



Ian Clifford

British Council, Burma

Ian.Clifford@mm.britishcouncil.org

Khaing Phyu Htut

British Council, Burma

KhaingPhyu.Htut@mm.britishcouncil.org

A transformative Pedagogy for Myanmar?

1 ABSTRACT

The paper addresses the theme of how pedagogy and assessment can support learning in the context of ongoing research in Myanmar.

The polarisation of child-centred approaches (CCA) and teacher-centred approaches (TCA) has been questioned in the context of pedagogical reform in the developing world. Structural and cultural barriers to the implementation of CCA have been identified and the importance of valuing local pedagogical knowledge stressed. A recent review of developing world teachers finds best outcomes associated with authoritative teachers within a performance model using a combination of CCA and TCA.

The CCA model presented to developing world stakeholders as uncontested is anything but and reviews of pedagogical effectiveness in the developed world find 'direct instruction', or whole class teaching, broadly more effective than discovery-based pedagogy, if undertaken in an engaging and interactive way which responds to the needs of individual students.

In the Myanmar context choral chanting and rote memorisation are ubiquitous within a tradition of whole-class teaching and the exam system rewards rote memorisation, but teachers are highly respected and students often show a joy of learning regardless of the pedagogical approach taken.

The paper explores attempts to move beyond the polarisation of CCA and TCA in Myanmar, building on local values and traditions of whole class teaching while negotiating changes in assessment acceptable to parents and communities in the context of the Myanmar reform process as a whole and a large scale project working with 1,500 of the country's teacher educators.

2 LEARNER CENTRED AND CONTRASTING APPROACHES – HISTORY AND DEFINITIONS

In common with much contemporary educational and development writing, this paper will use the terms '*learner-centred*', '*child-centred*' and '*student-centred*' interchangeably, as these reflect differences in the age and context of learners rather than philosophical distinctions regarding pedagogy.

The term '*child-centred*' has the longest lineage however, with philosophical roots in the work of Rousseau (1712-1778) who argued for the centrality of the learner in the education process, advocating minimal teacher intervention in the "*natural development of children*". The views of Locke (1632-1704) on the liberal education of children in turn informed the educational approach of Pestalozzi (1746-1827) which viewed children as active learners needing stimulation.

More recent theoretical foundations of learner-centred approaches are found in the subject centred, or cognitive constructivism of Piaget (1896-1980) and social constructivism of Vygotsky (1896-1934). Both versions of constructivism stress that learners must actively integrate new learning into their existing knowledge and beliefs. However, critically for the approach of this paper, constructivism is a theory of knowledge and of learning not a theory of teaching (Hattie, 2009; Petty, 2014; Mayer, 2004; Kirschner et al., 2006), and, while learners need to be cognitively active, this doesn't necessarily mean they have to be behaviourally active (Mayer, 2004).

Westbrook et al. have pointed out that, while authors use terms such as '*child-centred*', '*student-centred*' and '*active learning*' as if such terms have clear, stable meanings, it is not at all clear what classroom practices are being referred to (Westbrook et al., 2013). However, while not a defining feature of all learner-centred approaches, minimal teacher instruction is frequently advocated in the approaches termed '*discovery learning*', '*problem-based learning*', '*inquiry learning*' and '*experiential learning*', which clearly fit within the learner-centred camp (Kirschner et al., 2006).

Several authors also map Bernstein's typology of performance and competence onto the debate, with approaches that prioritise competence – deeper understanding which can be adapted to new contexts – broadly ascribed to the learner-centred camp.

Learner-centred approaches are often contrasted with '*teacher-centred*' approaches, in which the teacher is dominant in the classroom. Such approaches are often characterised as hierarchical and authoritarian, giving primacy to the transmission of knowledge and rote memorisation and prioritising performance through recitation and tests (Barrett, 2007). Such descriptions tend to be derogatory and pejorative, such as Freire's description of '*banking education*'. However, many advocates of teacher directed pedagogy would differentiate teaching dominated by teacher talk from an interactive form of whole-class teaching, variously described as '*direct instruction*', '*active teaching*' and '*structured learning*', moving beyond pure transmission and taking into account constructivist theories of learning (Kirschner et al., 2006 ; Petty, 2014; Hattie, 2009).

