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# Helping learners adapt to unfamiliar methods

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## Abstract

Learners in contemporary programmes of English as a Second Language (ESL) often encounter a wide variety of strange and wonderful new classroom methods and procedures. Today, perhaps more than ever, we encourage them to develop more personal responsibility and show more

personal initiative in their second-language learning process, by carrying out tasks in independent pairs and small groups. Realizing the importance of relevant and meaningful content, we strive to personalize their lessons in some way. In order to lower defensive barriers, we try to build an informal, stress-free environment where minds are free to acquire.

Although much of the new research suggests the value and efficacy of highly active, independent group work, self-investment, personal involvement, and informality in the second-language classroom, students' needs, preferences, learning styles, and educational backgrounds do differ widely, and some may have other perceptions of this new teaching/learning milieu, and may respond in unproductive ways. This article discusses various student reactions to the activities we so carefully and thoughtfully plan as language teachers, and offers suggestions on how to avoid or deal with negativity or resistance on their part.'

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