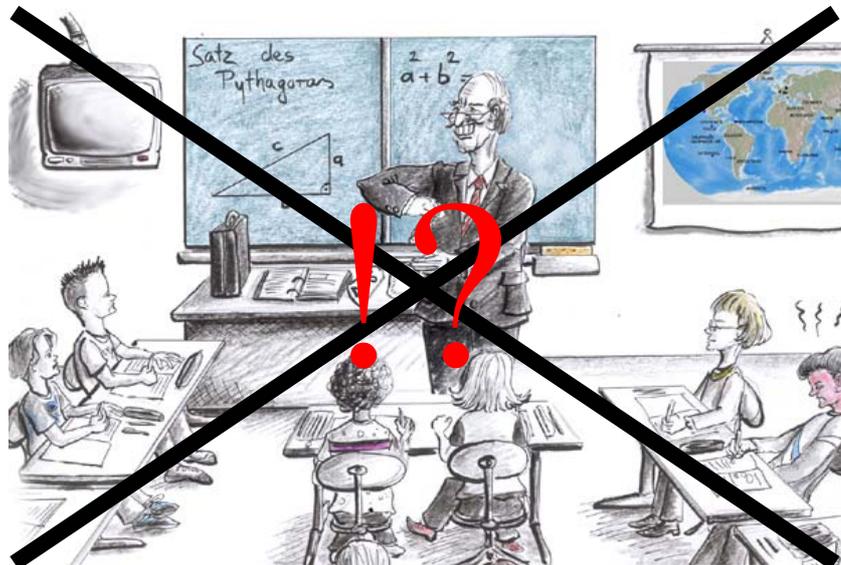


Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster  
Englisches Seminar  
Seminar: Learner centred approaches  
Dozent: Prof. Dr. Legenhausen  
Wintersemester 2005/2006

# *Lernen durch Lehren (LdL)* in theory and practice



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### Appendix I

### Appendix II

# 1 Introduction

As early as 2000 years ago, the Roman philosopher *Seneca* wrote: “Docendo discimus”- We learn by teaching. Hence, teaching methods based on forms of peer tutoring are not new. In Germany the term peer tutoring is closely connected with the name *Jean-Pol Martin*. In the early 1980s Professor *Martin*, who teaches at the *University of Eichstätt* in Bavaria and at a German *Gymnasium*, developed a specific variant of peer tutoring called *Lernen durch Lehren* (LdL) – Learning by teaching. He successfully employed LdL in several of his classes teaching French and has tried to optimise and to spread his idea ever since.

This paper will take a close look at LdL from two different perspectives, a theoretical and a practical point of view. Chapter 2 will give a brief introduction to the teaching method by *Jean-Pol Martin*. After explaining how this method works the *network of contacts* will be presented as a means to disseminate the idea and to stay in touch with teachers supporting LdL. Chapter 3 tries to answer the question why it is time to look for new teaching methods. Analysing the demands of a new German syllabus it will be seen how far LdL meets the requirements of our time and can thus be legitimised. But our major focus will be on experiences of teachers who use LdL in their classrooms. In order to receive reports of practical application, we set up a questionnaire dealing with the advantages and, which is more important, the alleged difficulties. These questionnaires were distributed to more than 90 teachers from all over Germany. In view of this fact, the total of only 15 returned answers might appear disappointing. The results, however, provide interesting insights into practice and will constitute chapter 4. The pros and cons of LdL have also been elaborated on within the seminar “learner centred approaches” at university. Chapter 5 combines the students’ expectations, theories and doubts with the teachers’ experiences. It remains to be seen if especially the supposed disadvantages turn out to be as problematic in reality. The appendix will provide complete lists of the pros and cons mentioned by students and teachers.

This paper does not claim to represent the common attitude towards this method among teachers. It merely shows that despite all the criticism, there are teachers who succeed in following an alternative path to teaching.

Before starting the analysis, we would like to thank the teachers for their contribution to our questions. Very special thanks go to Professor Dr. *Jean-Pol Martin* for his kind cooperation in helping us to contact teachers employing the method.

## **2 What is *Lernen durch Lehren* (LdL)?**

“Tell me and I will forget. Show me and I will remember. Let me do it myself and I will understand.” This famous saying might have inspired Prof. Dr. *Jean-Pol Martin* to develop his teaching method *Lernen durch Lehren* - learning by teaching in the early 1980s.

This chapter will give a general survey of LdL focussing on the way this method works and how this idea has spread among teachers and researchers.

### **2.1 How does LdL work?**

The basic idea of the learner centred teaching method is that some traditional functions of the teacher are assigned to the pupils who are asked to teach the new content to their classmates by themselves. Thus, “they themselves are responsible for the quality” (*Skinner*, 1994, p. 38) of their lessons.

Preparing a new sequence, the teacher begins dividing the content that is supposed to be taught according to the syllabus into small units. These units are allocated to groups of two or three pupils that have to be formed in the first lesson. The pupils are given the task to prepare a complete lesson teaching the unit to their fellows.

The groups’ preparation immediately starts in class. As a first step they have to collect material which either has to be made available by the teacher or can be taken from the course book. Moreover, they are urged to look for further authentic material. Secondly, the pupils have to set goals for their presentation and didacticize the material according to their own needs. Since the pupils are not asked to turn the traditional teacher-fronted lesson into a tutor-fronted counterpart, they have to search for varying methods with a view to promoting motivation and catching the attention of their classmates. Additionally, they have to make sure that everyone is able to follow their presentation and understand the information given. This task can be fulfilled by inserting questions, preparing task sheets and activities or letting

someone summarize certain points. This, by the way, is the vital point distinguishing LdL from the German *Referat*.

After about two lessons the content for the weeks to come is prepared and it is time for the presentations to begin.

This method creates new relationships inside the classroom and it also forces the teacher to revise his role (cf. *Martin*, 1996, p.80). He is no longer in complete control of the single lessons. The function of a facilitator who provides material, answers questions and gives advice about methods or activities is now assigned to the teacher. During the presentation of a group he has to stay in the background. He only intervenes if communication between the tutors and their peers is endangered and if problems, misunderstandings or errors occur. The teacher also has to collect all the task sheets and homework as it remains his task to evaluate not only the presentations but also the learning progresses of the entire class.

Professor *Martin* claims that his method can be applied to all subjects and all grades of any kind of school within the German school system (cf. *Martin*, 2002, p.6). Furthermore, LdL can be employed at university or in areas of the education of adults.

