

Activity 1 – Teacher-centered or Learner-centered?

Look at the following statements and indicate whether they represent a teacher-centered or a learner-centered approach. Tick (✓) the appropriate boxes below.

| Statement | Teacher-centered | Learner-centered | Well, I'm not sure |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Learners depend on teacher for explanations of new vocabulary. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Teacher designs activities based on learner strengths, needs, and interests. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Teacher asks learners to read a text and then asks a number of comprehension questions in a clockwise manner. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Learners practice a new grammar item through role-play. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Teacher uses topics of her/his own interest. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Teacher presents a grammar rule and the language is produced based on the rule. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. The teacher asks the learners to discover a grammar rule for themselves. (Guided discovery.) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Teacher sets up project work to be completed by learners in the self-access center. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. Learners are involved in making decisions about what is to be learned. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. Teacher is a facilitator of the learning process, provides direction rather than just instruction. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. Teacher wants learners to write a letter about a certain topic and asks learners to send their homework via email to the teacher. The teacher receives emails, corrects them and sends them back to learners via email. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. Learners expect teacher to correct their mistakes. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 13. Teacher encourages learners to give feedback to each other. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 14. Teacher asks learners to use a dictionary to find the meanings of new vocabulary items. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Module 4: Learner-Centered Classrooms

Course Book

| | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 15. Learners practice different ways of recording vocabulary and choose the way that helps them learn best. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 16. The teacher teaches learners strategies to help them find answers for themselves. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Write down any important points your group discuss:

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Activity 2 – Comparing Traditional and Learner-centered Classrooms

2.1 – Worksheet A

Read the following text about *The Legend of Chuab*. Your trainer will ask you some questions afterwards.

A long time ago in the region that is now Palau, there were only two land masses. One of them was Ngeaur and the other was Beliliou. A goddess by the name of Latmikaik of Ngeaur gave birth and named her offspring Chuab. Chuab was different from other normal babies. Chuab developed a huge appetite and started growing bigger and bigger by the day. Pretty soon the people in the village had to tie Chuab's food on poles in order to reach Chuab's mouth so that Chuab would not starve to death.

The villagers began to feel the affect of Chuab's insatiable appetite and were greatly worried that they themselves would soon starve to death if Chuab continued to eat all their food. The villages asked Latmikaik for her advice. Latmikaik sadly suggested that the villagers had no choice but to stop Chuab from consuming the villagers' food supply and from growing stronger.

The village people began collecting wood and built a huge structure in which to place Chuab. When it was completed, they convinced Chuab that the structure was built to honor him and that Chuab should sit in the center of the building. Chuab asked the villagers why they were placing firewood under the building. The villagers answered that they were preparing the fire for a huge feast for him. Chuab was, as usual, always hungry and could hardly wait for the food to be cooked. When Chuab entered and settled on the center of the building, the people immediately lit the fire underneath. Within minutes. the fire engulfed the entire building causing it to collapse. Chuab fell with a roar and tumbled into the fire.

Upon falling, Chuab's gigantic body separated into different parts and scattered to form the various places in Palau today. The head became Ngerchelong, the groin Imeliik, the neck Renged, the stomach Kiukl, the back Desbedall, and the legs Ngemelachel, Oreor, Ngerekebesang and Ngaruktabel.

The people tried to cover Chuab's body with a mat but it was not large enough so they collected branches and sticks to cover the rest of his body. But even that was not enough. The places that were covered and uncovered eventually became the forests and the plains of Palau. Over time, people emerged out of Chuab's flesh and settled in the islands of Palau. The people called these islands Belau.

Source: Rechebei, E & McPhetres, S; *History of Palau: Heritage of an Emerging Nation*, Ministry of Education, POR, 1997

2.2 – Worksheet B

Read the following text about diving in Palau. Your trainer will give you a task afterwards.

Perhaps the most common reason why tourists visit Palau is to go diving. In addition to its rock islands above water, Palau is world famous for its wonderful sights underwater.

Using just a mask, fins and snorkel, divers can explore coral reefs inside the rock island lagoons. In the relatively shallow water, divers can find hundreds of different kinds of coral and fish. In fact, Palau has more different kinds of fish than any other place in Micronesia, if not the world. Some of the fish that people can see in Palauan waters cannot be found anywhere else on earth. One of the most popular fishes to see in Palauan waters is the majestic Napoleon Wrasse, a protected species in Palau. Other regular underwater sights include sharks, manta rays, turtles and scores of second world war plane and shipwrecks, many of which are lying at relatively shallow depths.

Palau is probably more famous for the deep water diving outside its barrier reef where the water quickly becomes very deep. In order to enjoy the sights at deeper depths, divers need to bring their own air with them in SCUBA tanks. Diving belts with lead weights, buoyancy vests, and of course a mask and fins are also essential SCUBA diving equipment.

