



## Balancing Teacher–Led And Student–Led Activities When Teaching Foreign Languages to Students at Uzbekistan’s State Conservatory

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**ABSTRACT:** This paper will look at the issue of implementing new work methods in English classes at the State Conservatory of Uzbekistan. Recently, there has been a lot of debate on whether to switch to a student–centered method or stick with the traditional model, in which the teacher entirely controls the process. There has been the need to employ innovative ways for motivating students and monitoring learning activities in the process of learning foreign languages in the digital educational environment. The paper argues that most students, regardless of their level, prefer cooperative learning and value teacher assistance. The forms of education that students select are determined by their attitude toward the learning process. The combined learning process allows language learners to cooperate with their teacher and fellow students, resulting in changes in the connection between teachers and students in which students’ personal interests and professional aspirations are taken into account. In the case of teaching conservatory students, it was discovered that student–centered training was less beneficial for those of students that just starting to learn English language as well as for the students at an intermediate level, but showed good results for the students approaching a more advanced level of understanding.

**KEYWORDS:** teacher, educational environment, student, education, English language, experience, learning styles, learning requirements, digital environment, foreign languages, activity, balance.

Lessons that are “student–centered” rather than “teacher–centered” have gained popularity in recent years. A new student–led method of foreign language learning in higher education has increased in favor in recent years, owing to technology improvements that allow for greater flexibility in study. People now have more autonomy in their learning due to technological advancements. People can take online classes and use new software to track their own progress. Thus, when it is important to optimize the learning process, technocratic relationships sideline the function of the teacher's personality. There is a strong trend toward using technology and auxiliary means to replace direct, live communication between learners and their instructors. Various formats are actively employed for this goal, including video films, tests, presentations, situational assignments, and so on, which are frequently created for individual learning. Accordingly, the role of the teacher is transformed under the influence of interactive technologies, which require the teacher to take initiative in a different way. That could be challenging since changing the teacher’s role from a passive performer to an active one is a labor–intensive process. It was previously assumed that teacher–led educational techniques were more traditional and thus less effective. Supporters of this technique may be resistant to change.

The goal of this discussion is not to determine which method is superior. One is clearly more traditional, whilst the other is new and quickly becoming the global norm [1, 2, 3, 4]. Petrova et al. argued that the quality of teaching is greatly influenced by the professionalism of the teacher as well as his or her understanding of the peculiarities of the student’s personality and a strong sense of purpose. It was also stressed that technical and additional means of teaching were also necessary for the educational process of the student, but they should play an auxiliary role, not be decisive or, even more so, replace the teacher’s role [5].

Some authors argue that shifting from teacher–centered lessons to student–led classes is a must [6, 7, 8]. According to their arguments, fostering student–led learning will help students learn more efficiently since providing the latter with extra authority allows them to become more aware of their own talents and enhances their self–esteem. It is claimed that, despite its challenges, student–led learning encourages students to think for themselves rather than merely following instructions. As a result, it gives students many possibilities for self–direction and the ability to do research on issues that are important and relevant to their lives. This entails abandoning traditional teaching approaches in favor of giving students more autonomy and accountability for their outcomes.



Thus, Pronevich et al. stated that in the traditional mode of education, the teacher manifests himself or herself as the main mediator of educational and professional activities, and in this method of education, the teacher serves as an information provider [9].

At the same time, according to Kisel et al., the benefits of the student-led form of education for the students themselves are many and varied, including making students an integral part of the academic community, increasing motivation to study, increasing independence and responsibility in their studies, and ensuring that due consideration is given to the needs of students [10]. Her main argument is that it benefits the teacher and society as a whole as it promotes a culture of lifelong learning. Thus, for instance, language learning is a dynamic process, and giving students more freedom can inspire them to develop their skills to the best of their abilities. Here, the teacher is not replaced, but remains on hand to guide as always.

In his article, Keiler investigated strategies to assist teachers in making the transition to non-traditional teaching, as well as the effects on educators of teaching in student-centered, peer-mediated classrooms and preparing student peer leaders for their positions in these classes [11]. Selmurzaeva underlined the importance of teachers assisting students in their individual work. According to her, the teacher should teach students a variety of autonomous work methods and approaches, develop projects with increasing degrees of autonomy, instruct students, and instill self-control in them [12].

The difference between teaching and learning is that teaching is defined as the conveyance of knowledge, whereas learning requires learners to participate actively. Accordingly, a teacher-led class is set up so that the teacher is the center of attention and offers students a presentation or lecture. Because the teacher will most likely need a board, interactive whiteboard, or projector for the class, the students normally face the teacher. The teacher is the single leader in a teacher-centered class as he/she is responsible for all organization, rules creation, and imposing them on students, while students are given minimal responsibility. The teacher-led method demands students remain attentive to the teacher and follow a syllabus that all students must comply with in order to pass.