3 PROBLEMS WITH IMPLEMENTING CHILD-CENTRED APPROACHES IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD

In the developing world child-centred approaches are often seen by policy makers as a panacea to a wide range of educational challenges (Lall, 2011) including student retention and achievement (Sriprakash, 2010); exam-focused teaching; content and inclusion; and even wider political goals of poverty, elitism and the need for a democratic culture (Schweisfurth, 2011).

A wider goal of transition to democratic advanced capitalist economies has been observed in Africa, where the World Bank and UNESCO aim to *“transmit the cultural and ethical values necessary for active participation in a democratic society”* (SEIA, 2007; Vavrus, 2009 and where *“Teachers are increasingly required to employ constructivist teaching approaches”* to achieve such changes” (Mulkeen et al., 2007). In Turkey, Altinyelken notes the appeal of learner-centred approaches in terms of intellectual emancipation and transition to democracy (Altinyelken, 2011). Going further, Tabulawa (2003) sees the promotion of political democratisation through learner-centred pedagogy as intended to create the political conditions necessary for the penetration of the free-market economic system.

Yet accounts of the failure to implement learner-centred approaches are legion. In Turkey, Altinyelkin (2011) notes teacher, parent and student resistance in the context of large class sizes, lack of materials and an examination system that traditionally values knowledge acquisition and reproduction. In rural India Sriprakash finds policy aspirations for ‘democratic’ and ‘participatory’ classrooms through CCA unfulfilled as closed questions remain the dominant approach to teaching (Sriprakash, 2010).

Reviewing 72 studies of the implementation of learner-centred education (LCE) across 39 mostly developing world contexts, Schweisfurth concludes that *“the history of the implementation of LCE is riddled with stories of failure grand and small”* (Schweisfurth, 2011), grouping reasons for this failure into four categories:

1. Expectations of education reform are too high and the speed of expected change too rapid.
2. Practical, material and resource constraints include infrastructure, class size, teaching materials, teaching capacity and training.
3. Cultural barriers in contexts where a focus *“on the needs and interests of individual learners conflicts with a cultural tendency to work as a group”* and where teachers are *“expected to be in control and learners are expected to be obedient”* (Schweisfurth, 2011).
4. The absence of joined-up reform of curriculum, infrastructure, teacher education and the high-stakes examinations.

Faced with these constraints, some have suggested that the implementation of child-centred approaches in the developing world would be possible if it was accompanied by reform of exams, a reduction in class sizes, suitable training and resources. However to hope for the simultaneous introduction of such a wide range of reforms is optimistic and the issue of culture is, in any case, more intractable. Others respond to the problems of implementation by rejecting the polarisation of child-centred and teacher-centred approaches, instead advocating recognising, building on and broadening the repertoire of traditional whole class teaching (Hardman et al., 2012a, 2012b). This involves recognising that the traditional, whole-class teaching, performance model can contain more competence-based and constructivist elements (Barrett, 2007). Westbrook et al (2013) suggest the best developing world teachers use a combination of *“both student- and teacher-centred pedagogical practices, integrating newer pedagogies with more traditional ones”* within *“... a performance model, led by the teacher, who remains an authoritative figure, with strong framing of lessons, visible pedagogies and collective ways of behaving and standardised outcomes, but informed by a competence model where students’ needs are responded to by the teacher”*.

4 EVIDENCE FOR THE EFFECTIVENESS OF DIRECT INSTRUCTION

Some question why learner-centred approaches are presented to developing world teachers as uncontested, given that many donor countries are moving away from such approaches (Lall, 2011; Altinyelkin, 2011; Tabulawa, 2003).

Much recent research in the developed world has focussed on the effectiveness of “*direct instruction*”, also referred to as ‘*active teaching*’ or “*whole class interactive teaching*” (Muijs and Reynolds, 2011; Petty, 2014). These proponents of direct instruction are not referring to “*didactic, teacher-led, talking from the front*” teaching (Hattie, 2009) which encourages rote learning without understanding. The emphasis here is on actively engaged teachers bringing the content of the lesson to the whole class (Muijs and Reynolds, 2011).

Evidence demonstrating the effectiveness of direct instruction is extensive. Again and again increased time spent actively teaching the whole class and explicit training in direct instruction are associated with gains in standardised tests (Rosenshine, 1979; Good and Grouws, 1979; Fitzpatrick, 1982; Croll, 1996; Galton and Croll, 1980; Mortimore et al., 1988;. Muijs and Reynolds, 1999; 2000; 2002).

