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THE EFFECTIVENESS OF STUDENT-CENTERED LEARNING IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS

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Abstract. Student-centered learning has become an increasingly significant approach in contemporary English language teaching because it emphasizes learners' active participation, independence, collaboration, and responsibility for their own educational development. Unlike traditional teacher-centered instruction, which often positions students as recipients of information, student-centered learning encourages learners to construct knowledge through meaningful communication, problem-solving, reflection, and practical experience. This article examines the theoretical foundations, pedagogical applications, potential benefits, and implementation challenges of student-centered learning in English language classrooms. A literature-based analytical approach is adopted to explore the relationship between learner participation, communicative competence, motivation, autonomy, and language development. Classroom observation, comparative analysis, and questionnaire-based investigation are proposed as complementary methods for future empirical research. Particular attention is given to communicative activities, pair work, group discussions, role-playing, project-based learning, peer assessment, and formative feedback. Practical classroom examples demonstrate how these strategies can create opportunities for developing speaking, listening, reading, writing, critical thinking, and collaborative skills. The analysis suggests that student-centered learning can contribute to more interactive, inclusive, and meaningful educational experiences when activities are aligned with learning objectives and adapted to students' proficiency levels. However, successful implementation requires effective classroom management, appropriate instructional support, equitable participation, and systematic assessment. The article concludes that student-centered learning should complement rather than completely

replace teacher-led instruction. Further empirical research is necessary to establish its effectiveness in specific English language learning contexts and determine which strategies produce the most meaningful educational outcomes.

Key words: student-centered learning, English language teaching, learner autonomy, communicative competence, active learning, classroom interaction, student motivation, collaborative learning, formative assessment, critical thinking, language acquisition.

Аннотация. Личностно-ориентированное обучение становится одним из значимых подходов в современном преподавании английского языка, поскольку оно предполагает активное участие учащихся, развитие самостоятельности, сотрудничества и ответственности за собственное образовательное развитие. В отличие от традиционного обучения, ориентированного преимущественно на преподавателя, данный подход способствует формированию знаний посредством содержательного общения, решения проблем, рефлексии и практической деятельности. В статье рассматриваются теоретические основы, педагогические возможности, потенциальные преимущества и трудности реализации личностно-ориентированного обучения на занятиях по английскому языку. На основе анализа научной литературы исследуется взаимосвязь между активностью обучающихся, коммуникативной компетенцией, мотивацией, самостоятельностью и развитием языковых навыков. В качестве дополнительных методов будущего эмпирического исследования предлагаются наблюдение за учебным процессом, сравнительный анализ и анкетирование. Особое внимание уделяется коммуникативным заданиям, работе в парах и группах, ролевым играм, проектной деятельности, взаимному оцениванию и формирующей обратной связи. Практические примеры показывают, как данные стратегии могут способствовать развитию навыков говорения, аудирования, чтения, письма, критического мышления и сотрудничества. Анализ позволяет предположить, что

личностно-ориентированное обучение может способствовать созданию более интерактивной, инклюзивной и содержательной образовательной среды при условии соответствия учебных заданий поставленным целям и уровню языковой подготовки учащихся. Вместе с тем успешная реализация данного подхода требует эффективного управления учебным процессом, педагогической поддержки, равного участия обучающихся и систематического оценивания. В заключение подчёркивается, что личностно-ориентированное обучение целесообразно сочетать с объяснением материала преподавателем, а для определения его эффективности в конкретных условиях преподавания английского языка необходимы дальнейшие эмпирические исследования.

