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The Development of Learning Environment Based on Learning Materials in EFL Speaking Class

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ABSTRACT

Learning materials have essential roles in building learning environment—whether it becomes learner-centered, knowledge-centered, or assessment-centered. This study sought the trend of learning material development in basic speaking class. This study was qualitative in nature where the data quality was the key point measurement for further steps in finding the answer(s) to the research question. The data source was materials used for 14 meetings of Basic Conversation class. While the subject of this study was these materials, the object was the material criteria categorized based on Bransford's et al. (2001) representation about learning material development in a classroom. The data analysis employed interactive analysis undergoing three steps which were data reduction, data display, and data verification. The results show that learner-centeredness was majorly developed in Meeting 2, Meeting 4, Meeting 5, Meeting 8, Meeting 9, and Meeting 10; knowledge-centeredness was majorly developed in Meeting 3, Meeting 6, and Meeting 7; and assessment-centeredness was majorly developed in Meeting 6 and Meeting 7. It is concluded that, first, the learning materials used for Basic Conversation class generally developed learner-centered environment as the focus was students' interest and their background knowledge. Secondly, the materials also accentuated on knowledge-centeredness, though not as much as the first result. Last, there was also slight but still substantial development of assessment-centered environment. It implies that there can be found ample balance between these three types of learning centeredness to promote good learning environment.

Keywords: *Learning Environment; Learning Materials; Teaching Speaking; Learner-Centeredness; Knowledge-Centeredness.*

INTRODUCTION

Learning materials can be defined as materials and/or facilities which support learning process—to ease, to simplify, to initiate, to enhance, and to promote the process—in the form of human and non-human (Bransford et al., 2001). It includes anything possible to be involved in the teaching and learning process. Learning materials are considered pivotal in the learning process because it contributes to accelerate the scaffolding process both in the teachers' and learners' mind. More

specifically, Millwood et al. (2008) stated that learning materials can be beneficial for students as they can follow the trace from the teacher's explanation. What has been explained by the teachers is affirmed in the learning materials. Learning materials also have further benefit—which is to develop a learning environment. In the major stance, learning environment not only achieves the objectives of lesson plans but also the academic purposes in a broader sense, and at the same time enhances the educational system as a whole. Aligning the learning materials with the learning environment has a profound benefit for the nation's education in the future. The term 'learning environment' can be prone to knowledge-centered, learner-centered, or assessment-centered (Bransford et al., 2001). Specifically speaking, there are numerous stimuli that can be generated by a teacher, including learning stimuli in teaching and learning context. However, not all of these stimuli are fetched by students as students with different learning capacity assess these stimuli differently, too. They unconsciously choose which stimuli suit their way of thinking best, and which they have encountered in their background knowledge.

Thus, new concepts are most probably needed to be explained repeatedly with learning material supports. In addition, students also manage information differently. Some of them are good at managing information by visual aids, audio aids, audio-visual aids, or motor movements; some of them prefer spending alone time of reading, while some others prefer peer-discussions (Altun & Erden, 2013). Specifically, in learning speaking, this circumstance also applies. In coordinating the students' way of learning as well as to enable them to adapt with any potential learning styles, learning materials serve as the core elucidation, especially in learning to speak in English—our non-native language.

There are various important components in the process of English teaching and learning, but the most significant one in every learning process is the presence of learning materials. The terms 'learning material' and 'teaching material' are interchangeably used but both refer to identical terminology. According to Garrison et al. (2001), teachers/lecturers must be able to present situations namely teacher presence, cognitive presence, and social presence—where students are expected to interact with each other and with teachers/lecturers. Besides, Tomlinson (2003) highlighted that learning materials help students and teachers to predict what they are going to learn, and manage what they are going to evaluate at the end of the learning process. Learning materials do not only serve as a general instrument for teachers to preciely follow national curriculum, but it also serves as a guidance in projecting the lesson explanation, examples, and relevant practices and exercises (Brown, 2004). Additionally, Abdelwahab (2013) inserted that the utilizatin of learning materials can unify the lesson transfer from one class to another class, even if the students have different locus of ability. This benefits the learning management, particularly to keep in track that several classes have the chance to meet all materials in a certain lesson. This further eases the evaluation process where the examination items can be consolidated to all students. Briefly, the use of learning materials can promote standard learning instruction and teaching management.