The benefits and difficulties of this teaching method will be discussed in chapter 5.

## **2.2 The dissemination of LdL**

Although the concept of LdL is more than 20 years old, the method is still unknown to many teachers. Limited space has been given to the notion of LdL in didactics and very few articles appear in magazines.

Professor *Martin*, instead, has found his own way to spread his idea. Apart from two books (*Martin*, 1985, 1994) that introduce LdL and provide studies on the practical use of this method he has designed a website (<http://www.ldl.de>) where the latest articles, films, interviews, materials and other information can be found. To enable all teachers interested in LdL to communicate interactively he founded a *network of contacts* (<http://www.zum.de/Foren/ldl>). All members receive didactic letters that contain material, advice as well as the latest research findings. Today, more than a thousand teachers from all over the world engage in discussions on that platform.

Additionally, Professor *Martin* still uses the traditional ways of spreading his method by presenting it at teacher training seminars, conferences or interviews on television, which are still very effective as the experiences of chapter 4 will prove.

### **3 The German school system in need of a new method**

In Germany more and more attention has been drawn to the system of education at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Public opinion as well as many parents and politicians believe in a lack of efficiency within the German school system for German pupils do not meet European standards as international comparison studies like the *Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)* have proved. As a consequence, researchers, teachers and officials tried to define new goals for educational processes which had to be laid down in a new syllabus to guarantee implementation. New educational goals are always influenced by the predominant theories of a time. Holistic learning, learner centeredness, constructivist ideas and the communicative approach (cf. *Piepho*, 1979) have been prominent terms in second language acquisition (SLA) research throughout the last decades. As early as 1996, *Jean-Pol Martin* claimed that his “approach meets the essential requirements [especially] of foreign language teaching, requirements which have been demanded for more than a decade” (*Martin*, 1996, p. 70). This chapter will analyse in how far LdL already incorporates the goals of a modern syllabus.

#### **3.1 The realization of new goals in a syllabus**

The syllabus of the *Realschule* in Bavaria (*ISB*, 2001), which was introduced in 2001, is a good example of a different way of looking at the educational process as it explicitly states learning objectives that are different from the traditional, mostly cognitive goals. The following objectives are mentioned (*ISB*, 2001, pp. 14-18):

- The quality learning is to be regarded as more important than the quantity of topics. Teachers have to make sure that their pupils really understand what they are learning and why, instead of superficially lining up single bits of information.

- The pupils shall develop soft skills which are necessary not only for learning at school but also for private life as well as future professions. Among others, skills like reliability, punctuality, flexibility, creativity and independence are mentioned. “Die dafür erforderlichen Lernprozesse werden durch einen Unterricht ermöglicht, der ein Höchstmaß an Selbständigkeit und Eigentätigkeit der Schüler beim Lernen fördert sowie von ihnen Eigenständigkeit und Kreativität bei den Lösungen verlangt und angemessen honoriert“ (*ISB*, 2001, p. 15).
- The pupils are expected to learn how to learn, which means that they have to be made aware of processes and activities leading to a build-up of knowledge and capacities.
- Since working in teams continually gains importance, the pupils have to get used to group work in order to learn that sharing capacities may be more effective and may lead to improved results.
- Pupils are requested to learn to take over responsibility for themselves as well as for the community.
- Pupils have to improve their communicative competence since communication is the very centre of social life and a basic prerequisite for participation. Future professions increasingly demand the ability to communicate in foreign languages, which is an important factor especially with regards to foreign language teaching (FLT).
- Teaching has to be learner centred (content & methods) and challenging tasks should be assigned to pupils wherever possible.

The Bavarian syllabus does not suggest a certain teaching method in order to achieve these goals. It leaves this issue up to the individual school and teacher. Reading between the lines, however, it slightly criticizes the traditional teacher-fronted method of direct instruction which is based on the pupils' receptive absorption of carefully didacticized and pre-structured knowledge.

### **3.2 Syllabus goals as inherent parts of LdL**

The Bavarian syllabus goals set a framework for schools and teachers. This is the basis for them to identify a method they believe to be suitable. In this context

learning by teaching may appear a real alternative to teacher-fronted lessons as it makes successful teaching dependent on the achievement of these goals.

Obviously, LdL is a learner centred approach since the pupils themselves plan and carry out the teaching within the curriculum guidelines. Thus they take over responsibility not only for themselves but also for the quality and efficiency of the learning process of the whole class. There is no other possibility of assigning more responsibility to the pupils (cf. *Martin*, 2002, p.7).

The use of teamwork in LdL can be looked at from different angles. On the one hand the pupils learn how to behave as a part of a group working on the same project. From this, they realize that the development of soft skills is absolutely necessary in order to finish a project successfully. Here LdL provides a form of social learning. On the other hand, LdL on a larger scale proves that the division of work can be much more effective than working all alone. Preparing just one unit instead of a complete topic and profiting from the good presentations of other teams means saving a great amount of time.

Moreover, LdL positively affects the quality of learning. Being expected to deliver a professional presentation, the pupils have to deal with the content more intensively. Compared to teacher-fronted lessons which require little preparation pupils have to invest more time beforehand to work out and understand backgrounds, relationships and single details in order to teach their classmates as experts. They must be able to comprehensibly answer questions and react to occurring problems. In this context, learning to learn is very important. The groups must first analyse their own learning process. Their personal experiences will then help them to imagine how their fellows will create coherently structured knowledge out of their presentation. Additionally, knowledge about learning facilitates the anticipation of errors and comprehension problems, which provides the opportunity to adapt the methods adequately.

LdL, which was originally developed for FLT purposes, impressively achieves the goal of improving the communicative competence. It is a result of offering the chance to engage in authentic discourse. Pupils have a defined message that they want to get across. They feel the urgent need to express their thoughts, ideas and questions and do not find themselves in a fictitious “do-as-if” situation as in many “communicative” activities. Furthermore, *Jean-Pol Martin* has proved in his studies that up to 75% of the verbal expressions within a lesson come from the pupils (cf. *Martin*, 1985, pp. 216-219), which is a massive increase compared to the 25% of

traditional methods. After getting used to LdL the pupils seem to break through a barrier that prevents them from using the foreign language. Hence, most of them benefit from LdL as the active use of a language is regarded as one of the best ways to learn it. A third advantage concerning the communicative competence in FLT is the fact that this method raises awareness among pupils of how a foreign language is learned and taught (cf. *Legenhausen*, 1998, p.5). When a team has to present a grammar rule, its members must take a close look at the structure and patterns of the language. In addition, they must think of how to present this grammatical phenomenon in a logical way in order to maximize the learning effects.

