

Historical Foundation of Learner Centred Teaching

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Signs of LCT education began appearing with the dawning of formal education and can be traced back to the Sumerians and the development of written language around 3500 B. C. Later in seventeenth century, Locke introduced experiential education (the idea that one learns through experience). Another two hundred years passed before European educators Pestalozzi, Hegel, Herbart, and Froebel designed and popularized experience-based LCT. A century later, nineteenth century educator Parker brought this method to America. Twentieth century Russian sociologist Lev Vygotsky, Swiss psychologist Piaget, and American philosopher and educator Dewey shaped the existing LCT into a program called constructivism. This article traces this development and examines the major contributions of each of these educators. This study is based on the secondary resources and In-depth desk review or secondary research methods has been utilized.

Context of the Study

Signs of learner-centred teaching (LCT) education began appearing with the dawning of formal education and can be traced back to the Sumerians and the development of written language around 3500 B. C. (*Brodiea, Lelliotta, & Davis, 2002; Entwistle, 2012; Kapenda, 2007; Mtika & Gates, 2010; Ozmon and Craver, 1999*). Within 500 years, the Chinese have set up formal schools. These early teachers emphasized individual character and citizenship. Perhaps the earliest individual teachers to have a profound, direct effect on learner-centred education was the Chinese philosopher Confucius (551 BC-479 BC) and the Greek philosopher Socrates (469-399 B.C.). Confucius emphasized character and good citizenship, and Socrates emphasized the individual. Confucius believed that every person should strive for the continuous development of self until excellence is attained. Some well-known philosophers and educators such as Confucius, Socrates, Rousseau, Parker, Pestalozzi, and Dewey made great contribution in the development of LCT (*Cuban, 1993; Henson, 2003*). In the west, notions of LCT can be seen to reach back as early as Plato's Socratic dialogues (*Entwistle, 1970: 11; Brodie, Lelliott, and Davis, 2002: 542*). In these dialogues, LCT manifests itself in the strategic questioning from which the teachers draw the student's ideas on the basis of his existing experience and understanding (*Brodiea, Lelliotta, & Davis, 2002; Entwistle, 2012; Mtika & Gates, 2010*). Socrates, in the form of dialogues, illustrated an early concern with scaffolding, believing that a person's latent knowledge needed the guidance of another who is more knowledgeable to bring it out. Therefore, all that a teacher can do is to help a learner to become aware of his current knowledge, his mistakes, and his limitations. And it is only the student who can bring about the improvement (*Perkinson, 1980*).

Henson (2003) speculates that the Chinese philosopher Confucius and the Greek philosopher Socrates (around the 5th and 4th centuries BC) were the earliest individual teachers to have intense and direct effect on LCT. Similarly, according to *Ozmon and Craver (1999)*, signs of LCT began appearing with the dawning of formal education and can be traced back to the Sumerians and the development of written language (around 3500 BC). Within 500 years, the Chinese had also established formal schools. These early teachers emphasised individual character and citizenship. Perhaps the earliest individual teachers to have a profound, direct effect on LCT was the Chinese philosopher Confucius (551 BC-479 BC) and the Greek philosopher Socrates (469-399 BC). Confucius stressed character and good citizenship, and Socrates stressed the individual. Confucius believed that every person should strive for the continual development of self until excellence is achieved. The earliest known formal teaching method was the tutorial method. For five thousand years, the tutorial method continued to dominate.

Locke (1632-1704): Concept of Tabula Rasa

Locke (1632-1704) introduced the concept of tabula rasa or blank slate, proposing that at birth the mind is a blank slate, and the only way to fill it is through having experiences, feeling these experiences, and reflecting on them (**Locke, 1693**). Locke's experience-based educational philosophy gave birth to a concept called experiential education (**Garforth, 1964**). Locke's books *An Essay concerning Human Understanding* (1690) and *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693) both, argue for a liberal education of children. According to **Campbell (1967)**, learners' curiosity should be fed and nurtured. Locke understood that curiosity is the engine that drives learning. He advised that teachers should always answer students' questions and when doing so, listen not to the learners' words but to the learners' thoughts. Each individual learner's own unique qualities and dispositions should be considered when planning a curriculum. Locke believed that the planning of educational experiences should begin by focusing on the learner. He recommended that teachers observe their students to learn their dispositions. By doing so, the curriculum can be personalised to meet each student's needs. The learner's perceptions should shape the curriculum. In his work titled "Conduct of Understanding", Locke expressed the important role that perception plays in learning: "knowledge is seeing till we ourselves see it with our own eyes and perceive it by our own understandings, we are so much in the dark and as void of knowledge as before" (**Parker, 1998:167**). Learner-centred teachers must learn to view the curriculum through the learners' perceptions. The learning environment should be free from fear. Locke cautioned teachers that affection, not fear, is the incentive that spurs children to their duty.

Locke was regarded by many in his time as an expert on educational matters. He taught many students at Oxford and also served as a private tutor. Locke's correspondence shows that he was constantly asked to recommend tutors and offer pedagogical advice. Locke's expertise led to his most important work on the subject: *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*. The work had its origins in a series of letters Locke wrote to Edward Clarke offering advice on the education of Clarke's children and was first published in 1693. Locke's views on education were, for the time, quite forward-looking. Classical languages, usually learned through tedious exercises involving rote memorization, and corporeal punishment were two predominant features of the seventeenth century English educational system. Locke saw little use for either. Instead, he emphasized the importance of teaching practical knowledge. He recognized that children learn best when they are engaged with the subject matter. Locke also foreshadowed some contemporary pedagogical views by suggesting that children should be allowed some self-direction in their course of study and should have the ability to pursue their interests. Locke believed it was important to take great care in educating the young. He recognized that habits and prejudices formed in youth could be very hard to break in later life. Thus, much of *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* focuses on morality and the best ways to inculcate virtue and industry. Locke rejected authoritarian approaches. Instead, he favored methods that would help children to understand the difference between right and wrong and to cultivate a moral sense of their own.

