Learner-Centred Curriculum Revisited

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Abstract
In this article, we discuss the antecedents and meaning behind a learner-centred curriculum, as well as the way in which it has been taken, considering the current needs and situations of learners throughout their lifetimes. We put forth a variety of principles associated with the concept of a learner-centred curriculum, considering different didactic and psychological points of view. Based on approaches to the new ecology of learning and the personalisation of educational experiences, we revisit this concept and propose some guidelines for adapting it to the challenge of giving the learner the leading role as creator of knowledge in formal and informal environments, learning by means of digital technology. Some examples of projects mediated by ICT where young creators assume the role of aprendients and prosumers are given. In addition, we take up some of the obstacles in following a learner-centred curriculum, as well as discuss curriculum and teaching aspects requiring transformation.

Keywords: Learner-centred curriculum; Aprendient; Prosumer; New ecology of learning.

Introduction
The well-known learner-centred (centred on learning) curriculum proves to be one of the key elements in the curricular reforms carried out in many countries around the world over the past few decades. However, the idea of learner-centred curriculum takes on different meanings and its origin can be traced back to a plethora of educational focuses. From our point of view, and without ignoring the diversity of meanings and concepts underlying the approaches preceding a learner-centred focus, the common denominator is the conviction that education should be oriented toward developing the subjects of education, in whom we need to awaken an interest in knowledge, imagination, a penchant for knowledge, learning with comprehension and based on action, and not on mechanical repetition and punishment (Díaz-Barriga, 2015).

What is a reality is that the tension between a discipline-centred curriculum and a learner-centred curriculum continues latent in light of the impossibility of educational systems to rethink curricular structures in-depth and, above all, change ways of managing and organising the prevailing educational practices in schools and universities.

Therefore, we decided to revisit the learner-centred (centred on learning) curriculum concept, considering the new ecology of learning, the prevalence of digital technologies and social networks among young people, and the multiple scenarios outside the school where people learn.
1. Some Antecedents to the Concept of Learner-Centred Curriculum

The germinal ideas of this concept go back to paedocentric views on education, the origins of which can be traced back to the XV century and the humanistic thinking of authors such as Juan Luis Vives and Michel Montaigne (Valdés, 2015). From such a point of view, it was the human person himself whom was to be valued above all, his individuality and freedom, seeking to substitute mechanical processes with the use of methods centring on intellectual activity and on students’ interest and curiosity. Education became more practical and experiential, with activities attempting to favour self-education.

In other currents of thinking developed over the next centuries (for example, in Realism, Enlightenment, New School, among others), one speaks of issues such as favouring the development of rational thought, self-education and autonomy, education for life or participation in society.

It is thus that the varying concepts of the subject in education and their denomination (aprendient, pupil, student, learner) have their enclave in a certain era and a leisure-cultural and educational context, constituting a quite specific way of understanding what teaching and learning are.

We should point out that the concept and meaning of an educational act and the role of the educational institution are distinct within the different points of view mentioned. For example, in socialist education, the unit of analysis is not the individual, but the human collectivity. The goal of education is to focus on striving for equality, aiding and participating in society in common.

From the point of view of unschooling, the central thesis is that education is a diversified action lasting a lifetime and, therefore, should not be subject to closed curricula nor limited in scope and length, or to a single scenario: the school.

One more example: from the rationalist point of view, the purpose of educating Man is the development of rational thinking, which becomes the underlying basis for everything known, so that the learning of science becomes an end worthy in and of itself (Valdés, 2015).

The antecedents mentioned are of relevance, but we may say that it is in the context of the emergence of the curricular field, as well as of the New School movement and active education during the first decades of the XX century, that the bases for the curriculum and didactic methods of modern education were posited, advocating what would later be called learner-centred curriculum.

In his book *The Child and the Curriculum*, published in 1902, John Dewey states that it is the child and not the school subject under study that determines the quality and quantity of instruction, such that the school subjects under study are, more than anything else, opportunities offered the learner to develop to the degree he/she is immersed in the immediate and transcendent experience. Therefore, one should stop thinking of the school subjects under study as something rigid and elaborate. Curriculum development should not be centred on scientific disciplines per se, but on the learner, who is to be considered the centre of the educational act.

