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**Exploring the faculty's selection of teaching methods in International Relations: Case of
Azerbaijan**

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Abstract

The learning-centered teaching presupposes an approach oriented in the long-lasting learning of the student combining the lecture and active learning methods considering the student's learning needs and learning objectives of the course. Previous domestic research suggests that the implementation of active learning methods in higher educational institutions present challenges for the instructors for the reasons such as low level of engagement of students, lack of technical facilities, and instructor's lack of capabilities in integration of innovative methods. The preliminary data collected from the graduates of International Relations (IR) program from three universities in Baku suggest that lecture-based learning still persists in the classes. Therefore, the study investigated the applied teaching methods in IR program and identified the factors contributing to the faculty's teaching decision-making process. The qualitative research design was employed, whereby fourteen instructors instructing courses related to International Relations at University A, University B, and University C were interviewed, and their syllabuses were previewed.

The findings responding to the first research question displays that the instructors favor the integration of active learning methods in classes, as they motivate students, and enable them to develop collaborative, writing, analytical thinking skills. The data related to the second research question suggest that philosophical assumptions, student-related factors, the instructor's involvement in professional growth, course content, and the institutional factors influence faculty's decision on selecting particular methods. Substantially, the philosophical beliefs of the instructor and student-related factors are revealed to have an effect on the decision-making process of the instructor by either inhibiting or fostering application of learning-centered approach. Based on the findings of the study and literature review, the guideline on learning-centered teaching is presented that incorporates the learning-centered concept, teaching methods, and Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and

Evaluation (ADDIE) model. It is believed that the guideline may address the student-related challenges and help the instructors to make effective decisions enhancing student's learning.

Key words: International Relations, higher educational institutions, lecture, active learning methods, learning-centered teaching.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The education landscape has undergone significant changes, particularly in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, as a result of the rapid shift from conventional approaches to innovative methods. The teaching decisions of the faculty in Azerbaijan have demonstrated a discernible transition. The adoption of student-centered approaches has become increasingly widespread alongside traditional teaching methods. Based on the indigenous literature (Sattarova et al., 2021), it can be inferred that the courses in Azerbaijani higher educational institutions (HEIs) are predominantly imparted through traditional lectures. Furthermore, the implementation of a student-centered learning approach in HEIs is confronted with certain difficulties, as reported by the European Union (2018) and Sattarova et al. (2021).

This study considers lectures and active learning methods equally important for the student's learning without giving preference to one of the approaches when examining the teaching methods used in the field of IR. This study investigated the teaching methods employed in the instruction of IR and analyzed the determinants that shape instructors' selection of these approaches.

Definition of the Key Terms

Lectures are a widely used pedagogical approach in tertiary education, serving three primary objectives: shaping students' perspectives, facilitating the conveyance of knowledge, and inspiring students to engage in further reading (Atkins & Brown, 1988).

Active learning is a pedagogical approach that involves students in discussions and encourages their participation in analytical and reflective activities (Bonwell & Eison, 1991).

Learning-centered teaching involves the integration of five key components, namely: the teacher's role as a facilitator, shared power dynamics between teacher and student, student accountability for learning, content utilization for teaching purposes rather

than mere coverage, and assessment aimed at facilitating learning (Blumberg, 2019; Weimer, 2013).

Although we also used the term “student-centered learning” and the similarity between student-centered learning and learning-centered teaching, based on Weimer (2013) explanation, we assume that learning-centered teaching is reasonable. A learning-centered approach focuses on teaching that recognizes the individual potential of each student and strives to meet their learning needs. The pedagogical approach of learning-centered teaching suggests that educators are not obligated to meet all the desires of their students, but rather to their learning needs (Weimer, 2013).

Deep learning is referred to as a long-lasting change occurred in learner as a result of teaching and learning process (Biggs, 1999; Fink, 2013) which can be attained by operating all levels of knowledge which are factual, conceptual, procedural, and metacognitive knowledge (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). *Factual knowledge* indicates knowledge of distinct facts necessary to get familiar with the discipline or solve the problems and requires memorization to recall information, *conceptual knowledge* means the knowledge of the concept by integration of ideas and facts with the use of analytical skills and critical thinking skills, *procedural knowledge* refers to knowledge of application and knowing how to solve the problem utilizing problem-solving skills, and finally *metacognitive knowledge* implies knowledge and awareness of own’s cognition and learning by utilizing reflective skills.

Problem Statement

After joining the Bologna Process in 2005, HEIs in Azerbaijan started to experience reforms, transform from Soviet educational system to European, and apply Bologna degree structure, thereby propelling significant changes in the higher educational system (Mammadova & Valiyev, 2020). Nonetheless, Mammadova and Valiyev (2020) state that

modifications in the process of transition into the system of European Higher Education Area (EHEA) are still to be undertaken.

According to the mission report of the Twinning Project (European Union, 2018) in Azerbaijan, implementation of competence-based approach that embraces student-centered teaching and learning presents difficulties in higher education, accordingly, lack of instructors' competencies in design of student-oriented curricula necessitates support to academic staff of HEIs. Sattarova et al (2021) mention of the difficulties faced by teachers in embedding problem-based learning (PBL) into the format of studies throughout the semester at Azerbaijan University of Architecture and Construction which include lack of relevant skill of instructors, resources and technical equipment in realizing PBL, and students' engagement and motivation in the involvement of PBL lessons. Hence, realization of student-oriented classes in HEIs requires time and support.

Active learning is fostered in international literature (Glazier, 2015; Rösch 2018), as it enables students to engage in the classes of IR whereby their interest in what they are learning, "deep understanding" (Glazier, 2015, p. 265) and "deep learning" (Rösch, 2018, p. 71) occur. With regard to specifically IR studies in the country, Aghazade (2019) discusses teaching and learning of IR in ten universities of Azerbaijan, and states that presently, the level of educating IR in Azerbaijan is not reaching the world standards due to various reasons. One of them is a focus on theoretical learning of IR, which causes struggles in students while application of theory in practice. To get an initial understanding of the teaching practices in IR classes and collect preliminary data, the survey was conducted by the authors of this study, where twenty-six participants graduated from three universities completed bachelor's degree not more than five years ago. Based on the results of the data, lectures, listening to the instructor and retelling the material (see Table 1 and Table 2 in Appendix B) during the lessons constitute the main part of the classes.

Statement of Purpose and Significance of the Study

The purpose of this research is to explore the pedagogical approaches used in undergraduate International Relations courses. Furthermore, the research endeavor seeks to investigate the factors that impact the choices made by instructors regarding teaching methods. The literature available in Azerbaijan provides an overview of teaching methodologies employed in higher education, as well as the various factors that influence instructional decision-making. However, the Azerbaijani literature exhibits a dearth of scholarly inquiry regarding pedagogical practices within the context of teaching IR. The present study aims to assist instructors in the field of International Relations in implementing teaching methods that prioritize student learning. Furthermore, the research will aid in the identification of the factors that impact the pedagogical choices made by instructors. Understanding the factors that influence the pedagogical decision-making of faculty members may assist in the design and implementation of effective professional development initiatives for faculty in the field of International Relations. Hence, the research holds considerable importance for improving the teaching methods of International Relations in higher education institutions (HEIs) of Azerbaijan.

Research Questions

The research questions of the study are as follows:

1. What kind of teaching methods do instructors educating IR use?
2. What kind of factors influence the instructor's decision on selection of teaching methods in IR classes?

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The literature review consists of two sections, namely teaching methods used in IR classes and factors influencing instructors' teaching decisions. Lectures and active learning methods will be examined in the first section of the literature review. The second section discussed the factors, such as the needs of students, personal beliefs, and contextual factors, that influence instructors' decisions regarding teaching methods.

Teaching Methods Applied in IR Classes

There are contradictory findings on the optimal instructional technique for teaching IR (Gormley-Heenan & Lightfoot, 2012). Handbook of Teaching and Learning in Political Science and International Relations (Ishiyama et al., 2015) states that “presentations, simulations, role-plays, placements, and the submission of portfolios, all of which enable students to actively showcase their knowledge and understanding of the subject” (p.86). Contrarily, “lectures and seminars will by their nature be better suited to teaching some aspects of the discipline than others,” as stated by Gormley-Heenan & Lightfoot (2012, p.32).

The awareness of the positive implications of active learning methods (movies, simulations, role-plays) in facilitating better understanding of political concepts in HEIs is known from a long time (Newkirk & Hamilton 1979; Verba, 1964), and fostered by the contemporary scholars (Glazier, 2015; Shellman, & Turan 2006; West & Halvorson, 2019; Wunische, 2018). However, the benefits of lectures (Archer, & Miller, 2011; Wunische, 2018) and the consideration of students’ needs and context while designing class are accentuated in international literature (Glazier, 2015; Haack, 2008; Weber, 2001).

Lecturing

As perceptions of lecture and active learning can vary depending on the individual, the argument regarding lecture and active learning is not about which method is superior (Barkley, 2018). “... we argue that researchers need to be asking more nuanced questions

about the lecture. When is lecture useful? How much lecture is too much? What kind of lecture is best? What supports are most effective?” (Barkley, 2018, p.12). Lecture and active learning methods can be designed in a manner that can contribute deep student learning and understanding (Barkley, 2018; Herranen, et. al., 2018).

The traditional lecture does not evoke analytical, critical and reflective thinking and relinquishes the responsibility for learning on students (Hoidn & Klemenčič, 2020) which consequently leads to passive learning. However, Mayer (2009) claims that passive instruction does not necessarily result in passive learning. When dealing with novice students, lecturing can be effective as students' needs are not entirely excluded (Ramsden, 2003; Norman 2017). If a student lacks knowledge regarding discipline, he or she may benefit from passive instruction (Kirschner et al., 2006).

Despite the lack of effectiveness of lecture-only classes in long-term retention of knowledge and furnishing practical skills, the lecturing should not be eradicated as a teaching method in the delivery of IR (Leston-Bandeira, 2012; Wunische, 2018). Leston-Bandeira (2012) says that large amounts of information containing critical details to the large auditorium can be transmitted through lectures which make them cost-effective. Additionally, traditional lectures help students, particularly freshman and sophomore learners with little knowledge, to get the initial understanding of the content (Archer, & Miller, 2011) and aural learners who learn better through listening (Rösch, 2017). The longitudinal experimental study conducted by Wunische (2018) unfolds that simulations assist in retaining the knowledge for a long time, however, in the short-term the lecture “still holds value” (p.10). Hence, an overly teacher-centered approach or the entire elimination of lecturing and switch to active learning methods is not the means to teach IR to aid development of critical, analytical, and reflective skills of students.

Active Learning Methods

The empirical studies (Powner & Allendoerfer, 2008; Shellman & Turan, 2006; West & Halvorson, 2019; Wunische, 2018) illuminate how simulations and discussions put the students in the political environment and improve their understanding of IR concepts and theories. Nonetheless, the active learning methods in IR such as discussions, role plays, simulations, movies are critical to be selected in a considerate manner of learning outcomes, students learning styles, needs, content and context, otherwise, they will not help students rather create confusion and disillusionment (Archer, & Miller, 2011; Haack, 2008; Powner & Allendoerfer, 2008; Wunische, 2018). The effectiveness of active learning methods simulations, discussions, role plays demonstrate effectiveness in enabling active engagement of students in learning process and comprehension of the theoretical concepts is agreed on by international scholars (Archer, & Miller, 2011; Calossi & Coticchia 2017; Powner & Allendoerfer, 2008; Wunische, 2018). Having said that, Haack (2008) on organization of Model of United Nations (MUN) simulations claims that merely “doing politics” and “superficial approaches” (p. 395) do not accomplish true deep learning (p. 408) if students are not deliberately involved in the activity. Apart from significance of the intentional engagement of learners, the experimental study Powner and Allendoerfer (2008) reveals that role-playing activities impede instructors to encompass large amounts of material in the class. In the same vein, qualitative study of Trinidad (2019) illustrates that students from social studies assume that not all classes are suitable for interactive applications. However, when movies, addition of audiovisual elements, simulations are purposefully applied taking into consideration the content, context, students’ needs, it aids illumination of real political environment, evoke imaginations, and apprehension of complicated theories (Saltzman, 2018; Roberts, 2017; Weber, 2005). Hence, as Leston-Bandeira (2012) suggests combination of

lectures and active learning methods, redesign of lectures contribute to “deep learning and critical thinking skills” (p. 53).

Learning-Centered Teaching

Learning-centered teaching aims to foster “deep and long-lasting student learning” (p.17) by considering the needs of students regarding their learning (Blumberg, 2019). In learning-centered teaching, the instructor becomes a facilitator, while students assume responsibility for their own learning (Blumberg 2019; Weimer, 2013). Using active learning methods in accordance with the learning objectives of the course and using the content not for the purpose of covering rather than assisting students with conveying of the main idea of the reading may help in developing a deeper understanding of the subject (Blumberg 2019; Weimer, 2013).

According to Blumberg (2019) and Weimer (2013), in a learning-centered teaching approach, the primary objective of assessments is to enhance student learning. Tractenberg (2021) proposes a model for evaluating assessments in learning-centered classes that comprises four dimensions: alignment with course objectives, utility of structured assessments throughout the course, application of Bloom's Taxonomy, and clarity of assessments.