Though such notions of LCT have existed for a long time, there was little concern with treating children in a special way until Rousseau's 'Emile' was published in 1762, which became the first comprehensive presentation of learner-centred ideas (**Entwistle, 1970; Darling, 1994, Tabulawa, 2003**). The fundamental principle that runs throughout 'Emile' is that children have their own ways of seeing, thinking and feeling' and we should not try to teach them in a way we as adults see, think and feel (**Rousseau, 1762: 54**). Children are interested in finding things out for themselves, so education should allow children opportunities to discover things and draw conclusions from their own experiences and they should not be forced to learn things that are beyond their grasp (**Darling, 1994**). Rousseau criticises conventional education as a failure in directing children's attention to matters utterly remote from their minds, providing no opportunities for children to reason for themselves and putting children in an environment where they can be neither happy nor free (**Rousseau, 1762**). He states 'it matters little what he learns; it does matter that he should do nothing against his will' (**p. 135**). With such an understanding, education is not a matter of teaching knowledge but developing children's interests and ways of learning with their desire to learn. For Rousseau, this is the basic principle for any good education. In his words, the school should be made to fit the child rather than the other way round and the curriculum should be determined by children's interests and needs (*ibid*). Furthermore, Rousseau recognises the fact that individual children vary, therefore education needs to be individualised so as to meet their individual needs and level of development (**Darling, 1994**).

Jean Jacque Rousseau (1712-1778): The Writer of Emile

In *Emile*, Rousseau declared that nature provides for the child's growth in her own fashion, and this should never be thwarted. In this way, Rousseau introduced to educational thought a completely new emphasis, presenting ideas that were clearly learner-centred, such as arguing that children are naturally active, both physically and mentally; and that LCT requires a focus on individual differences and levels of learning

(*Entwistle, 2012; Mtika & Gates, 2010*). Rousseau's Emile, caught many people's interest, arguing for an approach to education that was child-centred and experience-based (*Henson, 2003*). Rousseau recommended a type of education that at the time was unknown, an education that was natural, child-centred, and experience-based. His intent was to protect the children from a corrupting society and permit them to develop naturally. Emile was given the freedom to explore and interact with nature (*Ikenberry, 1984*). Emile sought to replace the conventional and formal education of the day with a training that should be natural and spontaneous. Education in this era, however, was limited to the education of boys and did not promote the equal treatment of girls (*Lall, 2010*). With the birth of his own children, he gave away each child, yet, perhaps no one else has ever done so much to help children. In his adopted country, France, as perhaps was true universally at the time, children were seen as small adults and were not treated well. Rousseau understood that such treatment was unnatural and damaging to children. After tutoring a boy named Emile, and Emile's sister, Rousseau wrote a book titled 'Emile'.

According to *Entwistle (1970)*, it was with Rousseau that there entered into education a completely new way of thinking. This new thinking of education, based on children's individual interests, their natural stages of development with an emphasis on first-hand experience and individual differences, was taken forward by later writers such as Pestalozzi (1746-1827) and Froebel (1782-1852) among others. Pestalozzi, Froebel, and John Dewey extended this approach to thinking about children and their education, developing and revising existing ideas and ensuring that the application of these new approaches to education was sound (*Darling, 1994*).

Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746-1827): Father of Modern Education

Around the 16th century, inspired by Rousseau, Pestalozzi continued to stress that education should be for the child not the child for education and he strongly criticised the education of his time for expecting too much of the child and forcing the child to learn in a miserable way without attending to individual needs (*Heafford, 1967*). Pestalozzi stresses that education should take full account of what the child is capable of achieving mentally, physically and intellectually. He claims that all instruction of man is then only the Art of helping Nature to develop in her own way; and this Art rests essentially on the relation and harmony between the impressions received by the child and the exact degree of his developed powers (*Pestalozzi, 1898: 57*). In other words, 'to instruct men is nothing more than to help human nature to develop in its own way, and the art of instruction depends primarily on harmonizing our message and the demands we make upon the child with his powers at the moment' (*Green, 1912: 87; Darling, 1994: 18*). The child should learn through activity and through things. He should be free to pursue his own interests and draw his own conclusions. He should not be made anxious under stress, and his development should not be forced (*Green, 1914; Heafford, 1967; Darling, 1994*). While advocating the need for the child to proceed at his own pace and recognizing the fact that the ability of children could vary considerably, Pestalozzi valued the instructional role of the teacher and was in favour of firm discipline in the classroom and believed in the value of hard work (*Heafford, 1967*).

Different from Rousseau, who presented his ideas of education in a novel focusing on an individual child cut off from society, Pestalozzi recognised the importance of education to all and realised that education is the key to the improvement of social conditions (*Green, 1914; Heafford, 1967; Darling, 1994*). He also gave some thought to how such educational ideas can be put into practice for broader implementation by stressing that there should be a sequence in the instruction given to children 'so that beginning and progress should keep pace with the beginning and progress of the powers to be developed in the child' (*Pestalozzi, 1898: 58*). He also valued the use of picture books and real objects to create visual experiences for learning and proposed the use of textbooks for teaching and learning as he recognised that few teachers were experts and some teachers were ignorant. He believed that well-designed textbooks could help solve the problems.

Pestalozzi was influenced by Rousseau's writings and decided to open a school in Switzerland, with a learner centred curriculum (*Henson, 2003*). Pestalozzi believed that the whole child should be educated physically, mentally, and emotionally and that children should be nourished like a plant while they learnt by doing. Pestalozzi believed that teachers must respect children and base their discipline on love. He pointed out that the school should be like a good home and the teacher should be like a good parent. Pestalozzi's school succeeded educationally but failed financially. In Germany, Froebel used the learner centred, child-centred, experience-based ideas to develop the world's first kindergarten, a school for young children (*Campbell, 1967*). Pestalozzi transferred some of the central themes in Rousseau's account of learning and teaching into his own educational writing (*Darling, 1994*). Pestalozzi believed that the whole child should be educated (physically, mentally, and emotionally), and that children should be nourished like a plant while they learn by doing. Children, according to Pestalozzi, should learn through activities and they should

be free to pursue their own interests and draw their own conclusions. They should not be anxious or put under stress, and their development should not be forced (*Darling, 1994*). Teachers, according to Pestalozzi, must respect children and base their discipline on love - the school should be like a good home and the teacher should be like a good parent (*Darling, 1994; Henson, 2003*).

Pestalozzi's work, which was founded on the conception of education as development based on the nature of the child, advocated such ideas as nature walks, and the use of games and songs was much admired by Friedrich Froebel. As a result, Froebel used the philosophies of learner-centered, child centered, and experience-based learning to develop the world's first kindergarten-a school for young children (*Henson, 2003*). Froebel viewed play as something important to the development of the child's awareness, with an emphasis that play is not only a form of creative activity but also the means through which a child grows increasingly aware of the world and his place in it (*Froebel, 1885*). Froebel's view is consistent with Rousseau's, namely that the best learning occurs when learners are manipulating objects and solving problems.