Posner (2004) coincides that, it is in the first decades of the XX century, that new ways of organising the curriculum began to be posited, since it tends to
be a reflection of the fragmented structure of scientific disciplines and, for that reason, its organisation contemplates multiple course or subject matters, ordered deductively, linearly, and without taking into consideration the psychological structure of knowledge and the complex processes of human learning. From the point of view of this author, it is from the sixties on in Anglo-Saxon and European, and subsequently Latin American, circles that major curricular projects of a public and national nature were consolidated, specifically learning-centred or learner-centred. Said projects were inspired mainly by the learning theories in vogue: cognitive and constructivist. The thinking of authors such as Jean Piaget, Jerome Bruner, David Weikart and David Ausubel exercise an important influence on curricular design and on educational methods and materials, as well as on projects involving teacher training.

Emes & Cleveland-Innes (2003) attribute to humanist Carl Rogers the notions of student-centred learning and student-centred teaching in his book Freedom to Learn, published in 1969. It is well known that Rogers developed a person-centred focus to explain personality and human relationships, applying the same in the realm of psychotherapy and counselling as “client-centered therapy” and in education through his concept of “student-centered learning.” His idea underlying everything is that education should be oriented toward human development or the self-realisation of the person.

Rogers posits that significant learning is, in its essence, experiential, involving the mind, feelings and personal meaning. He said that learning is self-initiated, has an impact on personality, its essence being the search for meaning and relevance, and is self-evaluated. In addition, he holds that each student is, above anything else, a person and, for that reason, is different and unique, a question that permeated the philosophy of that focus well beyond humanistic currents.

We cannot fail to mention the critical point of view of education. These authors argue in favour of anti-authoritarianism and the autonomy of those learning, even advocating self-government and self-regulation. Some of their central theses reside in the need for an education oriented toward human emancipation or social transformation, in which the subject of education acts with conscience and freedom.

Along this line of thought, Pérez (2015, p. 47) states that critical theories of education seek the decentralisation of the individuals of modernity, such that “no longer is it the latter, but, in its place, voices, conversations, social interactions, narratives are present as categories from which the change in education is critically attempted.” That is, by placing at the centre of educational action and its transformation, an individual is converted into the object of study by the disciplines, classified and subject to divisive practices. But, at the same time, made to be an individual agent of progress and responsible for change, it impedes removing the veil from the criticism of the ways in which, historically, social identities and practices of schooling linked to hegemonic power have been constructed. From the preceding, that critical approach to the change in education is not centred on the subject, but on questions such as analysing how educational practices colonise the narratives of professors and students. The intent is to reveal the prevailing meta-narratives and draw out alternative and transgressing ones.
This brief overview on the different focuses underlying learner-centred curriculum and learning allows us to keep an eye on the diversity of meanings involved. Weimer (2013) analyses different reforms in educational programs at university level in the Anglo-Saxon context dating back to the nineties and identifies prevailing trends. She finds that the main ones are cognitive theories of learning, attribution and self-efficacy; radical and critical pedagogy; feminist pedagogy; and constructivism in its varying aspects. She argues that, in each of said theories, there is a particular acceptance of what is meant by *learning* or *being a learner*. Therefore, curriculum, programs and educational experiences are conceived distinctly, as is the role of the teacher, even though, in all cases, emphasis is placed on the learner.

In summary, be it a case of a learner in his/her character of cognescent subject, of a person with differing qualities, motives and interests; of being social, subject to a dynamic of power and authoritarianism; of a dominated or vulnerable group; of a silenced voice or a subject that has not been able to develop all his/her creative potential; of differing focuses that we can call “learner-centred,” they argue about how to transform the subject of education or the prevailing reality of educational institutions.

### 2. The Principles of Learner-Centred Curriculum

The wide-ranging dissemination of the concept of curriculum and learner-centred teaching is linked to the 1997 publication of the principles of the American Psychological Association (APA): “Learner-Centered Psychological Principles: Guidelines for School Redesign and Reform,” undersigned by a group of renown specialists in the field, based on the analysis of psychological research on learning in school context taking place over almost an entire century. Table 1 briefly lists those principles, in light of the impossibility of an exhaustive treatment of the same here, for which we remit the reader to the original source.