Richards (2001) further considered the importance of learning materials as he declared that teaching program cannot give maximum impacts without learning materials. This is reasonable because learning materials comprise the lesson structures as well as learning syllabus. Moreover, learning materials are considered to meet the students' needs despite the fact that they are not specially designed for them. Learning materials enable students to audit and prepare their lesson, and the materials also alos permit them to set-up learning adaptation and improvisation (Fatima et al., 2015). Commonly, the problems that frequently appear from learning materials mismatching are the complexity level which are unsuitable for all students' level of understanding as well as time allocation. Often times, the teachers give over-complicated materials for the students. Another problem appearing is that there is little relevance between the learning materials and the lesson itslef— which as a whole will have an impact on the learning environment that is formed when the teaching and learning process occurs.

Learning Environment is a significantly determinant factor in an attempt to achieve the learning objectives. Henceforth, pertinent investigations regarding learning materials are also crucial both in physical and social terms. Learning cannot take place as simple as it seen in formal settings alone, it occurs when there are meaningful interactions among concurrent factors such as teachers, students, learning materials, learning process, and learning environment (Laurence, 2012).

Garrison et al. (2001) introduced a learning environment where several determinant factors are in presence. These factors are convinced to help teachers achieve the successful learning process- they are social presence (involving students), cognitive presence (involving knowledge), and teaching process (involving assessment). From similar but not identical persepective, Bransford et al. (2001) classified the factor in a more procedural standard; they are learner-centered, knowledge-centered, or assessment-centered. Furthermore, these three important elements composing the learning environment can be explained as follows. The most basic element in every learning process is the cognitive element—or *knowledge-centerednedness*. This element exists in every student who is ready to take lessons and receive information from the teacher. Therefore, it can be understood that, if a student has decided to participate in a class or learning community, it means that the student is cognitively present and continuous communication is expected to occur during the teaching and learning process (Douglas & Gifford, 2001). Whether the learning is carried out through face-to-face learning or not, cognitive presence is something that is absolutely necessary for the teaching and learning process to occur. Cognitive presence is an important element in critical thinking, learning process, and learning outcomes of which are often presented as the real goal of all learning processes.

The second core element is the social presence of students, or *learner-centeredness*. This element can be seen as the ability of the participants in a class or educational community where they are required to match their characters with other students who are also present in the class (Douglas & Gifford, 2001). This means that students must interact appropriately with their friends, not too closed and not too excessive. Each student has a different information coding strategy for their internal processing

memory. Some try to learn by giving meaning to them all at once, while some try to learn by repeating. Some students can remember what they learn easily and quickly. On the other hand, some have difficulty remembering and organizing what they know. Some students like to study in groups, and some may find it annoying and prefer to learn in companionlessness. This has to be adaptable in a class of different students with different ways of thinking. Basically, this social presence is seen as a supporter of cognitive presence, because when together with other students, critical thinking will be wider in scope where discussions and questions are the impetus. Hence, social presence is a direct contributor for a student to get an educational experience where they find interactions in groups enjoyable and personally satisfying so that they will remain in the student group for the future to continue the learning process. Consequently, learning continuity occurs.

The last element of this framework is the presence of the teaching process (from the introduction of the material to the evaluation process)—or *assessment-centeredness*. The presence of this teaching process has two functions, they are: (1) to choose learning methods that are deliberately suitable for students (Baafi, 2020), which includes the selection, organization, and presentation of key teaching materials, as well as the design and development of learning and assessment activities that needs to be executed by the teacher; and (2) to facilitate the learning process carried out by teachers together with students, which is intended to promote interaction between teachers and students, and among students themselves. With the deployment of these three elements described above in the teaching and learning process optimally, the teacher will be able to fulfill his duties optimally; and for students, they can also ingest the best information from the teaching materials provided.