Practical Education: A Comprehensive Theory of Education

Practical Education, published in 1798 by Edgeworth and his daughter, Maria, was the most outstanding text on LCT. It provided a comprehensive theory of education that combines the ideas of Locke and Rousseau, as well other educational writers. It was the first educational work to place more emphasis on experimental and holistic teaching methods, emphasising the notion that children should be encouraged to discover for themselves and that "children's attention, interest and understanding should be awakened by sympathy" (*Doddington & Hilton, 2007: 7*). However, in contrast to these LCT movements, the industrial revolution was also developing schools catering to children from poor areas and slums. In these schools, children were educated through rote memorisation and a system based on a rewards and punishments. The child centred approach became the system for the more privileged through charity schools catering to the children of the artisans and shopkeepers (*Lall, 2010*).

The first person who explicitly used the term child-centred was said to be Froebel, (*Chung and Walsh, 2000*). The term child centred appeared in Froebel's 1826 book 'The Education of Man (1885)' and steadily gained greater prominence in the educational literature from the late 1800s (*Chung & Walsh, 2000*). Froebel pioneered his child-centred ideas in kindergartens, thus developing his philosophy of education which combines child-centred theory and method. During that time Froebel used the Learner-Centred, Child-Centred, and experience-based ideas to develop the world's first kindergarten. Froebel confirmed that "only by the extension and enrichment of the child's instinct to involve itself in active play could sympathetic adult educators help the child in his or her full development as an "acting, feeling, and thinking human being" (*p.14*). Using these methods, kindergartens provided a child-centred curriculum, focusing on play and experimentation, gardening and singing. Froebel's work promoted the idea that LCT implied that the teacher should not "interfere with this process of maturation, but act as a guide" (*Simon, 1999*). Simon highlighted that this was associated with the process of development or 'readiness', i.e. the child will learn when he/she is ready.

Friedrich Wilhelm August Froebel (1782-1852): A pedagogue

Inspired by Rousseau as well as Pestalozzi, Froebel earnestly devoted himself to this 'new education' (*Lawrence, 1952: 21*). He believed that schooling should fit children's natural stages of development (*Lilly, 1967; Darling, 1994; Chung and Walsh, 2000*). Because young children think and learn differently from older children and adults, 'schooling for young children must differ from that for older children and adults' (*Chung and Walsh, 2000: 217*). Furthermore, Froebel stresses that 'every human being, even as a child, must be recognised, acknowledged, and fostered as a necessary and essential member of humanity' (*Froebel, 1886, cf. Lawrence, 1952: 21*). He stated that children should be regarded and cared for like plants: 'Given the right conditions they would grow and unfold' (*Lawrence, 1952: 195*). The role of the teacher, therefore, is to provide the right conditions for children's growth. In other words, creating a positive learning environment was seen an important factor for children to learn. Moreover, he sees children's play as a form of creative activity and such creative work can be a means to knowledge (*Darling, 1994*). Froebel states:

Play, therefore, must not be left to chance. Just because he learns through play a child learns willingly and learns much. So play, like learning and activity, had its own definite period of time and it must not be left out of the elementary curriculum. The educator must not only guide the play, since it is so important, but he must also often teach this sort of play in the first instance (Lilley, 1967: 167).

With his concern about the crucial function of play, Froebel began to devise some concrete techniques such as simple toys to be used as teaching equipment to translate his principles into practice. Froebel's elaboration on LCT had a strong impact in education in Europe as well as in America in the late 19th and early 20th century with lectures and exhibitions organised and the Froebel Society formed (**Lawrence, 1952; Darling, 1994**).

In the nineteenth century in Britain, the ideas of Froebelianism gradually spread and were no longer confined to the kindergarten but challenged the methods of teaching children in elementary (primary) schools. LCT was promoted in North America and the UK in the late 19th and early 20th centuries by continental philosophers, who questioned the nature of childhood and how children should be educated (**Schweisfurth, 2013a**). However, there still existed in parallel another educational ideology where schools continued to emphasise rote learning and authoritarian methods.

The central tenets of child-centred views lie in the respect for children's natural interests, their natural developmental stages, learning through experience and discovery, the recognition of the function of play in learning, and individual differences of each child. These ideas were revisited, reformulated, as well as further developed by later writers such as Dewey (1859- 1952), Piaget (1896-1980), Vygotsky (1896-1934), Bruner, Donaldson and many others in the 20th century. **Dewey (1956b)** likened this new approach to education to Copernican revolution. He states:

In traditional education, 'the center of gravity is outside the child. It is in the teacher, the textbook, anywhere and everywhere you please except in the immediate instincts and activities of the child himself. .. Now the change which is coming into our education is the shifting of the center of gravity. It is a change, a revolution, not unlike that introduced by Copernicus when the astronomical center shifted from the earth to the sun. In this case the child becomes the sun about which the appliances of education revolve; he is the center about which they are organised' (p. 34).

Centuries later, with the influence of diverse notions from various educators (Locke's tabula rasa, Bacon's scientific method, Kant's pragmatism and others) Dewey at the famous School of Education, University of Chicago, idealised the concept LCT to "embrace the idea that education should be both problem-based and fun" (**Henson, 2003, p.3**). Dewey further recognised that each child has both a psychological as well as a social dimension. Therefore, in opposition to Rousseau's idea of protecting children from the society, Dewey strongly believes that "the only way a child would develop to its potential was in a social setting" (**Henson, 2003, p.3**).

John Dewey (1859-1952): Emphasis on Democracy

The current understanding of learner-centredness can be traced to concurrent developments of the progressive movements in western countries namely the USA and the UK. In the USA, Dewey was one of the key figures in the development of the basic rationale for LCT (**Dworkin, 1959**). He was concerned with pedagogy seen in terms of children's growth and a process of discovery. Dewey theorizes that education was not a preparation for future living but a continuous reconstruction of experience within a social world and school was viewed as a community engaged in a social process of enriching the children's own activities (**Dewey, 1920; Dworkin, 1959**). The concept of learner-centredness in education originates from the notion of LCT that appears to be closely associated with 'progressive education' (**Pine & Boy, 1977**). This progressive education emerged as a response to the traditional, didactic schooling system in America. A significant early expression of concern for the child as a learner was found in the work of Rousseau and other nineteenth century educators such as Pestalozzi, Herbart and Froebel (**Pine & Boy, 1977**). However, the greatest and clearest statement of the concepts of LCT is said to be found in the writings of Dewey who seems to place education in the context of a social philosophy expressly designed for the twentieth century (**O'Hear, 1991**) and it was claimed that many of the methods of social progress and reform were constructed based on Dewey's ideas.