Annotatsiya. O‘quvchiga yo‘naltirilgan ta’lim zamonaviy ingliz tilini o‘qitish jarayonida muhim pedagogik yondashuvlardan biri hisoblanadi, chunki u o‘quvchilarning faol ishtiroki, mustaqil fikrlashi, hamkorlikda ishlashi va o‘z ta’lim jarayoni uchun mas’uliyatni his etishiga asoslanadi. An’anaviy, o‘qituvchi markazidagi ta’limdan farqli ravishda, ushbu yondashuv bilimlarni mazmunli muloqot, muammoli vaziyatlarni hal qilish, refleksiya va amaliy faoliyat orqali o‘zlashtirishga imkon beradi. Mazkur maqolada o‘quvchiga yo‘naltirilgan ta’limning nazariy asoslari, pedagogik imkoniyatlari, ehtimoliy afzalliklari va uni amalga oshirish jarayonida yuzaga kelishi mumkin bo‘lgan muammolar tahlil qilinadi. Ilmiy adabiyotlar tahliliga asoslanib, o‘quvchilarning faolligi, kommunikativ kompetensiyasi, motivatsiyasi, mustaqilligi va til ko‘nikmalari rivoji o‘rtasidagi bog‘liqlik ko‘rib chiqiladi. Kelgusidagi empirik tadqiqotlar uchun dars jarayonini kuzatish, qiyosiy tahlil va so‘rovnoma metodlari taklif etiladi. Juftlikda ishlash, guruh muhokamalari, rolli o‘yinlar, loyiha asosida o‘qitish, o‘zaro baholash va shakllantiruvchi fikr-mulohaza kabi metodlarga alohida e’tibor qaratiladi. Amaliy misollar ushbu strategiyalar orqali o‘quvchilarning tinglab tushunish, gapirish, o‘qish, yozish, tanqidiy fikrlash va hamkorlik ko‘nikmalarini rivojlantirish imkoniyatlarini yoritadi. Tahlil o‘quvchiga yo‘naltirilgan ta’lim

mashg‘ulotlar aniq o‘quv maqsadlariga moslashtirilganda va o‘quvchilarning til bilish darajasi hisobga olinganda yanada interaktiv, inklyuziv va mazmunli ta’lim muhitini yaratishga yordam berishi mumkinligini ko‘rsatadi. Biroq samarali natijaga erishish uchun sinfni to‘g‘ri boshqarish, tegishli pedagogik yordam ko‘rsatish, barcha o‘quvchilarning teng ishtirokini ta’minlash va muntazam baholash zarur. Xulosa sifatida ushbu yondashuvni o‘qituvchi tomonidan tushuntirish va yo‘naltirish usullari bilan uyg‘unlashtirish tavsiya etiladi. Uning muayyan ta’lim sharoitlarida samaradorligini aniqlash uchun qo‘shimcha empirik tadqiqotlar o‘tkazish lozim.

INTRODUCTION

English has become an essential means of communication in international education, scientific research, business, tourism, and professional development, making the development of effective language teaching practices an important educational priority. In contemporary classrooms, the ability to use English successfully involves much more than memorizing vocabulary, learning grammatical rules, or translating isolated sentences. Learners must develop the ability to understand spoken information, express their opinions, participate in conversations, interpret written texts, and communicate appropriately in different social and academic situations. Consequently, English language teaching requires instructional approaches that connect linguistic knowledge with meaningful language use and provide learners with regular opportunities to practice the skills they are expected to acquire. Traditional teacher-centered instruction has an established role in education because explanations, demonstrations, controlled exercises, and explicit feedback can help students understand unfamiliar concepts and develop linguistic accuracy. Nevertheless, when classroom activities depend predominantly on teacher explanations and students have limited opportunities to communicate independently, learners may find it difficult to transfer their knowledge into real-life situations. A student may be able to identify the correct grammatical form in a written exercise but struggle to use that form naturally

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during a conversation. Similarly, learners may memorize a list of words about travelling without being able to use those words to ask for directions, book accommodation, or explain their travel preferences. These examples demonstrate the importance of combining explicit instruction with opportunities for active language practice. Student-centered learning offers a pedagogical framework for addressing this challenge by placing learners' needs, experiences, interests, and participation at the center of the educational process. Rather than viewing students as passive recipients of information, this approach recognizes them as active participants who can develop understanding through communication, exploration, collaboration, and reflection. The teacher remains responsible for planning lessons, selecting appropriate materials, explaining difficult concepts, and monitoring progress, but also creates conditions in which learners can make decisions, solve problems, exchange ideas, and gradually become more independent. The effectiveness of this approach therefore depends not on eliminating teacher guidance but on establishing a productive relationship between structured instruction and meaningful student participation.