Leston-Bandeira (2012) discusses the noteworthy significance of active learning methods in the classes of IR since given the nature of political sciences, which are not distinct and constantly changing, the students should be in the center of the learning, construct, interpret and reconstruct their knowledge, enhance critical, analytical and reflective thinking skills. Meanwhile, she (Leston-Bandeira, 2012) pinpoints that lectures make students familiar with the content, critical theories and elements. Thus, to bridge the gap between theory and practice, she suggests a mixture of lectures and activities. Learning-centered teaching not only includes active learning methods but the lectures as well (Herranen, et. al., 2018). On

modification of lectures Weber (2001) shares her experience of introducing movies into curricula and asserts that merely movies in the classrooms without an aim and considering the context can cause boredom, confusion, and disappointment. Leston-Bandeira (2012) and Glazier (2015) discuss strategies on making students active and responsible for learning in accordance with learning outcomes and goals, and students' learning preferences. Speaking specifically about usage of films and simulations in IR, Simpson & Kaussler (2009) in his non-empirical article discuss contradictory views on lecturers and active learning eventually concluding that solely either films or lectures are not beneficial, and films are suggested "to complement and supplement traditional teaching approach" (p. 427) of intricate theoretical concepts. *The Godfather* (Saltzman, 2018), *Game of Thrones* (Young et al., 2018), *Independence Day* (Weber, 2005), and popular movies (Simpson & Kaussler, 2009) enable students to immerse into hypothetical political environment, see terrorism, tensions, conflicts, sense emotions that cannot be transmitted through books.

To summarize aforementioned statements, the class should be designed accordingly depending on the type of content, context, learning styles, preferences and needs of students, learning purposes of the instructor. Both too many traditional or interactive classes impedes deep learning. The over-usage of lectures occasions passivity and not an effective method approach from the long-term perspective. Similarly, strictly interactive classes, the unstructured and purposeless application of methods are as harmful as traditional lectures.

Factors Influencing Instructors' Decision of Teaching Methods

According to research, factors such as personal educational philosophy, student needs, and the environment, professional growth-related factors are the primary determinants of pedagogical decisions (Škėrienė & Augustinienė, 2018; Chen & Chen, 2022; Emery, et. al., 2021; Lee, 2019; Sansom, et. al., 2023). Škėrienė and Augustinienė (2018) state that the

instructor's decision on the teaching method cannot be based on intuition but must be supported by evidence.

Pedagogical decision-making has to be based on the reasoned activity of the teacher that involves setting the goals based on the philosophy of education, selection of methods, tools, and means, the creation of an appropriate environment in order to ensure good “teacher-learner” interaction and imposing development of a learner’s personality in general (p.18).

According to Sansom et al. (2023), the pedagogical decisions of instructors can be influenced by their educational beliefs and attitudes towards teaching methods. Sansom et al. (2023) claim that instructors' differing perceptions of the purpose of teaching, such as facilitating, delivering, or caring, may influence their approach to teaching methods.

According to Snook's (2021) argument, if an instructor views the purpose of education as centered on caring for students and meeting with their interests, the motivational strategies employed might not produce successful outcomes related to student learning. Furthermore, the outbreak of Covid-19 has led to modifications in the teaching methods of educators, which has resulted in a discrepancy between their beliefs and practices (Sansom, 2020). This is due to the lack of time available for reflection on student learning while making these adjustments, as noted by Sansom (2020). Hoidn and Klemenčič (2020) stated that some instructors possess a rigid mindset with respect to passive pedagogical approaches, thereby impeding the implementation of innovative or updated teaching methods (Blumberg, 2015).

The feedback provided by students can be regarded as an important factor that influences the teaching decisions made by faculty. Sansom et al. (2023) claim that incorporating student feedback into the decision of teaching methods necessitates the inclusion of faculty feedback as well. According to Sansom et al. (2023), instructors are less likely to implement changes in the absence of opinions from colleagues and in the face of

negative feedback from students. Similarly, Al Ansari et al. (2020) argue that although constructive feedback from students can aid instructors in modifying their teaching methods, the process can be enhanced with the assistance of faculty feedback.

Additionally, while transferring to the learning-centered teaching, instructors face challenges in designing activities due to contextual factors such as the incompetence, shortage of materials, technical equipment, large classes, and unwillingness of students to shift from passive listening to lectures to becoming active participants in learning (Lea et al., 2003). Similarly, Exeter (2010) suggests that passive lectures can be a viable pedagogical approach for teaching large groups of students. On the other hand, the most recent study (Emery, 2021) suggests that contextual elements, such as class size and inadequate equipment, have a restricted impact on instructors' adoption of learning-centered teaching when compared to individual factors, such as beliefs and competence. While discussing the importance of culture Myers and Myers (2015) suggest that the implementation of learner-centered assessment methods can be facilitated by the establishment of an institutional norm or a reward system.

The characteristics of students can be regarded as a crucial determinant in the selection of appropriate pedagogical approaches (Sansom et al., 2023). Various student attributes, such as immaturity for higher education, lack of preparedness for classes, and heterogeneity, may hinder the effective implementation of active learning methods (Sansom, 2023). McGuire and McGuire (2016) claim that inadequate provision of learning skills by instructors is the reason behind students' unpreparedness for class. Furthermore, certain earlier research studies (Lea et al., 2003; Pundak & Rozner, 2007) have highlighted the reluctance of students towards active learning approaches. However, as per Blumberg's (2019) findings, the notion of students being resistant to active learning methods is no longer valid.

The study conducted by Aghayeva (2019) in Azerbaijan has identified the factors that pose challenges for faculty members who adopt innovative teaching methods. Aghayeva (2019) posits that educators who adopt innovative pedagogical approaches face challenges pertaining to their control over courses, access to professional development opportunities, financial incentives, cooperation among colleagues, infrastructure, and proficiency. The preoccupation of Azerbaijani students with grades is a significant factor that affects the decisions of instructors, as noted by Aghayeva (2019). Aghayeva's (2019) study aimed to investigate the impact of motivational factors on the engagement of instructors in innovative teaching methods in Azerbaijan. The findings of the study indicate that there exist certain impediments that hinder instructors from effectively implementing innovative teaching methods. It is our belief that the use of active learning and lecture-based pedagogical approaches can effectively enhance the depth of students' learning in International Relations courses. The objective of this research is to examine the perspectives of educators regarding active learning and lecture-based approaches in International Relations courses, as well as the factors which influence their selection of teaching methods.

Conclusion

This chapter provides an overview of the literature related to teaching methods used in higher education, especially in the field of IR, along with an analysis of the factors that influence instructors' decision-making processes. The use of lecturing and active learning methods has been considered required in the instruction of courses related to International Relations. For the theoretical portions of the IR, lectures are thought to be helpful, especially if they are well-organized and incorporate student participation. Active learning methods have the potential to enhance the practical, analytical, and reflective skills of students. The literature review underscores the significance of learning-centered teaching, which prioritizes the learning requirements of students and incorporates a blend of didactic and interactive

teaching methods. Learning-centered teaching prioritizes the acquisition of knowledge and skills by students, as opposed to tailoring to their desires. The literature review also examined the factors that influence the pedagogical decisions of faculty members. The factors included characteristics of the students, course content, contextual environment, the beliefs of the faculty, and factors associated with professional development. Further examination of the topic is required to identify the teaching methods utilized in International Relations (IR) in Azerbaijan, as well as the factors that influence the decisions of IR instructors.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology and Design

The purpose of the study was to investigate teaching methods used by the instructors in IR classes and identify factors influencing the instructor's decision while selecting teaching methods. The present chapter depicts the research design, data collection and analysis, and ethical considerations of the study.

The central tenet that underlies the qualitative research is to seek multiple meanings the individuals make sense out of their experiences and understand the phenomena through the interpretations constructed by them (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), basic qualitative study intends “to uncover and interpret these meanings” (p. 25). The qualitative data, which comprises various experiences shared by the participants, documents, observations, pictures, is represented using words. We discover the methods the instructors utilize and factors contributing to their decisions through their experiences and meanings they ascribe to them. Hence, given the purpose of the study along with the fact that it is mostly relied on the views of the individuals while exploring the event, and characteristics of the qualitative research, the qualitative research design was determined to apply to undertake the study.

Since the nature of qualitative research is to get an insight into the event through uncovering different perceptions of people, the philosophical underpinning of the basic qualitative design is constructivism (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The core belief embedded in the constructivist approach is making meaning of the experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). That being said, considering the focus of the research study, the philosophical assumption of the study falls under constructivism.

Data Collection

The main sources of data in qualitative research include interviews, observations and documents (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). To obtain extensive responses to respond to the research questions of the study, interviews and documents were employed that are elaborated below along with the sampling strategy.

Sampling Strategy

The study utilized the convenience sampling technique while selecting the participants given the accessibility, willingness to participate, and time availability of the individuals (Creswell, 2012; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Although the convenience sampling method does not generate rich description of the phenomena (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), it may still produce helpful information (Creswell, 2012).

The instructors from University A, University B, and University C in Baku were selected to be interviewed. The names of the universities are not uncovered due to confidentiality measures. One of the universities rejected the request to participate in the study. Thereafter, another university was chosen and sent the permission letter which was favorably accepted. Given the time constraints, the rationale behind choosing the universities lied in the prompt accessibility to the participants, a high probability in the willingness to participate in the study, and time effectiveness considering the universities' locations (Creswell, 2012).

After receiving the permission from universities on the conduction of interviews, the instructors educating courses related to International Relations were acquainted and contacted with the help of the head of department or information provided on the university website about instructors along with their mail addresses. Twenty instructors were invited to the interview via phone call, face to face or sending invitation letters with enclosed consent forms to their mails addresses or contact numbers. Initially, the sample size was expected to constitute fifteen, which was considered to be sufficient to reach the point of saturation, however, fourteen

participants out of twenty gave their consent to take part in the interview. The instructors of various work experience, academic degree, gender, age, nationality, those who are permanent faculty members and adjunct instructors educating obligatory and elective courses accepted to take part in the study. Overall, seven instructors from university A, four instructors from University B, and three instructors from University C agreed to be interviewed.

Data Collection Tools

Interview. Given the kind of information required to be gathered to respond to the research questions, the respective mode of data collection is decided on and selected (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Relying on Maruyama and Ryan (2014) and Merriam and Tisdell (2016), interview is regarded as the pertinent data collection technique once “more in-depth responses are sought” (Maruyama & Ryan, 2014, p. 400) to obtain rich information that can be hardly elicited through other means of data collection. According to Maruyama and Ryan, face-to-face interviews enable to collect more “complete and meaningful responses” (p. 400) through clarification of possible misunderstanding of the question or obscure moments.

Considering all this, face-to-face interviews were conducted by applying a collaborative co-interviewing approach. Vellardo and Elliott (2021) describe co-interviewing as participation of several interviewers during the interview which helps to carefully listen to the participant and ask follow-up questions as needed. For the sake of convenience and flexibility, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participants that allowed them to maintain flexibility throughout the interview and to pose probing questions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). According to Creswell (2012), probe questions are helpful to clarify vague moments and get better comprehension of the respondents’ answers through asking them for elaboration. Hence, the data was conducted via semi-structured collaborative interviews lasting for about forty-five minutes, but depending on the responses provided by the interviewees, the duration of interview time was either shortened or prolonged. Prior to starting interviews, the

peer review of questions was administered by demonstrating them to the educator in International Relations discipline to make sure of the ease of understandability of the questions. After getting feedback on the questions, the interview protocol was designed, and interviews were undertaken. The data was gathered in Azerbaijani and English languages depending on the preference of the participant. As a result, two interviews were conducted in English, while the rest of them were held in Azerbaijani language.

Document. The documents are helpful sources of data in qualitative research in terms of providing data in text that does not need transcription (Creswell, 2012). The documents, syllabuses in the present study, were selected as a source of data to make a comparison with the participants' responses. The instructors were informed beforehand about sharing syllabuses, and after the interview, they were requested to send them. As a result, nine participants agreed to send their syllabuses which were used to understand the extent to which active learning methods are manifested in the syllabuses and to employ them as a second source along with the interviews to obtain information about the instructor's autonomy provided by the institution. Collecting syllabuses before the interview would have helped in formulation interview questions and rigorous analysis, however, because of the unease it may cause for the participants, it was decided to request for the syllabuses after the interview.

Data Analysis

The main purpose of data analysis is making sense of the data to answer defined research questions (Creswell, 2012; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The analysis of qualitative data is the process of distribution of data into themes through coding which is "the process of making notation bits of data" (p. 204).

After completing the data collection process, the verbatim transcription of recorded interviews was made, and then the codification of the transcripts was conducted in English. To

ensure the accurate codification of Azerbaijani transcripts in English, the researchers exchanged the coded transcripts for the inspection and maintaining the meaning with minimized distortion. The coding was exercised manually and descriptively to avoid interpretation and distortion of the essence of the participant's response, thereby minimizing the researcher's bias in the data analysis.

Thereafter, the codes were grouped and corresponding themes manifesting the gist of codes were created. The categorization of data can be done through deductive and inductive reasoning starting from inductive moving towards the deductive way of analysis (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). To systemically codify without confusion and deviation from research questions, initially, we devised a tentative list of themes that were further modified and subthemes were defined via inductive way of coding and comparative method of analysis. The inductive and comparative method of analysis is commonly utilized in qualitative research to identify similar patterns and generate themes (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Hence, after finishing the stage of coding transcripts, the codes were compiled into Excel to combine codes of common meaning together, to determine the final names of themes and subthemes, to allocate the codes of all the transcripts under respective themes and to draw similarities and differences between participants' responses.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in qualitative research comprises four components, namely credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). To ensure the trustworthiness of the research, we considered the credibility depicted below.

Credibility

Given the fact that qualitative research incorporates the researcher as a primary data collection instrument, his assumptions and value, and diverse participants' interpretations of reality, it is not able to do "capture objective truth or reality" (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016, p.

244). Nonetheless, the congruence between reality and study findings can be matched (Wolcott, 2005, as cited in Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), and it is possible to be established through triangulation, member checking, adequate engagement in data collection and positionality (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). For the present study, we utilized the method of triangulation to assure the credibility of the study.