Dewey's idea of education emphasises the equal importance of physical, emotional, intellectual and social development of the child and proposed that a teaching-learning process should engage the whole child. Dewey accepted that individuals have important developmental properties but he also stressed the value of experience. According to Dewey, education should be a systematic reconstruction of learners' experience (**Dewey, 1920; Dworkin, 1959**) where teachers are required to progressively guide learners in connecting learners' experience with their learning as well as constructing new experiences. These requirements

evidently put certain demands on the teachers' roles as synthesised by Dewey below. According to Dewey, teachers' roles in LCT can be categorized into four as: finding ways of enriching, balancing and clarifying the children's experience; refining experience because children need to be guided into reflective channels to seek new meanings; simplifying experience because a child is uniquely different; and finding ways of connecting the child's experience with the diverse ways of life of his culture.

Dewey used his very long life to exert more influence on education and philosophy than any other American. Dewey was influenced by Locke's tabula rasa, Bacon's scientific method, Immanuel Kant's pragmatism, *Charles Peirce's (1839-1914)* insistence on the clarification of ideas and his belief that one's mental grasp of any idea depends on the unification of the idea in actual experience, and James' (1842-1910) beliefs that truth is inseparable from experience and that experience, like life itself, is a stream of sequential events (*Good & Brophy, 1997*). Dewey's works were made powerful because he recognised that each child has both a psychological dimension and a social dimension and to be effective, education must begin with understanding how the child's capacities, interests, and habits can be directed to help the child succeed in the community. In opposition to Rousseau, who wanted to protect children from society, Dewey believed that the only way a child would develop to its potential was in a social setting. He believed that the school should be a microcosm of its community and that education is living, not just a preparation for life. Dewey's view of LCT embraced the idea that education should be both problem-based and fun. He pointed out that each experience should leave each student motivated and that the solving of each problem must lead to new, related questions about the topic (*Good & Brophy, 1997*).

Different from Rousseau, who saw the education of a child in an ideal and isolated environment virtually with no history and social relationships (*Entwistle, 1970*), *Dewey (1956a; 1956b)* believed that schools are necessary arrangements for learning and school should not be separated from society. Instead, they should reflect the real life of society. He agrees with Rousseau that children are different from adults and education should meet the needs and developmental stages of children, but he disagrees with him on the value of a pedagogy which just stirs up children's interests 'without directing it towards definite achievement' (*Dewey, 1956a: 16*). Dewey argues for a pedagogy which should 'get hold of the child's natural impulses and instincts, and to utilise them so that the child is carried on to a higher plane of perception and judgement, and equipped with more efficient habits; so that the child has an enlarged and deepened consciousness and increased control of powers of action' (*pp. 127-128*). Dewey stresses that if such a result is not reached, play would simply be an amusement to children with no function in promoting educational growth. In other words, learning should not be simply in the form of play but in play which fosters reflection and understanding through scientific enquiry (*Alexander, 2000*). Dewey believes that children need experience and affection, as well as various activities as conditions for learning. Learning for children is a process of active thinking and problem solving (*Dewey, 1956b*).

With regard to the teacher's roles in LCT, Dewey insists that learning should be directed and it should not be left to the child to grow out of his free will. For Dewey, the central question of education is how to take hold of the child's interests and give them direction. 'Through direction, through organised use, they tend toward valuable results, instead of scattering or being left to merely impulsive expression' (*Dewey, 1956b: 36*). Dewey further argues that the development of the child and the implementation of the curriculum should not be viewed as opponents to each other. He warns teachers to guard against the danger with this 'new education' to simply 'let children think things out for themselves without supplying any of the envioning conditions which are requisite to start and guide thought. Nothing can be developed from nothing' (*Dewey, 1956a: 18*). For Dewey, it is the child, not the curriculum that should be at the center of the school.

In opposition to Rousseau, who wanted to protect children from society, *Dewey (1897)* believed that the only way a child would develop to its potential was in a social setting. While the child was seen by Rousseau as an individual interacting with the natural environment, Dewey shared Vygotsky's view that the child learns through interacting within a social environment, including either an informal one such as in a family or, in the case of school, with teachers and peers. Dewey (1938) believed that involving students in life experiences motivates their learning and connects them to the world outside the classroom.

Jean Piaget (1896-1980): Emphasis on Individualism

Another leading psychologist who contributed significantly to LCT was the Swiss educator Jean Piaget. Piaget focused his attention on the learner as an individual. While many may not think of him as a constructivist, his work consisted of giving his students (usually his own three children) problems to solve, not written problems but problems that encouraged them to manipulate concrete objects. He watched the

ways in which they manipulated the objects and saw that each learner made assumptions and drew right or wrong conclusions about the objects (*Good & Brophy, 1997*).

Piaget focused his attention on the learner as an individual. His work consisted of giving his students problems to solve-not written problems but problems that encouraged them to manipulate concrete objects. He watched the ways they manipulated the objects and saw that each learner made assumptions and drew right or wrong conclusions about the objects (*Darling, 1994*). Consistent with Rousseau, Froebel, Vygotsky, and Piaget's view that education should be experience based, John Dewey developed the first pedagogical constructivist approach to teaching and learning, named learning by doing (*Henson, 2003; Tarnopolsky, 2012*). Dewey's (1938) view of LCT was that each child has both a psychological dimension and a social dimension. Education should be both problem-based and fun and founded on an understanding of how each child's capacities, interests, and habits can be directed to help the child succeed in the community.

The claims made by Rousseau, Froebel and Dewey that all children follow a natural sequence of development were further intensified by Piaget. As a result of extensive experiments and tests, he maintained that children's cognitive development follows four biologically based phases with each representing a different way of achieving material and rational thought (*Turner, 1975; Wood, 1998*). The major implication is that the effectiveness of teaching depends on children's readiness to assimilate and accommodate new information. Until the child is ready, it is futile to try to teach. Piaget's works led to the initial formation of the constructivist theory. According to Piaget, children acquire understanding of the world about them primarily through an analysis of their own actions upon the world not by imitation or memorisation, although these factors make contributions (*Piaget, 1970*). In other words, every learner constructs his or her knowledge by actively making sense of the world around him/her as opposed to receiving ideas from a teacher or an authority complete and correct. Learning is an internal and personal process largely obtained from first-hand experiences and from communication with other people (*Selley, 1999*). Therefore, each individual is regarded as an active agent in his own learning environment (*Turner, 1975*) and he constructs new knowledge based on what is already known (*Marshall, 2000*).

