

## The Significance of Theoretical Foundations in Enhancing Teaching Practices: Teachers' Perceptions and Use of Learner-centered Approach in EFL Classrooms

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### Abstract

Undeniably, the realm of teaching English as a foreign language still embraces active research that continuously looks for approaches and methods which may contribute to a more efficient instruction of the target language. These theoretical foundations enable the instructor to appropriately implement the outlined approach along its salient features to achieve the desired outcomes. Despite this tight rapport, teachers of English at the University of Mostaganem tend to rely on their common-sense teaching practices that are mainly informed by their experience of teaching EFL. The gap between the two extremes theory and practice, the premise of this paper, may be widened as teachers do not develop accurate and scientific understandings of certain pedagogical concepts, in this case, learner-centeredness as agreed on by professional academics, let alone to apply it along its proper standards. The pedagogical sequel of such misunderstanding mainly relate to random references to both teacher and learner-centered approaches in classroom teaching practices. The study via a detailed teachers' questionnaire revealed that teachers of English, in addition to the cursory understandings they develop in relation to the very meaning of a learner-centered approach, tend to eschew developing learners' metacognitive skills in their teaching practices. Most importantly, they are likely to rely on traditional ways of assessment instead of authentic frameworks, a cardinal feature within the current paradigm.

**Keywords:** Authentic assessment, constructivism, learner-centered approach, metacognition, teacher-centered approach

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## **Introduction**

Teaching English as a foreign language has never been a static and rigid practice whereby one approach fits every contextual variable. On the contrary, the history of EFL teaching has known several teaching paradigms nurtured by different schools of thought. The flexibility of the debated practice coped with the changes the world has witnessed, namely the technological boom which altered the very meaning of teaching English in the 21st century. Given that the witnessed metamorphosis required learners' autonomy, a learner-centered approach has been adopted to refine the nature of learning and as well as the roles of the main pedagogical agents.

## **The Significance of Theory for Practice**

An effective teaching practice necessitates establishing of a tight rapport between theoretical grounds and practical platforms. This is evident in the very nature of theory whose definition goes as follows: "a theory is an organized body of concepts and principles intended to explain a particular phenomenon" (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). This citation lucidly underscores the significance of theory in relation to different life practices be they in scientific laboratories, educational settings, or ordinary life routines. Most importantly, its cardinal role springs from its explanatory mechanisms which are required to understand the subject at hand (Johnson & Christensen, 2007). Following the same line of thought, the universality of theories with regard to different fields of study is another argument to establish its legacy in teaching practices.

Despite the fact that theoretical foundations are needed for heterogeneous research practices, a contract between natural sciences and social sciences is worth an explanation. Thus, while the former displays approximately fixed theoretical frameworks that stem from clear –cut standards, the latter displays an unstable nature that accounts for contextual variables and as such opens room for various options of interpretation processes. By contrast to natural science whose theories are approximately fixed, social sciences comprise competing theories and multiple theoretical perspectives which do not share the same consensus (Anfara & Mertz, 2006). Most importantly, educational research denies the fallacy of a well-established unified theory of education. On the contrary, theories differ since they echo divergent schools of thought, co-exist along oppositions and contradictions. These qualities make theories in social science and educational research context-bound.

## **Learner-centered Learning**

The metamorphosis of the realm of education, witnessed over the past years, did not flip the roles of both teachers and learners only, but it redefined the very mechanisms of teaching practices, touching namely on the construction of knowledge in the classroom, the rapport between the two main agents, metacognition, collaborative learning and assessment. The discussed shift gave birth to a learner-centered learning. Barr & Tagg (1995) elucidate the nature of the new paradigm as they contrast between an instruction paradigm and a learning paradigm. While the former depicts the process of transferring knowledge to the students, the latter alludes to learners' discovery and construction of their knowledge.