Pertaining to learning materials, there are several essential considerations as per suggested by Mukundan (2011). Initially, the characteristics of learning materials should be interesting, familiar, original, easily photocopied, and practical to use. Various learning materials are available such as textbook, articles—both scientiic and non-scientific ones, graphs, maps, pictures, diagrams, and pictures on television. The next important character is that the learning materials should support the students' learning needs, facilitate the teacher's instructions, awaken the awareness towards environment, promote better mindset, initiate expansive mindset, incline motivation, promote fun in learning, and assist students in applying the concepts. In other words, it can be said that the information and knowledge contained in teaching materials are very influential, even determining, in the direction of mindset and thinking patterns of students in the future, both academically and overall understanding, bring the concepts into different applications. Further consideration is that the learning materials must be relevance. This has a very clear urgency because unnecessary learning materials are not worth to be employed as learning materials. For instance in speaking course, learning materials that should be used are the ones initiating their ability to think, to conceptualize, and to speak out the concept in an explicitly uttered manner. In addition, the learning materials also need to arouse the students' awareness of learning benefit. They should be able to reach the idea that learning is not a waste of time, and

it will certainly be a huge advantage for themselves and other people. More specifically, the learning materials should be able to be reached by all students' level, not only students with higher thinking performance. For example, a student cannot efficiently understand the concept of Greetings in one book, then s/he gets another learning source such as cards or articles. This act can be beneficial for him/her to reach the optimum potential. Furthermore, learning materials must be able to increase students' motivation. If the learning material is practiced in an effective way, and students can understand efficiently about its applications and concepts, they can develop motivation in learning (Di Sarno et al., 2002). Learning materials should be fun and interesting from the outlook as well as the implementation. In speaking, the learning materials should be effective, communicative, and lead to the development of friendly learning environment.

At last, learning materials are suggested to center on the improvement of decision making and critical thinking abilities. Decision making and critical thinking are important to every learning objective, as well as in language learning. These skills can help in managing tasks and activities in achieving academic objectives at the more integral level.

Previous research has indeed been conducted under the topic of learning environment. Prameswari and Budiyanto (2017) carried out a systematic literature review to find out procedures to develop good learning environments. From the literary work, they found that effective learning environments derive from teacher's internal ability, students' engagement during learning process, and institutional supports. Another study by Oluwatelure (2010) examined the relationship between learning environment and students' learning literacy. The highlighted results show that there was a significant relationship between these two variables. The more literate the students on various concepts of lessons are, the more optimum the learning environment in classroom are. The last study mentioned in this manuscript is conducted by Damayanti et al. (2018). Her study tried to shed light on the learning material relevance towards teaching quality. It was found that there are two types of relevance regarding learning materials, which are created materials (the materials designed and compiled by the teachers to justify the students' needs); and authentic materials (the genuine materials elicited from the pioneering contexts).

However, The research mentioned above to date has tended to focus on either learning environment or learning materials alone rather than the relationship between these two variables. Hence, this study fills such gap by providing information about trends on the learning material expansion to develop a certain learning environment. This study aims at analyzing the development of learning environment based the on the utilization of learning materials in Speaking Course at English Education Porgram, Serambi Mekkah University, Aceh. This study is considered significant because it contributes both theoretically and practically to the field of education. Theoretically, the result of this study enriches the ontology and epistemology of education especially the English teaching and learning. Practically, the values of the result found in this

study can be applied by teachers and future researchers, either as a reference or simply as their bibliographic readings. Specifically, the research question is as follows:
What is the trend of the learning environment formed in the Speaking Course at the English Education Program, Serambi Mekkah University, Aceh based on the framework of Bransford et al. (2001)? Is it learner-centered, knowledge-centered, or assessment-centered?

METHOD

Regarding the stages of the research method, this research was conducted using a qualitative method. Qualitative study focuses more on various perspectives of a certain data source such as a person, phenomenon, document, audio, or song. In this study, what was studied was the classroom phenomenon related to the use of learning materials in the Speaking course. While the subject of this study was these materials, the object was the material criteria categorized based on Bransford's et al. (2001) representation about learning material development in a classroom for 14 meetings during May-June. The location of this research was English Language Education Study Program, Serambi Mekkah University, Aceh, Indonesia. Regarding sampling, the sampling technique was purposive sampling. Sampling with this technique aims to be widely used in qualitative research. This affects the quality of the data in an effort to identify appropriate findings and condense information about the research problem (Palinkas, et al., 2015).