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*Source: APA, 1997; McCombs & Vakili, 2005.*
We should mention that the APA opts for the term learner and not child, student or pupil, due to the fact they observe learning over a lifetime, not only school scenarios, but in other settings where learning occurs. On the one hand, it has a double perspective: it focuses on the person (learner) and on the process (learning). The group of experts that generated the underlying document for the APA on this topic posit that “learner-centered” led to curricular and instructional principles and focuses having to do with both questions (McCombs & Whisler, 1997; McCombs & Vakili, 2005):

- **What is known about the person learning, the learner:** his/her experiences, points of view, interests, needs, cognitive styles, etc. should be taken into account when designing the curriculum and be the motive for pertinent curricular support and adaptation.

- **The learning processes themselves:** recovery of the best knowledge available, based on theory and educational research regarding how people learn, as well as on the practices and focuses of the most effective learning, so as to promote high levels of motivation, learning and performance for all learners in a variety of contexts and conditions.

The term has likewise been employed in contrast to the idea that, traditionally, the curriculum and educational classroom practices have been centred on teaching, on the actions of the teacher, with a view toward transmitting disciplinary content and not centred on the student and on how he/she learns. In turn, UNESCO underscores the need for new “learner-centred” visions and educational models for the new millennium, based on the document by Delors (1996) which, in our judgement, constitutes one of the milestones of learner-centred focuses.

We have to recognise that the use of terms such as student, learner, aprendient, subject of education, pupil, among others, continues to be the object of controversy and takes on meaning in different theories and historical times (Díaz del Castillo, 2015). As a function of the reference discourse, the terms may acquire a passive meaning or an active one on the part of the subject of education. We would add two recent concepts that broaden the discussion about what to call the subject of education:

- **Aprendient,** referring to a process of on-going learning, where the goal is for the individual to learn to learn independently, in a collaborative and self-regulated manner. It seeks to emphasize the active and responsible condition of the person learning, without discarding the role of educational agents (teachers, counsellors, peers) and likewise leaves room for the idea that one can learn not only in schools, but also in many other settings, by immersion or by inclusion in a community of aprendients.

- **Prosumer,** in light of the emergence of new paradigms of communication and learning in informal contexts by means of digital technologies and, above all, in light of the development of the Web 2.0, positing that youth have become users and producers of knowledge in virtual time, reconsidering the concept held of the learner confined to formal education (Giurgiu & Bârsan, 2008; Sarsa, 2014). That is, this concept implies a new dynamic of consumption, production, publication and distribution of content on the part of users of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)
and social networks. This means that not only are they consumers of information, but, above all, persons with competencies to generate the same, for communication and collaboration with others and, moreover, to produce knowledge, publish it and share it. Therefore, the word *prosumer* is the result of the union of competencies to consume information plus that which refers to producing knowledge (Gerhardt, 2008). This implies, moreover, recognising that we find ourselves faced with a new ecology of learning (Coll, 2013), as we shall comment upon further on.

Both concepts emphasize an active role, throughout the breadth and width of life, in formal and informal educational contexts, where people are expected to construct knowledge, be innovators, inventors and problem-solvers. Before all, it requires they make decisions regarding their formative formal and informal paths, develop skills for complex thinking both in academic spheres as well as in daily life, learn to work collaboratively, take onto themselves leading technology, and acquire competencies or know-how so they may face the complex, uncertain and ever-changing world they live in at this point in time.

However, we must recognize that the preceding precepts can be interpreted in a variety of ways, pursue different ends and result in varied educational policies. At present, the polemic in the underlying documents on learner-centred curriculum revolves around scenarios of globalisation, the knowledge society and its challenges, both for the teacher as well as for the students themselves. Considering didactic models or specific educational devices that can put the ideal of learner-centred curriculum into concrete form in the classroom, we have found a wide range of opinions.

3. Pedagogical Devices Linked to Learner-Centred Curriculum

A *device* is an instrument that is created or is used to solve a problem in the context of a specific situation, that is, it is “a complex artifice, thought for and/or used to posit alternatives action” (Sanjurjo, 2009, p. 32). A pedagogical device favours the concretion of an educational project tending to resolve a problem and to achieve the expected learning, since it encompasses instrumental and conceptual aspects. It has a high degree of malleability as a function of the situation, such that it is being adapted continually. When we talk of a pedagogical device, the intention is that it be a mediator of the processes of reflexion, of deliberate, well-grounded intervention, leading to the concretion of the reference model thanks to the appropriate design and instrumentation of specific learner-centred learning experiences.

