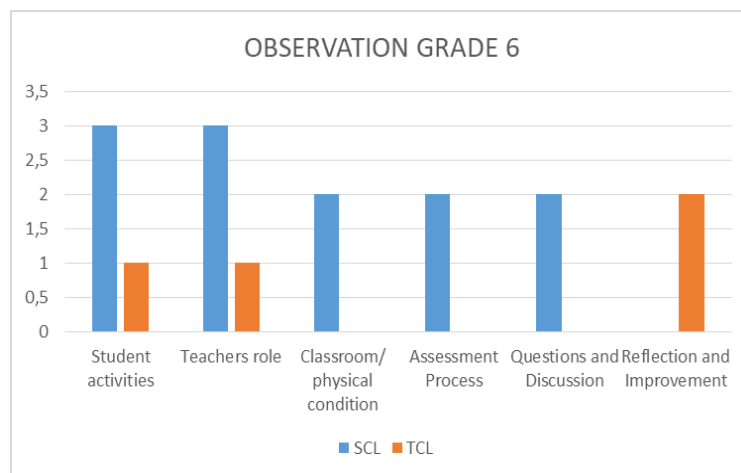


Figure 1. Observation in a Grade-5 Class

Figure 2. Observation in a Grade-6 Class



Student Activities

Student activity is one of the main aspects to see whether the class being observed is student-centered or not. The findings relating to this aspect are presented based on the four criteria of SCL approach: students’ involvement, collaboration, and participation, and how the lesson plan supports them. The results of observations show that in Grade 5, all students can be classified into the four categories that reflect on the SCL implementation as they seemed to indicate their active involvement and participation in class, which was also in line with the designed activities in the teacher’s lesson plan. At the same time, the students were not likely to perform the other four categories of the TCL at all. Meanwhile, in Grade 6, from the observations, all students’ activities could be considered to represent three out of four categories in SCL, while some other activities apparently tend to display only one of the TCL categories. Therefore, in terms of students’ active participation, the class can be regarded as SCL. It can be concluded that the results indicate how the teacher has successfully applied the SCL approach in her class, because during the classroom instruction, the teacher provided opportunities for her students to express their ideas and opinions. For instance, students were engaged in any discussions with the teacher when the teacher explained and posed questions. All students were also free to express their arguments as the answers the questions given, even if they were incorrect. Additionally, students had the opportunity to discuss with their peers before responding to the teacher's questions.

Teacher’s Roles

The role of a teacher is crucial as a positive behavioral model for students. The attitudes, values, and ethics demonstrated by teachers can serve as examples for students in developing their character and personality. Based on the results gathered from the observations in grades 5 and 6 for the English subject at Sang Timur elementary school Semarang, the teacher's role table consists of 5 characteristics. Observational findings indicate that students in Grade 5 can be categorized into five distinct groups based on their Social and Emotional Learning (SCL) characteristics; all five characteristic students can be classified into the four categories of SCL, with none in the teacher-centered learning category. In Grade 6, based on observations, all roles undertaken by teachers seem to encompass four out of five categories in Social and Emotional Learning (SCL). Simultaneously, certain other activities seem to align predominantly with only one of the TCL categories. Consequently, concerning the roles of teachers, they can be viewed as embodying SCL principles. Based on the observations in the classroom, the teacher demonstrates a student-centered learning approach. During teaching, the teacher tends to pose critical questions to students, fostering active engagement. Additionally, when a student provides an incorrect or less accurate answer, the teacher offers feedback by providing explanatory justifications. Moreover, the teacher engages in discussion activities with students, rather than solely delivering one-way explanations.

Classroom (Physical condition)

The classroom creates an environment that supports collaboration among students. Collaborative learning allows them to share ideas, knowledge, and skills with each other. The results regarding this aspect are outlined using the two criteria of the SCL approach. The results of observations show that in Grade 5, classroom can be classified into the two categories that reflect on the SCL implementation and 6 for the English subject at SD Sang Timur, Semarang, in the classroom characteristics table, the observations in both grades totaled 2 out of the 2 available characteristics, and all can be classified into the two categories of student-centered learning. The seating arrangement in the classroom has been carefully set up to support collaborative learning activities and student interaction. Additionally, the classroom is equipped with facilities that enhance collaborative learning, such as computers, LCD screens, a sound system, and other supporting tools. Therefore, it can be concluded that the classroom meets the criteria for student-centered learning.