Triangulation. The types that triangulation encompasses include “the use of multiple methods, multiple sources of data, multiple investigators, or multiple theories” (Denzin, 1978, as cited in Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 244). The credibility of the present study was ensured through the usage of multiple sources of methods and investigator triangulation. We utilized interviews and documents as sources of data to see whether the documents reflect the data obtained via interviews and draw comparison between two data sources. Additionally, to make certain that the participants’ responses were understood correctly and to maintain a neutral stance, the investigators examined one another’s codes and consulted on the essence of participants’ responses.

Ethical Considerations

The ethical considerations presuppose the relationship of the researcher with the participant so that no harm or risk the research should posit to the participant (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Amongst the points indicated by Patton (2015) discussed in Merriam and Tisdell (2016), explanation of the study purpose and data collection methods, confidentiality, informed consent form were present in the study.

To follow the code of ethics in research, the informed consent forms were sent to participants via mail or phone number prior to the interview to get them familiar with the purpose of the research, data collection sources, interview procedure, confidentiality matters and general rights the participant possesses. The requests of the participants regarding alternative ways to the voice recording and the questions they did not want to respond were

considered. Once the participant did not want to be audio recorded, the notes were taken. To maintain the confidentiality of the interviewees' personalities, all the names were replaced with the pseudonyms.

Limitations

The limitations of the study include one-sided way of exploration of teaching methods and factors contributing to their teaching decision-making from the perspective of instructors, excluding students' views to the matter. The feature of one-sided attitude is also related to instructor's characteristics in terms of gender and years of experience. To be specific, most participants were male and had a few years of experience in teaching of International Relations. The convenience sampling methods was also one of the limitations of the study restricting to reach more thick information about the problem. Additionally, one of the research sites turned down the request for participating in the study which influenced the track of the data collection process.

Chapter 4: Findings

The findings incorporate the summarization of themes (or categories) derived from data analysis (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016; Creswell, 2012), accordingly, the present section discusses the major common themes that respond to the research questions of the study. The study intended to explore teaching methods as well as identify factors influencing the decision-making of the faculty while selecting the methods via analyzing the interviews and instructors' syllabuses.

Overall, fourteen instructors from University A, University B, and University C were interviewed in the study. The names of the participants were replaced with pseudonyms, and their characteristics are indicated in the table enclosed in Appendix C. Similarly, the study does not mention the names of the universities due to confidentiality matters. However, the brief description of the context of universities based on the data derived from the interviews and syllabuses are provided herein since the institutional regulations, particularly related to the class design and assessment system, is one of the uncovered themes within the factors influencing faculty's selection of methods. Therefore, to comprehend the reasons behind instructors' decisions stemmed from institutional contexts, the brief description of universities' setting is yielded as follows:

University A

Based on the participants' responses (Mr. Yusifli, Mr. Seferli, Mr. Axundov, Mr. Aghayev, Ms. Rustamzade), given the regulations within the university, the format of classes is divided into lectures and seminars. Each holds the purposes of delivering the lecture and assessment of student's learning within a class, respectively. Also, the grading scale, allocation of certain amount of score for in-class activity, individual work, mid-term exam, and final exam are stipulated by the university policy resulted in the same grading percentage amongst instructors given the syllabuses. The data (Mr. Axundov and Ms. Rustamzade) suggests that

although the instructors are empowered to employ any methods and strategies, they deem to be helpful during lectures, seminars, mid-term exams, and individual work, the university restrains the instructors from establishing the format of the final exam and establish limitations in the type of questions included in the exam.

University B

According to the data provided by Ms. Zeynalli, Mr. Samedov, Mr. Sherifzada and Mr. Qarayev, the division of classes in lectures and seminars is not determined by the university policy, thereby empowering the instructors to make decisions regarding the class design and student's in-class assessment. Based on the responses (Ms. Zeynalli, Mr. Samedov, Mr. Sherifzade), the specific amount of grade is allocated to the written mid-term and final exams, whereas the rest of the percentage is divided and defined by the instructors to other assessment tasks, participation, and attendance. The instructors are authorized to decide on the type of assignments and including or excluding the student's participation from the assessment. However, the format of the exams is established by the university regulations, and exam questions are monitored, as indicated by the participants (Mr. Samedov, Mr. Sherifzade, and Ms. Zeynalli).

University C

Relying on the data (Mr. Ibrahimov, Mr. Haqverdiyev, and Mr. Islamzade), the university entitles the instructors are entitled to decide on the design of the classes. With respect to the assessment strategies, based on the instructors' syllabuses and responses, the choice for assignments, the format of exam, the type of questions to be included, and distribution of grades are entirely resolved by the instructor.

The table below represents the overview of the methods and factors that are subsequently elucidated, whilst the direct influence of factors to the methods based on the participants' responses and syllabuses is vividly displayed in the table attached to Appendix D.

Table 1

Teaching methods and factors influencing faculty's selection of teaching methods

Teaching methods	Factors influencing faculty's selection of teaching methods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching methods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Lecture – Exams, tests, and quizzes – Active learning methods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Socratic dialogue ○ Group projects ○ Simulations, debates and discussions ○ Gamification ○ Decision memo ○ Academic paper ○ Portrait analysis ○ Book review ○ Alternative history 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal Teaching Philosophy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Educational Purposes of the Instructor – Beliefs about the Role of the Instructor – Perceived effectiveness of the methods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lecture ○ Exam ○ Active learning methods • Student-related factors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Student prior knowledge – Student beliefs and attitudes – Student motivation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Grade-oriented attitude ○ Preparedness and active participation – Plagiarism and Ghost writing – Students' feedbacks • Instructor's involvement in professional growth • Course Content • Institutional context

Teaching Methods Used by the Instructor

The present section delineates the methods used by the instructors for learning, including lecture and active learning methods. Exploring the methods relying on the syllabuses of the instructors and their responses during interviews, the used practices are enumerated beneath. Herein, the teaching methods incorporate assessment methods as well since the application of assessment methods is integrated with the learning of students. Based on the instructors' responses, the active learning methods embrace the practices that enable students to get a deep understanding of the theories and enhance analytical, critical, and writing skills.

Lecture

The findings demonstrate that all the participants are lecturing in class to students to make them aware of the significant moments of the concepts or to explain the terminology. Based on the participants' responses, it can be deduced that the way of lecturing differs among instructors, namely Mr. Haqverdiyev and Mr. Ibrahimov prefer to use the board instead of presentations, while some (Mr. Rustamzade, Mr. Samedov, Mr. Aghayev, Mr. Axundov, Mr. Jabbarli, Mr. Seferli) demonstrate presentations. Also, some instructors (Mr. Islamzade, Mr. Yusifli, Mr. Ibrahimov, Mr. Haqverdiyev) use jokes, stories, analytical questions, and discussion to make the lecture more interactive.

Exams, Tests, and Quizzes

Some participants (Mr. Islamzade, Mr. Ibrahimov, Mr. Axundov) shared that they do not consider examinations as an effective assessment method for learning because (students do not learn). Depending on the autonomy the system empowers the instructor, they substitute exams with simulations, group projects or academic papers that are mainly possible to be administered during the mid-term exam rather than final exams. Mr. Islamzade shared that along with checking understanding of the concept, he avoids the descriptive questions, instead, includes analytical questions in the final exam. Similarly, Mr. Axundov shared that

he disseminates the tests with open-ended situational questions to check analytical skills of students. Mr. Yusifli prefers to assign quizzes for checking the understanding of the concepts, whereas Mr. Haqverdiyev consider the quizzes ineffective.

Active Learning Methods

Based on the participants' experiences, herein, the active learning incorporates groups projects, simulations, debates, discussions, gamification, decision-memos, academic paper, portrait analysis, book review, design of alternative history, content analysis, event analysis, cognitive mapping, delta method, and imitations.

Group Projects. Some participants (Mr. Islamzada, Mr. Rustamzada and Mr. Jabbarli) shared that group-oriented assignments enable students to develop collaborative and communications skills, which are important to possess for their further career life. In addition to learning how to work in a group, the participants said that the assessment is conducted based on the performance of students in group projects. However, Mr. Samedov shared that it is difficult to evaluate the performance of students in group projects, as the effort put by each student is not obvious.

Simulations, Debates, and Discussions. Based on the responses of the participants using simulations (Mr. Zeynalı, Mr. Rustamzada, Mr. Jabbarli, Axundov, and Mr. Suleymanli), they assist students to play roles by stepping into the shoes of the diplomat, to get more rich information about political situations and different countries. Mr. Zeynalı said debates constitute the major part of the student assessment, and Mr. Jabbarli and Mr. Axundov stated that students are assessed based on their performance in simulations during mid-term exams.

Socratic Dialogue. The Socratic dialogue assignment given to students was used and described by Mr. Islamzade. The students are divided in pairs to write a paper in the form of a

dialogue debating on the philosophical issue that is interesting and concerning them. The students communicate their contradictory views on the matter in a written form.

Decision Memo. Mr. Haqverdiyev discussed the usage of decision memos assigned to students as individual assignments during final and mid-term exams. It includes two parts, namely written part and role-playing. First, the students should opt acute problem and give the rationale for the urgency of this problem and provide recommended action plan. Thereafter, the students play the scenario as presenting their decision to the individual from authority. He stated that this kind of assignment helps him to determine the thinking capacity of the student.

Academic Paper. The academic paper was mentioned by some participants (Mr. Ibrahimov, Mr. Sherifzada, Mr. Garayev, and Mr. Zeynalli) to assess students' writing skills and research skills. Mr. Zeynalli said that by writing an academic paper, students develop argumentation skills. Contrarily, Mr. Haqverdiyev stated that academic paper is easy to write, as it does not require sophisticated thinking abilities and does not help to reveal the thinking potential of the student. Hence, contradictory views regarding the utilization of academic papers as assignment tasks exist.

Portrait Analysis. Ms. Zeynalli shared about portrait analysis that is used in the theory-based course where debates cannot be conducted, but instead, students are assigned to analyze the political portrait of the public figure. The assignment helps students to learn about ideologies, political processes of that particular period, and influential moments in the decision of the individual. The students study the lifetime of the individual to understand the political decisions he made.

Book Review. Mr. Jabbarli discussed the assignment he uses for senior-year students, which presupposes reading a fiction related to International Relations. He explained that he asks students to choose a book and read it throughout the semester, and in the end, write a

five page essay, providing a summary and the critique of the book. He shared that it enables the student to apply critical thinking skills.

Alternative History. Ms. Rustamzade shared her way of assessing students through creating alternative history which is useful for students in terms of building integration and making prognosis based on historical facts.

The Division into Lecture and Seminar

Based on the participants' responses about the description of the division of classes into lectures and seminars, two ways of understanding lecture and seminar exist. According to participants' responses, the class is divided into lectures and seminars either because of the institutional regulations or the instructor's purpose to do so, and it changes the notions of these concepts. One presupposes the explanation of theoretical concepts throughout the lecture to prepare students for upcoming discussions in the seminar whereas the other understanding refers to the transmission of knowledge during the lecture and evaluating the knowledge of students over seminar. Mr. Suleymanli said that "Mühazirə biliyi ötürmək üçündür, seminar biliyi götürmək üçündür" [The purpose of lecture is to transmit the knowledge, the purpose of seminar is to receive the knowledge back]. The way of class design was criticized by Mr. Rustamzade and Mr. Axundov since Mr. Islamzade and Mr. Haqverdiyev said that they divide the class into lectures and seminars purposefully so that they will be able to convey information during the lecture, since most of the students do not read, to lay a ground for discussion during the seminar.

All in all, these are the teaching methods indicated by the participants, and the next section elaborated on the factors contributing to their pedagogical decisions.

Factors Influencing Faculty's Selection of Teaching Methods

The common major themes revealed across interviewees' stories regarding the reasons underpinning their decision of teaching methods encompasses the personal teaching

philosophy of the instructor, analysis of students' needs, instructor's involvement in professional growth, course content-related factors, and institutional context that are divided into subthemes and elaborated below.

Personal Teaching Philosophy

The data proposes that the philosophy and beliefs of the instructor regarding the methods underpin the instructional and teaching methods he utilizes in the class. At the outset, the educational purposes of the instructor, beliefs about the role of the instructor, and beliefs about the benefits of the different instructional methods are divided as subthemes given the responses of the participants.

Educational Purposes of the Instructor. Amongst the comments shared by participants, common patterns of ideas can be noticed that can be divided into three columns - nurture of a citizen with good manners, professionals for society, and provision of understanding and knowledge of IR field. These ideas are manifested in the phrases expressed by the participants such as “decent citizen”, “uşaqlara düzgün dəyər şkalasını vermək” [cultivate proper set of values], “cəmiyyətimizə yaxşı politoqlar, siyasətçilər qazandırım” [raise good politicians and political scientists for our society], “to get them to understand more about how to think like a participant, or an analyst too”, “biliklərin ötürülməsi” [transfer of knowledge], “müəllimin verdiyi elmi-nəzəri biliklərdir” [theoretical knowledge that is what the teacher yields], “tələbələri sahədən xəbərdar etmək” [to make students aware of the field]. On the pursued educational purpose, Mr. Haqverdiyev described as follows:

That's very important to get them to prepare for their professional lives, whatever they end up doing in life. And then, on the basis of this, I've designed my syllabi to reflect this. So the readings, the explanations of the course, we have role playing exercises that I will tell you more about the types of papers I get them to write, and all that

stuff, it's all geared to get them to understand more about how to think like a participant, or an analyst too.

This statement distinctively demonstrates the direct influence of the philosophy the instructor embraces on the methods he utilizes in class.