Reviewing 300,000 studies through 500 meta-analyses, John Hattie found an effect size of 0.59 associated with ‘*direct instruction*’, and strong evidence that approaches associated with ‘*teacher as activator*’ are significantly more effective than approaches associated with ‘*teacher as facilitator*’ (Hattie, 2009).

Explaining such results, Muijs and Reynolds suggest whole class teaching allows more contacts between teachers and children, facilitates pupil monitoring and is easier to manage in the classroom (Muijs and Reynolds, 2011).

The widest definitions of ‘learner-centred’ simply refer to ensuring that teaching addresses the needs and acquisition level, a definition that includes effective and interactive whole-class teaching. However, in the development context the term generally implies extensive use of group-work, collaborative learning and, critically, minimal instruction by the teacher. However, evidence for the effectiveness of constructivist, problem-based, experiential and inquiry based approaches which involve minimal instruction is very weak. Kirschner et al (2006) note that approaches advocating minimal instruction assume that students should be challenged to solve ‘authentic’ problems or acquire complex knowledge with minimal guidance. The authors draw on recent findings regarding cognitive architecture to argue that, if the goal of instruction is to manipulate information in the working memory in order to store such information in the long-term memory, learning based around problem solving leads to cognitive overload, such that learning cannot occur. The authors conclude that the use of problem solving techniques by disciplinary specialists depends on very large amounts of facts, laws, principles, schema and theories which are best learnt through direct or guided instruction. Coe et al concur: “*although learners do need to build new understanding on what they already know, if teachers want them to learn new ideas, knowledge and methods they need to teach them directly*” (Coe et al, 2014).

Importantly, these authors stress that constructivism is actually a theory of learning or knowing and not a theory of teaching (Hattie, 2009). Petty makes the same point noting that it is a common misconception that because constructivism holds that students construct their own meaning they should not be told anything (Petty, 2014). Overall the literature supports a balanced approach. Muijs and Reynolds stress that teachers should not spend the whole lesson teaching the whole class, and warn against passive reception of learning by students (Muijs and Reynolds, 2011) while Petty advocates delivering whole class interactive teaching in a constructivist way (Petty, 2014).

5 MYANMAR

Myanmar was known exclusively as Burma before 1989. It is the second largest country in Southeast Asia with a long coastline on the west and borders with China, Thailand, Bangladesh, Cambodia and India. The latest national census in May 2015 estimated a population of 51.5 million. There are 135 officially recognised ethnic groups speaking a total of 111 languages. 67% of the population is of working age (18 to 60) with a literacy rate of 89.5%.

6 BRIEF HISTORY OF EDUCATION IN MYANMAR

In Myanmar, monastic school education was the main form of education in the pre-colonial period before 1820. There was a monastery in nearly every village and monks taught males from most families Buddhism and basic literacy. Prominent monasteries also included 18 arts for governing society, including martial arts and military strategies, to cater for the needs of princes, nobles and lords.

From the 1820s, British colonialism brought Christian Missionary schools to the main towns and administrative centres. Macaulay encouraged the educating of an indigenous elite who would mediate *“between us and the millions we govern”* (Macaulay, 1835), and the colonial period (1824 – 1948) saw three types of schools emerging: vernacular (Burmese-medium), Anglo-vernacular (mixed Burmese-English medium) and European (English-medium) schools. Eventually, the British formal Western-style schooling replaced the traditional monastic education system in the cities. Rangoon University was founded in 1920.

At independence in 1948, Myanmar had the highest literacy rate in its own language across the former British Empire (Lorch, 2007). The government was dedicated to creating a literate and educated population, and Burma was believed to be on its way to become the first *‘Asian Tiger’* in the region.

However, with the military coup by General Nay Win in 1962, Burma first fell under military dictatorship. The new government nationalised all foreign businesses and cut ties with all foreign nations, especially the western bloc countries and the US. All schools were nationalised and European Code and Anglo-vernacular schools closed. In 1965, in the context of the Cold War, the government allied with the Soviet bloc, embraced state socialism, ordered the closure of all western businesses and institutions and replaced English as the medium of instruction at Burmese universities. Burma’s increasing isolation from the world thereafter was associated with a rapid decline in educational standards.

Social unrest initiated by University students’ protest in the late 1980s resulted in schools and universities being shut down for years. The SPDC (State Peace and Development Council) government which took office scattered universities to different regions while claiming rapid improvement in provision. Although the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2005 officially announced that Burma’s education system, including the 156 official universities and colleges, was reaching an international standard, the quality of education was very much in question.

