

Student-Preference Responsiveness (SPR) and Instructional Restrictiveness (IR) among English Teachers in Public Secondary Schools of Lopez East and Lopez West Districts of SDO-Quezon

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ABSTRACT

This study examined Student-Preference Responsiveness (SPR) and Instructional Restrictiveness (IR) among English teachers in public secondary schools of Lopez East and Lopez West Districts of the Schools Division Office of Quezon during School Year 2025–2026. Using a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design, the study measured the levels of SPR and IR, examined differences based on teacher profile variables, determined the relationship between the two constructs, and developed a context-responsive ELT planning toolkit.

The respondents were 68 full-time public secondary English teachers selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using structured survey instruments covering teacher profiles, SPR dimensions (content personalization, pedagogical adaptation, and assessment flexibility), and IR dimensions (procedural rigidity, pedagogical control, and assessment rigidity). Results showed that teachers demonstrated very high levels of SPR, particularly in personalizing content, adapting instruction, and modifying assessment practices. However, some system-dependent practices such as diagnostic-based vocabulary calibration, flexible grouping, and sustained portfolio assessment were less consistently implemented. IR was more evident in procedural rigidity and teacher-led instructional practices than in assessment rigidity.

Significant differences in SPR were observed when teachers were grouped according to grade levels taught and ICT access, while IR differed according to educational attainment, teaching rank, and recent ELT-related professional development exposure. SPR and IR were found to have a significant but weak positive relationship, suggesting that teachers could demonstrate responsiveness while still operating within structured institutional routines.

Based on the findings, the study proposed CHOICE-with-STRUCTURE: A Context-Responsive ELT Planning Toolkit designed to strengthen learner-responsive teaching while reducing unnecessary instructional restrictions.

Keywords: student-preference responsiveness, instructional restrictiveness, English language teaching, public secondary schools, context-responsive planning toolkit

INTRODUCTION

English language teaching has increasingly shifted toward learner-centered and personalized approaches due to technological changes, post-pandemic educational reforms, and greater recognition of student voice in learning (Akbari & Eslami, 2025; Benson, 2022; UNESCO, 2023). Schools continue to face the challenge of balancing responsiveness to learner needs with the requirements of curriculum standards, assessment systems, and institutional procedures (Au, 2021; Tanguay et al., 2025).

Student-Preference Responsiveness (SPR) refers to the extent to which teachers adjust content, teaching processes, and assessment choices according to students' preferences, interests, culture, and learning needs (Abdulaal, 2021; Tomlinson, 2023). Instructional Restrictiveness (IR), on the other hand, refers to fixed routines,

teacher-centered control, and standardized requirements that may limit instructional adjustments (Engin, 2020; Tanguay et al., 2025).

Although learner-centered education has been widely promoted, limited empirical studies have examined SPR and IR together, particularly in Philippine public secondary English classrooms where teachers work under varied ICT conditions, resource limitations, curriculum demands, and diverse learner contexts (Almonte-Acosta, 2024; Cruz et al., 2023).

This study addressed this gap by examining how English teachers in Lopez East and Lopez West Districts manifested responsiveness and restrictiveness in classroom practices. Specifically, it aimed to determine teacher profiles, measure SPR and IR levels, identify differences across teacher characteristics, examine the relationship between SPR and IR, and develop a context-responsive planning toolkit.

METHODS

Research Design

The study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design. This design was appropriate because it allowed the researcher to describe existing levels of SPR and IR, compare results across teacher profile variables, and determine the relationship between the two constructs without making causal claims (Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Cohen et al., 2021).

Participants and Sampling

The study involved 68 full-time English teachers teaching Grades 7–12 in public secondary schools within Lopez East and Lopez West Districts of the Schools Division Office of Quezon during School Year 2025–2026. Purposive sampling was used to select respondents who met the study criteria, including professional eligibility and relevant teaching experience.

Research Instrument and Data Collection

The SPR and IR instruments were developed based on the study's conceptual framework and relevant literature on learner-centered instruction, teacher adaptation, and instructional control. The instrument blueprint aligned items with the identified dimensions: SPR (content personalization, pedagogical adaptation, and assessment flexibility) and IR (procedural rigidity, pedagogical control, and assessment rigidity). Sample items reflected actual teacher practices related to responding to student preferences and maintaining instructional structures.

Content validity was established through expert review using Lawshe's Content Validity Ratio (CVR). Three education and English language teaching specialists evaluated the items for relevance, clarity, construct alignment, and contextual appropriateness. Revisions were incorporated based on expert feedback. Pilot testing with 30 English teachers yielded a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of **0.931504**, indicating very high reliability. The instrument used a five-point Likert scale, with higher SPR scores indicating stronger responsiveness to student preferences and higher IR scores indicating stronger instructional structure and control.

SPR and IR were treated as distinct but related constructs rather than opposite ends of a continuum. SPR reflects the extent to which teachers consider student preferences in instructional decisions, while IR reflects the extent to which teachers maintain structured procedures and instructional control. Thus, teachers may demonstrate high responsiveness while still maintaining necessary classroom structures.