Beliefs about the Role of the Instructor. The participants had different perspectives regarding the role the instructor should play that include “sırf olaraq insanı tərbiyələndirən insan” [the one who rears an individual], şəxsiyyət kimi nümunə olmaq [be a role model as a personality], müəllim olmaq valideyn olmaqdır [being an instructor means being a parent]. Mr. Islamzade, Mr. Ibrahimov, and Mr. Yusifli concur that because of technological advancements, the student is capable of reaching a large amount of information and reading independently, which makes the instructor unnecessary from the perspective of delivering information. Mr. Islamzada said, “Əslində biz onlara nəşə öyrətmirik biz onlara elm öyrətmirik. Sadəcə elmi necə öyrənmək olar bunu öyrədirik”. [Indeed, we do not teach them science. We just teach them how to learn]. As said, he mentioned that he tries to create an environment where students will be able to freely share contradictory views and debate. Having said that, he also expressed that to explain important terminology and due to student’s lack of prior knowledge, the lectures take place in classes.

Contrarily, Mr. Suleymanli and Mr. Safarli view the role of the teacher in delivering knowledge and being a parent to the student, respectively. Also, Mr. Safarli indicated that he tries to deliver the required content to the students. On the other hand, Mr. Axundov, who teach at different universities, said that the role he assumes varies given the level of the audience, so he can be a dictator, interpreter, leader, adviser, but the best situation he prefers is the role of an advisor in the class. As a result, the instructors have different perspectives on the role of the teacher and have influence on the practices they prefer to apply during the class.

Perceived Effectiveness of the Methods. Based on the data, interviewees' beliefs on the effectiveness of methods in terms of understanding of concepts, terminology by students, and development of communication, critical, analytical, writing, and collaboration skills, better classroom management, and student engagement were revealed as a common pattern among the responses indicated by the participants. Therefore, in the present subtheme, instructor's beliefs upon methods such as lecture and exam, and active learning methods are going to be depicted.

Lecture. The data suggest that lecturing is an integral part of the class, and several participants' responses (Mr. Garayev, Mr. Haqverdiyev, Mr. Islamzada, Mr. Jabbarli, Mr. Safarli, Mr. Aghayev) suggest that delivering a lecture is effective to provide an explanation to the students of the necessary theoretical concepts, terminology and details that are not mentioned in reading materials, whereby the student is informed about the content. Regarding using lecturing and its usefulness, Mr. Haqverdiyev expressed:

“I do lecturing, why, because I think it's sometimes pedagogically very useful to do because you are able to convey information. Conveying information is genuinely important, or a particular analysis of the information, or an explanation of the readings or whatever.”

Additionally, he stated that lectures help to ensure that students are on the same level, specifically, those who completed the readings and those who did not have the same background information so that the systematic discussions can be further held.

The rest of the participants shared common opinions. Also, Mr. Safarli indicated that compared to preparing a presentation where students distract with additional questions, the lecture helps to hold the control over the process and cover the intended material. As a whole, given the fact the lecture provides requisite information that students should know and easy for an instructor to control the class, the lecture is deemed to be helpful and preferred.

Additionally, Mr. Aghayev mentioned that since most of the materials related to IR are in English, and students lack foreign language skills, he is lecturing the main parts of the international books. Another common aspect discerned in the comments of the interviewees include the unpreparedness of students to the class such as not reading required materials which makes instructors hold lectures, however, since it is more related to student-related factor, elaborated discussion apropos of this is provided beneath in the theme named “Student-related factors”.

Additionally, the way of lecture delivery was a matter discussed by the participants to make it more interactive and draw students’ attention. Mr. Haqverdiyev argued, “You can't be like, you know, in the movies, where the guy is just talking data and everybody's asleep. That's useless”, and further he added, “People remember those stories, and then they remember the lesson.” Likewise, other instructors (Mr. Suleymanli, Mr. Islamzade, Mr. Ibrahimov, Mr. Axundov, Mr.Samedov, Mr. Zeynalli) agreed on the effectiveness of interactive lectures for the sake of capturing students’ attention and learning. They included asking questions during the lecture, discussions, stories, and video materials as means of holding interactive lectures.

Also, some of them (Mr. Jabbarli, Mr. Aghayev, Mr. Rustamzada, Mr. Safarli) indicated that they conduct a lecture through presentations to give a more structured and systematic outlook, and to engage students’ attention to the class. That said, Mr. Haqverdiyev and Mr. Samedov had common views of the drawbacks of presentations. According to them, the bullet points and summarization provided in presentations impede development of systematic thinking and reading skills, and independent learning. Preferring a board instead of presentations, Mr. Haqverdiyev claimed, “Because it means that you can just think in bullet points, the worst thing that can happen to young people is to get them to think in bullet points already”. Mr. Yusifli, conversely, lectures through presentations in key points that hold

sufficient information for students. Considering it from the side of student's responsibility for learning, Mr. Samedov said:

The problem here is that it makes students a bit lazy, they don't read the original texts ... They expect these: the professors to entertain them, to summarize things for them. It dampens their intellectual curiosity, they're not interested in doing things independently.

Nevertheless, Mr. Samedov opts for lecturing through presentations with long texts due to the unpreparedness of students to the class. Accordingly, mostly student-related factors affect his decision, which is mentioned and elaborated in detail in the "Student-related factors" section.

Hence, it can be inferred that participants agree on the usage of different techniques mentioned above for interactive lecture to facilitate student's learning and engagement during the class, but have contrasting views regarding the lecturing through presentations. As a result, based on the assumptions the instructors hold, they apply corresponding practices are applied.

Considering the above-mentioned statements, the conclusion can be drawn that given the benefits of lecture and its way of delivery for learning from the instructors' perspectives, they select lectures and a certain way of its delivery. However, despite possessing some effective elements, Mr. Jabbarli said that lectures do not enhance self-confidence, communication skills, and expression of thoughts that can be accomplished through active learning methods.

Exam. The exam was one of the common discussion topics among participants who expressed different perspectives on the types of questions included there. Mr. Axundov and Mr. Islamzade clearly state that exams are not effective for students' learning. Mr. Islamzade said, "Mən imtahanların, bu tip yazılı imtahanların çox da bir şey öyrətdiyini inanmıram

tələbəyə [I do not believe that students learn much from the written exams]”. Alternatively, they shared that they give group projects, organize simulations during a mid-term exam, or put open-ended questions. Contrarily, Mr. Aghayev stated that open-ended questions are not distinct and create contradiction between the instructor and students, whereas closed-ended questions provide entire objectivity and certainty. Therefore, the perspective of the effectiveness of the method shapes the instructor’s selection.

Active Learning Methods. The findings show that active learning methods are used by instructors because they are deemed to be effective in achieving certain learning goals and engaging students into the learning process. For example, with respect to the benefits debates and discussions comprise, Mr. Islamzade said:

Hətta bəzən zarafata belə salıb dava zad çıxarmağa çalışıram aralarında ki, qoy o fierce debate-ləri [sic] yaşasınlar. Çünki başqa cür humanitar elmlərdə, sosial elmlərdə nəyisə öyrənmək mümkün deyil. Ancaq bu discussion-da [sic] mümkündür, ancaq bu analytical question-da [sic] mümkündür. [Even sometimes I try to strike up a quarrel between them so that they experience the fierce debates because otherwise, it is impossible to learn anything in humanities, social sciences. It is possible solely through discussions, through analytical questions.]

Similarly, Mr. Zeynalli stated that simulation and debates help students to prepare better, read more, step into the shoes of the diplomat, learn argumentation, and teamwork skills. Regarding the teamwork skills, Mr. Islamzada and Mr. Islamzada, Mr. Rustamzada and Mr. Jabbarli shared that they devise collaborative methods (group projects, debates, simulations) so that it will help them to enhance their interaction skills within a group. In addition to the improvement of learning skills, Mr. Jabbarli also added that simulations increase motivation of students to study. He said, “Yəni görürsən ki, onlarda daha da motivasiya yaradır, daha həvəslə, deməli, iştirak etmək istəyirlər.” [You can notice that it

increases their motivation, they are willing to participate with enthusiasm.] Hence, it can be concluded that instructors adopt active learning methods because they develop students' communication skills and engage them into the lesson.

It can be concluded that once the instructors notice the effectiveness of methods in terms of facilitating learning and raising engagement of students, they decide to select and administer in practice. Another major factor influencing instructors' decision is students' characteristics that are detailly discussed below.

Student-Related Factors

The discussion of factors relating to students' motivation, attitudes, and prior knowledge and abilities was a recurring theme throughout the participant interviews. Instructors used expressions such as “tələbələrin marağı” [interest of students], “fərqli” [different], “ingilis dili bacarıqları” [English language skills], “həvəssiz tələblər” [unmotivated students], “qiymət üçün oxumaq” [grade-oriented study], “hazırlıqsız tələbələr” [unprepared students] and “yola vermək” [slap-dash way of doing] as they were describing various types of student characteristics that were considered when deciding teaching strategies. Although the majority of participants indicated that student-related factors influence their teaching decisions, some instructors did not make significant changes to their teaching methods.

Students' Prior Knowledge. Findings show that the knowledge and skills of students affect instructor decision of teaching method, especially for the first-year students. Several instructors (Mr. Rustamzadə, Mr. Samedov, Mr. Zeynalli and Mr. Axundov) agreed that, due to the lack of knowledge and skills, they were compelled to modify their teaching method. Mr. Zeynalli, who has taught several universities, mentioned that when student knowledge and skills are inadequate, the instructor is forced to apply traditional teaching methods. He said, “Səviyyə çox aşağı olur. Sən məcbursan ki, ona otursan bir dərsi mühazirəni deyəsən

və o da sənə deyəcək. Gedəcək qoyacaq kitabı qabağına, gəlib əzbərləyib seminar kimi cavab verəcək.” [The level is very low. You have to give a lecture, and he will retell. He will take the book, put it in front of him, memorize and answer the lesson as it happens in the seminar.]

Mr. Islamzada and Mr. Samedov stated that students lack analytical skills. Mr. Islamzada, who taught the first years, mentioned that analytical skills can be developed by posing analytical questions on exams and during class discussions. On the other hand, Mr. Samedov stated that students lacked the ability to answer analytical questions during the exams. He said, “They are asking me not to include analytical questions”. The findings suggest that instructors have differing perspectives on how to address students' lack of analytical skills. Although instructors mostly feel responsible for the learning of their students, they are not always feeling obligated to teach students additional skills that could have been taught before they entered university or during their first years of study.

Several instructors (Mr. Safarli, Mr. Yusifli, Mr. Samedov) stated that the lack of language skills of their students influenced their instructional decisions. Lack of language skills of students prevents instructors in the Azerbaijani IR program from providing additional and up-to-date materials to students. According to data, the problem with the English IR program is that students lack the ability to express themselves. For instance, Mr. Samedov stated, “They can't even formulate a sentence in English.” The findings indicate that instructor's decisions regarding classroom discussion and written assignments are influenced by students' lack of language skills.

Student Beliefs and Attitudes. The analysis of the interview responses shows that the beliefs and attitudes of university students regarding the learning process influence the teaching decisions of instructors. Changes in student attitudes toward learning were a common theme among the participant responses. Several participants (Mr. Samedov, Mr. Haqverdiyev, and Mr. Yusifli) concurred that students prefer quick information to reading

lengthy, complex sentences. Mr. Samedov said, “They just read ... very short things and social media. This is how we consume information in this social media age, we become too lazy.” According to Mr. Yusifli, the demand for quick information should be met by providing students with what they want. Mr. Haqverdiyev, on the other hand, stated that he did not cultivate students' learning attitudes toward brief information in his teaching decisions because he views such attitudes as problematic. As this information pertains to the instructor's pedagogical philosophy, it has been discussed in greater detail in an earlier section of this paper. The findings suggest that instructors with an objective of catching up with students' ongoing improvements tend to modify their teaching methods based on student satisfaction and provide short information. Others attempted to challenge students and alter their perspective.

Student Motivation. Student motivation is another factor that affects the instructor's teaching decision. Several instructors reported adjusting their teaching methods based on student motivation. For example, Mr. Ibrahimov mentioned, “Darıxdırıcı aparmaq istəmirəm, ona görə ki, tələbələr sizə hər şeyi bağışlayırlar amma darıxdırıcı dərsi sizə heç vaxt bağışlamazlar.” [I don't want my class to be boring because the students will forgive you for anything, but they will never ever forgive you for the boring class.] Many instructors expressed the way reacting to lack of motivation was having entertaining classes. Mr. Islamzada shared his experience of dealing with participation issues.

Çalışıram ki, daha şən daha zarafatlı olaq ki, bir birimizə açıq olaq. Və onlar da mənə nəsə sual verməkdən çəkinməsinlər. Çünki bilirəm ki, ... hesitation-ı [sic] olan tələbələr çoxdur ki, sızılırlar müəllimdən, sual vermirlər. Bu bariyeri aradan qaldırmağa çalışıram. Bunun mənim üçün başqa mənfəətli tərəfləri də olur. Belə də olanda özlərini çox yaxın hiss elədikləri zamanlar da olur. [I try to make jokes so that we will be open to each other, and they will not hesitate to pose questions to me. I

know that many students are hesitated, they hold back and do not ask questions. I want to remove this barrier, but it has some negative sides. In this case, there are times when they feel too close to me.]

Mr. Islamzada expressed difficulties that could arise while trying to motivate students. Mr. Jabbarli mentioned that it is sometimes just impossible to motivate students who came to university “yola vermək üçün” [to do in a slap-dash way] as they do not understand essence of being in a university.

Grade-Oriented Attitude. Several respondents stated that the fact that students attend university for the sake of grades influenced instructor decision-making. Despite the fact that instructors emphasize that learning should not be grade-based, many instructors were forced to assign grades to all tasks and class activities. Mr. Zeynalli believed that if interaction was not graded, students would be passive during lectures. He said, “Ola bilər bir iki tələbə aktivlik göstərsin müəhazirə zamanı, sual cavabda. 90 faizi göstərməyəcək çünki qiymətləndirmədə o yoxdursa onu eləməyəcək.” [One or two students will probably participate during the lecture and question-answering. 90 percent of them will not participate since if participation is not graded, he will not get involved.] Similarly, Mr. Islamzada said “Tələbələr daha çox qiymətləndirmə ilə maraqlandıqları üçün, mən active participation qiymətini yuxarı verirəm”. [Since students are mainly interested in grades, I give the high score for active participation.] To encourage students to actively participate in lectures, instructors often assign grades for classroom discussion. Mr. Samedov, on the other hand, mentioned that assessment became impossible during the class discussion. He said, “Since my students tend to be very passive, I don't have a grade for participation.”

