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Understanding ESL undergraduate students' beliefs about learner-centered instruction

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PREFACE

<u>A Learner, a Teacher, and a Researcher</u>

As a Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) instructor for 19 years, I, the researcher of this study, have had a diverse experience in teaching English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and TESOL courses at undergraduate and graduate levels in private universities in Bangladesh. I began my teaching career at North South University (NSU), a leading private university in Bangladesh, in 1996. My responsibilities included, but were not limited to, developing course materials, counselling, testing and evaluating students. While fulfilling the responsibilities of the English for Academic Purposes course coordinator, I also mentored novice teachers unfamiliar with the new academic environment, which promoted a mode of learning different from the traditional mode of learning in public universities. More than 100 private universities have been established in Bangladesh since the establishment of NSU in 1992 and I have taught at some of these. Several aspects about these universities have drawn my attention. A majority of these universities display an inclination towards the North American model of higher education in their curricula, books, resources, and faculty training. Also, their mission statements indicate that students are expected to adapt to an entirely new academic environment. I found most of the students at these universities not adequately prepared to deal with the challenges of the new, learner-based academic environment because their prior learning experiences had been teacher-centered or instruction-based.

Over the years, my aim has been to teach effectively but I have realized that, to become an effective educator, I need to understand the link between theory and practice. I have realized that as a non-native speaker-teacher of English, I need to pay attention to social, cultural, political, and economic factors of language teaching and the context in which it takes place. Instead of following Western language teaching methods as the one-and-only mantra of effective teaching, I need to take a locally situated approach to pedagogy to fulfil the needs of my students. The problem I have identified is that curriculum programs lack a global focus although the student population has become increasingly diverse in terms of social, economic, cultural, ethnic and political backgrounds. In this age of globalisation, as global educators, teachers need to be aware of not only students' needs, demands, and expectations but also what they learn, do not learn, and what more they learn that is not taught. Unfortunately, in Bangladesh, there is a dearth of awareness among educators to help, train, and inspire students to become global citizens. Moreover, I believe the curricula that the teachers follow do not prepare students to be global citizens. The impact of curriculum issues and educational philosophies on classroom teaching and learning has made me see that issues of curriculum affect every aspect of education whether in a country that is developed or undeveloped.

I served as a certified examiner and team leader for standardized exams jointly managed by the University of Cambridge ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) Examinations, British Council and IDP (International Development Program) Bangladesh from 2001 to 2015. As an examiner, I conducted one-on-one interviews with

individual candidates to evaluate their spoken English proficiency according to set requirements and assessed written scripts produced by candidates under exam conditions. As the examiner, I was expected to maintain the integrity of the test and ensure fair testing procedures for all candidates. As the team leader for ESOL exams, my responsibilities included, but were not limited to, recruiting, training, coordinating, standardizing, and monitoring examiners. Attending workshops and training sessions for professional growth was also expected of the team leaders. As an external examiner for other public universities in Bangladesh, my responsibilities included preparing exams, reviewing exam papers set by others, and grading as well. Through my professional responsibilities in different roles, I have learned to appreciate the opportunities I had for professional growth. At the same time, I have experienced and observed the challenges that new modes of education like learner-centeredness require of educators and learners. Although I come from an EFL (English as a foreign language) context, I am among the few privileged ones whose language learning experiences have been meaningful.

I was born in Bangladesh's port city of Chittagong in the late sixties. My family moved to the capital city, Dhaka, three years later. Our stay in Dhaka was short as my father, then the Managing Director of Duncan Brothers, was transferred to the British company's London office during Bangladesh's War of Independence in 1971. So, the first school I went to was in London. I still remember my reaction, standing in the hallway in front of the principal's office, when my father told me that I would be admitted there. I cried. I was anxious that no one would understand me as I could not speak English! Sixteen years later, I got a B.A. in English Literature followed by an

M.A. in English Language. Years later, in 2005, I was awarded a Hornby Scholarship by the Hornby Foundation for an M.A. in TESOL at the University of Leeds in England.

My father was a chartered accountant and worked for a British company before he took a job in Tripoli, Libya, as the financial advisor to the National Oil Corporation, from 1974 to 1986. My mother was a housewife. My three sisters and I went to school and college there. I am the youngest amongst my siblings. Before going to Libya, I studied in a missionary school – Holy Cross High School – for two years in Dhaka. My schooling was primarily in Tripoli where I went to three different English-medium schools: Manshia (run by a Maltese principal), Pakistani Community School, and The Oil Companies School (American school). As these schools had international students from all over the world, I had a very diverse blend of friends. Those from the school and the neighborhood we lived in offered me a rich social and cultural experience in addition to the friends I had in the Bangladeshi community. My sisters and I were actively involved in extracurricular activities, which involved us more with our own cultural activities like music and dance. I took special interest in music and so my parents made sure I had private lessons.   I took vocal lessons in classical music for several years.