It is of no surprise that the notion of learner-centred curriculum or focus is invariably associated with pedagogical devices related to learning through experience, in the logic posited by J. Dewey (Emes & Cleveland-Innes, 2003) or as posited by Coll (2016), with inquiry methodologies that permit the personalisation of learning (problem-solving, heading projects and case analysis), falling under the socio-cultural current of situated and experiential teaching (Díaz-Barriga, 2015).

In our opinion, one of the greatest challenges of a learner-centred curriculum is to contend with the diversity represented by learners and their reference contexts. It should start from the idea that the “average” student as
such does not exist and that those experiencing the advantages of an education responding to their needs and characteristics involve each and every one of those being educated, including those in a situation of academic or social vulnerability. That is, students with different capacities to learn, those that come from native cultures and minority groups, those that have gone through failure at school and violence at school or home, those no longer in school or from situations related to gender or women, all constitute meta-populations of great interest. It is from understanding these actors in their identity as learners and the dynamics of their educational communities that we can look, through critical lenses, at those aspects conditioning the success or failure of this focus, therefore giving it renewed meaning and taking best advantage of its potential. Therefore, a learner-centred focus will not have the success expected if it only considers, unidirectionally and restrictively, the student who learns, without a systematic look at the processes, agents and educational context involved.

Thereto, Roldán (2000) proposes distinguishing between learner-centred (an adjective that translates as centred on the learner) from learner-centredness (an abstract noun that may be understood as the system centred on). So, the term learner-centredness posits a more open and systemic point of view, insofar as it relates to the system of teaching-learning as a whole, to the student, to the curriculum, to the particular context where instruction are put into practice, and to the actions displayed by the actors involved.

Thus, learner-centredness includes both the content as well as the way in which teaching itself is conceived, based on the needs and characteristics of some concrete learners. The concept recovers the role of the learner, but likewise that of educational agents, didactic devices, evaluation methods, learner strategies, foreseen activities, etc. Only in this way, starting from recognition of the diversity of the participants and of the conditions operating in a particular context, is it possible to encourage a willingness to learn and a more active and motivated role in learners. The responsibility for transforming the educational setting is centred both on the learner’s activity as well as on joint action with his/her educators and peers, as well as on how the system as a whole operates (Murphy & Rodríguez-Manzanares, 2009).

4. The Importance of the Personalisation of Teaching and the Learning Pathways

For Emes and Cleveland-Innes (2003), a learner-centred curriculum should evolve, as society itself has, toward what they call the “emergence of situational personal cultures,” given the emergence of unprecedented situations and needs to be able to operate in the complexity represented by an increasingly globalised world. First and foremost, they state that students cannot remain as “consumers of information,” given that the challenge is to educate them as “developers of knowledge,” reiterating the concept of prosumer mentioned above. It requires the curriculum be geared toward educating learners with a capacity to create, on their own, experiences of learning and spread them over their lifetimes and in other scenarios, not only at school and at the university.

In 2000, Charles Reigeluth anticipated the view of the student as an active participant in designing curriculum and instruction. He believed that, given the
possible educational scenarios of today (flexible, technology-mediated, learner-centred, linked to real and virtual scenarios beyond the school, based on dialogue and collaboration), a good part of the what is included in educational design should be done or at least decided by the students themselves while underway, while they are learning and making decisions about their learning goals. That paves the way for the greater involvement of students and attention to a wide range of learning interests, rhythms and styles.

That is, sixteen years ago. Reigeluth anticipated trends that, today, are central to the educational debate: the personalisation of the curriculum starting from the election of educational paths defining the learners themselves throughout their entire schooling, shifting between face-to-face and virtual scenarios for self-study purposes, and recognising the importance and eventual interaction between formal and informal experiences in a person’s educational history.

These features are those linked presently by Coll (2013) to the new ecology of learning. This idea remits to the notion of a curriculum for diversity, not for uniformity. Therefore, the most outstanding feature consists of the need to build personal pathways to learning, choosing or constructing learning content, and managing educational processes where the learner assumes a protagonistic role.

Elsewhere, Blumberg (2008) emphasizes that we need to educate the student to successfully perform in a curriculum that is centred on his learning and that requires his/her competences in self-management, autonomy and responsibility in decision-making about alternative pathways to learning. Therefore, if the devices that aid in educating the strategic, autonomous and self-motivated learner we expect to find do not exist or are ineffective, it will be hard for the expected self-didacticism or participation of the learner to emerge. We must not forget that the latter are cognitive, socio-emotional and cultural types of learning that occur in the context of a given learning situation.