Preparedness and Active Participation. All participants in the study reported having issues with students who do not read assigned materials. The findings of this study indicate that the preparedness of the students in the classrooms compels the majority of instructors to

modify their instructional approach. Some instructors believe they are accountable for students' lack of preparation. Mr. Yusifli said that “Tələbələr əgər dərsə hazırlaşmırlarsa deməli, mən nəyisə düz etməmişəm”. [If the students are not preparing for class, then I did something wrong.] Similarly, Ibrahimov stated that after a pandemic, student unpreparedness is more severe. He claimed that instructors were unable to catch up with the changes that occurred with students.

Biz elə bildik 2019-cü ilə qayıdırıq, pre-pandemiyanın vaxtına amma biz bir şeyi başa düşmədik ki, biz bu iki il ərzində 20-ci, 21-ci il ərzində biz elə transformasiyadan keçmişik ki, hansı ki biz 20 ildə keçmədik, biz onu iki ildə keçmişik, burdaki olan transformasiya, uşaqlarda və sairə. ... Mən ona kitab verəndə ki oxu o kitab oxumayacaq, maraqsızdı ona kitab oxumaq. [We thought that we are returning to the year of 2019, to the pre-pandemic period, but we did not recognize the fact that went through such a transformation in these two years, in 2020 and 2021. The transformation that we did not have in twenty years, we underwent in two years, the transformation here, in students and so on... When I give him a book to read, he will not read, as reading a book is not interesting to him.]

On the other hand, some instructors hold students accountable for their own learning. Data show that adjustments were still being made in considering the fact that students do not wish to read. Mr. Samedov stated that students' lack of preparation caused them to lecture more. He claims that because his students do not read, he was required to provide more information during lectures, resulting in less interactive classes.

If the students don't do the readings, then how are we supposed to do class discussions. ... Since they don't do the readings, I have to put more effort into my slides, because this is going to be the only material that they will read, actually.

Mr. Haqverdiyev argued that the teaching method should be motivating for students to change their learning attitudes. He said, “You reward people who've done the reading and who engage, and you and you shame those who haven't, but you do it in a fun enough way that they don't end up hating you”. In addition, he stated that the unpreparedness of students prompts some instructors to make unnecessary modifications to their instructional strategy.

You can be punitive about this by giving, you know, reading quizzes, which are idiotic, insulting and time consuming, for grading. Or you can figure out how to work with the fact that they're not going to do all the reading.

Mr. Haqverdiyev mentioned a demonstration of a teaching method that does not require student feedback during the lecturing part of the lesson but does involve discussion at the end to help students convey the knowledge. In the previous section of the findings, this type of teaching method was reviewed in detail.

The data demonstrate two distinct approaches to class preparedness among students. Some instructors believed that they bear responsibility for their students' motivation to learn and, in lieu of giving reading materials, seek alternative methods. Others believed it is the responsibility of the student, and they motivate students to read.

Plagiarism and Ghost Writing. According to the results of the interviews, plagiarism and ghostwriting are among the factors that require instructors to be cautious with written assignments. Mr. Haqverdiyev said, “I'm not interested in reading academic papers ..., because it's easier to plagiarize.” He expressed application of tasks requiring original thought from students. Mr. Haqverdiyev and Mr. Sherifzada perceived the oral presentation of written assignments as a means of coping with ghostwriting and plagiarism. In addition, Mr. Haqverdiyev stated, “I always indicate in the course outline that I reserve the right to administer the exam orally or to engage with the student after he or she has submitted the

paper.” Due to the risk of plagiarism, Mr. Islamzada rarely assigned written assignments to his students.

Essay [sic] yada bir hər hansısa bir writing project [sic] demək olar vermərəm. Çünki ədalətli qiymətləndirmə apara bilmərəm. Nəticə etibarı ilə də vermərəm və çox təəssüf edirəm öz elədiyim şeyə, çox uğursuz hesab edirəm öz elədiyim şeyi. [I almost do not assign any essay or writing project to them because I cannot conduct a fair assessment. As a result, I do not assign, and I feel desperately sorry for what I am doing. I consider the way I am doing very unsuccessful.]

The factors of plagiarism and ghostwriting force instructors to modify their instructional decisions. While some instructors believe they have discovered an effective method for combating plagiarism and achieving the desired results, others are dissatisfied with their approach.

Students’ Feedback. The data suggest that students’ feedback does not serve as the main factor in instructors’ decisions for the methods. interviewees’ comments show that the students’ course evaluation is not of much use in the modification of the methods. Mr. Rustamzade and Mr. Yusifli said they consider students’ feedback for further improvements, whereas several instructors (Mr. Islamzade, Mr. Haqverdiyev, Mr. Sherifzada, Mr. Ibrahimov, Mr. Garayev, Mr. Samedov) expressed that students’ feedback has rarely influenced their choice of methods. Amongst the reasons for that, the participants included a few students filling in the course evaluation forms and a lack of students’ specificity and objectivity in comments they share about the instructor’s methods. The common patterns across the interviewees’ responses were the linkage between the grades students get and their evaluation of the instructor. To illustrate, Mr. Samedov said, “If you are a tough grader, they will probably write the letter with the criticism”. He also added that other instructors’

evaluation is more helpful than students' evaluation. Likewise, Mr. Garayev shared his experience with students' feedback:

İlk illərdə, müəllimləyə başlayan ilk illərdə çox eliyirdim... sonra dayandardım çünki yararlanma bilmirdim. Çox qarışıq olurdu. Hər cür feedback gəlir. Çox bəyənen tələbədən, çox narazı tələbələyə gədər. Və bunlar əksəriyyəti çox mütanasib gəlirdi ... tələbənin dərindən nə qədər uğurlu keçməsi ilə asılı olurdu. [In the initial years of my teaching, I used to do a lot. Then, I stopped because I could not benefit from them. They were very entangled. I was receiving all kinds of feedback – ranging from highly content student to highly dissatisfied student. And majority of them were highly correlated with... it depended on the academic achievement of the student.]

Meanwhile, the instructors also mentioned that once the students' feedback entails serious reflection, then they can be helpful for future changes. In this regard, Mr. Haqverdiyev commented, "If the evaluations are thoughtful, if you see that there's actually a reflective element then it's worth reading". The views of other instructors (Mr. Islamzade, Mr. Sherifzada, Mr. Ibrahimov, Mr. Garayev) about the usefulness of the students' course evaluations were common. Hence, it can be inferred that students' feedback is not the main factor in determining the instructor's selection of method.

Instructor's Involvement in Professional Growth

The common pattern discerned across the responses of the participants is the influence of engagement of the instructor in professional growth that enables him to enhance awareness and application of contemporary methods. Speaking about the awareness of the methods, Mr. Jabbarli stated:

Bəzən müəllim bilmir yeni baxış açısı var, yeni metodlar mövcuddur və o metodlarla tanış olmağı üçün müəllimin təlim proseslərinə cəlb olunmasında fayda var. [Sometimes, the instructor is not aware that there is a new approach, and new

methods exist. And to get informed of these methods, the instructor's engagement in professional trainings is of favour.]

This statement demonstrates the significance of professional development in being aware of the latest methods, and the need for an instructor's support. Some instructors (Mr. Zeynalli, Mr. Jabbarli, Mr. Rustamzade, Mr.Samedov, Mr. Garayev, Mr. Ibrahimov, Mr. Sherifzada) shared about their participation in training programs abroad or teaching experience as visiting scholars as well as purposeful dedication to the research of international practices that they consider to be helpful to learn and decide to use.

Training and Teaching Abroad. Several instructors (Mr. Rustamzade, Mr. Sherifzada, Mr. Samedov, Mr. Zeynalli) mentioned that participation in international training and working as an instructor abroad aided them to get familiar with new methods and change their way of teaching. For example, Mr. Sherifzada shared his change during his teaching experience in the following way:

Məsələn, simulation-ləri [sic], modulları mən oralarda gördüm və gəlib burda tətbiq elədim hamısını. Hamısı da uğurlu nəticələr verdi. Yəni o Avropa universtetlərində olanda mən yenə gördüm orda, onların o dərs keçmək qaydası, tələbələrə işləmək qaydası və s. [For example, I learned about simulations and modules there and applied them all here, and all of them gave successful results. When I was in European universities, I observed once again their way of teaching, working with students and so forth].

Likewise, other instructors indicated the value the training or teaching experience abroad added to the increase of awareness of teaching methods. Apart from that, some of them discussed the research of methods in an independent way.

Independent Professional Growth. To stay up to date with the latest innovations occurring in education and be informed about the methods utilized in the International Relations discipline, some instructors (Mr. Axundov, Mr. Ibrahimov, Mr. Garayev, Mr.

Samedov) use various digital resources. In this regard, Mr. Axundov said, “Mən bütün YouTube-da [sic], bütün universitetlərdə IR-lə [sic] bağlı leksiyalar var. Onların hamısını izləmişəm.” [YouTube has lectures from all universities related to IR. I watched them all.] Similarly, Mr. Samedov and Mr. Garayev indicate browsing the practices used in IR at top universities.

Based on the above-mentioned statements, it can be inferred that professional growth serves as a factor influencing the decision-making of the instructor, as it enables him to broaden his awareness of the effective methods and adopt the suitable one for the context from a variety of them.

Course Content

The data shows that the course content plays an influential role in determining the teaching method and its format. For example, while describing the portrait analysis, Mr. Zeynalli stated that he utilizes this method because the theoretical nature of the course does not allow debates to be held. Therefore, he assigns portrait analysis as an assignment task for students. Similar views were expressed by Mr. Jabbarli who stated that the format of simulations changes depending on the course. In this respect, Mr. Haqverdiyev said that since his course is practice-oriented, therefore, he focuses on the practical aspects, and it is one of the reasons for giving students to write decision-memo. Hence, depending on the characteristics of the course, the method is accordingly selected.

Institutional context

The influence of policies within an institution was also found to be a recurring pattern amongst the participants' responses. Mr. Axundov, Mr. Rustamzade, and Mr. Yusifli who teach at University A indicated that they are not satisfied with the division of classes into lectures and seminars, and consider that student's assessment should be possible to conduct not only during the seminars, but during the lecture as well. Mr. Axundov can decide on the

methods, and type of questions for the mid-term exam, lecture, seminar, and individual assignments of students excluding the written final exam which he reckons to be ineffective for checking the capabilities of the students studying in the diplomacy, but he is not entitled to make amendments. Ms. Rustamzade indicated that certain restrictions are applied to the format of questions included in the exam. The questions of instructors educating similar course should be similar which she considers to be not pertinent to Social Sciences.

Similar attitudes are traced in the responses of Ms. Zeynalli and Mr. Sherifzada who are employed at University B. Ms. Zeynalli argues, “Qiymətləndirmə siyasəti çox vacibdir. Qiymətləndirmə siyasətinə görə də müəllimə qiymətləndirmə siyasətində azadlıq verilməsi çox vacibdir”. [The assessment policy is crucial. Considering this, granting freedom to the teacher in the assessment policy is highly important] Likewise, Mr. Sherifzada claims that the instructors need academic freedom to feel comfortable and freely conduct their classes. He said, “Müəllim müəyyən cızırlar [var] ki, hə, bu xətdən bu yana çıxmaq olmaz. Bunu belə deməlisən, onu elə deməlisən” [The instructors cannot go beyond certain existing lines. So, you are supposed to talk as you are told to]. In the same vein, Mr. İslamzade who teaches at University C stated that academic freedom is vital so that instructors and students are able to share their thoughts without constraints, which is helpful to create debates and learning accordingly. On the other side, Mr. Seferli’s, the instructor University A, shared that the instructors are demanded to conduct the lessons on the certain topics at the beginning of the semester.

In conclusion, although the institutional context does not have major influence on the selection of methods, the restrictions in assessment policy, format of final exam, and academic freedom restricts instructor’s possibilities and affects the learning environment within a class.

To conclude, the teaching methods were revealed based on the documents and data derived from the interviews. The instructors favor the usage of active learning methods to foster writing, critical, analytical, collaborative skills of students. Relying on the participants' responses, the factors contributing to the teacher's decision on selection of methods were identified, including personal teaching philosophy, student-related factors, instructor's involvement in professional growth, course content, and institutional context.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The principle underlying the learning-centered approach is incentivizing student's learning. Accordingly, it embraces both the lecture and active learning methods to be employed depending on the value that the method contributes to the student's learning. Specifically, the lecture is beneficial to convey theoretical underpinnings of the course, whilst active learning methods enable to develop practical, analytical, reflective skills. Relying on the literature, the factors influencing faculty's decision-making include the components such as personal beliefs, needs of students, and contextual factors. The indigenous literature demonstrates that conventional methods constitute a major part of the teaching, and the integration of interactive methods is not entirely accomplished.

To contribute to the increase of effectiveness of learning in the International Relations program, the research pursued to reveal utilized teaching methods in the undergraduate level of the program, and the factors influencing faculty's decision-making process while selecting the particular method. The study was conducted from three universities interviewing fourteen teachers instructing the courses connected to International Relations discipline and reviewing syllabuses. The collected data reveal the methods used by the instructors, and consisted with the literature, factors influencing faculty's method selection include personal teaching philosophy, student-related factors, instructor's involvement in professional growth, course content, and institutional factors. The personal teaching philosophy, and students' characteristics, namely prior knowledge, students' motivation, unpreparedness, proclivity to plagiarism mostly affects the instructors who differently handle student-related factors resulting in applying or refraining from learning-centered approach.