7 THE HISTORY OF THE REFORM PROCESS IN MYANMAR

While little reform of note took place between 1965 and 2011, in 1981, an attempt to halt the declining English proficiency of the nation saw English taught as a compulsory subject from kindergarten and used as the medium of instruction to teach science subjects and economics at

the upper secondary level under the 'New Education Programme'. Unfortunately, the teachers who were brought up in General Ne Win's regime were not ready for the reforms programmes and little was achieved.

Since 2011, the military-backed civilian regime led by President Thein Sein has promoted wide-ranging reforms with a particular focus on education. The Comprehensive Education Sector Review (CESR), launched in February 2012, aimed to bring Myanmar's education system up to ASEAN and international standards.

Phase 1 of the CESR involved collecting data, evaluating education policies and curriculum and learning from other countries in order to develop a body of knowledge about the existing education system. This resulted in a Rapid Assessment Report which highlighted deficiencies in the quality of curriculum in both higher education and basic education and the capacity of teachers (MoE, 2013).

Phase 2 of the CESR involved more in depth analysis, with draft findings published in June 2014 (MoE, 2014). The CESR is now in the last stage of producing a sector-wide costed National Education Sector Plan (NESP), with the overall goal of improving teaching and student learning achievement in all schools and educational institutions by 2021 (MoE, 2015). The NESP advocates creative teaching methods centred on '*Building on the traditional model of whole class teaching in Myanmar*' (MoE, 2015). Assessment is a critical issue identified within the NESP, which concludes that "*there is a general consensus that there should be a move from rote learning, cramming and short term memorisation of facts to a variety of methods used more flexibly both to assess course work and the higher level thinking skills of pupils*" (NESP, 2015a).

8 THE HISTORY OF ATTEMPTS TO IMPLEMENT CHILD-CENTRED APPROACHES IN MYANMAR

The Myanmar government's Thirty Year Long Term Basic Education Plan 2001-2031, set out goals and strategies to be achieved within primary and secondary education by 2031. The 30 year plan committed to:

"transform subject-centred approach into child centred approach, traditional teaching approach into participatory and active learning approach, rote learning into learning based on applicability and the exam system into a system of progress measurement through continual assessment" (MoE, 2001)

Since this date, the main advocates of CCA in Myanmar have been JICA and UNICEF. The government of Japan has supported the primary education of Myanmar since 1997. In 2001, JICA carried out MBESS (Myanmar Basic Education Sector Study). As a result a child-centred approach (CCA) was introduced. Drawing on the 30 year plan, the Myanmar Ministry of Education saw CCA as the standard for teaching and learning and the Myanmar Government requested the support of the Japanese Government to disseminate the child centred approach to the whole country. From December 2004, JICA carried out a four year project entitled: *Strengthening the Child Centred Approach* (SCCA). In addition to revising the education college curriculum and national assessment system, the project aimed to roll out the child-centred approach by training up teacher educators in the education colleges, training cluster trainers at local township and school principal level in 24 targeted townships and using a cascade model to up-skill teachers at school level.

On the completion of the first phase of SCCA, JICA undertook a summative evaluation (JICA, 2007). Unfortunately, this review of the project showed little positive change between baseline and end of project surveys in the attitudes of teachers and students. Lesson observations undertaken with the teacher educators in all the education colleges demonstrated that although teacher educators had sufficient knowledge and skills of CCA, there was a wide gap in instructional abilities.

Nevertheless, JICA commenced phase two of SCCA in 2007, adding an additional 40 townships to the original 24 in phase 1. The project was completed in 2011. A final evaluation of the second phase of the project has not been published, but a workshop hosted by JICA on 25th January 2015 to review the project was reported in the Myanmar press under the headline: *“Child-centred education a failure – experts”* (Myanmar Times, 2014). Class sizes, a reluctance to abandon the traditional rote-learning approach and particularly Myanmar’s exam system, were blamed for the failure to implement CCA.

UNICEF was the only other international organization, apart from JICA, that the Myanmar Government officially engaged with to support education reform before 2011. In 2001 UNICEF established *Child Friendly Schools* and *Early Childhood Care Development (ECCD)* as five year projects to run concurrently in 61 townships. As part of the projects UNICEF delivered in service teacher training on school improvement planning and the child-centred approach (CCA). UNICEF also undertook a large scale education programme from 2006 to 2012 with the vision of providing quality early child development and basic education for all. The programme comprises three interlocking sub-projects, quality basic education (QBE) being one of them. The second phase of QBE began in January 2012 and will continue until early 2016.