## ***Distinguishing Features of Learner-centered Learning***

The new paradigm of learning and teaching- which initiated a shift at multiple levels- displays certain features that distinguish it from previous approaches to English language teaching. Johnson

et al. (1991) stress the fact that this metamorphosis has altered cardinal aspects of the whole process of learning such as the very concept of knowledge, aims of learning and pedagogical relationships. These traits mainly relate to knowledge construction, creativity, metacognition, collaborative work, the rapport that brings both the teacher and the learners together, and authentic assessment frameworks, to boot.

To begin with, the new paradigm stressed the significance of knowledge development, but at the same time, redefined the route teachers and learners were accustomed to take when chasing it. The perspective, adapted to knowledge, sanctifies learners' prior knowledge and its essence in organizing and representing new information (Murphy & Alexander, 2000). Most importantly, the fabric of classroom knowledge is no longer solely owned by the teacher as its provider and controller. On the contrary, learners have become co-creators and discoverers of knowledge in the learning environment. As such; the purpose of education, which in its turn embraced a certain metamorphosis, shifted to developing students' competencies (McCombs & Whistler, 1997).

The constructivist perspective, adopted by a learner-centered approach, emphasises the co-construction of knowledge within a social group (s) and along collaboration mechanisms. In relation to this, classrooms constitute a social environment where every learner may contribute to the fabric of knowledge. Thus, the discussed approach downplays the sole reliance on lecturing, which is believed to disregard the social essence of learning, and as such supports collaboration which provides learners the opportunity to learn from classmates, and most importantly, to acquire certain skills necessary for outside classroom settings, too.

A learner-centered approach underscores learners' autonomy since it stresses the importance of metacognitive skills along the learning processes. This practice of self-reflection is believed to create a learning setting that fosters learners' taking responsibility over their learning. By the same token, the afore-mentioned dexterity would allow learners to monitor their learning process (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2008). Within this cognitive vista, the success of a learner may be measured in relation to certain features such as learners' engagement in their learning activity, the ability to manage thinking processes, interrogating learning practices, and most importantly, to attain a stage of responsible learners (Lambert & McCombs, 2000).

Another salient feature of a learner-centered approach relates to the rapport that brings both the teacher and the learners together in English language classes. Relationship building is highly advantageous since it develops among the involved agents the sense of cooperation, teamwork and many other pedagogical boons. By contrast, within a teacher-centered approach, the two main pedagogical agents used to occupy distinguished roles. The former being the controller of the classroom and the latter being the recipient of knowledge. The distance between the teacher and the learner had been among the criteria of conventional understandings of quality teaching. However, within the current paradigm, the rapport had been redefined. In today's settings, the learner is the partner of the teacher. This flexibility would allow the teacher to develop an understanding about learners' characteristics that enable them to manage an effective instruction. Most importantly, this sociable fluidity would give the learners a say in classroom decision making.

Due to the significance of assessment in any learning process, it has accompanied many approaches to teaching English as a foreign language. However, within the discussed pedagogical vista, authenticity has been the most distinguishing factor. To shift away from paper and pencil exams, this trait merges along classroom activities to generate learners' motivation and engagement (National Research Council, 1999). Authenticity is believed to be clearly identified along performance assessment, a practice processed along certain activities, which stress learners' demonstration of certain performance skills along pre-determined quality standards. The targeted assessment may achieve effectiveness along teachers' continuous search for ways of designing meaningful assessment frameworks.

### Methodological Framework

This study had been motivated by the author's modest experience of teaching English at the University of Mostaganem, an experience that is continuously open to improvement and enhancement. By means of discussing teaching practices with colleagues, certain pedagogical anomalies had been identified. The main one being that teaching practices are- most of the time more informed by teachers' experiences in teaching the language (common sense) than by theoretically solid foundations. The outcome of this- the rationale of the study- being teachers misunderstanding certain pedagogical concepts – in this case a learner-centered approach and, most importantly, random teaching practices along the shadow of a teacher-centered approach.