These types of learning environment are a reality, especially in higher learning. Some years ago, we were talking systematically about building personal learning environments (PLE), mediated by digital and mobile technology as resources for elective self-learning by students. Thereto, Adell and Castañeda (2010) mention that, with mediating digital technology, from the networks in which the students participate and with interactions among a variety of people (not only teachers), it is viable and very potent to set up an environment in which many of the interactions and ways of communication are reproduced that are the basis for the permanent learning of learners.

When students take on setting up their own personal learning environments through ICT, they can extend their abilities and promote innovation with the help of specific and effective tools, using a variety of didactic methods. Thus, under certain conditions, they can achieve their own learning objectives more quickly, dynamically, effectively and multi-dimensionally. Another option of interest is participation in learning groups and communities self-initiated and self-governed by the students themselves, starting long-term projects as a function of their needs and interests that do not fit into the traditional paradigms prevalent in school and university institutions.

Another experience of interest is that of young people who create their own channels in media such as YouTube, where they share information of a varying...
nature, including video tutorials that help others learn different areas of academic knowledge or solve practical problems in everyday life, without forgetting the recreational and fun component. The accumulation of experience from active and self-generated learning by students in scenarios other than formal and school-based ones grows day-by-day, and shows models of good learning practices.

The trend toward personalising learning is growing. There is evidence of personalised learning environments created by the students themselves, be it in collaboration or on their own initiative. Let us examine the following examples of university students in Mexico:

- The YouTube site created by Alain Massieu, a graduate student in medicine, is a good example of the profile of a young prosumer who not only consumes but creates multimedia content of an academic, artistic and recreational nature. He has created successful video tutorials in medicine, music and video games, resulting in a great number of followers. ([https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCKqqgl9l4MP6GjXaIFzKpbQ](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCKqqgl9l4MP6GjXaIFzKpbQ)). He also promotes networks for young people with similar interests.

- Some students create self-study sites because they are unable to find the type of educational materials and teaching strategies in their classrooms motivating them to learn. They are clear examples of the search for personalization in learning and the ability to raise personal trajectories without renouncing academic rigor, bringing the curricular content closer to informal learning and their life interests. The Website “Neurodummies” by Adolfo Díaz, with self-study and educational multimedia activities for learning the neuro-sciences, aimed at young university students, illustrates the above ideas ([http://fitodd.wix.com/neurodummies-unam](http://fitodd.wix.com/neurodummies-unam)). The personal self-learning environment (PLE) “Vero and the Fantastic World of Neuroscience” created by Verónica Vázquez, a psychology student, led her to academic success in subjects she had previously failed in ([http://angelverivazne.wix.com/veroneuro](http://angelverivazne.wix.com/veroneuro)).

- Other young university students have developed projects seeking to support learning digital skills, thinking strategies or pedagogical devices for learning or teaching. Edmundo López’s channel (“Ineducable” [https://www.youtube.com/user/albedmundo](https://www.youtube.com/user/albedmundo)) show videos, tutorials, music, biographies and conferences by leading authors in education, etc., geared toward helping others to learn and targeting a wide audience of learners and educational agents. Likewise, Santiago Chávez had an educational channel for high-school students with videos focused on developing the ability to search for information and surf the Web (“Redesign Your Mind” [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCsMT_ve8FLSua_xtxLig4Yg](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCsMT_ve8FLSua_xtxLig4Yg))

- Another interesting example: the project of a group headed by Fernando Zárate and Fernanda Rodríguez, called “On the Same Team. An Opportunity for Equity,” deals with sociocultural animation on Facebook and a Web portal promoting gender equity among young people. Its purpose is to critique and change the language and cultural practices of a patriarchal and macho culture. They use the resource of transmedia narrative. This has allowed them to generate messages in video format, tweets, comics,
academic essays and memes, among others. (Facebook: https://m.facebook.com/enunmismoequipo?ref=bookmark; and Website: http://equidadequipo.wix.com/en-el-mismo-equipo)

- The University League of Role Playing (http://ligauniversitariadejuegosderol.blogspot.mx/) is a group of university students in math, science, philosophy of science, communications and literature promoting role-playing games as an activity that uses present-day popular culture, as well as developing imagination, creativity and improvisation. This league promotes workshops, meetings and gaming sessions based on game-based learning, the potential of narrative and the collaborative creation of a fictional world by players. The games not only involve play, but debate issues from scientific, literary and artistic fields of knowledge. This experience represents one of the best examples of how formal and informal learning can be integrated into playful scenarios in accordance with the interests of young people.