To summarize, one can say that learning by teaching forces the pupils to approach the learning processes more actively. Compared to the traditional method of direct instruction, they have to make efforts to construct their own knowledge themselves and reflect on it. That makes LdL an alternative way of teaching that enhances all the requirements laid down in the syllabus.

## **4 Teacher's experiences with LdL**

This chapter presents the experiences of teachers successfully employing the LdL method. By means of a questionnaire we elicited data from members of the *network of contacts*. The number of returned questionnaires by teachers of all secondary school types comprises a total of 15.

### **4.1 The questionnaire**

Since there exists a variety of possible questions covering the manifold aspects of the method, we decided to concentrate on a selection of 19 questions that focus on the practical application of LdL in class. The questionnaire, however, does not claim to be representative, but rather provides a collection of authentic teacher's experiences.

**The teachers were asked to answer the following questions:**

1. Gender
2. Age
3. For how long have you taught your class/course according to LdL and how did you come across the method?
4. How often do you use this method in class?
5. In which grade and subject do you apply LdL?
6. Is there a grade (*Ober-, Mittel-, Unterstufe*) in which you think LdL is easier to apply? If so, give reasons.
7. Are there any differences between classes of the same grade?
8. Are there major differences within a class between the particular presentations? Are some presentations probably too demanding and thus incomprehensible for weaker learners?
9. How much time (per 45 minutes) approximately do you have to schedule within the lesson for resuming and revising the elaborated aspects?
10. Do you connect LdL with specific educational fields? (Only if you teach a language. E.g.: grammar, vocabulary, text presentation)
11. How did you introduce the method to your class/course?
12. Give a brief outline of your individual preparation for an LdL lesson and your reflection on it.
13. By which criteria do you evaluate the learners' presentations and their individual learning progresses?
14. How do the learners (especially rather introvert pupils) react to LdL?
15. How do colleagues react to the method?
16. To what extent can a connection of the learner centred approach with the strictly defined subject matters of the syllabus, especially in the *Oberstufe*, be successful?
17. Briefly comment on the following statement: "The learners do not come up with their own creative methods, but merely copy the familiar teacher's behaviour."
18. Briefly mention the advantages and disadvantages of LdL and state which seem most important to you.
19. Would you recommend this method to other colleagues?

## 4.2 Analysis of the answers

For purposes of clarity the results will be presented question by question.

### Question 1: Gender?

9 male and 6 female teachers returned the questionnaire. Conclusions that the masculine gender dominates the employment of LdL cannot be drawn. On the contrary, the *network of contacts* suggests that as many female teachers use it.

### Question 2: Age?

The teachers are aged between 30 and 59. Contrary to our expectations, the teachers performing this method do not belong to a certain generation. It appears that LdL is not a method which is mainly applied by a young and progressive generation of teachers, but rather provides a valuable alternative to classic methods of teaching.

### Question 3: For how long have you taught your class/course according to LdL and how did you come across the method?

The answers to this question reveal that most of the teachers have already been applying LdL for more than 5 years. While the younger ones have used it from the start of their professional career, some of their older colleagues had started LdL schemes more than 20 years ago. Thus, the quality of the answers to the questionnaire implies a rich pool of practical experiences by experts.

Most of the interviewed initially got in contact with LdL through *Jean-Pol Martin* himself, who regularly offers teacher training seminars for further education. A few of them have even been members of *Martin's* special working pool. Other teachers got to know LdL in talks with colleagues or at the *Referendariat*. Only one of those interviewed claimed to have learned about LdL at university. This is, however, obviously due to the fact that she studied at the *University of Eichstätt*. One teacher had developed a learning by teaching concept himself and only many years later had recognized that his private plan has already been turned into an “official” method.

Overall, the answers suggest the spread of LdL to be highly dependent on Professor *Martin*.

**Question 4: How often do you use this method in class?**

The frequency of application highly varies between teachers to. There is an “appliance scale” ranging from 40 hours per week and short sequences of 10 minutes per lesson to 5 times per term, 20 times per term, one whole term or always. The focus, however, lies on a constant application of this method, which partly results from the fact that mainly the teachers convinced of LdL have been interviewed. Nonetheless, these results also show that LdL is a method that can completely replace older concepts of teaching. Moreover, it is also possible to apply the method now and then as a variation to usual lesson processes.

**Question 5: In which grade and subject do you apply LdL?**

LdL is mainly used in classes of the lower grades, that is the *Unter-* and *Mittelstufe*. Most teachers prefer teaching LdL in the lower grades, especially in subjects such as languages (French, English, German, Spanish) and ethics. Less application of the method can be found in subjects such as mathematics, politics or geography. It might be more suitable to teach a language with LdL than other subjects since language teaching takes more space within the syllabuses than ethics, geography or politics for instance. Hence, the more time that is provided for a subject, the easier LdL can be employed. This fact shows that LdL is time consuming, a possible disadvantage of this method which will be discussed in more detail in chapter 5. Nonetheless, the majority of those interviewed found LdL to be a universally employable method, appropriate for any kind of subject as far as the contents are concerned.

**Question 6: Is there a grade (*Ober-, Mittel-, Unterstufe*) in which you think LdL is easier to apply? If so, give reasons.**

As mentioned above, LdL is particularly used in lower grades, a fact which is emphatically confirmed by question number 6. While three answers claimed it to be dependent on the individual class if LdL is effective or not, the teachers agreed in a total of 7 against 2 on LdL as being a method which is easier to apply in the *Unter-* and *Mittelstufe* than in the *Oberstufe*. Various reasons for supporting this opinion are given.