The theoretical foundations of student-centered learning can be connected with constructivist and sociocultural perspectives on education. Vygotsky (1978) emphasized the importance of social interaction and guided learning in cognitive development, suggesting that learners can achieve more complex tasks when they receive appropriate assistance from teachers or more capable peers. This perspective is particularly relevant to English language classrooms, where students often develop communicative competence through dialogue, collaborative tasks, and opportunities to negotiate meaning. For example, when learners work together to prepare a short presentation, one student may help another identify suitable vocabulary, organize sentences, or pronounce unfamiliar words. Through this interaction, language becomes a practical tool for cooperation rather than merely an object of memorization. Learner autonomy is another important dimension of student-centered education. Benson (2011)

explains autonomy in relation to learners' ability to take control of aspects of their learning. In language education, autonomy can involve setting personal goals, choosing appropriate learning strategies, monitoring progress, identifying difficulties, and reflecting on performance. A student who recognizes difficulties with English listening, for example, might decide to listen to short recordings several times a week, record unfamiliar expressions, and evaluate improvements in comprehension. The teacher can support this process by recommending suitable materials and helping the learner establish realistic goals. In this way, student-centered learning extends beyond classroom interaction and encourages the development of lifelong learning habits. In practical terms, student-centered learning can be implemented through pair work, group discussions, information-gap activities, role-playing, project-based learning, problem-solving tasks, peer assessment, and reflective activities. For instance, in a lesson on environmental protection, students might investigate the problem of plastic waste at school, discuss possible solutions, prepare a poster, and present their recommendations in English. This single activity can integrate vocabulary development, speaking, listening, reading, writing, collaboration, and critical thinking. Students must understand the problem, exchange opinions, compare alternatives, and communicate a final proposal. The teacher can guide the activity by introducing relevant vocabulary, providing useful sentence structures, and giving feedback on language use without controlling every stage of the discussion. Despite its potential benefits, student-centered learning is not automatically effective in every classroom. Students may have different levels of English proficiency, confidence, learning experience, and willingness to participate. More confident learners may dominate group discussions, while less proficient students may hesitate to contribute because they fear making mistakes. Large classes, limited lesson time, insufficient learning resources, and examination-oriented curricula may also restrict opportunities for extended interaction. Furthermore, an activity that is engaging but unrelated to the lesson objectives may consume time

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without producing the intended educational outcomes. These challenges highlight the importance of purposeful lesson planning, differentiated support, effective classroom management, and reliable assessment.

The aim of this article is to examine the effectiveness of student-centered learning in English language classrooms by analyzing its theoretical foundations, practical applications, potential contribution to language development, and implementation challenges. More specifically, the article seeks to explain how student-centered activities can support communicative competence, motivation, learner autonomy, and critical thinking while identifying conditions that may influence their success. It also proposes a methodological framework for future empirical research that could examine student participation and language performance in actual educational settings. The central argument is that student-centered learning can contribute to meaningful English language education when activities are aligned with learning objectives, adapted to students' needs, supported by appropriate teacher guidance, and evaluated through systematic assessment.

METHODS

The present article adopts a literature-based analytical approach to examine student-centered learning in English language teaching. Its methodological framework draws on established educational theories, academic publications concerning learner autonomy and active learning, and pedagogical examples illustrating the application of student-centered strategies in language classrooms. Rather than presenting uncollected classroom data as empirical evidence, the article uses theoretical analysis to identify potential educational benefits, implementation challenges, and directions for further investigation. Classroom observation, comparative analysis, and questionnaire-based research are proposed as complementary methods that could be implemented in a future empirical study to evaluate these issues under clearly defined classroom conditions. The literature review focuses on research concerning constructivist learning, sociocultural

