

# ‘Active Student Participation’ – a conflict of interest as far as Teaching and Learning is concerned

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**ABSTRACT:** There is little doubt that the complexity of student active participation highlights the need for more extensive research into the practices of teachers in higher education. The concept of ‘active student participation’ usually includes a variety of perspectives on teaching and learning that enhances the idea of students supporting each others learning processes in different ways, such as *peer teaching*, *peer learning* and *peer tutoring*. In a time where student-centered learning is emphasized, these approaches to teaching and learning are highly relevant for a university teacher, but they are however not always as easy to adopt as it might seem. Given the fact that higher education institutions includes a set of traditional roles, such as the role of the teacher and the role of the student, surrounded by cultural expectations, students as well as teachers are not always inclined to embrace the idea of ‘active student participation’ in the classroom. In this study, interviews with seventeen teachers in a Swedish university, shows that even though they are working with student-centered learning methods, in which they firmly believe, they all have met challenges using these methods as far as the students are concerned. According to the teachers students do not always understand the pedagogical methods used for a student-centered learning approach, but mistakes these methods for lack of content knowledge from the teachers. In a traditional setting the teacher would be the active agent (lecturing) while students would be more passive (listening), while in a student-centered learning approach the students are expected to be active while the teacher take on a more passive role. This approach to teaching challenges both teachers and students and the aim of this paper is to discuss the conflict of using teaching methods that enables student active participation in higher education, where traditional and cultural beliefs of teaching and learning still are prominent in many ways. Consequently, it is suggested that student active participation methods can serve as means to challenge these beliefs and move beyond the expected.

## REFERENCES

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