Younger learners are in general more motivated and interested in learning. They are inquisitive about knowledge while pupils in the upper grades usually show little excitement for it. Older learners are not accustomed to new methods as flexibly as

their younger counterparts. Furthermore, young learners are less inhibited than older pupils, hence a presentation in front of the class often seems to be as easy for them as for learners from the *Oberstufe*. This might be due to the natural development of a child as some teachers guessed. Another reason for LdL to be taught rather in the *Unter-* and *Mittelstufe*, is well-founded in the fact that young pupils begin to learn very early to be self-responsible and autonomous in organizing their own way of learning. In addition, they approach learning processes more flexibly while older learners, in contrast, tend to have difficulties in rearranging their learning strategies that they have already grown accustomed to during their first years of school attendance. Some teachers also stated that the procurement of materials for the LdL-lessons is much more difficult in the upper grades than in the *Unter-* and *Mittelstufe*. As LdL is a method where the learners do not get direct grades as in the classic types of teaching, older pupils often dislike this concept, since they want to know about their educational level with regard to their final exams. Furthermore, teachers have to inform older learners about the sense of a method, in this case of LdL, because the pupils do not self-evidently adopt a new method if they cannot make out a reason for changing their previous learning behaviour.

Only two interviewed persons explained that LdL is easier to apply in the *Oberstufe*, since the learners here are more self-employed in working, definite in dealing with methods and they are far sighted about the intended goals of a lesson.

**Question 7: Are there any differences between classes of the same grade?**

This question resulted in 13 teachers stating that there are remarkable differences between the quality and the results of different classes of the same grade and one teacher confirming that there are no differences to be found. Concerning LdL there are obviously the same distinguishing factors between the performances of the classes as there can be figured out in traditional teaching methods. Differences predominantly depend on the learning conditions as question 7 provides evidence for. The answers to this question allow two main explanations why there are divergences: the internal conditions of a class on the one hand and the external circumstances on the other hand. Internal conditions are those of motivation within a class-system, the social structure, social competence, teamwork ability, self-confidence, temper of the learners, reliability, intelligence of the pupils and the ability to deal with a certain quantity of work to be done. External factors are defined

by the atmosphere of the learning environment, for example the number of pupils the size of a classroom, its design, its lighting or its temperature.

As a consequence of these manifold variables and felicity conditions, many teachers made the experience that some classes perfectly adopt LdL, whereas other classes fully fail to deal with this method. It depends on the individual class.

**Question 8: Are there major differences within a class between the particular presentations? Are some presentations probably too demanding and thus incomprehensible for weaker learners?**

Differences of quality and demand between the single presentations within a class do exist according to most teachers. A disadvantage for weaker learners, resulting from the latter, however, cannot be affirmed by the majority of the interviewed.

Some teachers see a chance for weaker pupils to improve their learning results with LdL. Learners usually feel more comfortable asking peers than teachers questions. That offers them an opportunity to fill gaps in their knowledge. Moreover, one teacher explained that weaker learners are often more skilled in conveying contents (methodology) than good learners when it comes to performing a peer-fronted lesson.

Since LdL is mainly based on group work, good learners can adopt a supporting role for weaker pupils during the teamwork. In the end there is always the teacher who can improve and complement certain contents or formalities of a group work. He can also take control of the organization of groups and tasks to avoid difficulties, for he usually knows about the individual abilities of his pupils as well as the social structure of his class. Qualitative differences between the presentations are welcome, since they offer a variety of themes for discussion and thus, especially in a foreign language classroom, require the learners to use the language creatively, as one teacher stated.

In general, the interviewed persons agreed on the fact that the different performances of the learners in an LdL classroom might not necessarily be a disadvantage for less talented pupils but can even be a chance for them to improve.

**Question 9: How much time (per 45 minutes) approximately do you have to schedule within the lesson for resuming and revising the elaborated aspects?**

The answers to this question vary greatly. There are teachers who need between 0 and 20 minutes for revising the outcome of an LdL lesson, while others prepare and revise a lesson for one or half an hour. Of course, the amount of time that has to be invested depends on the quality of the individual presentation. The majority of interviewed persons, however, claimed that they need no time for revision in class, because the LdL lessons are sufficiently prepared and elaborated on before and during the teaching unit.

**Question 10: Do you connect LdL with specific educational fields? (Only if you teach a language. E.g.: grammar, vocabulary, text presentation)**

Half of the teachers answered question number 10 with a definite “no”. They do not connect LdL with certain learning fields. Accordingly, some other colleagues confirmed that they use LdL in learning fields such as grammar, text works and vocabulary training. Obviously, LdL is a method which suits every subject and is not necessarily bound to certain learning fields.

**Question 11: How did you introduce the method to your class/course?**

In the eleventh question the interviewed persons offer a variety of answers from which some general results can be drawn. Some teachers prefer to explicitly introduce the concept of LdL to the class and discuss the idea and the sense of this method, while others decide to integrate LdL step by step, without explaining it. Some of the teachers who initially introduced LdL according to the first variant started out by forming groups and immediately providing materials and tasks to elaborate on. They introduce LdL with the concept of “learning by doing”. The learners might get graphics, pictures or texts, for instance, which they have to discuss, evaluate and finally revise by means of different media (on the board, on the overhead projector, etc.) and different methods (presentation, role play, etc.). One teacher puts the focus on teaching the learners a large variety of methods as a basis for introducing LdL. Another way of applying LdL step by step is to give texts and vocabulary that the pupils start working on. Afterwards, it is the pupils’ task to briefly present their results. Thus, short sequences of LdL on a beginners level are created. Moreover, the learners are requested to correct their own mistakes and those

of peers. They shall take over the teacher's role with the intention of finally managing to complete a lesson on their own.

“Nach meiner Erfahrung können die Schüler innerhalb eines Jahres in die Lage gebracht werden, einen Großteil der Lehrfunktionen zu übernehmen und fast sämtliche tradierten Unterrichtsphasen mit einem hohen Grad an Selbständigkeit durchzuführen”(Martin, 1986, p. 399). The answers given by experienced teachers confirm this statement by *Jean-Pol Martin*.

**Question 12: Give a brief outline of your individual preparation for an LdL lesson and your reflection on it.**

Question twelve offers many individual concepts of preparing and revising an LdL lesson. However, some general patterns can be identified. The revision of an LdL lesson usually ends with a feedback, which is sometimes given by the teacher and sometimes also by the peers. Didactic advice for improvement of the learners' concepts and works, correction of mistakes, criticism, clearing up of gaps in the knowledge, evaluating the learners according to an evaluation scale, producing minutes and class-diaries, development of new 'theme-branches' and copying improved learners' concepts as well as task sheets and transparencies are the mentioned main tasks of the teacher to (sometimes with the help of the learners) successfully revise an LdL lesson. Furthermore, two interviewed teachers stated that talks and discussions during the lesson are also a type of revision. Hence, not much time has to be spent on revision after a lesson. This corresponds to question 9, where most of those interviewed confirmed that a major part of revision has already been completed during the lesson.