Vygotsky (1896-1934): From Dialogue to Self-Regulation

In the 20th century, a Russian psychologist and sociologist, Swiss psychologist Piaget, and American philosopher and educator Dewey, shaped the existing LCT into a program called constructivism (*Henson, 2003*). Based on ideas related to children's development, Vygotsky believed that human learning and development occurred as an outcome of the social process of constructing knowledge and skills from experiential activities. As such, he highlighted the social aspect of learning, incorporating this into his theories of constructivism (*Henson, 2003*). His work encouraged teachers to have children work cooperatively in small groups to solve problems. Vygotsky studied children's interactions. He saw that when students worked in small groups to solve problems, by discussing problems, the learners were able to talk each other through to the solutions, which is to say that by helping other group members, they collectively solved problems more efficiently than they could solve them when working alone. He called this social learning approach. Vygotsky used a system which now is known as cooperative learning, to encourage cooperation within each learning group. To receive a good mark on any task, the members had to successfully help their fellow group members understand and succeed at the task. This system is in sharp contrast to traditional education in that it is not teacher-centred but is learner-centred, not passive but active and problem-centred, and is based, not on competition but on cooperation (*Ozman & Craver, 1999*).

Although Piaget accepts that social experiences and inter-personal communication are an important factor for children's cognitive development, they play a rather limited role in his theory as they are conditioned by children's readiness at a particular stage of cognitive development (*Wood, 1998*). In contrast to Piaget's concept of the isolated individual learner, both Vygotsky and Bruner offered a way of conceptualizing the learning process in a social context, adding an interactive dimension to effective learning. For Vygotsky, the child is not an isolated learner in a world of objects but an active discoverer or participant in a world full of other people with whom he/she interacts to gain experiences and understanding of the world around him/her (*Cameron, 2001*). Therefore, Vygotsky is often associated with the socio-constructivist theory (*Wood, 1998, Cameron, 2001*). Vygotsky (1962, 1978) emphasises interaction and engagement with learning tasks in a social context through language based on the concept of 'Zone of Proximal Development' (ZPD). In his words, this means 'the discrepancy between a child's mental age and the level he reaches in solving problems with assistance' (*Vygotsky, 1962: 103*). He states that 'with assistance, every child, can do more than he can by himself - though only within the limits set by the state of his development'. That is to say, learning can best be achieved through the dynamic interaction between the

teacher and the learner and between learners. With the teacher's help through questions and explanations or with more capable peers' support, the learner can move to a higher level of understanding with extended skills and knowledge. Through discussion with others - where ideas are shared, challenged, negotiated, and justified - new levels of conceptual understanding can be reached (*Edwards and Mercer, 1987; Vygotsky, 1978*). The implication of Vygotsky's ZPD is that the teacher plays a crucial role in helping the child in learning by providing a bridge between what is known and what is to be learned instead of leaving the child alone to figure things out for himself. Children should be given opportunities to actively participate and contribute to their own learning guided by the teacher and gradually take on more responsibility for their own learning (*Wood, 1998*). *Bruner (1977)*, along with Vygotsky, stressed the importance of teacher's roles in children's learning and the nature of interaction in the learning environment. He coined the term 'scaffolding' to illustrate that the tasks of adults are to assist children's understanding across the zone of proximal development through carefully structured learning tasks and the use of language.

Progressive Education Association Movement: A Move towards LCT

LCT was advanced by the Progressive Education Association Movement (PEAM), which was formed in 1919. The Progressive Movement flourished until the United States entered the Second World War in 1941. A massive evaluation of the LCT to education, known as the "Eight Year Study," was conducted from 1932 until 1940. The study found this approach equal or superior to traditional education in every way. According to the findings, some of the advantages of learner-centred methods over the traditional teacher-centred methods included students': attaining higher grades, attaining more academic honours, developing superior intellectual curiosity, developing superior creativity and developing objectivity (*Ikenberry, 1984*).

The principles and practices of LCT in the West during the first three quarters of the 20th century with a focus on the US and with whom he/she interacts to gain experiences and understanding of the world around him/her (*Cameron, 2001*). Therefore, Vygotsky is often associated with the socio-constructivist theory (*Wood, 1998, Cameron, 2001*). Vygotsky (1962, 1978) emphasises interaction and engagement with learning tasks in a social context through language based on the concept of 'Zone of Proximal Development' (ZPD). In his words, this means 'the discrepancy between a child's mental age and the level he reaches in solving problems with assistance' (*Vygotsky, 1962: 103*). He states that 'with assistance, every child, can do more than he can by himself - though only within the limits set by the state of his development'. That is to say, learning can best be achieved through the dynamic interaction between the teacher and the learner and between learners. With the teacher's help through questions and explanations or with more capable peers' support, the learner can move to a higher level of understanding with extended skills and knowledge. Through discussion with others-where ideas are shared, challenged, negotiated, and justified-new levels of conceptual understanding can be reached (*Edwards and Mercer, 1987; Vygotsky, 1978*). The implication of Vygotsky's ZPD is that the teacher plays a crucial role in helping the child in learning by providing a bridge between what is known and what is to be learned instead of leaving the child alone to figure things out for himself. Children should be given opportunities to actively participate and contribute to their own learning guided by the teacher and gradually take on more responsibility for their own learning (*Wood, 1998*). *Bruner (1977)*, along with Vygotsky, stressed the importance of teacher's roles in children's learning and the nature of interaction in the learning environment. He coined the term 'scaffolding' to illustrate that the tasks of adults are to assist children's understanding across the zone of proximal development through carefully structured learning tasks and the use of language.

By 1940, the ideals of progressive education under the influence of Froebel and Dewey became prevalent in the rhetoric of American education (*Ravitch, 1983, cf. Alexander, 2000*), which focused on identifying the needs of the individual child and constructing educational contexts which supported individual interests by identifying children's differences with a curriculum designed to meet the natural order of the development of the child (*Vadeboncoeur, 1997*). The main principles were summarised by *Kliebard (1986: 191, cf. Vadeboncoeur, 1997: 19)* as follows: 'The aim of Progressive Education is the freest and fullest development of the individual, based upon the scientific study of his physical, mental, spiritual, and social characteristics and needs'. Based on these principles, teachers had to learn to struggle between the old-fashioned, subject-centred, authoritarian traditional school and the modern, child centred, flexible, democratic, progressive school. The Progressive Education Association was formed in 1919 with the sole purpose of applying the theories of John Dewey in advancing educational reform (*Pulliam and Van Pattern, 1995*). Dewey's influence on American education brought fundamental changes in the way education was conceived and there emerged new thoughts about schooling and new patterns of classroom life (*Darling, 1994*), with public schools extended to nearly all Americans (*Lawrence, 1952*).