Underwater, divers can swim straight down beside cliffs called 'drop-offs' that drop vertically for nearly 100 feet. Divers can also descend straight down through 'blue holes', vertical tunnels that begin near the surface and open out near the bottom of an underwater cliff. Dark caves that run horizontally into the reef are also open for the more adventurous diver.

But it isn't only visitors who go skin diving. The men of Palau have a long history of fishing underwater with spears. Many of these men can dive down to over 50 feet below the surface to get close to the fish they hope to spear.

Many divers make their own spear-guns using local wood, a metal trigger, short pieces of rubber, and a long steel spear. With these spear-guns, people can catch most kinds of fish, from small fish that hide in the coral to much larger fish that swim around more freely in deeper, open water.

A problem for people who like spear fishing however, (in addition to sharks), is that some of the fish they bring home might be poisonous to eat. These poisonous fish can temporarily paralyse a person who eats their meat. Eating the meat can even kill a person. Fortunately over the years, Palauans have learned which kinds of fish are poisonous and avoid catching and eating these fish.

Most of the fish in Palau, including the yellow fin tuna, Spanish mackerel, red snapper, coral grouper and various species of trevally, are very good to eat, and the Palauan skin divers who spear them are believed to be the best divers in Micronesia.

Source: Tinkham, T; *Island English for Micronesia*, Best Press, 2001

2.3 – Worksheet C

Write down three sentences based on the picture below using the Present Continuous tense.



What are they doing?

1.
2.
3.

Activity 2.4 – Traditional Classroom vs. Learner-centered Classroom

Work in small groups and complete the table comparing traditional classroom with a learner-centered one. Fit the missing sections (given below) under the right heading.

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|--|--|
| It involves the element of self-assessment | Low order thinking |
| Learners expected to obey and receive | Teacher as a provider of information and expert in all knowledge |
| Takes into account different learning styles | Teacher as advisor, manager and facilitator of learning |

| | Traditional, non-learner-centered approach | Learner-centered approach |
|------------------------------|---|--|
| Teacher-learner relationship | Hierarchy. | Collaborative. Caring, encouraging, promoting participation, involving positive expectations. |
| Roles in the classroom | _____ _____ Teacher as a distant authority Teacher is in control of learning – its timing, pacing and contents; prescribes what, when and how students will be taught. _____ _____ | Teacher in multiple roles: designer, director-actor, facilitator, manager, and enabler of quality learning experiences. _____ _____ Teacher is standing back to let learning happen and for learners to solve problems. Learners question and analyze. |
| Using the course book | 'Teaching the course book'. Starts from the course book (curriculum based on the book). | Teaching the learners. Starts from learning outcomes. |
| Instruction style | Authoritarian. _____ 'Lecture-based' Often based on memorization of facts. | _____ _____ It starts from the learners, builds on learners' strengths, cares about learners' interests. Higher order thinking. |
| Testing /Evaluation | Not transparent, tests often seen as 'punishment'. | Authentic. Learners are involved in the selection of content. _____ _____ |

Activity 3 – Promoting Learner Autonomy

Work in pairs/threes to complete the sentences below. One member of your group will have to 'run' to the text, which is displayed, on the wall, remember as much as s/he can and 'run' back to the seat to report to her/his partner. Take it in turns to be 'the runner' or 'writer' until the text is complete.

Teachers can promote autonomous learning in a number of ways:

Read your completed Running Dictation text then reflect upon your own classroom practice.

Do you encourage learner autonomy?

Share with your group members the activities/techniques you use in your classroom which encourage learner autonomy/learner-centeredness.

Activity 4 – Who Does It?

A. For Experienced Teachers:

Think about your teaching experience and answer the questions below. Score each question like this:

Never students – 1

Sometimes students – 2

50/50 (teacher/student) – 3

Often students – 4

Always students – 5

1. Who chooses the topics?
2. Who chooses the activities?
3. Who prepares the activities/materials?
4. Who do your students speak to?
5. Who do your students look at?
6. Who writes on the board?
7. Who cleans the board?
8. Who operates equipment?
9. Who chooses the vocabulary?
10. Who spells out new words?
11. Who checks the work?
12. Who writes/asks the comprehension questions?
13. Who gives the instructions?
14. Who gives the explanations?
15. Who answers student questions?
16. Who repeats what has been said, if the others haven't heard?
17. Who creates the silences?
18. Who breaks the silences?
19. Who gives dictations?
20. Who tells stories?
21. Who chooses the homework?
22. Who chooses the pairs or groups?

Activity 4 – Who Does It?