In my childhood, I had interests in music, art, reading, creative writing, collecting sea shells, and travelling. The best memories I have of my childhood are the hours I spent practicing classical music under the apprenticeship of a music guru, writing stories in a diary I had, travelling to places with my family, and learning foreign languages like English, French, Arabic, and Urdu. In fact, my favorite classes in school were English and Art. The teachers of English had an enormous impact on my interest in English

language and literature; later, they became models for me as an EFL teacher. Because of my learning experiences in English classes and love for reading, one of my hobbies included creative writing and translating short stories from Bengali (my native language) literature to English while I was in high school. Later, when I was doing my undergraduate studies, I was asked by Humayun Ahmed, a popular Bengali writer and former professor of chemistry at the University of Dhaka and an honorary fellow in writing at the University of Iowa, to translate some of his literary works. I translated his novel, *Aguner Poroshmoni* (*Flowers of Flame*), and a collection of his short stories, *Ants and Other Stories*, which were published in 1994 and 1996, respectively. Translating was certainly a challenging task with the nuances in cultural expressions and beliefs.

Although Bengali is my first language, my formal learning of the Bengali language was very brief — until the age of 6. However, in my childhood, I was always encouraged to read Bengali novels, short stories, and books. Along with the English author Enid Blyton's children's adventure novels, and Nancy Drew books, I read many of the famous and widely-read fairytales and folklores of Bengali literature. My reading collection in both Bengali and English language expanded as I grew up and included both fiction and non-fiction. In addition to reading books, I enjoyed painting, making the choice of a course of study in my undergraduate years very difficult. I was eventually able to convince myself that I could always pursue my interest in painting while also studying English literature.

For my graduate studies my husband influenced me to explore a different area and to study English language. Right after graduation, he again influenced me to take up

teaching as a career. As there was no opportunity for pre-service training, I was unsure

of my own ability. I had to depend on my theoretical knowledge but, above all, my

instincts, the experiences I had as an English language learner, and the image of the

teachers of English who are my role models. In 1996, I started my teaching career in an

English-medium school as an English teacher in grades 3-6. However, by the end of the

year I was teaching at North South University, which was already in its fourth year of

operation. I have since then witnessed its growth, achievements, and continued effort to

deliver quality education and services to the ever-increasing number of young people in

Bangladesh interested in higher education. I firmly believe and hope that I will be able to

contribute to the benefit of the ongoing transformation process in the higher education

system and the academic community in Bangladesh.

I sometimes wonder how I would have fared in my teaching career if I had not

studied in five different schools during my formative years. I must say that, in addition to

the qualifications I gained, my associations with professional organizations and

participation in workshops, seminars, conferences, etc., during my early learning

experiences have had a profound influence on my teaching career. I have myself

encountered traditional as well as progressive schooling and thus learned to appreciate

the strengths of each and become cognizant of their weaknesses as well. As

undergraduate and graduate students in the same department, my husband and I strongly

felt how a systemic change was long overdue in Bangladesh's higher education. The

age-old tradition of rote learning did not prepare students adequately for the world of

work. Having been part of the academic community for so long, we both witnessed the

transformation that took place in higher education in Bangladesh with the privatization of education in the early 1990s.

My husband and I have chosen to pursue doctoral studies as we strongly feel it will contribute to our professional growth and thereby better equip us to participate in the conversation on how best to accommodate new approaches to learning in higher education systems worldwide. My husband worked for four leading English-language dailies in a journalistic career of more than 20 years and also taught as adjunct faculty in private universities in Bangladesh before deciding to go back to school. He is now in his first year of doctoral study in mass communication at the University of Iowa after completing a master's degree in communication studies at the University of Northern Iowa (UNI). Currently, I am on study leave from NSU and pursuing a doctoral degree in education at the University of Northern Iowa. My personal, educational, and professional lived experiences as an ESL (English as a second language) learner, a TESOL instructor, and a certified examiner have influenced me to think deeply about exploring the learning experiences of ESL learners in English classes. During the first semester at UNI, I used the first opportunity I had to observe an undergraduate English class for ESL students. To me, it was a learner-centered class, but I pondered what the students perceived the classes were like. I was convinced of the need to provide the ESL students at UNI opportunities to share their beliefs about the teaching practices in English classes.