### The Study Sample

The participants of this study were twenty teachers of English from the University of Mostaganem (Department of English). The teachers involved both sexes (males and females) and represented varied age categories. These participants had different teaching experiences (7-22 years of service). Their specialties were also varied including civilization, didactics literature, and psychology, among other fields. The table 1 showcases the sample of this study:

**Table 1. The study sample**

Gender	
18 females	2 males
Age	
25-30 (years old)	30-40 (years old)
7	13
Teaching experience	
5-10 years	10-20 years
5	15
Specialty	
Literature	3
Civilization	3
Educational psychology	6
Phonetics	2
Linguistics	3
Didactics	3

**Teachers' Questionnaire**

The conducted study referred to a detailed questionnaire administered to the teachers. This methodological instrument had been designed on the basis of extensive readings in relation to the main qualities of a learner-centered approach. It embraced different sections, each one aiming at covering a particular aspect of the educational theory being debated. These sections comprised some open-ended questions whose purpose was to gather qualitative data. They also included statements which can be approved or falsified, a means that allowed the researcher to gauge certain understandings and misconceptions of pedagogical practices.

**Section One: Teachers' Attitudes towards Education Theories and Teaching Practices*****The Rapport between Theory and Practice***

The first section of the questionnaire aimed at exploring teachers' attitudes towards theories and their significance in relation to their teaching practices, with the focus being on the theoretical foundations of a learner-centered learning. The first question administered to the interviewed teachers related to the significance of theory for teaching practices. The results are displayed in table 2:

**Table 2. Teachers' attitudes about the significance of theory for teaching practices**

Statements	Percentage
The superiority of practice over theory	10%
The importance of theories in teaching practices	90%
Supporting teaching practices along theoretical frameworks	80%

The minority of the teachers (10%) argued for the superiority of practice over theory made it clear in the ensuing comment: *'It (practice) is more effective than learning more about the theory'*. Most of the teachers (90%) claimed the cardinal role theories play in the teaching processes. They acknowledged the fact that their teaching practices had been being influenced by theoretical frameworks. The minority of them (20%) suggested that they did not support their teaching practices along theoretical frameworks. *'How would you describe a teaching practice which is not theoretically founded?'* To this question, they provided the following statements: *'fruitless and unproductive; not that effective, poor; it is simply intuitive and not sound, impulsive not in the norm'*.

***Locating Teachers' Teaching Practices within a Paradigm***

The next open ended question aimed at knowing whether or not teachers of English are aware of the paradigm shift that the educational landscape has adopted in recent years. The question was the following: *What is the difference between the bygone paradigm of learning/teaching and the actual one?* The results are displayed in table 3:

**Table 3. Teachers' awareness about paradigm shift**

Statements	Percentage
Knowledge about the past and new paradigm of learning/teaching.	40%
Disregarding the shift of roles of teachers and learners	30%
Close understandings of learner-centered learning	20 %

A good percentage of teachers (40%) claimed they had no idea about the past and new paradigm of learning/teaching. However, some teachers (30%) alluded to the teacher-centered paradigm and sidestepped the shift which altered the roles of both teachers and learners in the classroom and underlined the use of technology and ICTs in today's teaching practices. This view is echoed in the following statement: *'Learning process is still the same as that of the preceding years. Teachers and learners follow a standard syllabus; use written texts to evaluate, etc. The only change is the use of technology which makes a shift from a traditional way of teaching / learning to an active one.* The minority of teachers (20%) provided answers closely related to the learner-centered learning paradigm. A teacher stated: *'The teacher was the source of knowledge and learners were receivers. In the actual one teacher should be a facilitator, he orients learners who should be partners in the process.*

### **Teachers' Understandings of the Theoretical Foundations of Learner-centered Approach**

The following question targeted teachers' understandings and knowledge about the definition and nature of learner-centered learning. The purpose of the researcher was to see whether or not teachers of English were knowledgeable about the main features which distinguish this approach from the bygone paradigm. Before dealing with teachers' responses, the ensuing characteristics of a learner-centered learning, advanced by The European Student Union, had been taken as the backdrop against which teachers' answers had been tested.

