Student-Centered vs. Teacher-Centered Learning: An Examination of Performance and Preference

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Examination of teaching methods and learning styles is becoming increasingly important for educators as we move to a technological information age. A 2007 survey conducted by Indiana University showed that of the 81,000 students surveyed, 60% did not enjoy the activities that they were doing in the classroom. For these reasons, one can speculate that current teaching methods that focus on teacher-centered learning are not interesting students, and may affect student performance. A new teaching method of student-centered learning has emerged, which focuses on understanding the curriculum at the student's own pace. However, many still doubt the effectiveness of this method on students' grades and interest levels. This study examined these two teaching styles using historical data of grades and AP Exam scores, along with responses from over 800 students to a survey on the satisfaction of each method. The experimental results found no differences in grades between the two teaching methods. However, the results supported the hypothesis that student centered-learning increased AP scores. In addition, the results indicated that there was a preference to student-centered learning over teacher-centered learning. These results offer insight to student's preferences and performance and for future teachers about how to best provide the ideal learning environment for students.

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