During the data collection, the researchers conducted team-teaching where one researcher prepared the teaching material, and the other taught the Speaking course by using the materials. The data were later annotated regarding the relevance between the learning material and the learning environment based on the rubric of Bransford et al. (2001). This rubric has been validated in advance by three lecturers who are considered to have expertise in teaching and learning materials. Collaborating lecturers were considered appropriate to be involved as triangulation of the data obtained. Collaborating lecturers were not the research team, but English Education lecturers who have expertise in teaching materials.

After having been collectedd, the data were analyzed according to the rubric of Garrison et al. (2001) to determine whether the learning environment that was formed leads to learner-centeredness, knowledge-centeredness, or assessment-centeredness according to the research questions that have been formulated above. To analyze the data, percentage formula was used and the relevance between the types of teaching materials and the learning environment was qualitatively examined. Further, interactive analysis by Miles et al. (2014) was used in an attempt of data reduction, data display, and data verification. The irrelevant data, which were also collected during the teaching process such as the students' engagement and motivation, were reduced to later than be displayed in the graphic as shown in the upcoming section. Finally, the data were verified to see whether the research question formulated in the earliest section serves the reasonable answer(s).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Prior to displaying the results, learning materials along with the learning objectives and their instruction during the course are provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Learning materials

Meeting	Learning Materials	Learning Objective	Instruction
Meeting 1	Reading Aloud	Students are expected to produce good and correct pronunciation and be fluent.	Students are asked to read a short and simple passage.
Meeting 2	Retelling stories from pictures	Students are expected to retell stories with only covering the main idea.	Students are asked to retell stories from three comic stripes and and answer some interactive questions about main idea from the lecturer.
Meeting 3	Reporting facts about Burj Khalifa	Students are expected to report factual information with only covering the specific details.	Students are asked to report factual information from a video showing details of the Burj Khalifa and and answer some interactive questions from the lecturer and peers.
Meeting 4	Jobs and Occupations (1)	Students are expected to recognize types of jobs and occupations.	Students are asked to name types of jobs and occupations (through pictures) and answer some interactive questions from the lecturer and peers.
Meeting 5	Jobs and Occupations (2)	Students are expected to describe the places and tasks of jobs and occupations.	Students are asked to describe the places and tasks of jobs and occupations (through pictures) and answer some interactive questions from the lecturer and peers.
Meeting 6	Giving Instruction	Students are expected to give instructions.	Students are asked to give directions on how to go to a public place such as bank, market, school, hospital, etc.
Meeting 7	Following Instruction	Students are expected to follow instructions.	Students are asked to follow instruction by making a map or a route to a certain public place, such as bank, market, school,

			hospital, etc.
Meeting 8	WH-word (generating questions)	Students are expected to generate questions.	Students are asked to generate question using what, when, where, who, which, why, and how about daily activities.
Meeting 9	'Facts about me'	Students are expected to generate questions and provide answers.	Students are asked to generate question using what, when, where, who, which, why, and how about self-facts.
Meeting 10	Health, Diseases, and Hospital	Students are expected to generate questions and provide answers.	Students are asked to generate question using what, when, where, who, which, why, and how about health, diseases, and hospital.
Meeting 11	Describing Map	Students are expected to describe various hospital maps while generating questions and provide answers.	Students are asked to generate question using what, when, where, who, which, why, and how about five hospital maps—hospital rooms.
Meeting 12	Describing Diseases	Students are expected to describe various diseases and their causes while generating questions and provide answers.	Students are asked to generate question using what, when, where, who, which, why, and how about common and severe diseases.
Meeting 13	Roleplay	Students are expected to play the roles and a doctor and a patient.	Students are asked to play the roles and a doctor and a patient and the have to engage in conversations employing speaking skills that have been learned.
Meeting 14	Review	Students are expected to generate questions and provide answers about topics that have been discussed.	Students are instructed to engage in conversations employing speaking skills that have been learned.

The table 1 above provides information about topic being discussed in every meeting. To provide further information about the results of the materials above with the development of learning environment, the most obvious finding from the analysis is as shown intable 2.