Again, an evaluation of these projects found that the interventions had limited impact on the quality of teaching and learning (Clarke, 2010). This failure was acknowledged in the terms of reference for the UNICEF baseline study for the second phase of the quality basic education project including ongoing work around child-friendly schools which noted that during the previous country programme evaluation *“rote learning remains the dominant form of instruction”* (Hardman et al. 2012a).

The most recent version of the National Education Sector Plan Teacher Education Chapter summarises: *“the MOE rolled out child-centred approach trainings across the country and in education colleges from 2004-2011, yet these were found to have little impact”* (NESP, 2015b), and a prominent Director General in the Myanmar Ministry of Education recently concluded that CCA had failed in Myanmar due to a mismatch between the approach and local traditions. Further light on this cultural mismatch can be shed by the work of Lall in her review of attempts to implement CCA in Myanmar’s monastic schools (Lall, 2010) and her review of the views of Myanmar’s state school teachers (Lall, 2013). Lall finds that teachers *“had no difficulty explaining what they saw as the main elements of CCA”* or of *“the benefits they experienced when using CCA”*, (Lall, 2010) but struggled to apply the approach due to *“logistical problems such as high student-teacher ratios, lack of space, lack of teaching aids and lack of time ... Teachers, but also monks, trainers and training providers all agreed that CCA requires teachers to do a lot more work overall”*. In terms of logistical difficulties, state school teachers referred to the lack of fit with the current syllabus, lack of time, *“insufficient teaching aids, inappropriate class sizes and large student to teaching ratios, small class spaces”* and a *“... deep incompatibility between CCA ... and the exam system”* and this issue is raised again and again by teachers (Lall, 2013).

At a cultural level, in the monastic schools, “CCA was often seen as a ‘foreign’ or ‘western’ way to teach” (Lall, 2010). In the state schools teachers were reported as saying: “CCA can make children rude”, and that “things like no respect for elders can be prevented only by TCA [teacher-centred approach]” (Lall, 2013). Lall concludes that:

“The issue of respect and how the students view teachers and parents or other elders remains central as many see the main difficulty in how to balance the new approach and what is seen as the ‘modern’ and ‘western’ way with traditional Myanmar culture. Parents were especially worried that children would become too disrespectful and upturn the traditional hierarchies at home”. (Lall, 2010, p. 27)

9 THE ENGLISH FOR EDUCATION COLLEGE TRAINERS APPROACH

In July 2013, during a state visit to the UK, Myanmar’s President Thein Sein made a direct request to Prime Minister David Cameron for UK support to Myanmar’s education reform process through the placing of native speaker English language teacher trainers in each of Myanmar’s state education colleges. The President described an urgent need for Myanmar state school teachers to improve their English and develop their teaching skills, and he saw expatriate trainers as instrumental in helping to bring this about.

This initial request led to funding of £4,575,000 from the UK government’s Department for International Development (DFID) and the British Council to launch the English for Education College Trainers (EfECT) project in Myanmar. 48 expatriate trainers have been placed in 20 education colleges, two universities of education, the University for the Development of the National Races and the National Centre for English Language. 24 trainers are employed by the British Council, bringing expertise in English Language Teaching, and 24 trainers are volunteers placed by Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO), bringing a wealth of mainstream experience. In most institutions one British Council and one Voluntary Services Overseas trainer are deployed together. The EfECT project is presently working with 1,600 teacher educators across Myanmar.

The delivery model for the EfECT project involves one year devoted to improving the English language proficiency of the teacher educators and one year devoted to supporting the teacher educators to build their capacity around adult teacher training and knowledge and the application of school teaching methodology. The methodology phase began at the start of September 2015.

Unsurprisingly, a comprehensive needs analysis undertaken by the EfECT trainers at the start of the project reiterated many of the findings outlined above. 88% of the teacher educators in this sample rated themselves as ‘quite confident’ or ‘very confident’ in their **understanding** of a wide range of pedagogical approaches while only 40% rated themselves as ‘quite confident’ or ‘very confident’ in the **use** of these methodologies. 84% stated that they understood child-centred approaches and many were able to describe the characteristics and benefits of such an approach. In focus groups teacher educators referred to: “less chalk talk”; “student participation and involvement”; “students working, learning, discussing, practising together in groups” and “students thinking for themselves”; “teacher as facilitator” when asked to describe child-centred approaches. One teacher educator referred to how “the child-centred approach allowed students to take control of and have greater responsibility for their own learning”. The child-centred approach is generally perceived by teacher educators as more motivating and engaging for trainee teachers as lessons are more interactive and “more useful in encouraging independence, creativity and collaboration with students”.