theory, learner autonomy, communicative language teaching, and active participation in education. Vygotsky's (1978) work provides a theoretical basis for examining the role of social interaction and guided support in learning, while Benson's (2011) research contributes to understanding how learners can gradually assume greater responsibility for their educational development. Richards and Rodgers (2014) provide a framework for examining language teaching approaches and the relationship between instructional principles, classroom procedures, and learning activities. Freeman et al. (2014) provide broader empirical evidence concerning active learning in undergraduate science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education. Their findings are relevant to the general discussion of active participation, although they should not be interpreted as direct evidence of the effectiveness of particular English language teaching techniques. The sources were examined thematically to identify principles that could inform the design of interactive, communicative, and learner-centered English lessons. Classroom observation is proposed as a method for investigating how students participate in activities designed around learner interaction and independence. In an empirical study, a structured observation checklist could be used to record the frequency and distribution of student contributions, the extent to which learners use English during tasks, the quality of peer interaction, their willingness to ask questions, and the level of assistance required to complete activities. The observer could also examine whether students listen to one another, respond appropriately, contribute relevant ideas, and share responsibilities during group work. For example, during a lesson on healthy lifestyles, students might work in small groups to design a weekly health plan and explain their choices in English. Observation could reveal whether learners use relevant vocabulary, negotiate decisions, and support their suggestions with reasons. However, participation should not be evaluated solely by counting spoken contributions, because effective listening, thoughtful reflection, and relevant written contributions may also demonstrate meaningful engagement. Comparative analysis can provide a structured way of

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examining the differences between teacher-centered and student-centered approaches. A comparison may consider classroom interaction, the distribution of responsibility, opportunities for independent language use, feedback procedures, and the forms of assessment employed. Teacher-centered lessons may be particularly useful when learners require explicit explanations, demonstrations, or controlled practice, whereas student-centered lessons may provide additional opportunities for communication, collaboration, and problem-solving. These approaches should not be treated as mutually exclusive categories because effective teaching frequently combines elements of both.

RESULTS

The theoretical analysis identifies several potential contributions of student-centered learning to English language education, particularly in relation to communicative competence, contextualized language practice, learner motivation, autonomy, and collaboration. These contributions are understood as themes supported by the conceptual framework and relevant literature, rather than as measured outcomes of an experiment conducted for this article. Their practical significance depends on how learning activities are designed, how teachers support learners, and how progress is assessed in the classroom. One important potential contribution of student-centered learning is the opportunity to develop communicative competence through purposeful interaction. Language learners need opportunities to interpret spoken messages, formulate questions, express opinions, clarify misunderstandings, and respond appropriately to other speakers. Activities such as information-gap tasks, role-playing, and collaborative problem-solving can create situations in which communication is necessary for completing a task. For example, in an information-gap activity, one student might receive a timetable containing several missing details while another student has the complete version. The first student must ask questions such as “What time does the English lesson begin?” and “When does the science class finish?” while the partner provides the missing information. Unlike an exercise in which students

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merely repeat model sentences, this activity requires them to listen for meaning, formulate questions, process responses, and confirm information. The task also provides opportunities for teachers to observe pronunciation, grammatical accuracy, comprehensibility, and the ability to sustain interaction. Such activities can therefore connect language knowledge with practical communication while allowing teachers to identify specific learning needs. Student-centered activities may also support vocabulary and grammar development by placing linguistic forms in meaningful contexts. Vocabulary is more likely to become practically useful when learners encounter it in situations that require them to communicate an intention or complete a task. During a lesson about food and healthy eating, for instance, students could work in pairs to create and perform a restaurant dialogue. One student might act as a customer and the other as a waiter, using expressions such as “Could I have a vegetable salad, please?” and “Would you like something to drink?” The dialogue provides opportunities to practise food-related vocabulary, polite requests, question forms, and countable or uncountable nouns. Before the activity, the teacher could introduce essential expressions and model their pronunciation; afterward, students could receive feedback on the clarity and accuracy of their language. This example illustrates how explicit teaching and learner-centered practice can complement one another. The teacher establishes the linguistic foundation, while students apply it in a communicative situation that requires them to make choices and respond to a partner. Another potential contribution concerns motivation and classroom participation. Students may find learning more meaningful when they can connect lesson content with their experiences, interests, and practical goals. Interactive tasks can also provide different ways of participating, which may be particularly helpful for learners who feel uncomfortable speaking in front of the whole class. For example, during a lesson on environmental protection, groups could identify a problem affecting their school, compare possible solutions, and present a recommendation supported by reasons. One group might