	Learning Environment (Bransfor et al., 2001)	Meeting													
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Learner-centeredness	Involves students' background knowledge.	-	√	√	√	√	-	-	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
	Deliberates students' interest.	-	√	-	√	√	-	-	√	√	√	-	-	-	√
	Deliberates students' social values.	-	√	-	√	√	-	-	√	√	√	-	-	-	√
	Deliberates students' cultural/traditional values.	-	√	-	√	√	-	-	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Knowledge-centeredness	Enhances students' skill(s).	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
	Provides rigorous context.	-	-	√	-	-	√	√	-	-		-	-	-	-
	Compels students to understand concepts.	-	-	√	-	-	√	√	-	-	√	√	√	√	√
	Portrays concepts as the material center.	√	-	√	-	-	√	√	-	-		√	√	√	√
	Produces new knowledge.	√	-	-	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
	Produces new skill/mindset.	√	-	-	-	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Assessment-centeredness	Requires high standards.	-	-	√	-	-	√	√	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Requires feedback, reflection, and revision.	-	-	-	-	-	√	√	-	-	-	√	√	√	√
	Expects every student to succeed.	√	√	√	√		√	√	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Develops every student's ability to take measure.	-	-	-	-	-	√	√	√	√	-	-	-	-	-
	Compels students to recognize and differentiate strategies.	-	-	-	-	-	√	√	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Three major concerns can be learned from table 2. Initially, in learner-centeredness, the learning materials which involved students' background knowledge were employed in 7 meetings during the learning process in this study. In these meetings, the students were provided with materials of retelling stories from pictures; facts about Burj Khalifa—which was also the extent of retelling activity in the prior meeting; jobs and occupations where they had to talk about the types of job in meeting 4 and about the places and tasks of a job in meeting 5; generating questions using WH-words in meeting 8; generating questions about self-facts in meeting 9; and simple conversation about health, diseases, and hospital in meeting 10. Then, the involvement of students' interest was also carried out in 6 out of 10 meetings. Similarly, the materials which deliberated students' social and cultural/traditional values were also found in 6 meetings. Culture in learning speaking, as highligherd by Radhika (2017) plays an impotant role in shaping the learners' behavior which eventually leads to the students' hesitance or motivation in expressing the target language orally. Points such as topics and speech acts are general consideration when a learner decides to speak or not to speak in the target language. Then regarding students' skill, the materials were portrayed to enhance students' skill for all meeting. More specifically, the pivotal skill in this study was speaking skill—basic conversation skill.

Later, in concern of knowledge-centeredness, the material seldom provided rigorous context which only occured in 3 meetings. Next, compelling students to understand the context—which are rigorous—also happened quite seldom, which is only in 4 meetings out of 10 meetings. The condition when the lecturer centered the

concept as the material center was in Meeting 1, Meeting 3, Meeting 6, and Meeting 7. Regarding the role of materials to produce new knowledge and skill/mindset, it occurred more occasionally during the class. Under this circumstance, the knowledge does not necessarily refer to the content of the material, but more on the terminologies which are considered elementary. Douglas and Gifford (2001) supported that when a learner is present cognitively, they are voluntarily centering themselves as the knowledge receivers. Not activating some knowledge and transmit it to the students means losing the students' presence and engagement. This later can lead to boredom and the feeling of demotivated during class.

The last environment created during the learning process was the least focal—assessment-centeredness. In this type of centeredness, the material seldom requires high standard except for three meetings. These meetings focused on exploring students' ability in giving and following direction. The inability to adopt this skill can turn to chaotic scenes if misunderstanding occured in the real life. Later, every student was expected to succeed in learning for 6 meetings. For instance, in Meeting 1, the material was about practicing reading aloud which was expected to minimize—or even, if possible—prevent mispronounciation during conversations take place. Albeit infrequent, mispronounciation can also lead to chaotic situation in real life. Then, in developing every student's ability to take measure, the students was expected to do so in 4 meetings. Taking some measure in this context is defined as taking time-measure to keep the pace balance during conversation; and taking lexical-measure to determine precise lexicon(s) to use when conveying a message. This is know to similarly happen as in reading when students are not confused by ideas but by the manner of how ideas can be delivered or encoded (Moriyanti, et al., 2019) it also occures during the speaking internal processing.

The following graph displays the learning environment development for all meetings and the category of learning environment developed.