At the same time, teacher educators cited familiar reasons why they found it difficult to implement child-centred approaches: time constraints, assessment practices, class sizes, classroom layout and furniture, levels of motivation of teacher trainees, lack of training and, interestingly, a fear of being perceived as lazy by other teacher educators. Structured observations of teacher educator classes found extensive use of rote learning, drilling, chanting, reading aloud and memorisation with the majority of lessons comprising teacher questions and choral response of answers. Teacher educators showed a lack of confidence in using a range of methodologies and little evidence of staging, elicitation and checking understanding in lessons (British Council, 2015). These observations closely mirror those of Hardman et al (2012a) in their baseline study of Myanmar schools which found a transmission model with pupils spending a great deal of time listening to the teacher, mainly closed questioning, little teacher feedback and a lack of explicit learning objectives.

In response to these findings, the history of implementation of child-centred approaches in Myanmar and the wider literature, the project has opted for a balanced approach to supporting the teacher educators to develop their confidence in using and imparting more effective classroom teaching methodology. The first six months of the methodology year is being devoted to supporting the teacher educators to develop their 'direct instruction' skills. This involves supporting the teacher educators to undertake whole class teaching more interactively and in a way that takes account of students' existing knowledge.

Adams and Engelmann (1996) set out seven key steps to effective direct instruction:

1. Focus activity ('the hook')
2. Stating the objective and providing the rationale
3. Presenting content and modelling
4. Checking for understanding;
5. Guided practice
6. Independent practice
7. Closure

The first six months of the project will therefore aim to explore these skills. This will include explicit instruction around presentation, modelling and concept mapping skills. In addition, there is a particular focus on developing questioning skills, both because this has been identified as a key component of good direct instruction / interactive whole-class teaching (Muijs and Reynolds, 2012) and because this has been identified as a particular weakness of Myanmar teachers (Hardman et al, 2012a). In addition, since checking for pupil understanding is critical for both direct instruction and wider constructivist approaches, the assessment module of the methodology year highlights the important role of formative assessment, supporting Myanmar teachers to move beyond the exclusive reliance on summative assessment, in line with the NESP (2015a).

Within the second six months of the methodology year, teacher educators will explore classroom practices which traditionally sit more broadly within the learner-centred approach such as setting up pair-work, group work and more collaborative learning. The methodology year of the project is therefore organised around eight modules:

1. Introductory module
2. Effective whole class teaching
3. Questioning skills
4. Classroom management
5. Effective interactive teaching
6. Planning and preparation
7. Assessment
8. Critical thinking

Critically, the observation instrument being developed to monitor and evaluate progress in classroom practice has been designed to be 'ideologically neutral' in terms of the dichotomy between direct instruction and learner-centred approaches and to establish whether small, incremental changes are being made towards adopting a teaching practice which meets the needs of learners. Six key areas of classroom practice are assessed:

1. **Reflective practice** - identifying areas of strengths, areas for improvement and ways to improve it.
2. **Questioning** - asking questions to engage learners in the learning content, to check for prior knowledge, use of open ended questions, responding to learner contributions with follow-up questions and to check learning within the lesson.
3. **Interactive classroom management and feedback** – clear instructions to set up activities, monitoring, interacting and providing feedback, encouraging active participation, calling on learners to answer questions individually.
4. **Resources** – making effective use of the board and learning aids and adapting the coursebook in a motivating way.
5. **Planning** – clear learning outcomes and logical, coherent staging.
6. **Assessment** – learning outcomes and referred to and assessed throughout the lesson to consolidate learning.

This balanced approach has been met very warmly by Ministry of Education officials, college principals and teacher educators. At one consultation meeting with Ministry officials, the Pro-Rector at one of the universities commented that Myanmar needed to develop more critical thinking as the country moved towards democracy but still needed to respect its Buddhist traditions, within which the teacher remains an authoritative figure in the classroom.