However, in order to give concrete form to these types of scenarios or new learning ecologies, we must question and rethink the logic of present-day curricula: centred and vertical, not very flexible, especially the parts related to basic schooling. It is likewise necessary to transform the psycho-pedagogical approach, since instructional and evaluator processes, standardised and standardising, with aspirations of universality currently governing our educational system, are inoperative and contradictory to the principles of a learner-centred focus.

We would have to think about a curriculum organised around generic and transversal competencies related to the capacity to learn, understanding learning in its broadest sense, with an aim toward diversity, equity and multi-culturality.

Educational experiences would have to encompass the point of view of education based on and for life, with a wide range of flexibility to adapt to the needs and incidences of educational communities, though having, as a common denominator, a set of basic or nuclear knowledge. In no way would it be a reiteration of the positivist curriculum organised around disciplinary snippets. Some authors posit a series of guidelines for giving concrete form to learner-centred curricula, as shall be seen below. In all these cases, there are in-depth transformations in the education community. It is not just a question of changing formal curricular structures or didactic methods.

According to Weimer (2013), there are at least five large areas of educational practice that need to be transformed in order to give concrete form to a learner-centred focus:

- The role played by curricular content: its orientation toward constructing knowledge and reference frameworks in the student for developing abilities and self-regulation.
- Teaching tasks: more than providers of information, as mediators of knowledge, such that their concepts, practices and educational processes have to be rethought.
- Responsibility for learning: the strategic things to be learned, the willingness and motivation to be encouraged of the learners themselves in order for them to manage the learning by themselves.
• The purpose and process of evaluation: as an aid to improvement, as feedback and a model for complex learning, and not as a way to give marks or explore declarative information.

• The balance of power that occurs between curricular actors in the classroom and the educational community itself, which must be transformed.

On another level, Coll (2016) proposes a series of Principles to achieve the personalisation of teaching, at the same time making it feasible for students to delimit their own learning paths:

• Consider the interests and options of learners in identifying their learning needs and the path to follow that will satisfy them. That is, a learner profile and his/her personal learning plan must be set up.

• Connect school learning to the lives of learners and those of their communities, incorporating experiences from other contexts into formal education.

• Use a variety of resources for learning from outside formal education, but accessible to it.

• Establish practices and internships between schools and other social scenarios for learning (for example, distributed and interconnected education, service-learning experiences in the community).

• Rethink and redimension curricular content (what is indispensably basic and what is desirable). A major problem continues to be the encyclopaedic curriculum.

• Give broad latitude to the possibility of constructing personal trajectories or pathways, such that a framework of curricular flexibility and mobility among educational programs and scenarios is needed.

• Use educational models of inquiry, both experiential and situational, constructing personal environments to learn, territorial and community learning environments, learning based on play and gamification, among others, supported by mobile technologies available everywhere, with online and mixed modalities.

• Establish the type of services and support, both personal and inter-personal, aimed at learners, thereby ensuring they achieve the learning goals foreseen.

This is how we have to rethink and empower the architecture of the curriculum itself, which includes the method for the design, basic construction, philosophy and key components of the curriculum and of the educational programs constituting it, establishing a model of teaching and teacher-training congruent with that focus, thereby linking educational experience to learners’ needs and goals.

Conclusions

In this article, we have posited that the idea of placing the learner at the focal point of the educational act is expressed differently in different educational theories, but they have, as common denominator, an interest in encouraging the learner’s development, well-being and education, both for school and for life. The underlying rule is to awaken in the person a penchant for knowledge, as
well as the active and deliberate participation in his/her own learning process. It is also often argued that only in this way will it be possible to acquire intellectual capacities of a higher nature and that aspects such as meta-cognition and self-regulation are consubstantial to human learning.

Moreover, learner-centred curriculum is of such importance that, at present, it constitutes an imperative in establishing educational reform and attempting to innovate curricula and teaching. Notwithstanding, the pedagogical ends and devices foreseen to give it concrete form in the classroom could not be more diverse, just as are its eventual results.