Assessment Process

The assessment process involves systematically evaluating and measuring a student's knowledge, skills, and abilities in a specific subject. It utilizes a range of methods including tests, quizzes, projects, presentations, and observations to determine the level of comprehension and proficiency attained by the student. Assessment is essential for educators to monitor progress, pinpoint areas needing improvement, and make well-informed decisions regarding teaching methods and curriculum enhancement. The results of observations show that in Grade 5, and grade 6 for the English subject at Sang Timur elementary school Semarang, all the assessments can be classified into the two categories that reflect on the SCL implementation as they seemed to participate and understand students in class. This is because, based on the observations, during assessments, teachers tend to focus more on emphasizing the conceptual understanding of the material. When conducting assessments, teachers primarily administer tests that emphasize the core concepts taught and do not deviate from the material covered or the concepts presented to the students.

Questions and Discussion

Questions and discussions can facilitate deep understanding and the formation of critical thinking in students. By asking questions and engaging in discussions, students can delve into their own understanding of the subject matter. They have the opportunity to ask questions, consider different perspectives, and explore complex concepts. The results of observations show that all the characteristic questions and discussion can be classified into the two categories that reflect on the SCL implementation as they seemed to in grades 5 for the English subject at Sang Timur elementary school Semarang, with none in the teacher-centered learning category. Similarly, in grade 6, both criteria align with student-centered learning, and reflect on the SCL and none reflect on the teacher-centered learning category. From my observations, the questions posed by the teacher to students tend to promote critical thinking, encouraging students to delve deeper into the subject matter. The teacher addresses questions to individual students, and students actively engage in collaborative discussions to find answers to the teacher's inquiries.

Reflections and Improvement

Reflections and improvements are very important in classroom learning because they allow students and teachers to systematically evaluate and enhance the learning process, as well as reflect on the learning that has occurred. Students have the opportunity to better understand what has been learned, identify areas where they have succeeded, and also where they may need to improve their understanding. The results of observations show that in grades 5 and 6 for the English subject at Sang Timur primary school Semarang, in the table of reflection and improvement characteristics, there are 2 criteria. From the observations made in grade 5, both criteria reflect on the teacher-centered learning categories, with none in the student-centered learning category. Similarly, in grade 6, both criteria also align with student-centered learning, and none reflect on the teacher-centered learning category. In the learning process, there is

no reflection or improvement undertaken by the teacher at the end of the lesson. Therefore, reflections and improvements are categorized as teacher-centered learning.

Perceived Benefits and Challenges in the SCL Implementation

The implementation of student-centered learning (SCL) faces challenges, as some students are not active in class due to difficulties understanding the material or mental health issues that hinder the learning process. From the teacher's perspective, SCL implementation is often constrained by the pressure to complete the curriculum quickly, prompting teachers to take over classroom control when slower student learning becomes a concern.

Sometimes, student-centered learning fails because the students take a long time to progress, and we become impatient, wanting to quickly cover the material and end up taking over the class. From the student's perspective, sometimes they are not ready, they have mental health issues, or the classroom situation does not support their learning. (Teacher; Interview)

Nevertheless, SCL is effective when implemented properly. Actively engaging students and providing hands-on experiences enhance their understanding and knowledge retention. Creating a classroom environment that fosters active participation is key to the success of SCL.

As shown in the findings, all students in grades six and five, in this study, appeared to demonstrate their active engagement in the classroom. And it is also supported by the teaching methods that the teacher used to promote her students' participation in class. This result is in line with a study conducted who shows that when a teacher has commitment in applying the CTL approach, students tend to pay attention to all the given materials and positive learning environments characterized by minimal misbehavior and supportive, respectful relationships (Hyun, 2020). In addition, the teacher employed group work and discussions to make her students engaged in the lesson and encourage their active participation in its group discussion for the SCL. The advantages of elements that demonstrate how pupils can develop their confidence and persuasive abilities. This is important because during the presentation period, each of them will have their communication skills evaluated. In order to properly exhibit their efforts to the other groups, students might boost their motivation and gain more in-depth information about a certain issue, according to the second criteria. The third advantage is that pupils are able to develop their concepts as they have dedicated time to studying that specific subject (Tholibon, 2023). Additionally, the teacher's role seemed to play an important role in shaping the students' positive behaviors. In this study, all the roles performed by the teacher apparently adopted a student-centered learning approach. While teaching, the teacher tended to ask critical questions that encouraged students' active involvement. From the observation report and interview with the teacher, it can be assumed that in the class, the implementation of the student-centered learning approach could significantly contribute to a positive environment where students participated in meaningful, challenging activities both inside and outside the classroom. In addition, effective learning is mostly determined by the caliber of the actual learning as well as the students' attainment of the learning goals set by teachers or educators (Sahara, 2024).