Based on the derived findings, the guideline about learning-centered approach, teaching methods, and Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation (ADDIE) model is designed that may help teachers to design classes effective for learning. The guideline

aims to demonstrate a learning-centered approach that may change their personal assumptions regarding teaching. Also, to address student-related factors that stay as challenges for the instructors, various methods are proposed. Finally, the guideline finished with the description of the ADDIE model for the practical application of learning-centered teaching.

With respect to the institutional factors, instructor's involvement in professional growth, and student's feedbacks, the following recommendations are proposed to the institutions:

- The higher educational institutions are recommended to provide flexibility to the instructors in choosing the assessment techniques of students and determining the score for the defined assignment.
- The instructors should be continuously provided professional training organized within an institution to help them better organize the classes, increase awareness of the contemporary teaching practices, and select the most suitable technique considering the course content and learning outcomes.
- The student evaluation forms do not entirely demonstrate the genuine performance of the instructor. Therefore, in addition to the student's course evaluation, it is suggested to design a peer-to-peer evaluation system to reflect on the methods and make concomitant modifications.

Chapter 6: Final Product

The purpose of this research is to explore the pedagogical approaches used in undergraduate International Relations courses and investigate the factors that impact the choices made by instructors regarding teaching methods. Research aimed to find the factors that influence instructor's selection of passive and active learning methods. Based on the findings of this study and the literature review we developed a guideline titled "Guideline for Learning-centered teaching".

The purpose of this guideline is to support instructors in their instructional endeavors by equipping them with effective teaching methods. The ultimate goal is to enhance students' understanding of various subjects and their ability to acquire practical skills. By providing instructors with these methods, the guideline seeks to optimize the learning experience and foster students' comprehension of knowledge and practical skill development.

This guideline was developed using a learning-centered teaching which aims to cultivate student deep and independent learning by taking into account the learning needs of students. This guideline includes evidence-based learning-centered practices that can help to ensure that teaching resources and efforts are focused on strategies that are most likely to result in positive student outcomes.

The guideline presents effective teaching methods aimed at promoting student learning. It offers an introduction to these methods and a flexible rubric that instructors can adapt to their own preferences, class size, session duration, and other relevant factors. According to our research, the primary concern lies in the suitability of the methods employed by instructors. A secondary issue pertains to the clarity of the rubric provided to students, which emerges from data gathered through interviews and analysis of instructor syllabi. The present section discusses the critical review of the methods used by the instructors, thereby providing the

rationality lying behind choosing and including discussion leadership and simulations in the guideline.

Socratic Dialogue

The aim of the assignment, employed in the theory-based courses for the freshman and sophomore students, is to provoke them to jot down their contradictory views in a written form on the philosophical and political issue that is concerning them. Initially, the instructor divides the students into pairs. Thereafter, the students choose the political question interesting to them to ponder and debate upon, and write their contrasting views in a form of dialogue. The assignment helps to improve their critical thinking, collaborative, and writing skills, and avoids the chances of ghostwriting. However, with the emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) bots, there is a high likelihood of resorting to plagiarism by students. Therefore, the issue of high probability of plagiarism staying in front of the present assignment to be handled diminishes student's learning to a great extent.

Decision Memo

The aim of the assignment, assigned in practice-based courses for senior students, is to enable them to step into the shoes of the practitioners by yielding practical action plan to the particular political issue. The decision memo consists of two parts, namely from the written part and role-playing. The written part of the paper constitutes choosing a political issue, provide the rationale for the significance of the issue, and outline the recommended course of action for the problem. It is assumed that the decision memo is presented to one of the public figures from the high hierarchical position. Therefore, the written part is followed by the scenario, namely oral presentation of the decision memo by the student to the public individual, who can be a student or the teacher in this case. The purpose of the oral presentation also constitutes combat the potentiality of plagiarism and ghostwriting. As with Socratic dialogue, AI bot creates pedagogical challenge for the instructor while assigning

decision memo. Nevertheless, the role-playing which is aimed to uncover the ghostwriting case can be helpful to ensure the originality of the student's work.

Book Review

The aim of the assignment, given to the senior students, is to encourage students to read books related to International Relations and give them the opportunity to critique the book author. The instructor suggests ten-fifteen books to read that the students should choose one of them to complete by the end of the semester. Thereafter, they should write a five-page essay consisting of summary and critique of the book. The assignment is helpful to improve the reading, writing, and critical skills of the student. The challenge stemmed from AI bot is pertinent to the assignment as well as the students may read the short version of the book. However, once the oral presentation of the Book Review is conducted, the instructor may detect plagiarism, and reading of the student.

Portrait Analysis

The aim of portrait analysis is to enable students to gain rich information about the political events happening in the history. In theory-based courses such as history where debates are challenging to be conducted, an alternative method used is portrait analysis. Students are assigned to analyze the political portraits of public figures to gain insights into their ideologies, political processes, and decision-making within a specific historical context. By studying the life and actions of these individuals, students can better understand the political decisions they made and the factors that influenced their development.

Applying aesthetic approaches in teaching politics or international relations may not yield favorable results because this type of analysis often lacks empirical evidence (Bleiker, 2009). Giving excessive attention to individuals may lead to a neglect of the contextual factors that played a significant role in producing specific outcomes.

Alternative History

Alternative history, used in history-based courses, involves creating an imagined timeline by altering a particular historical event and making predictions based on historical facts. However, alternative history assignments have limitations due to their lack of supporting evidence, neglect of important historical events, and reliance on simplistic assumptions.

Quizzes

Based on our research, there exist differing viewpoints regarding the use of quizzes as a means of enhancing student readiness for a class. Some instructors view quizzes as a graded task that encourages students to engage with course materials, while others perceive them as a trivial and time-consuming activity. Taking a learner-centered approach to assessment, it is crucial to consider both student learning and the evaluation of their knowledge. Quizzes can be employed to assess students' understanding and ensure their active participation in reading. Therefore, it can be argued that the implementation of quizzes may not align with the intended purpose of our guideline.

Simulations, Debates, and Discussions

Simulations and debates are used among participants, and they assist students to step into the shoes of the diplomat and to get more rich information about political situations and different countries. The debates constitute a major part of the student assessment, and it was stated that students are assessed based on their performance in simulations during mid-term exams. On the other hand, creating a thorough rubric for simulations and debates can be a time-consuming process.

Discussion Leadership

In our study, some instructors implemented a teaching method that involved students discussing assigned readings. However, these activities did not result in favorable learning

outcomes, as they mainly focused on rote memorization and regurgitation of information. Although some instructors claimed to prioritize students' skills, their syllabi lacked explicit descriptions of these skills. To address this issue, the proposed guideline suggests a discussion leadership assignment, where students give speeches that are assessed based on criteria such as content coverage, analytical skills, engagement with the audience, and body language. This assignment aims to encourage deeper understanding and the development of important communication skills.

Conclusion

The teaching methods used by the instructors such as Socratic dialogue, Book review, Decision memo, Portrait Analysis, Alternative history are considered to be active learning methods helpful to improve student's higher order thinking skills. However, due to the latest technological advancements the students are likely to use AI bots while writing assignments, the instructors may encounter acute pedagogical and methodological crisis such as plagiarism and ghostwriting which is hardly possible to detect. The quizzes do not completely pertain to the learning-centered teaching methods for the reason that they do not have long-lasting learning effect and ensure deep understanding of the student of the concepts. As to the Socratic Dialogue and Book Review, even though they are highly helpful to develop critical thinking and writing skills of the students, the learners are predisposed to plagiarism and ghostwriting considering the written format of the assignments. The decision memo has the effective structure to minimize the risk of plagiarism as much as possible. Finally, the Portrait analysis used in the course of history is helpful to develop research and analytical skills of students. Considering all this, the guideline suggests discussion-based methods such as discussion leadership and simulations relying on empirical studies that can be applied for any type of course and level of students. The purpose of the guideline is to engage students in the classes, development of research, critical, analytical, and public speaking skills, and eliminate any potential risk of plagiarism. Due to ethical considerations, some of the learning-centered teaching methods used by the local instructors such as Decision Memo, Book Review, and Portrait Analysis are not included in the guideline.

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Appendix A

Survey questions for graduates

1. Sorğuda könüllü şəkildə iştirak etmək istəyirsinizmi?
 - Bəli
 - Xeyr
2. Zəhmət olmasa sorğunu dolduracaq dili seçin.
 - İngilis
 - Azərbaycan

Appendix A: Survey questions for graduates (translation in English)

1. Would you like to participate in survey voluntarily?
 - Yes
 - No
2. Please indicate the preferred language.
 - English
 - Azerbaijani

Survey designed in English

3. Please indicate the university you were studying in.
 - University X
 - University C
 - University A
4. How helpful were the classes to facilitate your learning of International Relations?
 - 1
 - 2
 - 3
 - 4
5. Please choose one of the following statements that holds true for you.
 - The classes were only lecture-based.
 - The classes are mainly lecture-based.

- Lectures and activities were used interchangeably in class.
- The classes were mainly activity-based where the discussions, peer/group works, debates, case studies, movies, reflections are mostly conducted
- The classes were only activity-based the discussions, peer/group works, debates, case studies, movies, reflections are solely conducted.

6. To what extent do you agree or disagree with these statements?

I learn better when classes involve only lectures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Strongly agree ○ Agree ○ Disagree ○ Strongly disagree
I learn better when classes involve only activities such as discussions, peer/group works, case studies, or reflections.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Strongly agree ○ Agree ○ Disagree ○ Strongly disagree
I learn better when classes involve both lectures and activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Strongly agree ○ Agree ○ Disagree ○ Strongly disagree

7. How was your learning assessed?

- Retelling a material
- Mid-term exam
- Final exam
- Individual assignment
- Simulations

- Presentations
- Group works
- Quizzes

8. Please choose one of the following statements that were mostly true for you while attending a class.

- I concentrated on listening to what the instructor said.
- I tried to write down as much as possible of what the instructor said.
- I joined peer/group activities.
- I did not listen to what the instructor said.
- I asked questions about any areas that were unclear.
- I retell the assigned reading material for home in front of the audience and get the grades.
- I joined discussions.

9. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the statement: I found value in what I have learned at the classes of International Relations.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

10. Please give description for the answer you gave in previous question. For example, if you chose agree, explain why.

11. What kind of suggestion would you give to improve IR classes?

Survey designed in Azerbaijani

3. Təhsil aldığınız universiteti seçin.
- Universitet X
 - Universitet C
 - Universitet A
4. Universitetdə keçirilən dərslər Beynəlxalq Münasibətləri öyrənməyinizə nə qədər kömək etdi?
- 1 2 3 4
5. Aşağıda qeyd olunan fikirlərdən doğru olanı seçin.
- Dərslər ancaq leksiyadan ibarət idi.
 - Dərslər əsasən leksiyadan ibarət idi.
 - Dərslərdə leksiyalar və aktivitələr bərabər şəkildə istifadə olunurdu.
 - Dərslər əsasən aktivitə yönümlü idi, hansı ki, müzakirələr, qrup işləri, debatlar, keyslər (case studies), filmlər, refleksiylar (reflections) dərslərin çox hissəini əhatə edirdi.
 - Dərslər ancaq aktivitə yönümlü idi, hansı ki, yalnız müzakirələr, qrup işləri, debatlar, keyslər (case studies), filmlər və refleksiylardan (reflections) ibarət idi.

6. Aşağıda qeyd olunan ifadələrlə nə dərəcədə razı və ya narazısınız?

Leksiyalardan ibarət olan dərslərdə daha yaxşı öyrənirəm.	<input type="radio"/> Tam razıyam <input type="radio"/> Razıyam <input type="radio"/> Narazıyam <input type="radio"/> Tam narazıyam
Müzakirələr, qrup işləri, keyslər (case studies), refleksiya (reflection) kimi aktivitələrdən ibarət olan dərslərdə daha yaxşı öyrənirəm.	<input type="radio"/> Tam razıyam <input type="radio"/> Razıyam <input type="radio"/> Narazıyam <input type="radio"/> Tam narazıyam
Həm leksiya həm aktivitələrdən ibarət olan dərslərdən daha yaxşı öyrənirəm.	<input type="radio"/> Tam razıyam <input type="radio"/> Razıyam <input type="radio"/> Narazıyam <input type="radio"/> Tam narazıyam

7. Öyrənmənin qiymətləndirilməsi necə aparılırdı?

- Dərsi danışmaq
- Ara imtahan
- Semestr imtahanı
- Sərbəst iş
- Simulyasiyalar
- Prezentsiyalar
- Qrup işləri

8. Zəhmət olmasa aşağıdakı qeyd olunan fikirlərdən doğru olanı seçin.

- Müəllimi dinləyirdim

- Leksiya zamanı qeydlər götürürdüm
- Qrup işlərinə qoşulurdum
- Leksiyaları dinləmirdim
- Qaranlıq qalan məqamları müəllimdən soruşurdum
- Müəllimin evə verdiyi oxunacaq materialı danışib qiymət alırdım

9. Göstərilən fikir ilə nə dərəcədə razısınız: Beynəlxalq Münasibətlər dərslərində öyrəndiklərimi dəyərli hesab edirəm.

- Tam razıyam
- Razıyam
- Narazıyam
- Tam narazıyam

10. Zəhmət olmasa yuxarıda verdiyiniz cavabı əsaslandırın. Məsələn, əgər razısınızsa, niyə?

11. BM dərslərini inkişaf etdirmək üçün hansı təkliflər var?

Appendix B

Tables

Table 1

Responses to survey question “Please choose one of the following statements that holds true for you”.