The methods, attitude, and classroom organization of a student-led approach differ. Student-led learning places a different emphasis on learner action. However, that does not mean that students are completely left to their own strategies. Instead, students are encouraged to become self-directed learners, capable of tracking their progress and achieving their own objectives. In a student-led class, leadership is shared, and students serve as facilitators for classroom operations. The rules are developed by the teacher and students together and there are shared responsibilities in the classroom. The classroom layout also differs and has its own atmosphere due to the diverse approach. The focus is on the students' own perception of their learning. For example, students' desks could be organized around the classroom. Not only is the class layout unusual, but so is the environment. Noticeably, a student-led class is noisier and livelier than a teacher-led class. Every teacher hopes that their students enjoy themselves and are inspired to participate in the topic and with one another. This could imply that students initiate debates and conduct research on topics relevant to their own growth.

In this study, we will not argue which strategy is superior or inferior, but rather look at how to incorporate both strategies into ESL classes.

However, student-centered learning does not mean that students learn alone without the need for a teacher. The truth is that some parts of a lesson should be more focused on the teacher, while others should be much more focused on the students. This will be mostly determined by the type of lesson activities involved. The role of teachers play will be primarily determined by the type of activity and the goals they want their students to attain. Some stages of a lesson will necessitate the teacher being more dominant or leading, while others will necessitate a more withdrawn approach. It is critical that the teacher can switch between various roles and understand how to perform the required role.

Obviously, students will encounter difficulties, discomfort, and resistance during the initial transition from a traditional approach to a new student-centered approach. In the new student-centered learning environment, students may feel insecure about their roles and responsibilities. In addition, they may lack the independent learning skills to succeed in this situation. Therefore, it is the teachers' responsibility to guarantee that the learning process is organized in such a way that all pupils are engaged and motivated. However, structure and the best access to knowledge should also be provided.

Strong leadership in the learning process is typically just as effective as an unsupervised approach, even for learners with extensive prior knowledge. It should be kept in mind that unsupervised learning is not only less effective in general, but it has also been shown to have harmful consequences when students gain misunderstandings or incomplete or disordered knowledge. As a



result, there is a need to improve the quality of teaching and learning before introducing the student-led approach by gradually encouraging teachers to employ student-centered learning methods. It should include analyses of good practice, a teacher training course promoting student-centered learning, projects supporting student-centered learning, a student survey identifying areas for improvement and development of the teaching model and learning environment, and a student survey identifying areas for improvement and development of the teaching model and learning environment.

During my 20 years of teaching English to students at the State Conservatory of Uzbekistan, I've discovered that everyone learns differently. I typically teach 12 groups of 18–25 students. Students range in age from 17 to 25. It is difficult to get to know the pupils and identify their strengths and shortcomings, as well as their needs and worries, from the start. Furthermore, with so many students in the class, ample room is required for them to walk around and form groups, exchange ideas, and cooperate with their classmates. They are sometimes hesitant to move. To avoid the learning process becoming a formality, a more informal approach is recommended. A more tailored approach is required to guarantee that the learning process does not become a formality. Teacher-led activities will include explaining grammar, reading aloud, questioning, mediating classroom discussions, testing students' knowledge, providing feedback, and other activities. They are, in my opinion, quite effective and simple to apply. However, it is difficult for me to engage my students in student-led activities such as pair work, small group discussions, project work, extended individual reading or writing projects, and so on. Some pupils are particularly shy and require encouragement from the teacher, while others are simply lazy or do not want to embarrass themselves in front of their classmates. When I assign students to work in pairs, many of them simply shut down or allow the smarter student do all of the work for them; the same is true for group projects. It appears that the bother of attempting to organize student work is rarely worthwhile. The students' behavior in class is also a problem. Teenagers want to brag in front of their peers, or they are simply uninterested in the issue. Many students, and I'm sure some teachers, feel more at ease in a teacher-led class because they recognize the routine. The teacher imparts knowledge, the pupils study it, the teachers test them, and the students pass based on their knowledge level. People can be resistant to change. First-year students come with different levels of knowledge, and most of them are not ready for cooperation and are not used to working in pairs or teams. They arrive at English class ready to listen and absorb what the teacher has in store for them. They are mostly passive in the sense that they expect the teacher to miraculously cram all of the essential knowledge into their skulls. As a result, I am sometimes concerned about losing control of the class when it comes to giving pupils more freedom. Students with the least knowledge and confidence may fall further and further behind in a student-centered program simply because they are not properly involved in the major emphasis of the lesson processes. They may be present, perform tasks, and attempt to participate, but for the reasons stated above, they will be unable to construct a safe scheme for actively participating in all events of the lesson, and thus will be unable to absorb the material required to make good progress in learning. Many of these underperforming kids are even relieved that they do not have to work hard in order to achieve good grades at the expense of others. However, there are pupils who would like to actively participate but, due to innate timidity, always relinquish the initiative to other hands. Not only that, but there are some very sophisticated students who believe they are above such activities. Typically, these are class leaders, and the entire group watches how they complete the work. All of this is due to the fact that, in general, conservatory students are not accustomed to new teaching approaches. They arrive to class and wait to hear what the teacher has to say. Again, the teacher's participation is critical here, as he or she must monitor how students work in pairs, groups, or individually on a project.