The preparation of an LdL sequence or teaching unit is much more time consuming, than its revision. Many aspects have to be taken into consideration when preparing the lesson. These are material procurement, talks in advance with the pupils for the choice of topics and materials, setting up a schedule, defining the expectations for the lessons, forming groups, improvement and rectifying of the learners' drafts and lesson outlines, teaching different methods in advance, developing tasks and questions and distributing plans for the year's subject matters. One teacher admits that preparation takes him many hours on a weekend.

It depends, however, on the individual commitment of each teacher, how long and intensively he or she has to plan an LdL lesson in advance.

**Question 13: By which criteria do you evaluate the learners' presentations and their individual learning progresses?**

This question provides another range of very different and individual answers. The progress of the students is generally measured by tests, repetitions, tasks off the cuff, homework and oral testing. LdL, in addition, offers the possibility to evaluate the efficiency of the lesson (has everybody understood everything), the quality of preparation (correctness of materials, well-structured documentations, knowledge of vocabulary) and the language-agility (conform to the learners' age). Furthermore, the question of whether the goal of a lesson has been achieved must be taken into account.

The teacher observes his pupils while performing or working in a group and hence can assess the learners' progresses. The following 3 points the criteria used to evaluate pupils' learning progresses:

- 1.) The pure knowledge of the pupils (level of knowledge)
- 2.) Their ability of transmitting knowledge (methodology)
- 3.) Their ability of fixing knowledge (reaching the lesson's goal, efficiency)

Presentations are assessed in three different ways. First of all the content is an important criterion to be considered. It is based on the presentation's content, the preparation of the presentation and the intelligibility of the subject matters to be conveyed. Additionally, the content will be checked on faultlessness. Secondly presentational aspects, such as the learners' behaviour and appearance during a presentation, their agility in using a foreign language (presuming it is a foreign language classroom) as well as different methods and their choice of materials and dealing with them, will be evaluated. One teacher summed up a list of her personal criteria to be considered for the assessment of pupils' presentation performances:

- Keeping eye-contact
- Planning of interactions with the class
- Creating relief for the peers
- Being friendly and polite
- Showing empathy
- Varying the intonation
- Gestures and mimics to support the conveyed information

- Taking over responsibility for the class and themselves
- Avoiding long pauses while speaking
- Having all materials and utensils ready

In addition, she refers to the website <http://aufbaukurs.intel-lehren.de> which provides further criteria for the evaluation of pupils' performances.

Moreover, some teachers lay great emphasis on the varying employment of media, such as power-point and the blackboard. They expect the learners to interact with the class and address their peers. Also the style of a performance and the pupils' ability to motivate their fellows with their presentation is an important aspect for evaluation. The assessment can be carried out both by the teacher and/or by the peers in a class-evaluation.

**Question 14: How do the learners (especially rather introvert pupils) react to LdL?**

Practical use shows that most pupils enjoy working with LdL and this is often mirrored by the results. Even outside the classroom pupils really spend a certain amount of time developing a professional presentation. If the peers as well as the teacher can profit from a good presentation they feel satisfied since they know that their increased motivation and their efforts have been appreciated.

Nevertheless, some pupils start groaning at the beginning of a new round of LdL for they already know that a lot of work lies ahead. Pupils who do not like this method would even call it an unreasonable demand. But this holds true for nearly every teaching method although one teacher clearly admits that negative reactions often result from insufficient preparation on the side of the teacher.

When introducing learning by teaching, quite an effort is required to stand in front of the class and talk. This unfamiliar situation simply has to be practised. Especially introvert pupils react differently. Some can only be persuaded to take over smaller passive activities like reading aloud or the correction of a text. Others, instead, begin to engage in more active parts. They learn that doing a presentation is not too difficult a task. But a teacher may run into great trouble if an introvert pupil reacts with strong fear of exposure. Since an atmosphere of fear has to be avoided at all events one teacher suggests that no pupil be forced to stand in front of a class. A teacher had better emphasize the chance for them to see how they react in such a

situation. Personal experiences have proved that, even if it takes more than a year, sooner or later all of them desire to find out and actively engage in presentations instead of fulfilling preparation tasks only. In such cases LdL requires a sensitive teacher who places these pupils in groups that will encourage them to join the presentation in front of the class.

All in all, pupils' reactions on LdL differ from one class to another and are dependent on its success. Though there is the danger of putting too much pressure on the pupils, teachers' experiences show that pupils predominantly react in a positive way.

### **Question 15: How do colleagues react to the method?**

Very different reactions among colleagues can be observed. Some teachers only experience two extreme positions where the colleagues either reject the method or are completely in favour of it. Others see their colleagues being curious on the one hand but also restrained and sceptical on the other hand.

A teacher who assists organizing seminars on LdL made the point that his colleagues did not show much interest in such an unconventional method. Older teachers in particular seem to ignore social, methodological as well as communicative learning objectives, which are great advantages of LdL, and focus on content knowledge only. These teachers are unable or unwilling to reduce their control of the teaching and to assign responsibility to their pupils. They often doubt that this teaching method can be used in all subjects and critically look at the time that has to be invested in advance.

“Pupils can indeed plan lessons themselves.” Running the risk of questioning the teacher's profession this claim has even led to hostile reactions among colleagues within the first 10 – 15 years of LdL, as one teacher answered. “So ein LdL-Lehrer gibt schließlich freiwillig nicht nur den kleinen Finger hin, sondern die ganze Hand! Das ist ja wohl unerhört! Obendrein machen die Schüler, wenn sie Stoff präsentieren viel zu viele Fehler – wo bleibt da das Lehrer-Vorbild? ”

Most invitations to sit in on LdL classes have been rejected by his colleagues and only a few *Referendare* took the chance to discover what this method is all about. Later, however, his colleagues asked questions on certain problems and it came out that they had tried out LdL secretly and revised their negative attitude.

What becomes obvious is the fact that major changes take a long time to enter the schools. Teachers have to be completely convinced of a method in order to adopt it and to defend it against severe criticism (cf. question 19). *Jean-Pol Martin's network of contacts* proves that some colleagues already have been convinced. “Wer *Jean-Pol Martin* einmal hat unterrichten sehen, wird sich der Begeisterung kaum entziehen können.”