Please choose one of the following statements that holds true for you	
Statements	Responses
The classes were only lecture-based.	3
The classes are mainly lecture-based.	18
Lectures and activities were used interchangeably in class.	1
Lectures and activities were used interchangeably in class.	4
The classes were only activity-based the discussions, peer/group works, debates, case studies, movies, reflections are solely conducted.	0

Table 2

Responses to the survey question “Please choose one of the following statements that were mostly true for you while attending a class”.

Please choose one of the following statements that were mostly true for you while attending a class.	
Statement	Responses
I concentrated on listening to what the instructor said.	16
I tried to write down as much as possible of what the instructor said.	13
I joined peer/group activities.	4
I did not listen to what the instructor said.	4
I asked questions about any areas that were unclear.	9
I retell the assigned reading material for home in front of the audience and get the grade.	14
I joined discussions	1

Appendix C

Table 3

Participant information

Mr. Islamzade	<p>Teaching experience: less than 5 years</p> <p>Teaching discipline: Political science</p> <p>Position: Faculty Instructor</p> <p>International experience: Education abroad</p> <p>Place of employment: University C</p>
Mr. Haqverdiyev	<p>Teaching experience: less than 5 years</p> <p>Teaching discipline: Political science</p> <p>Position: Adjunct Instructor</p> <p>International experience: Education and work experience abroad</p> <p>Place of employment: University C</p>
Mr. Sherifzada	<p>Teaching experience: 20-30 years</p> <p>Teaching discipline: International Relations</p> <p>Position: Faculty Instructor</p> <p>International experience: Teaching experience abroad</p> <p>Place of employment: University B</p>
Mr. Ibrahimov	<p>Teaching experience: 10-20 years</p> <p>Teaching discipline: International Relations</p> <p>Position: Dean and Faculty Instructor</p> <p>International experience: Education abroad</p>

	Place of employment: University C
Mr. Yusifli	Teaching experience: less than 5 years Teaching discipline: International Relations Position: Adjunct Instructor International experience: No Place of employment: University A
Mr. Seferli	Teaching experience: 10-15 years Teaching discipline: International Relations Position: Faculty Instructor International experience: Short-term trainings abroad Place of employment: University A
Mr. Jabbarli	Teaching experience: 5-10 years Teaching discipline: International Relations Position: Faculty Instructor International experience: Education abroad Place of employment: University A
Mr. Axundov	Teaching experience: 10-15 years Teaching discipline: International Relations Position: Faculty Instructor International experience: Teaching experience abroad Place of employment: University A

Mr. Aghayev	<p>Teaching experience: 25-30 years</p> <p>Teaching discipline: International Relations</p> <p>Position: Faculty Instructor</p> <p>International experience: No</p> <p>Place of employment: University A</p>
Mr. Suleymanli	<p>Teaching experience: 5-15 years</p> <p>Teaching discipline: International Relations</p> <p>Position: Faculty Instructor</p> <p>International experience: No</p> <p>Place of employment: University A</p>
Mr. Garayev	<p>Teaching experience: 10-15 years</p> <p>Teaching discipline: International Relations</p> <p>Position: Faculty Instructor</p> <p>International experience: Education abroad</p> <p>Place of employment: University B</p>
Ms. Zeynalli	<p>Teaching experience: 25-30 years</p> <p>Teaching discipline: International Relations</p> <p>Position: Faculty Instructor</p> <p>International experience: Teaching experience, participation in international conferences</p> <p>Place of employment: University B</p>

Mr. Samedov	Teaching experience: 5-10 years Teaching discipline: International Relations Position: Faculty Instructor International experience: Education and teaching abroad Place of employment: University B
Ms. Rustamzade	Teaching experience: 20-25 years Teaching discipline: International Relations Position: Faculty Instructor International experience: Education and trainings abroad Place of employment: University A

Appendix D

Table 4

Factors directly influencing the instructors' selection of methods and strategies

Instructors	Factors		Methods (and strategies)	
	Theme	Sub		
Mr. Islamzada	P	EPI	Decent citizen	
	P	BRI	To teach how to learn	
	S	SPK	Poor analytical skills in students of lower courses are observed stemming from school.	Avoiding descriptive questions Used methods: Debates, posing analytical questions in class discussions and exams
	P	PEM	Humanities, social science is possible to be learned solely through discussions, analytical questions.	
	S	SPK	Low level of student's worldview forces the instructor to conduct the lecture to explain the topics that they should have known.	Lecture
	S	SM	The students are hesitated to ask questions.	Jokes, fun classes
	P	PEM	To improve students' low problem-solving skills within a team, lots of group projects are assigned.	Written group projects
		Illustrative phrases and paraphrasing of quotes		

	S	PG	Students resort to ghostwriting, and it is a prevalent pedagogical issue.	Avoiding assigning essays Used method: Socratic dialogue
	S	SM/GOA	Students are interested in grades.	High grade for participation
Mr. Haqverdiyev	P	EPI	The purpose is to teach students to think as practitioners, and demonstrate authentic environment of IR.	Decision memo
	S	PG	Plagiarism and ghostwriting is one of problems to deal with.	Oral examination
	S	PAP	The students do not read the materials and come unprepared to the class.	Interactive lecture Reward and punishment in a fun way
Mr. Ibrahimov	P	EPI	Instill values	
	S	PAP	Most of the students are not interested in reading materials, and discussions are not going in the class.	Avoiding assigning articles Used strategy: Short videos/readings in class
	S	SM	The students will not forgive the instructors for boring lessons.	Discussions

Mr. Samedov	S	EPI	The purpose is to develop critical and analytical thinking skills, and prepare specialists in the field for the country.	
	S	PAP	The students do not read assigned materials, and attend the classes unprepared.	Long texts in presentations
	S	SPK	The students have very poor writing skills due to being untaught at school.	No paper assignments
Mr. Axundov	P	EPI	The purpose is to raise citizen and individuals caring about this country and society	
	P	EPI	The analytical skills of students and his knowledge is important for me.	Open-ended analytical questions to check the student's comprehension and analytical skills
Mr. Jabbarli	P	EPI	The purpose is education of youth, to raise them prepared for the society and labor market, and as caring members of the society.	
	P	PEM	Group works improve collaborative skills of students and increase their motivation.	Simulations
Mr. Sherifzade	P	EPI	The purpose is to learn together, teach students how to learn.	
	IIPG	TTA	I learned about simulation through observing the classes in USA and Europe.	Simulations

	S	SPK	Students' lack of English language skills in English IR program.	Switch to Azerbaijani language
Ms. Zeynalli	P	EPI	The purpose is to raise professional politicians and political scientists for the society.	
	P	PEM	Simulations help to improve argumentation, teamwork and research skills, and form as politician	Simulations
	S	SPK	The students' low level of background knowledge forces the instructor to give lecture.	Lecture
	S	SM/GOA	The main interest of students are grades.	High grade for participation
	S	SPK	Students sometimes do not understand some points in English.	Switch to Azerbaijani language
Ms. Rustamzade	P	BRI	The purpose is to be the role model for the students	
	P	PEM	Caricatures help to grab students' attention.	Caricatures
	P	PEM	The debates propel students to read and learn more, and improve collaborative skills.	Debates

Mr. Qarayev	S	SM	Some students enter the university without motivation to study.	Assignments suitable to students' needs
Mr. Yusifli	P	EPI	The purpose is the employment of students in grand companies and acquisition of different certificates.	
	S	SBA	Students prefer to process quick information, and have fun.	Gamification/ crosswords, lectures with bullet points Positive incentives
Mr. Aghayev	P	EPI	The purpose is to lay crucial theoretical foundation in students, the practical knowledge will be obtained through life experience.	
	P	PEM	Closed-ended questions limit contradiction between student and instructor.	Closed-ended questions in exams
	S	SPK	The students in Azerbaijani IR program do not know foreign languages that impede them to read international materials.	Lecture
Mr. Safarli	P	EPI	The purpose is ensuring that students have the requisite foundational information about the events.	

	P	PEM	The lecture helps to cover large amount of content without distraction by questions posed by the audience.	Lecture
	S	PAP	Students are not interested in reading books. Therefore, presentations and group works are assigned to motivate them.	Presentations/group works
Mr. Suleymanli	P	EPI	The purpose is to transfer the knowledge, help students to learn IR, and political events.	
	P	PEM	The lecture and seminar system is effective.	Lecture and seminar

Personal Teaching Philosophy (P)

Educational Purposes of the Instructor (EPI)

Beliefs about the Role of the Instructor (BRI)

Perceived effectiveness of the methods (PEM)

Student-related factors (S)

Student prior knowledge (SPK)

Student beliefs and attitudes (SBA)

Student motivation (SM)

Grade-oriented attitude (GOA)

Preparedness and active participation (PAP)

Plagiarism and Ghost writing (PG)

Instructor's involvement in professional growth (IIPG)

Training and Teaching Abroad (TTA)

Appendix E

Invitation to the interview

Hörmətli iştirakçı,

Biz, ADA universitetinin "Təhsilin İdarə Edilməsi" üzrə magistr tələbələri, Fərid Arazzadə və Səbinə Həsənova, Azərbaycan universitetlərində Beynəlxalq Münasibətlər ixtisasının tədris metodları ilə bağlı tədqiqat aparırıq. Bununla bağlı (universitetin adı) universitetinin müəllim heyəti ilə müsahibə aparmaq və sizi müsahibəyə dəvət etmək istəyirik. Müsahibə təqribən 45 dəqiqə çəkəcək. Əgər tədqiqatımızda iştirak etməyə razısınızsa, müsahibə sizə uyğun olan vaxtda və məkanda keçiriləcək. Göndərilən sənəddə tədqiqat işimiz və müsahibə haqqında məlumatlar qeyd olunub.

Diqqətiniz üçün təşəkkürlər!

Hörmətlə,

Fərid Arazzadə

Səbinə Həsənova

Appendix E

Invitation to the interview

Dear Participant,

We, Sabina Hasanova and Farid Arazzada, the students of Master in Educational Management at ADA University are conducting a study on the practices used in teaching of subjects related to International Relations at Azerbaijani Universities.

We would like to interview the instructors of (the name of the university) and invite you to the interview. Your experience and perspectives on teaching methods in International Relations discipline will be valuable for us to learn. The interview will last 45 minutes, but it may change depending on the process of the interview, and it will take place in a mutually convenient location.

You can get familiar with the consent form which is attached to the email.

Thank you for your time and attention!

Regards,

Farid Arazzada

Sabina Hasanova

Appendix F

Consent form to participate in a research study

Hörmətli tədqiqat iştirakçısı,

Biz, Səbinə Həsənova və Fərid Arazzadə, ADA Universitetinin magistr tələbələri sizə tədqiqat işimizdə iştirak etməyinizlə bağlı müraciət edirik. Biz Azərbaycan universitetlərində Beynəlxalq Münasibətlər ixtisasının tədris metodlarını araşdırırıq. Bu məqsədlə tədqiqat üçün seçilən iştirakçılardan müsahibə alıb onların Beynəlxalq Münasibətlər ixtisasında istifadə olunan tədris metodları ilə bağlı fikir və düşüncələrini öyrənmək istəyirik. Həmçinin, sizdən sillabus və ya dərs planı kimi sənədlərin bölüşülməsi istəniləcək. Sizin təcrübəniz və fikirləriniz Beynəlxalq Münasibətlərdəki ixtisas fənnlərin effektiv tədris metodları haqqında öyrənməyə kömək edəcək və tədqiqat işimizə tövhə qatacaqdır.

Tədqiqatda iştirakınız tamamilə könüllüdür və əgər iştirak etməyə razısınızsa, bu sizin qırx beş dəqiqə vaxtınızı alacaq. Sizin istəyinizə uyğun olaraq vaxt, gün və məkan qərarlaşdırılıb təyin ediləcək. Müsahibə müddətində sizin səsiniz qeydə alınıb şəxsi kompyuterdə xüsusi şifrə ilə etibarlı şəkildə qorunaraq saxlanılacaq və transkripsiya olunacaq. Səsinizin yazılmasına razılığınız olmadığı təqdirdə müsahibə zamanı qeydlər götürüləcək. Müsahibədə paylaşacağınız məlumatlar digər şəxslərə ötürülməyəcək və tədqiqat işində məxfiliyi təmin etmək üçün sizin adınız dəyişdirilib kodlaşdırılacaq.

Müsahibədən sonra bəzi məqamları dəqiqləşdirmək üçün sizinlə telefon və ya elektron poçt vasitəsilə əlaqə saxlamağa ehtiyac duya bilərik. Bu əlaqə on dəqiqədən çox vaxtınızı almayacaq. Əgər tədqiqatla bağlı hər hansı sualınız yaranarsa Fərid Arazzadə və ya Səbinə Həsənova ilə elektron poçt vasitəsilə əlaqə saxlaya bilərsiniz (farazzada14719@ada.edu.az; shasanova14700@ada.edu.az).

İştirakçının razılığı: Mən bu tədqiqatla bağlı yuxarıda qeyd edilən məlumatları oxudum və könüllü olaraq bu tədqiqatda iştirakımı təsdiq edirəm.

İştirakınız və bizə ayırdığınız vaxt üçün təşəkkür edirik!

İştirakçının adı və soyadı _____

İştirakçının imzası _____

Tədqiqatçının adı və soyadı _____

Tədqiqatçının imzası _____

Tarix _____

Appendix F

Consent form to participate in a research study

Dear Participant,

This is an invitation to participate in Capstone research project conducted by Sabina Hasanova and Farid Arazzada, Master's students of ADA University. We are investigating the teaching methods used in International Relations discipline on the undergraduate level in Azerbaijani universities. For this purpose, we aim to interview the participants selected for the study and learn their experiences and perspectives about the teaching methods applied in the International Relations major. Also, you will be asked to share documents such as a syllabus or lesson plan. Your valuable experience and ideas will help us learn about effective teaching methods in International Relations major and, hereby, contribute to our research.