- It relates to a constructivist paradigm;
- It promotes learning via communicative practices;
- It considers learners as active participants in learning process;
- It develops transferable skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking and reflective thinking. (Time for a New Paradigm in Education, n.d.)

The majority of the interviewed teachers (80%) argued they were familiar with a learner-centered approach. However, by means of contrasting the above mentioned definition with those of the teachers, it becomes clear that their understandings tend to miss many salient features such as its constructivist perspective, innovation, developing skills, and fostering reflection. A teacher claimed: *'It improves participation, and provides opportunity to collaborative learning'*. Another teacher added: *'The learner takes an active role in the learning processes.*

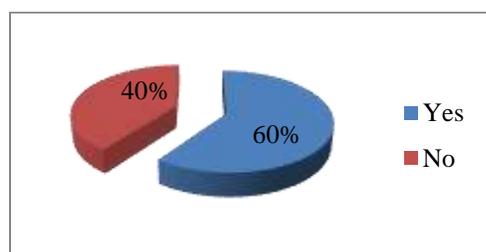
### **Teachers' Knowledge about Constructivism**

The very fact that a learner-centered learning is grounded on different social and cultural variables,

makes developing an accurate understanding of constructivism necessary. Since this would allow teachers to fully grasp the different features that accompany the learning process which transcend a mere direct and rigid rapport between the teacher and the learner. The question directed to the teachers was: *'What do you know about constructivism and its importance for learning?'* To decipher whether or not teachers of English were aware of the nature of the targeted theory and its significance for learning, the following features of constructivism advanced by Piaget & Vygotsky had been taken into account:

- It designates a learning process that seeks the construction of knowledge along various contexts;
- it argues that personal experiences constructs one's knowledge ;
- it enables the learners to negotiate and the generate hypotheses all along the process of knowledge construction;
- it underscores the significance of past experiences in knowledge construction ( cited in Ertmer & Newby, 1993)

The results of generated from the question administered to the teachers are mentioned in the graph below:



**Figure 1. Teachers' understandings of constructivism**

Most of the interviewed teachers (60%) suggested they had no idea about what constructivism was. As mentioned in the quote, constructivism stresses the active aspect of learning, the significance of context in relation to constructing knowledge, and most importantly personal experiences and the various ways they shape the whole learning process. As opposed to this covering understanding, a considerable percentage of teachers' (40%) responses identified certain features and sidestepped others. A teacher advanced the following feedback: *'It is a theory based mostly on observation constructing and co-constructing meaning i.e. learning is to construct knowledge by experience. Another teacher argued: 'Constructivism is that knowledge must be constructed by the learner. He must be active and construct his own learning within a suitable environment created by the teacher'.*

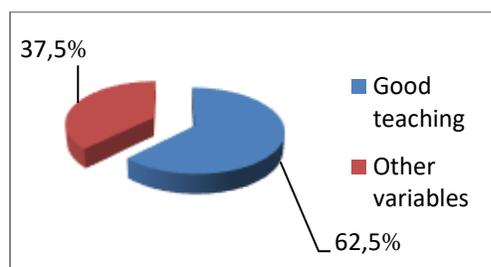
## **Section Two: Teachers' Application of Learner-centered Approach in their Classroom Practices**

The second section aimed at exploring whether or not teachers of English at the University of Mostaganem developed awareness about the main founding factors that scaffold the targeted learner-centered paradigm and the extent to which they had been reflected in their actual teaching practices. These features are briefly reviewed as follows: co-construction of knowledge in the classroom, metacognitive skills, teacher-learners' relationship, collaborative learning and

authentic and meaningful assessment frameworks.