Teacher's Role in Student-Centered Learning is significant

As shown in the findings that, the role of a teacher is very important as a model of positive behavior for students. The attitudes, values, and ethics demonstrated by teachers can serve as examples for students in developing their character and personality. The teacher's approach to student-centered learning is consistent with these results. Teacher is a key point in the teaching and learning process in the classroom. A good teacher is a teacher who can direct, guide, inspire and transfer their knowledge and virtues to his students. In addition teachers' identities and pedagogical philosophies may be significantly impacted by a drastic change in the learning environment. These findings may have implications for teacher education and professional development initiatives (Keiler, 2018). The objectives of young learners' education, their abilities as students, and their roles and competencies as educators can impact the effectiveness of various teaching approaches and classroom practices. These factors are seen as strong influences shaping their decisions and actions to enhance student achievement (Dewi, 2019). Therefore learning activities help learners focus, deconstruct tasks into smaller, more manageable chunks, deploy their attention more effectively, control their frustration, and more. The scaffolding can be weakened and eventually eliminated as students grasp the components of a task and develop the ability to complete it on their own. During teaching, teachers tend to ask critical questions to students, encouraging active engagement. Additionally, when a student provides an incorrect or less accurate answer, the teacher offers feedback with detailed explanations. Furthermore, teachers engage in discussions with students, rather than merely providing one-way explanations. In this study, all the roles performed by the teacher seem to align with student-centered learning. From the observation, it can be assumed that the teacher has already implemented student-centered learning in the classroom. Some of the challenges teachers face in implementing this learning approach include limited time and student preparedness, as well as some students' discomfort with the more independent approach, which may require time to adjust.

Supportive Activities for SCL

The classroom creates an environment that supports collaboration among students. Collaborative learning allows them to share ideas, knowledge, and skills with each other, Collaboration involves participants taking part in the study as co-researchers or through less formal arrangements. This perspective on validity emphasizes incorporating the participants' viewpoints into the research. It aligns with a critical paradigm, as the process is intended to honor and empower participants rather than contribute to their marginalization. The seating arrangement in the classroom has been carefully designed to support collaborative learning activities and student interaction (Creswell, 2000). Additionally, the classroom is equipped with facilities that enhance collaborative learning, such as computers, LCD screens, sound systems, and other supporting tools. Therefore, it can be concluded that the classroom meets the criteria for student-centered learning. This is in line with Student-centered learning strategies gaining popularity because they challenge the status paradigm in education by altering the timing, location, and mode of learning. Additionally, due to developments in educational technology enabling customized education, it is more practicable for educators to use student-centered procedures in educational settings. Therefore, it can be concluded that the learning space meets the criteria for student-centered learning. However, in implementing student-centered learning (SCL), teachers face challenges in selecting the right activities that can encourage active student engagement. Additionally, teachers must ensure that these activities are carried out effectively and meet the diverse needs of students. Another challenge is balancing students' freedom in learning with the achievement of predetermined learning objectives. Sometimes, children are not yet fully able to understand the information provided by the teacher, so they still require the teacher's assistance for about 50 percent of their time.

Insights into Effective Assessment Processes

The assessment process involves systematically evaluating and measuring students' knowledge, skills, and abilities in a specific subject. This process uses various methods, including tests, quizzes, projects, presentations, and observations, to determine the level of understanding and proficiency achieved by the students. Assessment is crucial for educators to monitor progress, identify areas needing improvement, and make informed decisions regarding teaching methods and curriculum enhancement. As shown in the findings, formative assessment can promote the development of capacities and attitudes used in lifelong learning. Assessment-centered learning environments also emphasize congruence between learning goals and what is assessed (National Research Council, 1999). Therefore, it can be concluded that the assessment process meets the criteria for student-centered learning. However, the challenges in the process of assessing the students' work and performance are ensuring objective and fair assessment is challenging, especially given the diversity of students' understanding and skills. Additionally, teachers face difficulties in assessing students' active involvement in project-based or collaborative learning processes, where the outcomes are not always directly measurable.