propose introducing reusable water bottles to reduce plastic waste, while another might recommend improving waste separation. Students would need to exchange opinions, listen to alternative suggestions, and reach a decision. The activity creates a communicative purpose beyond completing a textbook exercise and gives learners an opportunity to express their ideas. Nevertheless, the assumption that interactive tasks always increase motivation should be avoided. Students may differ in their preferences, confidence, and willingness to work collaboratively, so questionnaires, interviews, and observation would be needed to investigate their actual experiences. Student-centered learning may further support learner autonomy and critical thinking by encouraging students to make decisions, monitor their progress, and reflect on the quality of their work. Project-based learning provides a useful example because it requires learners to organize information, distribute responsibilities, evaluate sources, and prepare a final product. Students might work together to prepare an English presentation about a historical landmark, a cultural tradition, or an environmental issue. They would need to select relevant information, organize their ideas, prepare supporting materials, and communicate their conclusions to an audience. During the project, the teacher could provide a checklist asking whether the information is relevant, whether the presentation is logically organized, whether all group members have contributed, and whether the language has been checked for accuracy. This process encourages students to evaluate not only the final presentation but also the decisions they make while learning. Critical thinking can be developed further through tasks requiring learners to compare alternatives and justify their opinions. For instance, students could discuss whether public transport or private cars are more suitable for reducing urban pollution and support their arguments with relevant reasons. Such tasks require language use alongside reasoning, evaluation, and decision-making. A further theme concerns the potential of student-centered learning to accommodate differences in proficiency and learning needs. English classrooms commonly include students who differ in

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vocabulary knowledge, grammatical accuracy, speaking confidence, and previous educational experience. A single task may therefore be too difficult for some learners and insufficiently challenging for others. Differentiated support can help make student-centered activities more inclusive. During a discussion about travelling, less proficient students could receive sentence starters such as “I would like to visit…” and “I prefer travelling by…” while more advanced learners could be asked to compare destinations, explain their preferences, and discuss the environmental consequences of different forms of transport. Group roles, such as discussion leader, note-taker, vocabulary monitor, and presenter, can also help distribute responsibilities. However, assigning roles alone does not guarantee equal participation. Teachers must monitor the process, ensure that every student has a meaningful task, and adjust the level of support when necessary. The analysis also highlights several challenges that may influence the implementation of student-centered learning. Unequal participation can occur when confident students dominate discussions and less proficient learners remain silent. Structured turn-taking, individual accountability, and clear role assignments may help distribute opportunities more fairly. Limited vocabulary can prevent students from expressing complex ideas, making vocabulary lists, model sentences, visual prompts, and short teacher explanations important forms of support. Classroom management presents another challenge because collaborative tasks may become unfocused when students do not understand the instructions or expected outcome. Demonstrating the procedure, establishing time limits, and providing clear success criteria can reduce this risk. In addition, project-based tasks may require more lesson time than controlled exercises, so teachers need to choose activities according to the importance of the learning objective and the time available. Assessment also requires careful planning because a successful group product does not necessarily demonstrate that every participant has achieved the same level of understanding. Individual exit tickets, short oral questions, reflection forms, and separate assessment criteria can provide additional

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evidence of each student's progress. These considerations indicate that the educational value of student-centered learning depends on the quality of implementation rather than on the mere presence of group activities.

DISCUSSION

The analysis suggests that student-centered learning offers a valuable framework for creating more interactive English language classrooms, particularly when students need opportunities to apply linguistic knowledge in meaningful communicative situations. Its principal contribution is the connection it establishes between learning language and using language. Students are not limited to identifying correct answers or reproducing memorized expressions; they can use English to exchange information, solve problems, negotiate decisions, and explain ideas. However, this potential should not be interpreted as evidence that every student-centered technique is necessarily more effective than every teacher-centered method. The outcomes of an activity depend on its purpose, design, difficulty, and relationship to the intended learning objectives. The relationship between student-centered learning and communicative language teaching is particularly important. Richards and Rodgers (2014) discuss language teaching approaches in terms of their theoretical assumptions, instructional designs, and classroom procedures. From a communicative perspective, learners need opportunities to develop the ability to use language appropriately in context, rather than simply demonstrate knowledge of isolated grammatical structures. A lesson on travelling illustrates how different teaching approaches can be integrated. The teacher might first introduce useful expressions for asking about transport and accommodation, explain the relevant question forms, and model a short dialogue. Students could then work in pairs to plan a three-day trip using a limited budget, deciding where to stay, how to travel, and which activities to include. They would need to use the target expressions to exchange information, justify their preferences, and negotiate a final plan. A short written reflection or oral presentation could then provide evidence of what they had