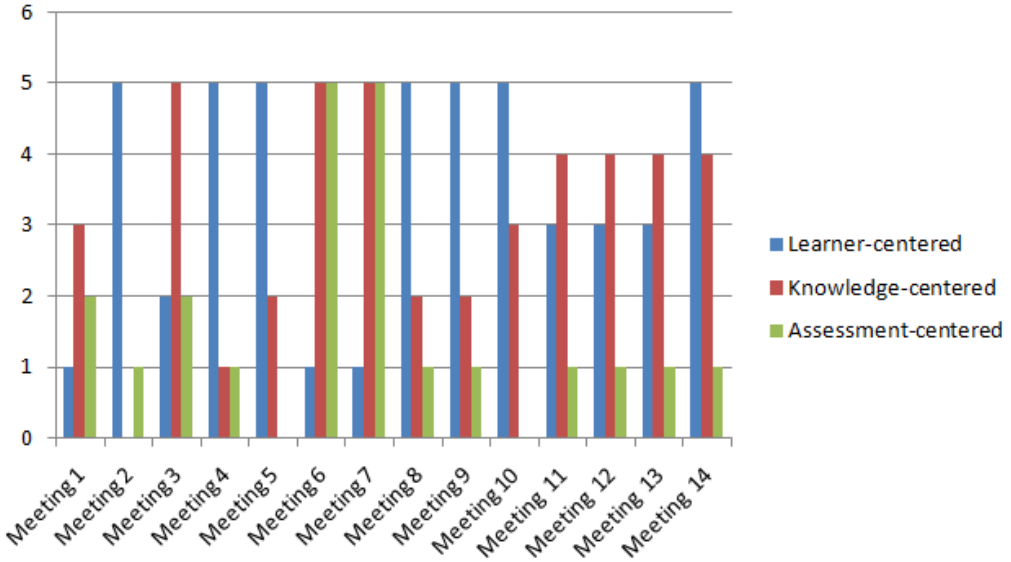

Figure 1. Learning environment development each meeting

The graph above shows that from ten meetings, learner-centeredness dominates among the others. It can be seen that learner-centered environment was majorly developed in Meeting 2 (students were asked to retell stories from three comic stripes and answer some interactive questions from the lecturer), Meeting 4 and Meeting 5 (students were asked to name types of jobs and occupations (through picture as well as to describe the tasks and places of work then later to answer some interactive questions from the lecturer and peers), Meeting 8 (students were asked to generate question using what, when, where, who, which, why, and how about daily activities), Meeting 9 (students were asked to generate question using what, when, where, who, which, why, and how about self-facts.), and Meeting 10 (students were asked to generate question using what, when, where, who, which, why, and how about health, diseases, and hospital). Then, in the second place was the development of knowledge-centered environment. This environment were majorly generated in Meeting 3 (students were asked to report factual information from a video showing details of the Burj Khalifa and and answer some interactive questions from the lecturer and peers), Meeting 6 (students were asked to give directions on how to go to a public place such as bank, market, school, hospital, etc), and Meeting 7 (students were asked to follow instruction by making a map or a route to a certain public place such as bank, market, school, hospital, etc); somehow in Meeting 1 (students were expected to produce good and correct pronunciation and be fluent), Meeting 4, Meeting 5, Meeting 8, Meeting 9, and Meeting 10, the knowledge-centerdness was partly engaged. Lastly, the learning environment in the Speaking Course was less oriented toward assessment, except in Meeting 6 and Meeting 7 as these meetings focused on giving and following directions. In the four latest meetings (Meeting 11, Meeting 12, Meeting 13, and Meeting 14), the materials were for advancement and students were generally asked to use skills or knowledge similar to that of in Meeting 10.

CONCLUSION

From the result, it can be concluded that the learning environment developed during basic speaking class was learner-centered—in majority—but it is still followed by knowledge-centeredness and assessment-centeredness in some competent extent. From the concusion, it implies that student-centered learning system is one that is constructed by students without the need for profound instruction from the teacher(s). However, due to students' lack of interest in learning, they frequently rely on teacher instruction in the classroom; as a result, students must first grasp what is being transmitted, making learning teacher-centered. Student-centered learning promotes active and cooperative learning—in which students actively engage, solve issues, answer questions, frame their own ideas, discuss, and explain during class with their peers. They can collaborate in groups on various problems and projects, helping each other to learn. However, it should be remembered that evaluation in learning is equally vital in determining whether or not teachers employ a learning system. Because there is no progress acknowledge in constructing the learning system if a teacher does not

perform an evaluation. Hence, the concentration in teaching materials developed needs to be balanced.

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