The Role of Questions and Discussions in Effective Learning

Students' development of critical thinking skills and deep comprehension can be aided by conversations and questions. Through inquiring and participating in conversations, students can explore their own comprehension of the topic matter. They have the opportunity to ask questions, consider different perspectives, and explore complex concepts. As shown in the findings, class discussion covers a wide range of learning sins and virtues. Some teachers use discussion to promote learning; others use it to fill class time. Some discussion is carefully planned; some occurs by default. While some is more like a conversation, challenging analysis and higher-level thinking skills. In short, class discussions can offer powerful learning experiences. Therefore, it can be concluded that questions and discussions meet the criteria for student-centered learning. However, the challenge of encouraging students to participate in class discussions lies in ensuring that every student feels comfortable joining in, especially those who tend to be quieter or less confident. Additionally, teachers face the challenge of keeping discussions focused and running smoothly, as there is a possibility of some students dominating the conversation or steering it toward less relevant topics.

How Reflection Drives Improvement

In the classroom, reflections and enhancements are crucial because they enable both teachers and students to systematically assess and improve the learning process as well as reflect on the lessons that have been learned. Students can pinpoint areas where they have excelled and where they might still need to enhance their grasp, as well as gain a deeper understanding of the material covered. Regardless, meta-reflection is an understanding of "contextual knowing," a notion that has developed through enlightenment philosophy, sociology of education, and teaching and learning theories, maybe starting with Bloom's Taxonomy (1956), and is currently embodied by thinkers like Both Schwab (1962, 1978) and Bernstein and Solomon (1999). This is admitted by (2000) Clandinin and Connelly as a modern progression from Dewey's research on how important interaction is for forming and interpreting experience identity, namely the utilization of narrative and personal accounts to produce contemplative thought that is also seen in Rogoff's (1991) work. (Natalie Canning & Sue Callan, 2010). The process of reflecting on reflection produces a criticality, and its goal is to bring about change by acknowledging that each person's identity is shaped by their culture and can be exposed by stepping outside of oneself to investigate different ways of thinking and acting with other people. (Natalie Canning & Sue Callan, 2010). After the observations conducted in the classroom, the students did not show the criteria mentioned above. Therefore, it

can be concluded that reflections in classroom learning indicate that the students have not yet met the standards of student-centered learning. Through interviews, the teacher also shared that the challenge is that they do not understand what needs to be done because they do not fully comprehend the questions or the material. Additionally, they seem to have external issues, making them mentally unprepared to receive lessons even though they are actually capable. They might feel mentally exhausted, which hinders their ability to learn effectively.

5. Conclusion

The observations conducted in two Indonesian primary school classes reveal a largely successful implementation of the Student-Centered Learning (SCL) approach. In terms of student activities, Grade 5 students fully adhered to SCL criteria, actively engaging in involvement, collaboration, and participation, while Grade 6 students displayed similar alignment with minor tendencies toward Teacher-Centered Learning (TCL). The teacher's role as a facilitator was evident, with critical questioning, collaborative discussions, and constructive feedback fostering an interactive learning environment. The classroom settings, with well-organized seating arrangements and collaborative tools like computers and LCD screens, supported active student engagement. Assessment processes emphasized conceptual understanding through tests, quizzes, and projects aligned with lesson content, reflecting SCL principles. Additionally, the teacher's use of questions and discussions encouraged critical thinking and peer interaction. However, the absence of structured reflection and improvement activities at the end of lessons indicated a slight inclination toward TCL in this area. Overall, the SCL approach was effectively implemented, promoting active engagement, collaboration, and critical thinking. On the other hand, the results of the observation shows that learner-centered teaching focuses on providing students with the opportunity to independently develop the knowledge they receive from the teacher, with the teacher's role being to guide, direct, and support. However, one of the challenges in implementing this approach is that students sometimes struggle to fully absorb the information, requiring the teacher's assistance about 50 percent of the time. Additionally, some students do not actively participate in class because they either don't understand the questions or the material, or they face external issues that affect their mental readiness. Despite their potential, these students may feel mentally exhausted, which hinders their ability to learn effectively. though the inclusion while challenges exist in the implementation of learner-centered teaching, the approach offers significant benefits. It encourages active student engagement, fosters independence, and helps students develop a deeper understanding of the material. With the teacher's support, students are given the tools they need to overcome obstacles and continue their learning journey. Despite the difficulties, the potential for growth in this learning model is substantial, as it promotes long-term learning habits and critical thinking skills.

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