learned. This sequence combines direct instruction with purposeful interaction and shows why student-centered learning is best understood as a flexible pedagogical approach rather than a complete rejection of teacher-led teaching. Broader educational research also provides a reason to investigate the role of active participation. Freeman et al. (2014) analyzed 225 studies in undergraduate science, engineering, and mathematics education and reported that active learning was associated with higher examination performance and lower failure rates than traditional lecturing. Their findings suggest that instructional designs requiring students to engage actively with learning material deserve serious consideration. Nevertheless, the study concerned STEM subjects rather than English language education, so its results cannot be transferred directly to language classrooms without additional evidence. English language learning involves particular demands, including the development of receptive and productive language skills, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammatical accuracy, and communicative appropriateness. Future research should therefore examine student-centered strategies using assessments designed specifically for these language outcomes.

Learner autonomy represents another important dimension of student-centered education. Benson (2011) emphasizes the role of learner control in the learning process, and this principle can be applied through goal-setting, self-assessment, independent reading, reflective journals, and individualized practice. For example, students who experience difficulties with listening comprehension could establish a weekly goal of listening to short English recordings, identifying unfamiliar expressions, and summarizing the main ideas. The teacher could recommend materials at an appropriate level and provide a simple progress checklist. At the end of the week, students could reflect on which strategies helped them understand the recordings and which difficulties remained.

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CONCLUSION

Student-centered learning represents an important approach to contemporary English language teaching because it emphasizes active participation, meaningful communication, collaboration, learner autonomy, and critical thinking. The analysis presented in this article demonstrates how these principles can be incorporated into practical classroom activities that connect language knowledge with real-life purposes. Information-gap tasks can create opportunities to practise listening and question formation, role-playing can place vocabulary and grammar in meaningful contexts, collaborative projects can develop communication and presentation skills, and reflective activities can encourage students to monitor their progress. Through these experiences, learners may become more actively involved in the learning process and develop greater awareness of how language can be used to achieve communicative goals. At the same time, the effectiveness of student-centered learning depends on more than the selection of interactive activities. Teachers must consider learners' proficiency levels, confidence, educational needs, and available resources while ensuring that each activity has a clear purpose. Unequal participation, insufficient vocabulary, limited lesson time, classroom management difficulties, and challenges in assessing individual performance can restrict the benefits of this approach if they are not addressed through appropriate planning. Differentiated instructions, clear task procedures, structured group roles, useful language models, and constructive feedback can help create a more inclusive and productive learning environment. A central conclusion of the article is that student-centered learning should complement rather than completely replace teacher-led instruction. Explicit explanations, demonstrations, controlled practice, and corrective feedback remain valuable components of English language teaching, especially when learners encounter unfamiliar vocabulary or complex grammatical structures. Combining these techniques with opportunities for meaningful communication can provide students with both the linguistic support and practical

experience necessary for language development. The teacher's role is therefore not diminished but transformed into a more flexible combination of instructor, facilitator, organizer, and learning adviser. The methodological framework proposed in this article offers a foundation for future research into student-centered learning. Classroom observation, comparative analysis, questionnaires, and language assessments could be used to investigate changes in participation, motivation, learner autonomy, and communicative performance. However, the present article does not claim to demonstrate experimentally measured improvements because original classroom data have not been collected. Further empirical studies should examine the effectiveness of specific strategies in different educational settings and report their methods and findings transparently.

In conclusion, student-centered learning has considerable potential to support meaningful, interactive, and learner-responsive English language education when it is implemented with clear objectives, appropriate instructional support, inclusive participation, and systematic assessment. By combining active learning with effective teacher guidance, educators can provide students with opportunities to become more confident communicators, reflective learners, and independent users of English. The long-term value of this approach lies not simply in making lessons more engaging, but in helping learners develop the knowledge, skills, and learning strategies needed to communicate and continue learning beyond the classroom.

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