The Plowden Report: LCT in United Kingdom

The influence of LCT on British education was for a long time rather limited. It became popular during the 1920s to 1930s in infant education under the influence of the Froebel society and Dewey's writings (*The Open University, 1984a*) but it was not until the 1960s that the philosophy of child-centredness was publicly endorsed by official reports in Britain of which the best known are Primary Education in Scotland or the Primary Memorandum (*SED, 1965*) which claimed to be very much based on Piaget's works. In the 1920s and 1930s there were major changes in the structure of primary education in Britain and the more didactic and syllabus-centred approach was then replaced by an educational style which focused on a more LCT. The Plowden Report, which was published by the UK government in 1967, built a primary system focusing on pedagogy and on the needs of deprived children in poorer areas, with the aim of producing a creative, autonomous, yet responsible and moral young citizenry across the nation. This report focused intensively on more informal, flexible teaching methods, and group work. The Plowden Report made LCT widespread in the UK in the 1960s, and these approaches to teaching and learning now dominate in the UK and in most of the Western world (*O'Sullivan, 2004*). LCT are also endorsed and promoted in many developing countries (*Black, Govinda, Kiragu, & Devini, 1993; Lall, 2010*).

While Dewey had provided the clearest statement of LCT during his era in the USA, similar emphasis on progressive education was also embraced by Britain. The Plowden Report (*DES, 1967*) was drawn from characteristics of progressive education that summarized LCT as:

- A school is not merely a teaching shop but must transmit values and attitudes.
- It is a community in which children learn to live first and foremost as children and not as future adults
- The school sets out deliberately to devise the right environment for children, to allow them to be themselves and to develop in the way and at the pace appropriate to them.
- The child', as cited in the Plowden Report, 'lies at the heart of the educational process (*DES, 1967, p.7*)

The Plowden Report (*CACE, 1967*), which was said to be influenced more by ideas from Rousseau, Dewey and Vygotsky. The latter contains the well-known rubric, 'At the heart of the educational process lies the child' (Para. 9). These two official documents noted above were considered landmarks in the development of LCT in Britain (*Darling, 1994*). The following extracts from both the Primary Memorandum (*SED, 1965*) and the Plowden Report (*CACE, 1967*), can be said to capture most of the elements in LCT.

- At the heart of the educational process lies the child. No advances in policy, no acquisition of new equipment have their desired effect unless they are in harmony with the nature of the child, unless they are fundamentally acceptable to him (*CACE, 1967: Para. 9*).
- It is vital that these individual differences should be recognised and catered for in all spheres of the child's activities in school. The teacher's methods and organisation should be sufficiently flexible to allow each child to progress at an appropriate pace, and to achieve satisfaction and success at his own level (*SED, 1965: 4*)
- Individual differences between children of the same age are so great that any class, however, homogeneous it seems, must always be treated as a body of children needing individual and different attention. (b) Until a child is ready to take a particular step forward, it is a waste of time to try to teach him to take it (*CACE, 1967: Para. 75*).
- It is now recognised that learning occurs most effectively when the learner is personally involved in purposeful activity which captures his interest or arises from it. Consequently the emphasis in primary education is now more on learning by the pupil than on instruction by the teacher (*SED, 1965: 60*)
- Finding out' has proved to be better for children than 'being told (*CACE, 1967: Para. 1233*).
- Emotional, social and intellectual aspects are closely intertwined in mental growth: the child is a total personality. Emotional life provides the spur and in many ways gives meaning to experience (*CACE, 1967: Para. 65*).
- The curriculum is not to be thought of as a number of discrete subjects, each requiring a specific allocation of time each week or each month. Indeed, it is quite impossible to treat the subjects of the curriculum in isolation from one another if education is to be meaningful to the child (*SED, 1965: 37*).

As we can see from the above, common principles advocated include the ideas that education should be compatible to children's nature and their natural pace of development; teaching should be individualised to meet children's differences; teaching and learning should provide a wide range of experiences for children to learn actively and creatively through play and discovery method; the curriculum should be integrated; every child should be cared for and respected, etc. All these reflect almost all the historical meanings of child-centredness and have instigated some fundamental changes in the way education was perceived and conducted before the 1960s with children seated at their desks and treated as the passive recipients of knowledge provided by teachers (*Darling, 1994*). Also, 'the idea of education which caters for each child's

interests suggests designing a curriculum which allows choices between different activities to the child's actual preferences' (*Darling, 1986: 37*).

When Margaret Thatcher's Conservative Government was elected in 1979, moves towards strengthening central control of the curriculum and weakening teacher autonomy were well under way (*Alexander, 1984; Pollard et al. 1994*), leading to the change of tide in education. The requirement of the 1988 National Curriculum clearly challenged classroom procedures which had been promoted during the 1960s and suggested a return to the basics with a more didactic approach to education (Simon, 1994: 14) despite the fact that there was no real shift away from didacticism in practice but more so rhetorically. This change of tide was signaled clearly by the Department of Education and Science (DES) in 1981 that 'The school curriculum is at the heart of education' (*DES, 1981, cf. Alexander, 1984: 5*). Child-centred education was equated with low expectations, undemanding teaching and underachievement according to research studies done during the 1970s, 1980s and early 1990s (*Alexander, 2000*). *Alexander et al.'s paper (1992)* advised a move towards subject-based teaching and also more whole-class teaching with the benefits of sustaining good order, and ensuring clear purpose and concentration of learning. The introduction of the national curriculum marked an abrupt change of direction in education by the British government from centring on the child to centring on the curriculum. Raising standards across the whole curriculum became the main concern. Along with the new curriculum, the separation of literacy and math began to be instigated to make sure the basics were attended to and a whole package of assessment targets was developed for each key stage. All these were based on the assumption that school education had lost touch with 'the real world' (*Darling, 1994: vii*), unable to produce the right product needed for the economic and technological development.

The introduction of the reform was also based on studies of what had happened in Eastern countries such as China and Japan in their high ranking in the international league tables for their success in school math teaching. Whole class teaching was thus given more value (*Alexander, 2000*). It is believed that both the educational processes and products need to be improved through a system of attainment targets and a testing system for all students and child-centred principles and practices were seen as defective in helping students to achieve high standards in order to meet the needs of the rapid social and economic development. At present, the National Curriculum, Standards of attainments, assessment and tests, and school League tables have occupied the rhetoric of school Education in England and Wales.