10 CONCLUSION

There are many references in the literature on teacher training in the developing world to the need to move beyond the polarisation of teacher-centred and child-centred approaches (Hardman et al, 2012a, 2012b, 2014; Barrett, 2007) but little guidance regarding what such an approach might look like in practice. A balanced approach to training around whole-class interactive teaching and learner centred approaches which allow more peer to peer communication and collaborative learning is probably not new. Programmes with a stated desire to implement learner-centred approaches are, no doubt, implemented more pragmatically on the ground when faced with class sizes of 50 plus and cultural resistance from teachers, students, parents and administrators. Indeed, references abound in the literature to the likes of '*contingent constructivism*' (Vavrus, 2009), '*Myanmar centric CCA*' (Lall, 2010) and the need for a learning-centred rather than learner-centred approach (O'Sullivan, 2004). However, it is perhaps more unusual to foreground direct instruction from the outset. Either way, it is hoped that the more

balanced approach being undertaken by the EfECT project will enable Myanmar's teacher educators to combine the new and the traditional in a way that both fits comfortably with the local culture and enables them to fully own the development of a transformative pedagogy fit for the task ahead.

REFERENCES

- Adams, G. L. and Engelmann, S., 1996, Research on direct instruction: 20 years beyond DISTAR. Seattle, WA: Educational Achievement Systems.
- Altinyelken, H. K. 2011, Student-centred pedagogy in Turkey: conceptualisations, interpretations and practices. *Journal of Education Policy*, 26.2 137-160.
- Barrett, A.M., 2007, Beyond the polarisation of pedagogy: models of classroom practice in Tanzanian primary schools. *Comparative Education* 43 (2), 273–294.
- British Council, 2015, English for Education College Trainers Needs Analysis, British Council Burma, Yangon.
- Clarke, D. J., 2010, *Independent evaluation of UNICEF education programme. Improving Access to Quality Basic Education in Myanmar (2006-2010). Final Report.*
- Coe, R., Aloisi, C., Higgins, S. and Major, L.E., 2014, *What makes great teaching? Review of the underpinning research*, <http://www.suttontrust.com/researcharchive/great-teaching/>
- Croll, P., 1996, Teacher-pupil Interaction in the Classroom. In P. Croll and N. Hastings (eds) *Effective Primary Teaching*. London: David Fulton.
- Fitzpatrick, K.A., 1982, *The Effect of a Secondary Classroom Management Training Program on Teacher and Student Behaviour*. Paper submitted at the AERA Annual Meeting, New York.
- Galton, M. and Croll, P., 1980, Pupil Progress in the Basic Skills. In M. Galton and B. Simon (eds) *Progress and Performance in the Primary Classroom*. London: Routledge.
- Good, T.L. and Grouws, D.A., 1979, The Missouri Mathematics Effectiveness Project in Fourth-grade classrooms. *Journal of Educational Psychology* 71, 355-62.
- Hardman, F., Stoff, C., Elliott, L. and Ackers, I., 2012a, *Child-Centred Approaches and Teaching and Learning Practices in Selected Primary Schools in Child-Friendly School Focused Townships in Myanmar*, (UNICEF).
- Hardman, F., Abd-Kahir, J. and Tibuhinda, A., 2012b, Reforming teacher education in Tanzania, *International Journal of Educational Development* 32 826–834.
- Hardman, F., Stoff, C., Aung, W., Elliott, L., 2014, Developing pedagogical practices in Myanmar primary schools: possibilities and constraints, *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*.
- Hattie, J., 2009, *Visible Learning, a synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement*, Routledge.
- JICA Myanmar Office, 2007, *Summary of Terminal Evaluation*.
- Kirschner, P.A., Sweller, J., and Clark, R.E., 2006, Why minimal guidance during instruction does not work: an analysis of the failure of constructivist, discovery, problem-based, experiential, and inquiry-based teaching. *Educational Psychologist* 41 (2) 75-86.
- Lall, M., 2010, *Child Centred Learning and Teaching Approaches in Myanmar*; Commissioned by Pyoe Pin; DFID Myanmar.