I've seen that learners who are more socially advantaged and educated are more likely to benefit from exchanging ideas and working independently. At worst, despite participating in student-led activities, they are less likely to face negative repercussions and are typically successful.

However, students who are less socially well-off and have lower levels of achievement appears to gain from teacher-led activities. Teacher-led activities will benefit everyone who participates, but the most vulnerable will benefit the most. I am obliged to teach in classes with pupils from various social groups and with varying levels of expertise in my teaching practice. I realized how similar the obstacles are in different scenarios. Many students struggle internally with learning. Therefore, it is not surprising that some students are more difficult to teach than others, and it is a shame that those students escape the attention and awareness of teachers.

In such cases, no matter how much one wants to deliver a lesson utilizing an innovative technique, both the traditional approach and the student-led tactic must be used.



When students arrive for class, they expect the teacher to have material, worksheets, presentations, and handouts prepared. When the instructor enters the classroom, she or he tries to do all possible to make the lecture more important and interesting. If learners merely follow the teacher's instructions, would the teacher inspire them to think for themselves? As Potter states: "There, the teacher must confront the students, question them, and guide the learning process" [13].

As a result, the teacher should encourage student-led techniques and encourage students to learn how to learn. Furthermore, it encourages students to think, be creative and innovative, and use their talents so that they realize they are capable of being autonomous learners, which is only beneficial to them. Students will be able to recognize their own worth and potential with these skills. Teachers may provide learners with numerous options in order to encourage them to make their own decisions. It should be noted that this style of teaching is significantly more advanced than the traditional method and can be dangerous if applied incorrectly. It is necessary to strike a balance between the two tactics.

Teacher-led sessions are more demanding for teachers; consequently, one rationale for balancing activities is to offer teachers some down time in lessons where students can work independently. These challenges, however, necessitate further consideration and critical thinking.

I also notice differences in how teachers address various problems. Indeed, I would argue that there is a great deal of potential throughout the system for learning routine practice in the classroom itself in a way that lessens compactness and begins to change the curve.

My approach to English teaching is to design a lesson plan based on the needs of the students. Simultaneously, it is vital to recognize failed attempts to implement these plans and to eliminate them as soon as possible during the educational process; in other words, one must be flexible and not afraid to change direction if it becomes apparent that learners either cannot cope or do not suit them well. Engaging students with failed attempts should be based on the idea that all students can succeed if learning is tailored to their individual needs. The majority of this effort would be devoted to advance preparation and the creation of materials to support the activities. Whatever method of instruction is chosen, whether student-centered or teacher-centered, teachers must be responsible for meeting the needs of those whom they teach, the lesson process must be overseen, and teachers must concentrate on teaching the subject's content [14].

Students that are well-versed in knowledge, in my experience, are more active in this type of activity. They are more likely to take the initiative or perform all of the work alone, whereas their less knowledgeable counterparts simply observe without engaging in any language exercise.

## CONCLUSION

When introducing new ways of teaching English, it is important to consider the students' prior experience, learning styles, and learning requirements. A teacher should serve as a tutor, facilitator, or guide for students, demonstrating where and how to obtain knowledge as well as how to modify and apply it. Language learning will be more efficient if a teacher uses a student-centered approach, routinely monitors learners' autonomous work, educates students about monitoring results, supports consistent effort, and effectively controls their time. Teachers must plainly assess every student's talents and distinguishing characteristics, as these influences the learning process. Teachers' responsibilities include inspiring and monitoring the students they teach, increasing their skills and competencies, and transparently evaluating students' progress. Giving students more responsibility for their education can have long-term benefits.

In the case of teaching conservatory students, it was discovered that student-centered training was less beneficial for students just starting to learn a language, as well as students at an intermediate level, but showed good results for students approaching a more advanced level of understanding.

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