Just like what has happened in Britain, America is also turning away from child-centredness to give more concern to students' academic achievements. According to *Alexander (2000: 104-5)*, in the last two decades of the twentieth century, there was an obvious increase in state and federal intervention in educational matters in the United States in terms of attainments achieved by students. The first wave of educational reform to raise standards began in 1983 signaled by the report *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). It sets out six goals for the year 2000 in order to raise standards. This was said to be the most comprehensive attempt at systemic educational reform to that date. The report attributed the educational problems to low academic standards and poor quality of instruction. Solutions from the top-down by the government required improvement by raising achievement standards. These reform efforts targeted an increase in the number of math and science classes, stiffer high school graduation requirements, tougher qualifications and requirements for teachers, and increased frequency of testing and assessment of students, etc. (*Lambert and McCombs, 1997*). By the late 1990s, national assessments were strengthened with particular attention to reading and writing (*Alexander, 2000*). As the educational system in the United States has been a decentralised one, each state was to develop its own tests to measure progress towards the state-level standards with reference to the national standards. However, the lesson that seems to be learned by educationalists and policy-makers is that solutions to solve educational problems need to help every student succeed to the highest level possible both academically and non-academically (*Lambert and McCombs, 1997*). The result was that throughout 1990s, LCT was challenged in countries like the UK and the US, and there has been a move back to traditional whole class teaching (*Alexander, 2003*).

Last but no Least: Criticism of the LCT

Issues related to the implementation of LCT in developing countries have been the focus of discussion since the 1990s. A recent literature review conducted by *Schweisfurth (2011)* revealed 72 relevant articles concerning learner-centred and child-centred education available on-line from 1981 to 2010 in the *International Journal of Educational Development* alone. *Schweisfurth* also notes that the topic of LCT has been a regular focus within other journals such as *Journal of Education and Practice*, *International Journal of Learning and Development*, *Comparative Education*, *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, *Compare*, and *International Journal of Science and Mathematics Education*. These research articles focus on pedagogy, assessment, and/or the curriculum implications of shifting away from teacher-

centred or didactic teacher-led approaches. This implies that LCT has had an influence on both educational policy and practice in many developing country contexts (*Schweisfurth, 2011*). Schweisfurth notes that learner-centred pedagogical practices have been introduced into learning environments in developing countries from preschool to university level and is most frequently employed in teaching languages and science. LCT in Africa, Asia and other developing countries has been supported by international aid organisations such as UN agencies, UNESCO and UNICEF. Often this assistance is provided under the rationale of enhancing participation in schooling in line with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Education for All (EFA) (*Mtika & Gates, 2010; Serbessa, 2006*). *Schweisfurth (2011: 427)* emphasises that some aid agencies view learner-centred pedagogy as “a policy panacea... to address a myriad of social problems in the developing world”

According to *Tabulawa (2003)*, aid agencies justify their promotion of such pedagogy in “benign and apolitical terms” (p.9), emphasising the efficacy of learner-centred pedagogy in cognitive/educational terms. In the same vein, child-centred ideas have been introduced in teacher-training programs and school reforms in many parts of Africa and Asia with the intention of creating more child-friendly, democratic learning environments (*Sriprakash, 2010*). As such, learner-centred education has been described as a “travelling policy, transferred from country to country in the developing world to hopefully solve such historically intractable issues as poverty and political authoritarianism, to increase levels of foreign investment or to extend democratisation” (*Schweisfurth, 2011: 427*). However, *Tabulawa (2003)* presents an alternative view of the widespread implementation of student centred pedagogy in developing countries. International aid agencies and institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, he claims, have prescribed the introduction of CCT through educational projects in developing countries, showing their preference and support for Western liberal democracy. *Nykiel-Herbert (2004)* notes that student centred pedagogy has spread in developing countries making a transition to democracy, perhaps because it promises intellectual liberation and emancipates from traditional approaches that are considered oppressive. Learner centred pedagogy might also be considered as democratic in that it calls for a more equal relationship between teachers and students.

Nykiel-Herbert (2004) critiques the role that aid agencies play in promoting CCT as a one-size fits all pedagogical approach, which works effectively in any settings. Similarly, *Tabulawa (2003, cited in Altinyelken, 2011)* argues that “if pedagogical practices are converging around the world (at least in the official curriculum), it is because a certain pedagogical approach is in the interests of powerful states or international organisations” (p.140). *Guthrie (1990, cited in Tabulawa, 2003)* similarly suggests that student-centred pedagogy represents a process of westernisation with its political and economic meanings. Such discussions emphasise the interconnected nature of pedagogy, politics and ideology. Whatever the reasons for the implementation of such approaches in developing country contexts, “the history of the implementation of LCT in different contexts is riddled with stories of failures grand and small” *Schweisfurth (2011, p.425)*. The challenges in implementing CCT in developing countries are many and include: policy issues; cultural factors; professional capacity; teachers’ beliefs, and parents’ and students’ attitudes towards CCT.

In the 1990s many Aid Agencies from Canada, US, UK, Denmark and Norway advocated LCT as supportive of democratisation, funded LCT -oriented projects, and sometimes prescribed LCT as a condition for structural adjustment packages (*Tabulawa, 2003*). *Schweisfurth (2013)* points to the powerful aura that has begun to surround LCT, increasingly enshrined in international agreements at a supra-national level. For example, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child guarantees children the right to access ‘modern teaching methods’ (*UNCRC, 1989, Articles 28, 29*), while international initiatives such as ‘Education for All’ (EFA) tend to assume that improving education quality implies moving towards ‘active and participatory approaches’ (*UNESCO, 1990, Article 4*). LCT is also increasingly promoted by multilateral organisations; for example UNICEF’s Child-Friendly Schools see a key marker of quality education as ‘the extent to which child-centred teaching methods are embraced’ (*UNICEF, n.d., p.4*).

To understand the rationale driving this global promotion of LCT as a ‘policy panacea’, *Schweisfurth (2013)* offers a useful categorisation of three broad lines of argument typically used by LCT’s proponents. The first is the cognitive argument that individuals learn better when given initiative and freedom in structuring their learning with help from a facilitator. The second is an emancipatory perspective, highlighting LCT’s potential to free people from oppressive forms of control that seek to stifle independent thinking and critical questioning. The third perspective, which would be opposed by the second, views LCT as an appropriate preparation for building the flexible self-directed learning needed for modern working life in a changing economic world order. However, *Schweisfurth* points out, all three strands of argument have

been rooted more in rhetoric than in evidence. The second and third strands do not even attempt to draw from evidence, using a rights-based perspective to assume its own justification in the case of the second, or requiring essentially a leap of faith in the third. Even in the cognitive strand, the few studies that have attempted to establish a link between LCT and improved learning outcomes remain inconclusive.