- Lall, M., 2011, Pushing the child centred approach in Myanmar: the role of cross national policy networks and the effects in the classroom. *Critical Studies in Education*. Vol. 52, No. 3, October 2011, 219–233.
- Lall, M. (2013) *Teachers' Voice, What education reforms does Myanmar Need?* Myanmar Egress. <http://marielall.com/wp/wp-content/uploads/Myanmar-teachers-voice-report-FINAL.pdf>
- Lorch, J., 2007. "Myanmar's Civil Society - a Patch for the National Education System? The Emergence of Civil Society in Areas of State Weakness." *Südostasien aktuell - Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, Vol 26 No 3 pp. 55-88.
- Macaulay, T. B., 1835, *Minute Upon Indian Education*.
- Mayer, R. E., 2004, Should There Be a Three-Strikes Rule Against Pure Discovery Learning? The Case for Guided Methods of Instruction. *American Psychologist*, 59, 1, pp. 1-14.
- MoE, 2001, Myanmar Ministry of Education, Thirty Year Long Term Basic Education Plan 2001-2031.
- MoE, 2013, Myanmar Ministry of Education, Comprehensive Education Sector Review Phase (1) Summary Report (Draft).
- MoE, 2014, Myanmar Ministry of Education, Comprehensive Education Sector Review Phase (2) Summary Report (Draft).
- MoE, 2015, Myanmar Ministry of Education, Update on drafting the National Education Strategic Plan (NESP) 2016-2021.
- Mortimore, P., Sammons, P., Lewis, D. and Ecob, R., 1988, *School Matters*. Wells, Somerset: Open Books.
- Muijs, D. and Reynolds, D., 1999, *School Effectiveness and Teacher Effectiveness: Some Preliminary Findings from the Evaluation of the Mathematics Enhancement Programme*. Presented at the American Educational Research Association Conference, Montreal. Quebec, 19 April.
- Muijs, D. and Reynolds, D., 2001, Student Background and Teacher Effects on Achievement and Attainment in Mathematics: a longitudinal Study. Presentation at the International Congress for School Effectiveness and School Improvement, Toronto, 7 January.
- Muijs, R. D. and Reynolds, D., 2002, Teacher Beliefs and Behaviours: What Matters. *Journal of Classroom Research* 45(3), 219-30.
- Muijs, D. and Reynolds, D., 2012, *Effective Teaching, Evidence and Practice*, Sage, London.
- Mulkeen, A., Chapman, D.W., DeJaeghere, J.G., Leu, E., 2007. *Recruiting, Retaining, and Retraining Secondary School Teachers and Principals in Sub-Saharan Africa*. The World Bank, Washington, DC.
- Myanmar Times, 2014, Child-centred education a failure – experts, 30 Jan 2014, <http://www.mmtimes.com/index.php/national-news/12962-child-centred-education-reform-a-failure.html>
- NESP (Myanmar National Education Sector Plan), 2015a, *Student assessment and national exams, Subsector Report No. 4*, Comprehensive Education Sector Review Phase 3.
- NESP (Myanmar National Education Sector Plan), 2015b, *Teacher Education and Management, Subsector Report No. 5*, Comprehensive Education Sector Review Phase 3.
- O' Sullivan, M., 2004, *The reconceptualization of learner-centred approaches: A Namibian case study*, *International Journal of Educational Development*, 24, 585-602.
- Petty, G., 2014, *Evidence-based teaching (Second Edition)*, Oxford.

- Rosenshine, B., 1979, Content, Time and Direct Instruction. In P. L. Peterson and H. J. Walberg (eds) *Research on Teaching*. Berkeley, CA: McCutchen.
- Schweisfurth, M., 2011, Learner-centred education in developing country contexts: From solution to problem? *International Journal of Educational Development* 31 (2011) 425–432 .
- SEIA [Secondary Education in Africa Initiative], 2007, Synthesis Report: Executive Summary (Online). Available at:
http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTAFRREGTOPSEIA/Resources/Executive_Summary.pdf.
- Sriprakash, A., 2010, Child-centred education and the promise of democratic learning: Pedagogic messages in rural Indian primary schools. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 30, 297-304.
- Tabulawa, R., 2003, International Aid Agencies, Learner-Centred Pedagogy and Political Democratisation: A Critique. *Comparative Education*, Vol. 39, No. 1 (Feb., 2003), pp. 7-26.
- Vavrus, F., 2009, *The Cultural politics of constructivist pedagogies: Teacher education reform in the United Republic of Tanzania*, *International Journal of Education Development*, 29, pp. 303-311.
- Westbrook, J. Durrani, N. Brown, R. Orr, D. Pryor, J., Boddy, J. and Salvi, F., 2013, *Pedagogy, Curriculum, Teaching Practices and Teacher Education in Developing Countries*. London: Institute of Education, EPPI Education Rigorous Literature Review.
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/305154/Pedagogy-curriculum-teaching-practices-education.pdf