A STUDY OF STUDENT-CENTEREDNESS, INCLUSIVITY AND DEEP APPROACH TO LEARNING. EVIDENCE FROM FINANCIAL ACCOUNTING MODULE AT WIUT

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I analyzed my class on Financial Accounting in terms of student-centeredness, inclusivity and encouragement on a deep approach to learning in the case of Level 4 WIUT students from Economics with Finance course. The lesson details and the lesson plan are provided in the appendices.

A constructivist approach, in contrast to a teacher-centred method, developed by the theories of Piaget (1977) and Vygotsky (1978) based upon the active learning by the students where teachers play a role of a guide. Hence, I can state that a particular lesson had features of the student-centeredness approach. First of all, I was assisting students allowing them to work autonomously. During the class, my role was more of a facilitator than an instructor, who helped and guided the students, organized the activities and monitored their learning (Iowacore, 2015). I let the students go through the lecture on their mobiles and then discuss their understanding with a peer. Although it was an unusual activity for students, they tried to familiarize themselves with the topic and initiated a slight discussion with their peers. Secondly, I think that my class was learner-centred because the students were not passive receivers of knowledge but active participants (Sasaki, 2018). For example, each student had to come up to the whiteboard and show a solution, and students were involved actively. However, when necessary I needed to correct the solution if that was wrong. Many students were able to show correct answers. Nonetheless, this can be due to the fact that students were solving the exercise one by one in an order and they knew their turn and which sub question they would be answering. At this point, a random selection of the students would be a better option to recognize their true understanding and to make the task a bit more challenging. Moreover, Cunningham et al (1993) stated that in student-centred environment students can actively participate in their own learning and are challenged to develop skills in problem-solving. In my class students were working in groups to find the solutions and "teacher's interference" was minimal (O'Neil, 2005). To summarize, all the activities were student-centred, however, I was also involved to monitor and guide students, correct mistakes and provide explanations where necessary.

Apart from student-centeredness, my goal was to make the class inclusive as well. In the group, there were three types of nationalities, and some students are fast learners whereas others may require more time and clarifications to understand a new topic. I am aware of the diversity of the class and thus tried to work with my students to create a safe and collaborative learning environment. An inclusive classroom is a warm and safe environment that leads students to better academic achievements and a sense of belong to school (Bucholz, 2009). According to Pivik et al (2002), an inclusive class is where teachers can assess their student's intelligence and adapt their teaching methods accordingly to provide choices and use different approaches to each individual child. Although I personally recognized my students, knew their names and distinguish the qualities of some students during the class, the time given for me was not enough to get well familiarized with each student and their intelligence. That particular lesson was carried out on the 4th week of my teaching which means I had seen them only 3 times before. However, since I have three more the same level of groups with the same background knowledge on my subject I already have noticed their learning styles. For instance, students in my groups get more engaged and learn better if I present information with real-life examples, and let them learn accounting rules and formats in easier ways such as mnemonics. I followed this strategy in my planned lesson as well and the students warmly accepted it. On the other hand, the materials I used in the class were validated by the Module Leader of Finance area and were just focused on students' ZPD level, that is not very difficult or not too simple but just challenging enough to help them develop necessary skills based on what they already knew from previous topics. The students also confirmed this when they provided feedback at the end of the lesson mentioning that the difficulty level of the tasks was just enough.

In addition, other than being student-centred and inclusive, a good class should also encourage students to adopt a deep approach to learning. Namely, Biggs (1978) proposed surface, deep and achieving approaches

to learning, whereas Marton and Saljo (1976) had defined the surface level and deep level processing of learners arising from their perceptions. They explained that this processing is not personal traits and it is all about learner's perception of the task, independent of the teacher's efforts. From my observations and counselling experiences I have noticed that majority of students apply a surface approach to learning and this was also observed during that particular lesson and the students' interest rose only when I mentioned about the coming assessments. Specifically, when solving questions some students were not confident in their answers, and they rather tried to show the correct answer for their self-image in front of the audience. Moreover, many students after the classes asked about the content of the exam and which topics they should rather focus on. This is the perception of the students – meaning that the purpose is to achieve a good mark or higher mark than somebody else. Thus, this showed some features of surface learning of students as they see the task as a necessity to be accomplished and are worried about the time the task takes and trying to memorize its details (Schmeck, 1983). Therefore, to encourage students' deep approach to learning, for instance, I first tried to encourage critical thinking by not confirming the answer right away given by a 'good' student. So, students looked at me to find approval from my face mimics if their answers were correct. I also tried to be patient and allowed a couple of students to make mistakes. Although I noticed some students started writing the answer incorrectly, I let them finish it. And only then I mentioned that particular question is 'one of the challenging' so that the students could feel comfortable and gave out clarifications in a way that they would understand what I meant and corrected the answer themselves, which requires to develop analysis, critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Those activities were very much related to the cognitive domain of the Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom et al, 1956). The lesson mainly involved remembering, understanding and applying the given topic through a number of activities. However, analyzing, evaluating and creating, which also define deep learning occurred to some little extent only. For example, during the activity 4 that was about correcting the incorrect Trial balance students needed to use focusing, distinguishing and structuring skills and after finding a potential solution they also had to evaluate and test if that brings to a balance in the table. Nevertheless, there were no activities leading students to design or produce gained knowledge in a new form. To sum up, the lesson was carried out with mainly student-centred approach and showing several features of inclusivity and encouragement for a deep approach to learning. However, there is still room for improvement and to employ better strategies against teaching approaches.

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Appendix 1: Lesson overview

Teacher's name: Gulhayo Nusratova	Date of session: 1 February
Discipline: Financial Accounting	Duration: 2 hours
Topic: Accounting Cycle	Level of students: Level 4
Aims/objectives: *The objective is to teach students about Accounting cycle and processes connected to making entries to books and balancing the Trial Balance*	
Learning outcomes: Students will be able to… *Understand the steps in the accounting cycle* *Practice double-entry transactions* *Learn 5 types of errors in recording transactions*	
Students' profile: (e.g. numbers, prior educational experience, gender balance, students with declared disabilities, learning styles, personality, etc.) *The students are from Level 4 Economics with Finance course. There are 30 of them in the group, 19 boys and 11 girls. There are mixed nationalities as Uzbek, Russian and Korean. There are some students who catch new topics real quick and some students who need more time to analyze and understand. They have limited prior knowledge of Accounting. Students prefer explanations with examples solved on a whiteboard. No students with disabilities.*	

Appendix 2: Lesson plan

Activity	Input/data	Mode	Task and Output	Job allocation	Outcome
1. Lecture recap	*1 question is given*	*Students are divided into pairs*	*Students present their answers to each other*	*Teacher monitors, each student explains the answer to a peer*	*Students have revised the topic*
2. Demonstrate double entry	*1 question is given*	*Students solve questions individually*	*1 student shows his answer on the whiteboard but doesn't explain*	*Teacher gives 1 question, a student shows an answer on the whiteboard.*	*Students get an explanation from different students*
3. Trial balance procedure	*1 incorrectly done trial balance is provided*	*Students divided into 6 groups*	*Each group reveals their answer, then a Video will be played to check*	*The teacher asks questions, 1 student from each group shows their answer.*	*The student learned correct procedure of trial balance*

4. A quiz about types of errors	*A quiz has 4 questions*	*Students solve the quiz individuall y*	*Students do the quiz and exchange answers with peers*	*Teacher gives a quiz, students solve and exchange answers*	*Students conducted a self-assessment*