Data gathering was conducted after securing DepEd Schools Division Office of Quezon province' approval. Selected teachers completed the survey within a 15-day period through an encrypted online platform administration. Digital consent, anonymity through participant codes, secure data storage, and completeness checks were observed throughout the process to ensure ethical and reliable data collection.

Since SPR specifically concerns student preferences, future research may strengthen findings through triangulation using student perception surveys, classroom observations, interviews, or instructional artifacts

alongside teacher self-reports to provide a more comprehensive understanding of actual classroom practices.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize respondent profiles and determine the levels of SPR and IR. Inferential statistical tests were applied to examine differences among profile groups, while correlation analysis was used to determine the relationship between SPR and IR.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles were observed throughout the conduct of the study to protect the rights, privacy, and welfare of the respondents. Prior to data collection, appropriate permission was secured from the concerned school authorities and offices. The respondents were informed about the purpose of the study, the procedures involved, and their role as participants.

Participation was voluntary, and respondents were provided the opportunity to decline or withdraw from the study without penalty. Informed consent was obtained before administering the survey instrument. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by ensuring that personal identities and individual responses were not disclosed in any report or publication.

All collected data were used solely for research purposes and were handled responsibly. The researcher ensured secure storage of research records and reported the findings accurately without manipulation or misrepresentation. These ethical practices supported the integrity and credibility of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The respondents were generally from rural and semi-urban school contexts. Most teachers were bachelor's degree holders and belonged to the lower to middle teaching ranks. Their teaching experiences, professional learning exposure, grade assignments, and ICT access reflected the diverse instructional conditions of public secondary schools.

Table 1. Profile of Respondents According to School Context

School Context	Frequency	Percentage
Urban	20	29.40%
Semi-Urban	23	33.80%
Rural	25	36.80%

The findings revealed that Student-Preference Responsiveness was very high among English teachers. Teachers commonly adjusted learning materials, teaching approaches, and assessment practices to respond to learner differences. This indicates that teachers actively attempted to provide meaningful and learner-centered English instruction despite contextual limitations.

However, some responsiveness practices requiring stronger systems and resources were less consistent. These included diagnostic-based vocabulary calibration, flexible grouping arrangements, and sustained portfolio-based assessment. These patterns suggest that teachers were responsive within the boundaries of available resources and institutional requirements.

Table 2. Summary of SPR and IR Dimensions

Dimension	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Content Personalization	3.44	Very High Degree
Pedagogical Adaptation	3.26	Very High Degree
Assessment Flexibility	3.32	Very High Degree

Procedural Rigidity	3.13	Great Extent
Pedagogical Control	2.91	Great Extent
Assessment Rigidity	2.32	Small Extent

Instructional Restrictiveness was mainly observed through procedural rigidity and teacher-led classroom practices. Teachers continued to follow structured routines, pacing expectations, and established procedures, reflecting the influence of curriculum requirements and organizational demands.

Differences in SPR were identified according to grade levels taught and ICT access. Teachers with different teaching assignments and technology conditions demonstrated varying capacities to personalize instruction. Meanwhile, IR differed based on educational attainment, teaching rank, and recent ELT-related professional development exposure.

The relationship between SPR and IR was significantly positive but weak. This suggests that responsiveness and restrictiveness may exist simultaneously. Teachers may provide personalized instruction while still maintaining structured routines necessary for classroom management and curriculum compliance.

Table 3. Relationship Between SPR and IR

Variables	r-value	p-value	Interpretation	Decision
SPR and IR	0.3118	0.01	Low Positive Correlation	Significant

The results support the development of a Context-Responsive ELT Planning Toolkit that promotes structured choice, flexible assessment, low-ICT planning strategies, and reflective teaching practices.

CONCLUSION

English teachers in Lopez East and Lopez West Districts demonstrated strong commitment to learner-responsive English teaching practices. Their high SPR levels showed their capacity to personalize content, adapt pedagogy, and provide flexible assessment opportunities.

At the same time, instructional restrictions remained present, particularly through established procedures and teacher-controlled routines. These restrictions appeared to reflect institutional structures and resource realities rather than a lack of commitment to learner-centered education.

The coexistence of high SPR and IR indicates that effective ELT practice requires balance between flexibility and structure. Schools should support teachers by providing opportunities for professional learning, collaborative planning, ICT access, and practical strategies that allow responsiveness within required standards.

The proposed CHOICE-with-STRUCTURE: A Context-Responsive ELT Planning Toolkit may serve as a practical guide for strengthening learner-centered instruction while maintaining instructional coherence.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Teachers may strengthen visible preference follow-through by consistently integrating learner interests, feedback, and choices into classroom activities.

School leaders may provide coaching, protected planning time, and professional development opportunities focused on adaptive ELT practices.

Educational policymakers may consider policies that maintain standards while allowing reasonable flexibility in classroom implementation.

Future researchers may expand the study using mixed-method approaches involving classroom observations, student perceptions, and qualitative interviews to further understand how SPR and IR operate in diverse educational contexts.

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