**Question 16: To what extent can a connection of the learner centred approach with the strictly defined subject matters of the syllabus, especially in the *Oberstufe*, be successful?**

Opinions on whether a restrictive syllabus contradicts demands for more learner centeredness are diverging. The majority of teachers do not see a problem in combining these two points as their pupils deal with the relevant contents of the syllabus in a learner centred way by using LdL. Teachers of languages even claim that for them there are not too many restrictions and regularities. The syllabus explicitly calls for learner centred methods. By employing LdL pupils internalise the content. However, teachers admit that sometimes a traditional teaching method would probably lead to a deeper understanding. Furthermore, LdL is much more time consuming if pupils are not already used to it. Hence, minor topics of the syllabus have to be left out in turn. But many teachers hold the opinion that the question whether all topics of a year can be dealt with is much more dependent on the individual class than on the method in use.

One answer to this question opened a different view regarding an obligatory syllabus as a killer of creativity that does not leave any room for learner centeredness. Pupils who critically think about a suggestive syllabus would be preferred instead of simply letting them explain the given contents to their peers.

One colleague seems to tackle exactly this problem in a brilliant way. He begins a year with showing the syllabus to his pupils. Afterwards, he urges them to anonymously discuss the contents in a teacher-online-chatroom, which offers new perspectives on how to approach and interpret them. Thus, the pupils are actively integrated into the planning process and the alleged contradiction between a restrictive syllabus and learner centred teaching disappears.

**Question 17: Briefly comment on the following statement: “The learners do not come up with their own creative methods, but merely copy the familiar teacher’s behaviour.”**

The pupils simply copy the behaviour of the teacher. Most of the teachers believe that this view only holds true for the beginning of LdL. The teams often copy the question-and-answer pattern of a teacher-fronted lesson, especially if its members are not motivated and reject this teaching method.

But the majority claims that copying need not necessarily be a disadvantage for a good copy may as well lead to a good lesson. Moreover, they take into account that their pupils cannot be expected to already know about creative and didactic methods. To their mind the children’s situation can be compared to a teacher’s at the beginning of his professional career. *Referendare* also adopt the behaviour and methods they observe and are thankful to get some given structures for orientation. Only a certain degree of routine unlocks the door to creativity. And once used to LdL the pupils abstain from simply copying and try to develop their own methods – methods that sometimes even a teacher could not have thought of. Thus teachers also profit from LdL. However, they suggest introducing some different teaching methods in class and then discussing their positive as well as negative variables before starting an LdL scheme.

Furthermore, one teacher sees a chance in the fact that his lesson is mirrored for if a teacher is able to approach his lesson critically, LdL will offer him the possibility to draw conclusions and consequently improve his style.

**Question 18: Briefly mention the advantages and disadvantages of LdL and state which seem most important to you.**

The answers to this question cannot be covered in a short abstract within this paper. A complete list of all advantages and disadvantages can be found at the end of this paper. Here only very few selected aspects shall be mentioned.

Most of the subjects see the biggest advantages in the improvement of the learning quality and the development of soft skills. They all stress the importance of social learning objectives especially with regards to future professions. Teachers employing LdL in FLT are impressed by the communicative activation of their pupils. Apart from it being fun to use a different method, pupils also profit from the organization of learning by teaching as the feedback of former pupils proves: “Ich war in der

Uni/in der Ausbildung der/die einzige, der/die sicher vor dem ganzen Hörsaal/der ganzen Gruppe auftreten [konnte] und nicht nur einfach ein Referat gehalten hat (das sich fast immer nur an den Dozenten wendet!), sondern mit allen arbeiten konnte”.

Though LdL has many advantages, nearly all subjects admit that several difficulties can arise. Preparation and organization, for example, is more time consuming than in teacher-fronted lessons. In addition, it can be very problematic if the presentations are insufficient and the teacher has to go over the topic again. Sometimes this requires the omission of other topics. An interesting problem, which only crops up in practice, is the fact that some pupils need constant pressure to achieve their goals. As a result of trusting the pupils' ability to take over responsibility for themselves these children often get better marks in a traditional classroom.

All the negative aspects, however, are outweighed by the obvious advantages of the method.

#### **Question 19: Would you recommend this method to other colleagues?**

The question whether the teachers would recommend LdL to their colleagues has unanimously been answered with “yes”, which is not really surprising since these teachers have experienced successful lessons and are convinced by the method as they engage in the *network of contacts*. Most of them continually try to spread *Jean-Pol Martin's* idea by presenting it at teacher training seminars, by writing articles for magazines or simply by telling colleagues about it.

However, hinting at difficulties that may occur they admit that a teacher needs to be convinced of LdL in order to overcome these problems. He or she must be willing to leave aside what has been learned at the *Referendariat* and in several years of practical use. The wish to experience something different and “new” must be the driving force as this method cannot simply be inflicted on the teachers. This would be destined to end in catastrophe.

LdL would definitely not be recommended to teachers who see preparing the lessons as a great burden. This method requires even more time for preparation. One teacher regards his job as *qualifizierende Entwicklungsförderung* perfectly assisted by LdL and believes it to be his duty to show the pupils by means of his efforts that discovering developmental progressions even motivates the teacher.

Altogether, the teachers would highly recommend LdL but often do not find colleagues who dare to try out a “new” method. Most of them put more trust in

traditional ways of teaching rather than in their pupils and underestimate the pupils' abilities.