### ***Co-construction of Knowledge***

This part comprised a set of diverse statements whose main purpose was to identify certain ambiguities in relation to how teachers perceived the construction of knowledge in EFL classrooms. Being aware of the mechanism of knowledge co-construction necessitated a cognizance of the fallacy that the traditional approach of teaching sanctified. It states that '*learning is automatic, inevitable outcome of good teaching.*' Most of the interviewed teachers (62, 5%) supported the statement arguing that effective teaching relies on how good the teacher was. The graph below elucidates the point:



**Figure 2. Learning and the traditional teaching fallacy**

By contrast, the current paradigm highlights the fact that learners are no longer empty vessels and that dealing with them as doers becomes cardinal for the making of knowledge. Table 4 identifies teachers' attitudes towards co-construction in the classroom:

**Table 4. Teachers' attitudes about co-construction of knowledge**

Statements	Percentage
Learners as active agents	75%
Learners as listeners	12,50%
Learners' prior knowledge	75%
Learners as co-creators of knowledge	87,50%

In relation to this, a great majority of teachers (75%) underscored the active roles of their learners in the classroom. Only the minority of them (12, 50%) claimed learners to be listeners. Taking learners' prior knowledge is important when it comes to developing a shared knowledge and understanding in the classroom. Most of the teachers (75%) acknowledged the importance of doing so and provided the following feedback: *The learners' prior knowledge can help in the process of teaching and learning.* 'My learners are co-creators (co-construct) in the learning process' had been the statement which clearly showcased teachers' awareness of the contribution learners make in the classroom. Most of the teachers (87, 50%) agreed they considered the learners as co-creators of knowledge and suggested the ensuing ideas: *They come prepared, contribute to the debate, and sometimes raise new issues; when they collaborate or given the opportunity to interact they are so*'.

**Metacognitive Skills**

Developing learners' metacognition is said to be a distinctive feature of a learner-centered approach. However, the application of such skill would be ineffective given the fact that teachers are not aware of what its meaning and its scope are. Table 5 displays teachers' understandings of metacognition:

**Table 5. Teachers' understandings of metacognition**

Statements	Percentage
Cursory understandings of metacognition	50%
Showing its importance to the learners	87%
Developing learners' capacities to control and to monitor their learning practices	75%

The interviewed teachers had been asked to define the concept of metacognition. While (50%) of them provided cursory understandings of it, the rest of the teachers (50%) claimed they had no idea. The former category provided the following understandings: *'Thinking about thinking; think (the process of thinking); rethinking the way you think'*. An awareness of the significance of metacognition can be boosted along developing learners' cognizance of it. Most of the teachers (87%) argued they showed their learners the importance of metacognition and taught it to them by means of providing learners with opportunities to reflect on their thoughts, behaviour, and how to think about their own thinking. The teachers suggested the following ideas: *'Sometimes, this shows learning is easy and simple while it seems not as such according to them ; through thinking they will become masters of their minds and learn how to make sense and choices'*. Developing learners' capacities to control and to monitor their learning practices would undeniably foment the targeted skill. In here also, a great majority of the teachers (75%) claimed they do so due to the following reasons: *'this leads to creativity to avoid imitation; it allows them to have and independent thinking'*. By the same token, controlling their learning would enhance their learning process at different planes. This control over learning, teachers believe *'... will lead them (learners) to become more active; this develops self-confidence'*.

**Teacher-learners' Rapport**

The traditional English language classes, it is important to note, had been featured by a rigid relationship between the two main pedagogical agents: teachers and learners. The hierarchical rapport established a visible distance between them in relation to certain duties and rights. The current learner-centered paradigm, however, substituted this for a more flexible rapport whereby teachers and learners have become partners. The features of the rapport between teachers and learners are showcased in table 6:

**Table 6. Teacher-learners' rapport**

Statements	Percentage
Learners as companions	62%
Involving learners in decision making	50 %
Helping learners to become responsible for the learning	62,50%

The first statement investigated the debated issue as it stated: *'I see my students as companions'*.