In fact, several critics have questioned whether LCT should continue being recommended as a policy choice worldwide. One critique is the apparent lack of conclusive evidence for LCT resulting in improved academic learning outcomes (*Alexander, 2000; O'Sullivan, 2006; Tabulawa, 2003*). While some studies show correlation between the two (*Cornelius-White, 2007*), these findings are sometimes questionable due to small sample sizes and challenges in methodology and research design. A second line of critique relates to operational complexities that ultimately defy simple binaries of 'teacher centred' and 'learner centred' as discrete categories. On one hand, students are not necessarily passive in teacher centred classrooms (*Vavrus, 2009*). Conversely, learner-centred classrooms do not imply passive teachers that let students decide what to do, when and how; the teacher still remains in authority and an authority on the subject matter. *Van Harmelen (1998)* critiques the assumption that all transmission teaching or factual recall should be discarded, which ignores their important value in the educational process. What often occurs in practice is a more complex hybridity of mixed approaches within a continuum of more and less learner-centred practice (*Schweisfurth, 2011; Thompson, 2012; Vavrus, 2009*). Both *Barrett (2007)* and *Sripakash (2012)* identify teachers in Tanzania and India as working with a mixed palette of both teacher-centred and learner-centred techniques and ideas.

Moreover, experiences from both Western and developing countries seem to point us to stories of challenge or even failure in the implementation of LCT on a large scale. Schweisfurth's review of 72 studies on LCT implementation in developing contexts from three decades concludes that 'the history of the implementation of LCT in different contexts is riddled with stories of failures grand and small' (*2011, p. 425*). Even in the UK LCT has not been without controversy, drawing waves of criticism about declining standards of literacy, numeracy, and behaviour perceived to be resulting from learner-centred reforms in recent decades (*Schweisfurth, 2013*). In both the UK and US the implementation of LCT has been uneven, and LCT in its pure idealised form has not been practised on a systemic scale anywhere in the world, beyond isolated classrooms or schools, often in independent private schools. This fact along with the numerous stories of failure of national LCT implementation efforts in developing countries leads *Thompson (2012)* to argue pragmatically that LCT should not be advocated for large-scale public sector reforms in under-resourced developing countries, but only in small-scale consortiums of private schools possessing the abundant resources needed for LCT's success. However, this proposal raises other equity concerns of whether the emancipatory ideals of LCT are compatible with attempts to restrict it to only an elite urban minority while a separate pedagogy of arguably inferior quality is designated for the rural masses.

Thompson is not the only one to question the appropriateness of LCT for developing countries, based on various constraints in these context that may render LCT inappropriate. These include limited resources, incompatible examination and curricular systems, substandard teacher training, unrealistic policy expectations, or differences in cultural models that may conflict with LCT assumptions. This has led some to question the underlying political agendas and global hegemonies driving international agencies to export LCT as a 'one-size fits-all', decontextualized 'best practice', despite numerous stories of failure (*O'Sullivan, 2006; Vavrus, 2009*). Critics suggest that the adoption of 'models of LCT in developing countries amounts to neo-colonialism, denouncing the unequal and unidirectional flow of Eurocentric knowledge to 'undeveloped' countries that has characterised international education, and the consequent marginalisation of indigenous knowledge systems within the global discourse (*Kanu, 2005; Nguyen et al, 2009; O'Donoghue, 1994*). *Tabulawa (2003)* goes to the extreme of labelling LCT a 'colonising', 'domesticating' pedagogy being pushed by international aid agencies purely for political and ideological rather than educational reasons. He argues that LCT is part of a design by aid agencies aimed not at improving learning, but at eroding traditional authoritarian structures and promoting social values associated with liberal democracy, ultimately intended to facilitate the penetration of capitalist ideology in developing nations under the guise of democratisation – 'representing a process of Westernisation disguised as quality and effective teaching' (*p.7*).

Even if one does not go as far as embracing Tabulawa's conspiracy theory, such critiques do raise the question of whether LCT is indeed a Western construct that is inappropriate in non-Western contexts such as Nepal. *Schweisfurth (2011)* aptly questions whether a postcolonial perspective implies that LCT should be 'rejected as a form of imperialism, or embraced as a potential liberator?' (*p.429*). Should LCT give way

to traditional cultures, or can LCT itself be used to challenge and steer prevailing cultural attitudes? In his critique of LCT, Tabulawa seems to uncritically reject LCT values such as open-mindedness and tolerance simply because they are associated with democratic systems, and thus inherently Western and warranting rejection—which is an unsubstantiated line of reasoning. The complicated history of colonization means that there is no easy way to delineate what elements of culture and pedagogy are indigenous and ‘foreign’. Postcolonial theory blurs this line between local and colonial, reminding us that indigenous culture is not a static closed system but is itself heterogeneous, embroiled in modernist discourses, and infused by relations of power and inequality. Indigenous cultural beliefs cannot be blindly condoned to the rejection of anything Western, particularly if they are detrimental to children’s learning, a violation of children’s rights, or being used to perpetuate the oppression of marginalised communities. Rather than blindly rejecting one or the other, traditional cultures as well as Western-originating progressive pedagogies need to be critically examined in order to determine what pedagogical approaches are most appropriate for supporting successful learning and for challenging oppressive forces within the Indian context. The history and critiques of LCT remind us that LCT reforms in Nepal must be analysed within this broader context of LCT’s complicated history, and of the global hegemonies and political motives that may underlie LCT’s worldwide propagation. Introducing LCT in Nepal is not simply a question of changes to classroom technique—there are various political, cultural, historical and economic forces that shape its implementation, globally and nationally.

Conclusion

From the above deliberation shows that many educationists have made significant contributions to the development of LCT. Locke believed that the only way an individual can learn is through experience. Vygotsky believed that all learning involves trying new information to prior experiences. Bacon, Montessori, Rousseau, Froebel, and Piaget believed that the best experience occur when learners are manipulating objects and solving problems. Rousseau felt a need to protect children from society, which was not child-friendly. Pestalozzi thought teachers should be as good parents and schools as good homes. His commitment to removing fear from schools greatly influenced Froebel, Herbert, and Montessori (**Campbell, 1967**). Dewey is known for his expression, "Learning by doing," an expression used a century earlier by John Locke (**Parker, 1998**). Initially, there was widespread support for LCT, but recently there has been widespread opposition. Some educationists have blamed that this concept is the concept of the country in the West and there is vested interest in this concept. On the other hand, some educationists are of the opinion that this concept cannot be applied as it does not suit the situation of all countries.

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