B. For Course Participants Without Teaching Experience:

Think about your past school or current college learning experiences and answer the questions below. Change questions to the past tense if you choose your past schooling. Score each question like this:

Never students – 1

Sometimes students – 2

50/50 (teacher/student) – 3

Often students – 4

Always students – 5

1. Who chooses the topics?
2. Who chooses the activities?
3. Who prepares the activities/materials?
4. Who do the students speak to?
5. Who do the students look at?
6. Who writes on the board?
7. Who cleans the board?
8. Who operates equipment?
9. Who chooses the vocabulary?
10. Who spells out new words?
11. Who checks the work?
12. Who writes/asks the comprehension questions?
13. Who gives the instructions?
14. Who gives the explanations?
15. Who answers questions asked by the students?
16. Who repeats what has been said, if the others haven't heard?
17. Who creates the silences?
18. Who breaks the silences?
19. Who gives dictations?
20. Who tells stories?
21. Who chooses the homework?
22. Who chooses the pairs or groups?

Activity 5 - Learner-centered Activities

In this activity, you are going to identify learner-centered activities that help teach particular language points.

Work in groups.

TASK A

Your trainer will give you a selection of English language teaching and learning resource books and/or materials.

Your task is to find learner-centered activities within these resources that help teach a particular language point(s). Find at least two activities.

Share your findings with another group stating the:

- i. Student age level(s) for which the activities are appropriate;
- ii. Language level for which the activities are appropriate;
- iii. What the activities are;
- iv. Where the activity came from (eg. your own idea or a particular English language resource book?)

TASK B

Your trainer will give you a selection of English language teaching and learning resource books and/or materials.

Have a look at the course book you're currently using in your teaching.

Select a unit from the course book and adapt it. Using the selection of English language teaching and learning resources, modify an activity or add a new ones to the unit, making it more learner-centered.

When you have finished, tell other group members about the changes you made stating:

- i. Where the idea for the modified activity came from (eg. your own idea or a particular English language resource book?)
- ii. Why the unit/activity is now more learner-centered (eg. Participants need to identify: The learner's role before and after the modification; The teacher's role before and after the modification; and if the activity is done individually, in pairs or in groups.

Activity 6 - Concerns

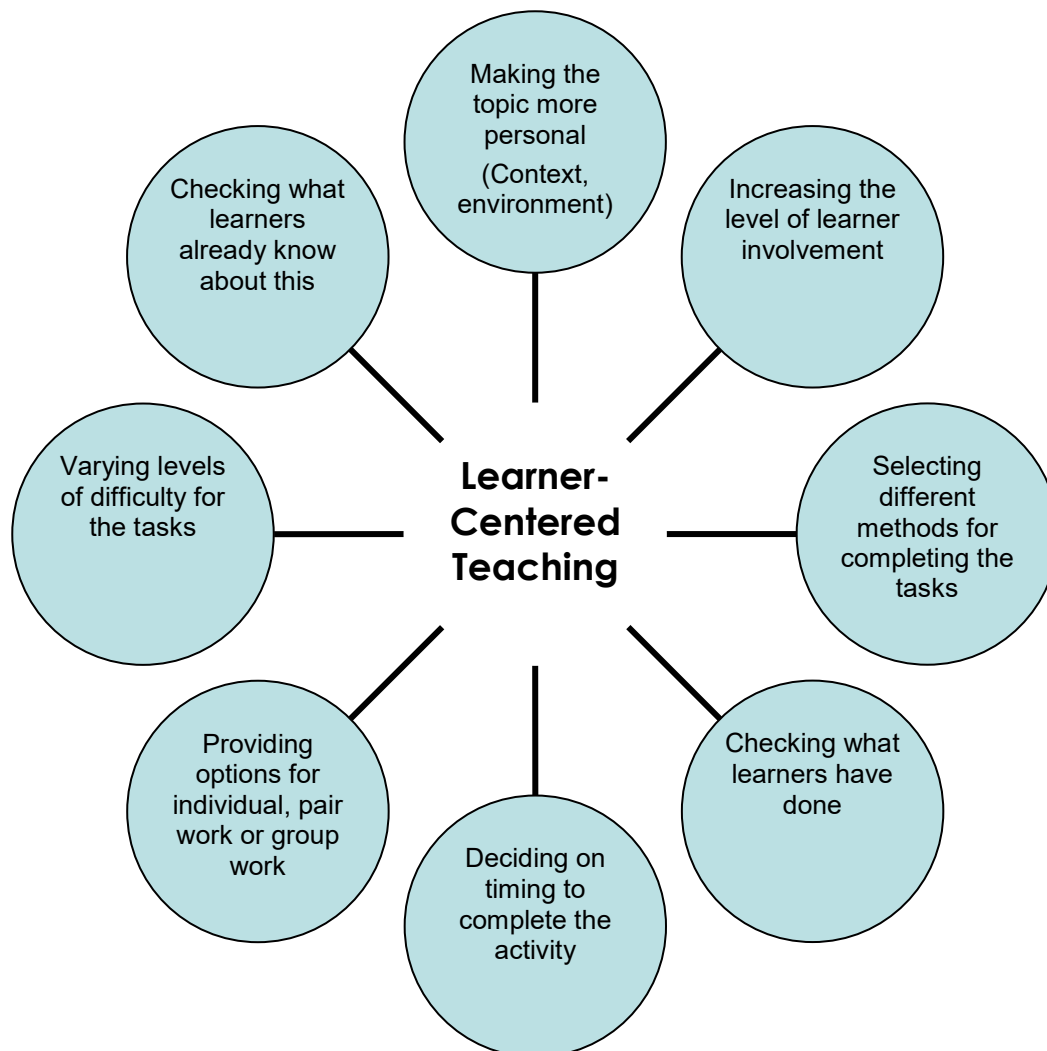
In this activity you will discuss some of their doubts about learner-centered teaching in your contexts and try to resolve these issues with practical advice from each other. Your trainer will give you instructions on how you will do this activity.