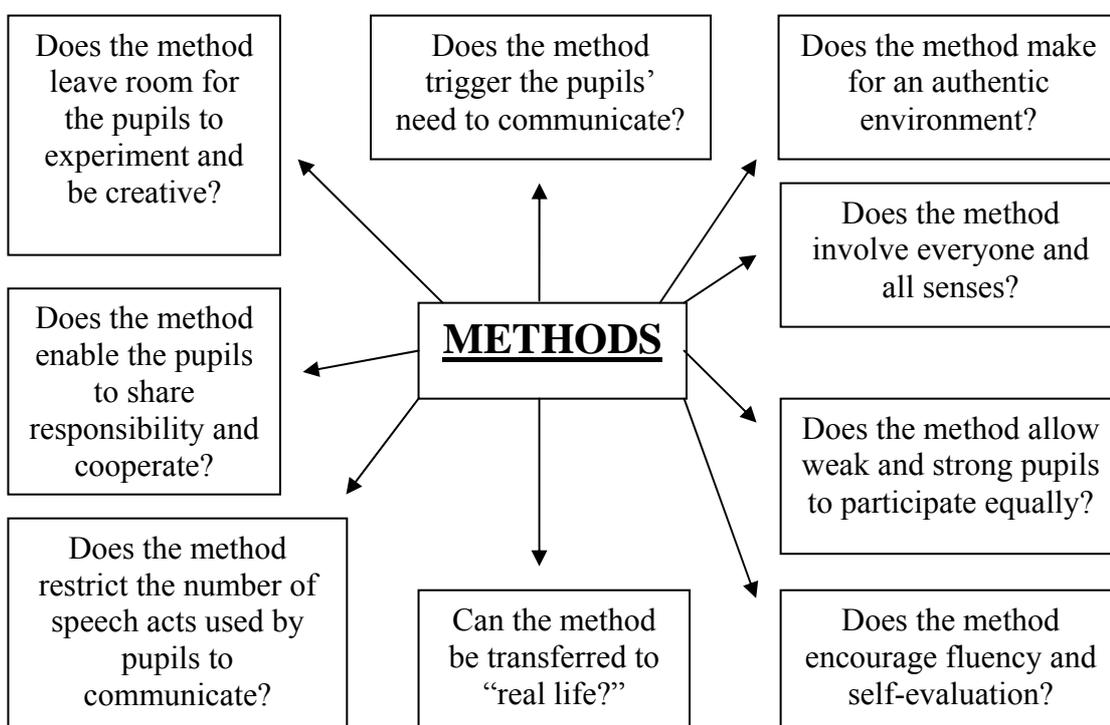
## **5 Results of a seminar discussion**

In the winter semester 2005/2006 we presented *Jean-Pol Martin's Lernen durch Lehren* to our fellow students within the seminar "learner centred approaches". Only four of about fifty students were already familiar with this teaching method, which again shows that it has not yet entered university, though most seminars rely on presentations (*Referate*) and the step to an LdL scheme is not to far away. Like us, these four students had experienced LdL in lectures and seminars of Dr. *Grzega*, a colleague of Prof. Dr. *Martin*, who had been teaching a year at the *University of Münster*.

After presenting the basic ideas of the method we worked out pros and cons together. Again a complete list of the single statements and arguments can be found in the appendix.

## 5.1 The pros of *Lernen durch Lehren*

On the basis of a text and two short films the groups came up with a long list of positive arguments which equal the pros mentioned in the previous chapters. These arguments centred around key questions the seminar had originally set up for the evaluation of activities. Thus, the key questions can also be used to analyse a method as the mapping underneath illustrates. Concerning LdL the groups found that all questions can be answered with “yes”.



## 5.2 Negative thoughts on LdL

Although the groups were impressed by the many advantages, which especially became obvious in the short video sequences, they critically thought about some of the aspects a teacher might experience problems within practical application.

The majority of the students held the opinion that LdL cannot be applied in lower grades since the pupils will not be able to work independently. They do not know how to organize a lesson or an activity. Like many teachers, who share this opinion, the seminar tended to underestimate the pupils' abilities. *Jean-Pol Martin* has proved in various studies that his method can also be applied in primary schools. He admits and explicitly states that younger pupils cannot start by taking over a complete lesson. They have to get used to the method step by step, beginning with single exercises and gradually increasing the complexity and difficulty of the tasks. In foreign language classrooms the introduction of classroom phrases will help to overcome language problems at the beginning.

The alleged lack of self-confidence in lower grades is no problem at all as the teachers' experiences show (cf. chapter 4). The opposite holds true for it is predominantly older pupils who do not dare standing in front of a class and deliver a presentation. Hence, problems may occur in higher grades and it takes a sensitive teacher not to put too much pressure on the pupils. This disadvantage, however, remains and a teacher has to find individual strategies to cope with this problem (cf. chapter 4).

Moreover, the seminar did not like the idea that the presentations will be based only on a copy of their teachers' behaviour for the pupils cannot be expected to know about didactics. Experienced teachers claim that this is not necessarily a disadvantage. On the one hand the teacher will be given the chance to reflect on his own methods and on the other hand he may get an impression of which kind of method is popular with the pupils since they will only copy "good examples". But most teachers experienced pupils who came up with their own creative ideas after a short time. Those are sometimes helpful in improving the teachers' lessons in other classes.

A final point of criticism deals with a lack of background information on the side of the pupils. The students claimed that background information on a topic is absolutely necessary in order to teach others and react to their questions. Consequently, a

teacher needs to guide his pupils quite carefully in order to ensure correct results. Thus, LdL requires much more preparation by teachers as well as pupils and the method is more time consuming than traditional teacher-fronted lessons. This means that not all topics of the syllabus can be dealt with. The experiences confirm that more time has to be invested in advance. However, teachers claim that the number of topics is not dependent on the method but on the class.

### **5.3 The seminar's overall attitude**

After working on different positive and negative aspects of LdL only a minority of the students believed this method to be a real alternative for everyday use. About two thirds would be willing to try out some LdL lessons. Most students put forward the opinion that the cons mentioned above outweigh the numerous advantages and a teacher has to consider carefully which class it can be applied to.

This evaluation certainly results from the fact that, though the film showed a short sequence, it was difficult to imagine what a lesson would look like. Despite a presentation outlining the basic aspects of LdL the students do not know enough about the possibilities. A comparison of chapter 4 and 5 clearly stresses the necessity of practical experiences for they prove that some supposed disadvantages do not hinder learning and teaching processes.

Furthermore, the students are highly influenced by the direct instruction method. In their mind, school is teacher-fronted apart from some phases of group work. It is the way they and their parents have been taught. Why should this way of teaching, which has proved to be quite efficient, be altered?

## 6 Concluding remarks

Throughout this paper we have seen that the old concept of learning by teaching has survived harsh criticism and seems to provide solutions to our immediate problems in learning and teaching processes. With LdL, *Jean-Pol Martin* has developed a method which is exclusively based on the acquisition and improvement of skills indispensable in our modern society. The promotion of communicative competence, social learning as well as the assignment of responsibility are the major benefits LdL offers to pupils, who have to approach the learning process more actively. They are in every respect invited to really engage in learning and teaching.