We believe that the pedagogical premises and thinking of learner-centred curriculum continues to be current and valid, but must be revisited. One of its major challenges lies in achieving a full understanding and acceptance not only of experts on topics of learning and development, or among curriculum designers, but, more broadly, among the actors of education and the decision-makers implicated.

Even more importantly, educational focuses centred on the participation and protagonic activity of the aprendients must permeate the thinking and practices of teachers and educational agents, if we are talking about school-related learning, but, even more broadly, be accepted by other educational agents and learners in non-formal, job-related, virtual or free-time learning scenarios, just to mention but a few. Educational-learning experiences at museums or scientific fairs and parks, learning situations based on play (video games, role playing, serious games and play-acting) that are successful and stimulating for participants have managed to incorporate several of the Principles we have set forth in these pages. Not for nothing, today, a whole trend in research has been developed around what is called *humanistic leisure* (Cuenca, 2000).

Finally, there is a series of unresolved issues related to learner-centred curriculum or that, at least, the solutions expected have not been attained. Outstanding among these, the epistemology of knowledge prevailing in curricular designs that continues to favour the type of already established knowledge, the atomised logic of the disciplines, the gap between theory and practice. At a second level, quite related to the preceding, to the architecture of the curriculum, in which the organisation by disciplinary subjects, a curriculum that is linear and not very flexible, or the prevalence of factual knowledge all impede complex and multi-disciplinary learning, embedded in relevant situations, be it that the latter are recreated in the educational institution, simulated in the virtual world or experienced in scenarios outside schooling.

Another question working against the focus is the culture of evaluating learning, trapped in a contradictory discourse. Though we talk of comprehensive, authentic and contextual evaluations, educational policy in the area of evaluation of learning prescribes the application of standardized tests, some with the promise of evaluating non-controversial knowledge or competences for life that are universal in scope, issues that are quite debatable. The reality is that, in many schools, the tendency is to give marks based on tests that only measure factual information or the elementary application of knowledge.
However, the best bet for putting the Principles of learner-centred curriculum into concrete form, at least from the point of view of the authors cited in this article, is related to teacher training and the conditions prevailing in teaching at educational institutions. Also, to be taken into account are the roles and capacity to learn of the learners themselves, their willingness and agency.

“Student agency refers to the level of control, autonomy and power that a student experiences in an educational situation. Student agency can be manifested in the choice of learning environment, subject matter, approach, and/or pace. Authentic assessment, experiential or project based learning, and mastery-based learning all provide opportunities to increase student agency. With more student agency can come higher levels of engagement and commitment to the learning process.” (From the Knewton Blog - https://www.knewton.com/resources/blog/ed-tech-101/student-agency/)

To that end, Weimer (2013) states that, seen as a whole, university-level classrooms continue to be extremely centred on instruction through professorial staff and on disciplinary content, an issue not conducive to academic achievement in students, especially with regard to their maturity, autonomy and willingness to learn. She postulates that university students themselves expect the professor to be someone who makes the decisions about what and how to teach, leading therefore to their orienting their learning efforts toward passing examinations rather than to self-initiated, creative and experiential projects.

Indeed, learners require clarity regarding their capacities and interests, being able to determine their own short-term and long-term learning goals, selecting pedagogical devices of interest, adjusted to their style of working, deploying strategies that permit them to interpret the information or curricular content for learning, constructing meaning and continually monitoring their learning. These types of learning must be explicitly modelled on and promoted among learners, but, in many educational programs, it is presupposed that students already spontaneously have or develop said capabilities or, rather, that it is not clear how their acquisition and mastery occurs.

The knowledge learners have of their identity and culture, of their prior knowledge and vital interests, turns out to be a nodal point to take into consideration. Under the current educational scenario, it is said that, from infancy, we are living more and more in a virtual world. The media and technology have a strong impact on the identity of younger generations, who learn to find out about, talk and write through those technologies, communicating through social networks and producing knowledge in the same, integrated virtual communities. We must look into these and other situations in the lives of children and young people, but also as relate to adult learners, from the point of view of diversity and human rights, rethinking learner-centred curriculum within the contemporary world.

Notes
1. Acknowledgements: To DGAPA-UNAM, through the project PAPIIT IN304114-3 and to Glenn Gardner for the translation of this text into English.
References


Received: 25 May 2016
Accepted: 10 August 2016