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STUDENT-CENTRED TEACHING

Here are some of the challenges around **student-centred teaching** and ways you can get the balancing act between teacher control and student autonomy *just right*.

1

CHALLENGE 1: Seeing your teaching from your students' point of view

SOLUTIONS

- When planning your lessons constantly **consider what you intend to do from your learners' point of view** by basing decisions on their level, loves, and the language that interests them (which means you'll have to consult them!).
- **See learners' learning as your responsibility** - do everything you can to encourage everyone to succeed i.e. by designing an end of lesson challenge in which your learners elaborate on what they've learnt while you listen (and respond, if necessary).
- **Frame feedback** to show you have high expectations and are not focussed on failure. Do talk about performance and ways to progress, don't make criticisms they might take personally.

2

CHALLENGE 2: Maintaining students' motivation

SOLUTIONS

- Use **'sponge activities'** - challenges for fast finishers that, like sponges, can expand or contract depending on the time available (invent your own follow-up activities related to the activity that's just been finished or pick from your engaging supplementary course resources).
- When you set a challenge **allow 'wait time',** and encourage students to ask two or take three others before asking you.
- **Scaffold preparation for language production** (like suggesting your learners make notes in graphic organisers before speaking), and give multiple chances to practice - the production of language will be deeper, more detailed, and done with much more confidence.

3

CHALLENGE 3: Increasing learner's autonomy

SOLUTIONS

- Respond to students' interests and need for increased independence by allowing them more freedom (gradually, at first, please). You can set aside **time for your learners to pursue projects they are passionate about**, or adapt the ones from the coursebook you're using.
- **Accept embracing autonomy** means relinquishing control — students using a digital platform to present their project probably know more about it than you do so consider yourself a project manager giving timelines, co-constructing goals, etc.
- **Work with students to develop rubrics** — making suggestions but also asking them what criteria they want to use to judge a project.

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REMEMBER: student-centredness is not about classroom location. It's about shifting how you teach, to be about how your learners learn. It is something that culturally we may not be used to, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't move along the line from controlling to negotiating, from doing all the speaking, to doing all the inspiring.