To this, most of the teachers (62%) agreed they supported, while the minority either disagreed or suggested that teachers should not consider learners as companions in every class. This peaceful rapport can be strengthened as learners are being involved in the process of decision making in the classroom, a view (50 %) of the teachers positively reacted to. They provided the following reasons why it was important to do so: ‘*This is necessary for the students who should think about how and what they learn; this encourages the learner to participate and show interest; this encourages them to hold control over their learning and learning more.* Under the same line of thought, most of the interviewed teachers (62, 50%) claimed they helped their learners to become responsible for their own learning. This, according to them, would allow them to ‘*to be autonomous learners by doing research.*’

### ***Collaborative Learning***

Learning is not a mere pedagogical practice, but it also entails certain social skills that enable the learners to acquire knowledge and to develop their sense of social being. This social dimension can be achieved by means of collaboration between the learners and the teacher. Teachers’ perceptions about collaborative learning are displayed in table 7:

**Table 7. Collaborative learning**

Statements	Percentage
People are social and the brain grows in a social environment	50%
Collaboration in the classroom	75%
Encouraging collaborative learning in the classroom	87, 50%

The first two statements targeted this aspect of language learning. ‘*People are social and the brain grows in a social environment*’, was the statement that (50%) of the teachers approved while and (50%) of them saw it as one among many aspects of learning. Teachers provided the following feedback: ‘*Things whose understanding is not possible through lectures can be clear from friends, Facebook groups, movies ; we evolve according the environment we live in ; students learn through collaborating and interacting with others*’. In fact, collaboration in the classroom tends to develop new meanings along social interaction, the idea that most of the teachers (75%) embraced and made clear along these ideas : ‘*acts of communication give new insights, ideas are exchanged mistakes are corrected and learning is likely to get enhanced ; new data may be acquired through interaction.* This awareness of the significance of collaborative learning made teachers use other strategies of teaching rather than an utter reliance on monotonous lecturing processes. Most of the teachers (87, 50%) encouraged collaborative learning in the classroom since, teachers argued, ‘*this encourages teamwork; it pushes students to become competitive and active and learn from each other*’.

### ***Authentic Assessment Frameworks***

In addition to the before-mentioned factors which characterise a learner-centered approach and which clearly distinguish it from traditional teacher-centered teaching paradigms, authentic assessment plays a cardinal role as to how learners’ performances are being tested. It is important to note that such type of assessment is reinforced along designing activities that generate learners’

authenticity, using performance frameworks to assess learners' academic achievements, the use of different real world assessment tools, and most importantly, a continuous search for novel ways of authentic and befitting assessment mechanisms. Table 8 identifies teachers' use of authentic assessment frameworks in classrooms:

**Table 8. Teachers' use of authentic assessment tools in classroom**

Statements	Percentage
I rely on paper and pencil tests	75%
to engage students in activities that result in authentic and challenging applications	62, 50%
As to the use of a combination of real -world assessment tools	37, 50%
performance assessment,	62, 50%
The active search for new ways of assessment,	37, 50%

To explore this part, the interviewed teachers had been asked to respond to the following statement peculiar to traditional assessment frameworks. It goes as follows *'I rely on paper and pencil tests'*. The data collection and analysis revealed that most of the teachers (75%) are imprisoned in the shadow of the traditional assessment landscape where paper and pen tests are relied on. Paradoxically, most of the teachers (62, 50%) are likely to engage students in activities that result in authentic and challenging applications. Teachers provided the following incentives: *'since this set them to real work; this encourages and motivates them, help them think and produce.* As to the use of a combination of real -world assessment tools, many teachers (37, 50%) tend to refer to but very often. A teacher commented: *'I apply it a lot in oral classes, simulation; this depends on the learners' level.* The minority (12, 50%) suggested they did not. In relation to the use of performance assessment, most of the teachers (62, 50%) claimed they used such type of assessment since *'it supports students to collaborate; the motivation to learn will increase; because performance shows the result of learning.* The active search for new ways of assessment, many teachers believe (37, 50%) is important. Despite this fact, some other teachers (25%) claimed they keep to certain assessment frameworks, they believed, they mastered.