Your participation in the study is completely voluntary, and if you agree to participate, it will take forty-five minutes of your time. The time, day and place will be discussed and agreed on. The interview will be audio-recorded and transcribed, securely protected with a special password on a personal computer. In case of your dissent to the audio-record, the notes will be taken during the interview. The information you will share in the interview and your identity will not be disclosed to others, and your name will be changed and coded to ensure confidentiality in the research.

After the interview, we may need to contact you by phone or email to clarify certain aspects which will not take more than ten minutes. If you have any questions about the research, you can contact Farid Arazzada or Sabina Hasanova by e-mail (farazzada14719@ada.edu.az; shasanova14700@ada.edu.az).

Participant's Consent: I have read the above-mentioned information about this study and voluntarily agree to participate in the interview.

Thank you for your participation and your time!

Name and surname of the participant

Participant's signature

Name and surname of the researcher

Signature of the researcher

Date

Appendix G

Interview Protocol

Müsahibənin ümumi proseduru:

Əvvəlcə tədqiqatçılar iştirakçını salamlayacaq, özlərini təqdim edəcək və özləri haqqında, yəni təhsil dərəcəsi və proqramı haqqında məlumat verəcəklər. Daha sonra tədqiqatın mahiyyəti, məqsədi və qısa təsviri iştirakçıya izah ediləcək. Tədqiqatçılar müsahibənin keçiriləcək dili, müddətini, səs yazısı barədə, müsahibədən sonra tələb olunacaq sənəd, məlumatların istifadəsi və məxfilik tədbirləri haqqında məlumat verəcəklər. Sonda razılıq forması iştirakçıya bir daha oxunması və imzalanması üçün təqdim olunacaq. Razılıq formasını imzaladıqdan sonra tədqiqatçılar söhbətə başlayacaqlar.

Müsahibə sualları:

1. Nə üçün müəllim olmağı seçmişiniz? Müəllim olaraq, məqsəd və hədəfləriniz nədən ibarətdir?
2. Müəllim bu gün dərs zamanı hansı rolu oynayır və ya sizcə, əslində, hansı rolu oynamalıdır?
3. Tələbələrinizin tədris semestri ərzində fənnlərinizdən hansı nəaliyyətləri əldə etmələrini istəyirsiniz?
4. Semestrin başlanğıcındakı ilk və gündəlik keçdiyiniz dərslərinizi təsvir edə bilərsiniz? Tədrisiniz nəticəsində tələbələrin fənnlərlə bağlı gözləntilərini və onların öyrənmə üstünlüklərini necə müəyyən edirsiniz?
5. BM fənnlərin tədrisində üstünlük verdiyiniz tədris üsullarını təsvir edə bilərsiniz? Mühazirə və fəal interaktiv tədris metodların müsbət və mənfi cəhətləri nədən ibarətdir?

6. Dərs zamanı tələbə-müəllim arasındakı interaksiya nə dərəcədə vacib olduğunu düşünürsünüz? Tələbələrə daha aktiv cəlb etmək üçün əlavə hansı effektiv üsulları vacib hesab edirsiniz?
7. Tələbənin öyrənmə səviyyəsini müəyyən etmək üçün hansı qiymətləndirmə üsullarından istifadə edirsiniz? İstifadə etdiyiniz qiymətləndirmə üsulları nəyə fokuslanır? Ümumilikdə, özəl olaraq, hansı qiymətləndirmə üsullarını daha effektiv hesab edirsiniz?
8. Semestr ərzində və ya semestrin sonuncu günü dərslərin tədrisinə dair tələbələrinizin rəyini anonim öyrənməyi nə qədər vacib hesab edirsiniz?
9. Fənnlərin tədrisi zamanı, adətən, nə kimi çətinliklərlə rastlaşmısınız?
10. Fənnlərin tədrisini effektivləşdirmək üçün professionallıq baxımından özünüzü necə inkişaf etdirirsiniz?
11. Nəşə əlavə etmək istərdiniz?

Appendix G

Interview Protocol

General procedure of the interview:

First, the researchers will greet the participant, introduce themselves, and provide information about themselves, namely their degree and program of study. Thereafter, the nature, purpose and brief description of the research will be explained to the participant. The researchers will provide information on the length and language of the interview, voice record, document that will be requested after the interview, the usage of data, and confidentiality measures. Finally, the consent form will be presented to the participant to read once again and sign. After signing the consent form, the researchers will start the conversation.

Preliminary interview questions:

1. Why did you choose to become an instructor? What are your goals and objectives as an instructor?
2. What role does the instructor play during the class today or what role do you think he/she should play?
3. What results do you want your students to get from your courses during the academic semester?
4. Can you describe your first class at the beginning of the semester and your daily classes? How do you determine students' expectations of courses and their learning preferences? How do you manage your class time?
5. Can you describe the teaching methods you prefer in teaching IR courses? What are the pros and cons of lecture and active learning methods?
6. How important do you think the interaction between the student and the teacher is during the lesson? What additional effective methods do you think are important to make students more actively involved in classes?

7. What assessment methods do you use to determine student learning? What do the assessment methods you use focus on? In general, which assessment methods do you personally find more effective?
8. How important do you think it is to get anonymous feedback from your students on the teaching during the semester or on the last day of the semester?
9. What kind of difficulties have you usually encountered during teaching?
10. How do you professionally develop yourself to make the teaching of courses more effective?
11. Is there anything you would like to add?

Appendix H

The product

Guideline for Learning-Centered Teaching

Farid Arazzada & Sabina Hasanova

Chapter 1: Learning-centered teaching

The product

The guideline is prepared based on literature review and research findings from Capstone Project that is led by Educational Management master years students. This guideline is based on insights gathered through interviews conducted with local professors, as well as by examining course syllabi from publicly available educational institutions abroad.

The purpose of this guideline is to support instructors in their instructional endeavors by equipping them with effective teaching methods. The ultimate goal is to enhance students' understanding of various subjects and their ability to acquire practical skills. By providing instructors with these methods, the guideline seeks to optimize the learning experience and foster students' comprehension of knowledge and practical skill development.

Findings from research

Research conducted among three Azerbaijani Universities in Baku explored faculty's selection of teaching methods and factors that affect the selection of these methods.

According to the findings of the study, educators encounter certain obstacles, including insufficient student background knowledge, inadequate student motivation, and student unpreparedness, which necessitate modifications to their instructional approaches. The prioritization of student needs in the implementation of instructional strategies may result in an underestimation of the actual learning outcomes achieved.

The guideline can provide a framework for selecting methods that align with course objectives and accommodate diverse learners, while also considering available resources and the effectiveness of the method.

Learning-centered teaching

This guideline was developed using a learning-centered approach. The objective of learning-centered teaching is to cultivate deep and long-lasting student learning by taking into account the learning needs of students (Blumberg, 2019). The pedagogical approach of learning-centered teaching involves a shift in the role of the instructor from being a primary source of knowledge to that of a facilitator, thereby empowering students to take ownership of their own learning process (Blumberg, 2019; Weimer, 2013). Incorporating active learning methods that align with the course's learning objectives and using course material to facilitate comprehension of the primary concepts rather than solely for coverage purposes may foster a more profound comprehension of the subject matter (Blumberg, 2019; Weimer, 2013).

The term "learning-centered" has been adopted instead of "student-centered" as it is believed that the latter approach places undue emphasis on the satisfaction and fulfillment of students, rather than focusing solely on their learning needs (Weimer, 2013). A learning-centered approach focuses on teaching that recognizes the individual potential of each student and strives to meet their learning needs. The pedagogical approach of learning-centered teaching suggests that educators are not obligated to meet all the desires of their students, but rather to their learning needs (Weimer, 2013).

This guideline presents evidence-based learning-centered practices that can help ensure that teaching resources and efforts are focused on strategies that are most likely to result in positive student outcomes. This can be particularly important for faculty who may have limited time and resources to devote to teaching. Using evidence-based practices helps to establish a culture of continuous improvement in teaching. By evaluating and using feedback on the effectiveness of teaching methods, educators can make adjustments to their approaches and adopt new, evidence-based strategies that can improve student learning outcomes. Therefore, evidence-based practices are important for faculty to consider when

selecting teaching methods because they have been proven effective through research and can lead to positive outcomes for students. By using these practices, educators can provide high-quality instruction that supports student learning and success.

Chapter 2: Teaching methods

International Relations necessitates strong persuasion, collaboration, critical, analytical, and problem-solving skills along with comprehension of the concepts. To develop these capabilities in students, the following evidence-based practices are proposed:

Discussion Leadership

The discussion leadership assignment is designed to enhance students' communication skills and deepen their understanding of key concepts (Biswas, & Haufler, 2018). This collaborative task is suitable for almost any course. Instructors can allow students to select discussion topics based on the assigned readings. Depending on class size, the timing of the speeches can be adjusted to ensure everyone, or a significant portion of students can actively participate. The number of participants in each group can also be tailored by instructors, with two or three members considered effective. The instructor may undertake discussion leadership activity as a way of student's presentations.

Criteria for assessing discussion leadership include:

- Adequate coverage of the assigned reading materials
- Effective communication of ideas, including critical analysis
- Utilization of eye contact and body language
- Provoking thoughtful questions and engaging with the audience
- Demonstrating teamwork skills

Simulations

Simulations and debates assist students to step into the shoes of the diplomat and to get more rich information about political situations and different countries. The debates constitute a major part of the student assessment, and it was stated that students are assessed based on their performance in simulations during mid-term exams.

The following information provided about simulations is based on the work of Shawn and Switky (2018), who outline simulation designs for international relations classes. In the initial stage, specific aspects such as class size, topic, learning outcomes, and timing of the simulations should be clearly defined. Simulations can be led by either the instructor or students, but to ensure equal participation and engagement, instructor-led sessions may be preferred. The roles of each participant in the simulation should be explicitly defined.

Simulations can be evaluated based on outcomes such as winning or losing, as well as active participation. Considering both factors can lead to effective and fair assessments. Assessing participation can be based on how well students fulfill specific roles and functions.

Additionally, Shawn and Switky (2018) offer a detailed rubric in their work to assist instructors in designing simulations (see Appendix 1).

Chapter 3: Steps to implement teaching methods

To effectively utilize the guideline, instructors can refer to the ADDIE (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation and Evaluation) model (Branch, 2009). The ADDIE model is an instructional design framework used to develop educational products such as lesson plans and curriculums (Branch, 2009). The model has been adapted and tailored to account for the outcomes of our study, with the aim of addressing the present state of teaching International Relations in Azerbaijani higher education institutions.

The initial step involves analyzing the specific needs of the students and establishing clear learning objectives. To achieve this, instructors can create pre-course assignments that are not graded, allowing them to gain insights into the students' interests, requirements, preferences, and expectations. Additionally, instructors should provide a well-defined outline of the essential skills and knowledge necessary to successfully complete the course.

The subsequent stage entails designing and developing teaching methods and assessment strategies. Instructors have the option to select from the suggested methods or utilize the provided rubrics for their assignments. Our research findings indicate that simulations, presentations, and class discussions are commonly employed by instructors. By utilizing this guideline, instructors can modify their teaching methods, if needed.

Following the design phase, instructors proceed to implement the chosen teaching methods during class sessions. Subsequently, they can evaluate the effectiveness of these methods and make any necessary adjustments. The evaluation process encompasses two forms: student evaluation and faculty/peer evaluation. While some instructors may not view student evaluation as an entirely reliable means of course evaluation, faculty evaluation is also incorporated as a component of this phase.

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Appendix

Below are a series of questions presented by Shawn and Switky (2018) that can assist instructors in the design of their simulations.

1. What is the topic of your simulation? (This will likely be one of the specific segments of your class, so be fairly specific.)
2. What are the main concepts that you want your students to understand better after participating in this exercise? (What are your learning objectives? Try to limit it to three to four learning objectives; be realistic.)
3. How much time do you want to devote to the simulation exercise? (Consider in-class time, restimulation preparation by the students, and debriefing and assessment time.)
4. Who are the different actors necessary to include in the simulation? (Individual business or government leaders, NGO or interest group representatives, analysts, legislative or judicial leaders, mediators/facilitators, faction leaders, etc.)
5. Will individual students represent these actors, or will groups of students collectively play each role? (Keep in mind the size of your class and how you might choose to assign grades.)
6. What outcome do you want the actors to reach? What form will this outcome take? (A negotiated agreement, a final judgment, creation of a new policy, a written document, an oral report, a final vote, etc.)
7. What types of interactions will the actors have with each other? Who will communicate with whom and how? (These should be realistic interactions and linked to producing the final desired outcome noted above. If these actors would not interact with each other in the real world, or would only interact in certain arenas, keep this in mind. Interactions or arenas could include meetings, formal decision-making procedures, hierarchal

- reporting, issuing judgments, lobbying for particular outcomes, etc. Are they collaborating or competing?)
8. What background information are you going to provide to the students and in what format? (Class lecture[s], a reading assignment, links to useful web sites, etc.)
 9. Will you provide additional information once the simulation begins? (e.g., a crisis or update?)
 10. Will the students need to do advanced preparation? If so, what kind?
 11. What role specific information or instructions will you give to each set of actors?
 12. How long will the actors have to carry out their interactions before arriving at the desired outcome? (What is your working timeline or phases for the exercise?)
 13. What role will you play as the instructor? (Active participant, major or minor interjection of your presence when things/students go astray, a completely hands-off approach, etc.)
 14. How will you conduct a debriefing for the exercise? What types of questions will you ask? (Will the debriefing be student-led or instructor-led? Keep in mind your original learning objectives. How will you know if the students have achieved these objectives?)
 15. How will you grade students for the simulation? (Participation, outcome, written work, quiz, etc.)
 16. Are there special room requirements or other materials you need for the simulation? (Placards or nametags, copiers, computers, etc.)