The only disadvantages remaining are dependent on the willingness of the pupils and teacher. They must be ready to put up with more work. Pupils, additionally, have to make an effort to overcome their fear of standing in front of the class. The fact that LdL is more time consuming than the direct method can easily be accepted as the gains are invaluable.

Frequent arguments of criticism simply turn out to be non-existent in practice as teachers' experiences impressively reveal. Problems of evaluation or pupils copying their teachers do not necessarily have to occur if a teacher knows how to cope with these factors.

Moreover, the experiences confirm *Jean-Pol Martin's* opinion that LdL can be employed in all grades, in many subjects and in different school types. However, it has to be mentioned that many teachers who used LdL did not succeed. Taking into account the fact that the method may not correspond to the needs of individual classes or teachers, the latter often make a crucial mistake. They just try out the method like any other. Such an attempt is destined to fail since the pupils slowly have to get accustomed to this new way of working. It takes them a certain period of time to recognize and organize the new learning processes and they will be able to profit afterwards.

While the majority of pupils reacts positively most colleagues have their doubts, as we admittedly had in the first place. We believe that people who did not delve into this topic are unable to really assess this method at first glance as our seminar's overall attitude (cf. 5.3) indicates.

Though the idea of learning by teaching has gained popularity within the last decade, predictions for the future promise uncertainty to us. Most teachers have come to

know about LdL by more or less direct contact to *Jean-Pol Martin* or his colleagues. Since he will not be able to reach everyone individually through one of his seminars, we personally hold the opinion that LdL has to enter university teaching as well as teacher training seminars in order to broaden the platform for dissemination. The *network of contacts* definitely offers an ideal chance to share experiences, problems and improvements. Yet, if future teachers do not know LdL exists, who will be supposed to bring about a decisive change in practice?

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## Internet resources

- <http://aufbaukurs.intel-lehren.de>
- <http://www.ldl.de>
- <http://www.zum.de/Foren/ldl>

## Appendix I

### In der Umfrage genannte Vorteile von *Lernen durch Lehren*

- Erwerb sozialer Kompetenzen
- Spaß an anderer Methode
- Schülerorientierung
- verbesserte Lernqualität durch intensivere Auseinandersetzung mit dem Stoff
- Schüler/innen erwerben beim Erstellen von Präsentationen didaktische Kompetenzen
- Schüler/innen sind aktiver am Unterricht beteiligt
- Die Schüler/innen verbessern aufgrund höherer Sprechanteile ihre kommunikative Kompetenz
- Schüler/innen reflektieren über gute und weniger gute Lehr- und Lernmethoden
- Lehrer bekommt in kleineren Klassen wesentlich bessere Anhaltspunkte für mündliche Noten
- Schüler/innen bekommen nicht nur vom Lehrer, sondern auch von Mitschülern ein Feedback

Oft wurde auf die zahlreichen weiteren Vorteile von LdL verwiesen, die in diverser Literatur und v.a. von Prof. Dr. Martin immer wieder genannt werden.

### In der Umfrage genannte Nachteile von *Lernen durch Lehren*

- immer LdL kann langweilig werden
- emotional sehr anstrengend (Aufbrechen der sozialen Struktur ist Vorteil, aber zehrt)
- arbeits- und organisationsaufwendig
- lange Einarbeitungsphase, wenn nicht mehrere Lehrkräfte mitziehen
- immer wieder ein Experiment, ob es für eine Klasse oder einen Kurs geeignet ist

- Die Evaluation der Präsentationen im Anschluss sind sehr zeitraubend.
- Einige Schüler/innen brauchen ständigen Druck um ihre besten Leistungen zu erbringen. Nachdem LdL auf die Eigenverantwortlichkeit der Schüler/innen setzt fällt es schwer diesen Druck auszuüben. Somit kann es sein, dass hier ganz andere durch das (Noten)Raster fallen als im herkömmlichen Unterricht.
- Die Durchführung kann soviel Zeit erfordern, dass andere Dinge weggelassen werden müssen.
- Bei einigen Themen sind Stunden, die vom Lehrer vorbereitet werden schlichtweg effizienter.

## Appendix II

### Pros and cons of *Lernen durch Lehren* (LdL) worked out by the students in the seminar “learner centred approaches”

#### pros:

- more pupils (everyone!?) are involved
- there are no grades in order to take the fear from the pupils
- an explanation from pupil to pupil is easier to understand
- the opportunity for the pupils to be on stage and present their own knowledge and state of work
- pupils learn by correcting each other and develop a greater acceptance for mistakes
- intensive use of the target language
- identification with the tutor
  - he/she is one of them
  - he/she is aware of problems that might occur during the learning process
- promotion of self-esteem and self-confidence
- promotion of motivation: chance to produce something of your own
- use of different methods:
  - makes topic more interesting and understandable
  - taking care of different types of learners
- pupils take over more responsibility
- creation of a positive learning atmosphere
- promotes teamwork
- introvert pupils are involved
- positive effect of symbiosis
- communication clarifies contents (communication as a goal by itself)
- promotes social competence (interaction)
- open to forms of creativity
- fulfils demands for communicative learning
- autonomous way of learning

- teacher can respond to comprehension gaps immediately
- easier to ask for help and explanations among peers
- includes method training
- applicable in every subject, school type and grade
- development of soft skills
- promotion of curiosity

**cons:**

- the concept cannot be used for younger pupils
  - unable to work independently
  - lack of confidence
  - attention span
  - social group still has to develop
  - unable to speak the foreign language properly
- problem of evaluation
- problem of correcting the presentation
  - as soon as the teacher intervenes he destroys the process of autonomous working
- problem of encouragement
- extrovert pupils have an advantage
- pupils are not educated in didactics and have to rely on copying the teacher
- difficult to measure the progress of the pupils
- “over-saturation”: too many presentations may lead to boredom
- close guidance is needed to ensure correct results
- need for discipline
- there is no curriculum designed for this method
- is not different from a report *Referat*
- LdL is more time consuming than other methods
- pupils cannot structure the lesson as good as a teacher
- pupils are not on the same level of proficiency
- weaker learners might feel under pressure

- does not promote motivation
- pupils do not talk more or pay more attention
- lack of background information on the side of the pupils
- pupils might not feel responsible for others to learn
- students cannot choose their own topics
- difficult for non-auditive learners
- often the same way of presenting is chosen
- teacher fronted & student fronted lessons should be balanced