## Discussion

The two sections of the study (theory and practice) had the aim of exploring teachers' awareness of the theoretical foundations of a learner-centered approach and their undeniable influence as to actual classroom teaching practices. The first section revealed that teachers of English at the University of Mostaganem recognize the significance of theory in relation to their teaching practices. However and paradoxically, they tend to be unfamiliar with a learner-centered approach since the understandings they provided miss certain salient features such as its constructivist perspective, innovation, developing skills, and fostering reflection. Under the same line of thought, most of the teachers were unable to identify the current teaching-learning paradigm and to contrast it with the bygone one. Under the same line of thought, most of the interviewed teachers are likely to misunderstand the very constructivist foundations of a learner-centered approach.

The second sections that shed light on teachers' actual teaching practices explored whether or not the afore-mentioned misconceptions influenced the very instructive practices. Most of the teachers tend to adhere to the traditional pedagogical fallacy that states that good teaching depends

how good the teaching practice is! By contrast, they supported the co-construction of knowledge in their classes. Among the salient features of the targeted approach and to which most of the teachers tend to develop a cursory understandings, in other cases have no idea about, is metacognition and the cardinal role it plays in developing learners' autonomy. The rapport teachers develop towards their learners is favorable for engaging learner-centered classes, a rapport that considers learners as companions. Collaborative learning accompanies teachers' practices due to the boons, most of the teachers acknowledge, it develops. Nevertheless, authentic assessment that distinguishes the current paradigm from the teacher-centered approach seems to be mingled with certain traditional teaching practices whereby paper and pen tests are relied on.

### Recommendations

The study has clearly shown that learner-centered approach and its use in higher education (University of Mostaganem) represents a pedagogical case whereby various shortcomings may be identified. These shortcomings mainly relate to the lack of solid theoretical backgrounds and common sense practices of teaching that stem from experience of teaching. Therefore, the study puts the following recommendations forward so as boost an effective use of the targeted approach:

- Teachers need to be aware of the distinctive features of both teacher-centered and learner-centered approaches.
- Theoretical foundations of approaches should occupy a significant locus as to teaching practices.
- Teaching experiences should be supported by theoretical backgrounds.
- Cursory understandings need to be avoided.
- Teachers need to develop background knowledge about past teaching approaches and to be aware of paradigm shifts.
- They need to develop a deep (concise) understanding of learner-centered approach.
- A readiness to embrace change and to challenge beliefs should be generated.
- Teachers should develop their understandings about the constructivist backgrounds of student-centered learning.
- They should develop deep understandings about metacognitive skills and apply them.
- Teachers should adopt authentic assessment frameworks.

### Conclusion

An effective application of a learner-centered approach necessitates teachers' awareness of its theoretical foundations and the main features which distinguish it from a teacher-centered paradigm. The study proved this interplay as it showed certain conceptual confusions teachers of English at the University of Mostaganem develop in relation to the very meaning of the debated approach. A clear understanding would undoubtedly enhance teachers' teaching practices and their learners' classroom performances as well. The study underscored the significance of two main features which teachers tend to be unfamiliar with and that would boost the whole learning process. Developing learners' cognitive skills would generate a sense of autonomous learning whereby learners acquire the skill of self-assessment of the learning processes. Most importantly, authentic assessment requires teachers' attention and focus since it enables the learners to engage in the real world as opposed to traditional ways of assessment that are limited to a rigid instrumental motivation.

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