Activity 7 - Reflection and Closure

Go back to the list of statements from Activity 1, and look at the ones we all agreed were teacher-centered. , In your group, discuss ways of making the situations more learner-centered.

Now think of a lesson you have given in the past or a lesson you attended as a learner. Was the lesson learner-centered? Discuss the lesson with the person next to you.

The following diagram may help you in your work:



Assignment (optional – for existing teachers and/or student teachers on practicum)

Your assignment is to try out a new idea/activity from this module with one of your classes. You should then reflect on your lesson. Use the following guidelines for your assignment.

1. Where appropriate, make up materials for the new idea/activity you will be trying out, focusing on the particular language points and learning outcomes you are aiming for.
2. Write your whole lesson plan, including your new idea/activity on the lesson plan document, then teach the lesson. After the lesson, write a reflection including: i. What went well? Why?; ii. What didn't go well? Why?; and iii. What changes will I make next time?
3. Attach your lesson plan (including list of materials used) and your reflection.
4. Submit your assignment by handing/emailing it to your trainer. The deadline for completion of this assignment is

Glossary

| Concept | Definition |
|---------------------------|---|
| pacing | The speed of the lesson. Teacher can vary the pace in a lesson by planning different activities in order to keep the students' attention |
| project work | An activity, which focuses on completing a task on a specific topic. Students often work in groups to create something such as a class magazine. Students sometimes have to do some work by themselves, sometimes outside the classroom |
| self-access center | A place with learning resources such as newspapers, books, computers, CDs, internet etc. where students can study by themselves |

Recommended reading

- **Learner-based Teaching**, Colin Campbell & Hanna Kryszewska, Oxford University Press, 1992
- **The Practice of English Language Teaching**, Jeremy Harmer, Longman, 2001
- **How to Teach English**, Jeremy Harmer, Pearson Longman, 2007
- **Group Work**, Peter Watcyn-Jones, Penguin, 2000
- **Elementary and Intermediate Communication Games**, Jill Hadfield, Longman, 1996
- **Fun Class Activities for Teachers 1& 2**, Peter Watcyn-Jones, Penguin, 2000

Additional Material

Activity 2.4 – Traditional Classroom vs. Learner-centered Classroom – Answer Sheet

| | Traditional, non-learner-centered approach | Learner-centered Approach |
|------------------------------|---|--|
| Teacher-learner relationship | Hierarchy. | Collaborative. Caring, encouraging, promoting participation, involving positive expectations. |
| Roles in the classroom | <i>Teacher as a provider of information and expert in all knowledge.</i> Teacher as a distant authority. Teacher is in control of learning – its timing, pacing and contents; prescribes what, when and how students will be taught. <i>Learners expected to obey and receive.</i> | Teacher in multiple roles: designer, director-actor, facilitator, manager, enabler of quality learning experiences. <i>Teacher as advisor, manager and facilitator of learning.</i> Teacher is standing back to let learning happen and for learners to solve problems. Learners question and analyze. |
| Using the course book | 'Teaching the course book'. Starts from the course book (curriculum based on the book). | Teaching the learners. Starts from learning outcomes. |
| Instruction style | Authoritarian. <i>Low order thinking.</i> 'Lecture-based'. Often based on memorization of facts. | <i>Takes into account different learning styles.</i> It starts from the learners, builds on learners' strengths, cares about learners' interests. Higher order thinking. |
| Testing /Evaluation | Not transparent, tests often seen as 'punishment'. | Authentic. Learners are involved in the selection of content. <i>It involves the element of self-assessment.</i> |