I developed a deep personal and professional interest in understanding learner-centered instruction through the eyes of ESL students. Therefore, I chose to collect data through a survey, a self-report designed to help students reflect on their teacher's

instructional practices, and focused discussions in focus groups to gain a deeper understanding of their learning experiences. In qualitative research, reflexivity is a must to expose that the researcher is "conscious of the biases, values, and experiences that he or she brings" (Creswell, 2013, p. 216). In carrying out a self-study alongside the dissertation research, I maintained a reflective journal and analytic memos (see Appendix Q for samples of analytic memos). Self-reflection also resulted in relaying past experiences. This "active reflexivity" was a way to confront and challenge my own assumptions about the study (Mason, 2002) and to stay alert to ways that they may potentially shape the findings, the conclusions, and the interpretations.

For conducting the focus group interview, as the researcher in the role of a moderator, I was cognizant of the fact that "[t]he moderator is a person, a member of a racial group, an age category, a gender, and so on, and any one of these factors could inhibit or prompt openness within the group" (Krueger & Casey, 2015). Therefore, in order to reduce the effect of any of these factors as far as possible, I explained to focus group participants that as the researcher, my interest was in understanding better the experiences that the ESL students had in English classes. They were encouraged to share negative and positive experiences as there were no right or wrong answers. They could rely on me as the listener as all information would be kept confidential. The participants were recruited from the institution where I am a doctoral candidate. They were merely familiar faces to me before they became focus group participants. However, the participants, who were Asian, were very likely to have identified themselves with me as I am of Asian origin as well. This was an added advantage as it had an impact on the flow

of the discussion as well as on the atmosphere. The richness of the data depended on how much they trusted me, and their uninhibited responses demonstrated the degree of trust they had in me.

As the researcher-moderator I was conscious of the interview skills I had mastered to conduct standardized language proficiency tests for over a decade. I reminded myself that "the role of a moderator should not be that of an interviewer" (Morgan, 1997, p. 48) and made efforts to educate myself through reviewing literature and seeking expert opinion. As the researcher, I was aware that "any description of lived experience by participants needs to be seen in the context of that individual's life" (Finlay, 2012) and so through in-depth interviewing (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984) I tried to stimulate the participants to be as transparent as possible. This allowed me to place myself in their situation and bracket myself as far as possible. Personal learning experiences, a variety of job responsibilities, and witnessing the changing education paradigm at home and abroad has been thought-provoking for me. These have been instrumental in helping me to realize that ESL students' learning experiences of learner-centered teaching practices need to be investigated so that instructors may make informed decisions towards making their English classes learner-centered.

UNDERSTANDING ESL UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS' BELIEFS ABOUT

LEARNER-CENTERED INSTRUCTION

An Abstract of a Dissertation

Submitted

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

Approved:

_____

Dr. Benjamin Forsyth, Committee Chair

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Dr. Jennifer Waldron

Dean of the Graduate College

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May 2019

ABSTRACT

This study was undertaken to determine undergraduate ESL students' beliefs about learner-centered teaching (LCT) practices in English classes and to understand to what extent their learner-centered learning experiences influenced their beliefs about the quality of LCT practices. The study involved explanatory sequential mixed-methods. The Learner-centered Battery Student Survey and focus group interviews were used to collect data. One hundred and twelve undergraduate ESL students at a Midwestern university took part in the survey, 17 of whom, predominantly Asians, subsequently took part in multiple mini focus groups that lasted approximately 50-70 minutes each. Quantitative data analysis included descriptive statistics, *t*-Tests, and one-way ANOVAs. Results from the quantitative strand indicated that aside from ethnicity, demographic variables such as age, gender, and college status had no relationship with student perceptions of teaching practices. The results also suggested that the participants perceived teaching practices to be highly transitioning towards learner-centeredness.

For qualitative data analysis, the constant-comparative framework was used. Three themes emerged from the focus groups — that LCT practices are characteristically learner-focused and learning-focused, set challenges to learning environment, and lead to academic and non-academic outcomes. The participants broadly measured the quality of LCT practices in two ways: evaluating via past learning experiences and identifying learner-centered and non-learner-centered teaching practices. The qualitative results also indicated that students require facilitative mechanisms in their learning activities, more support in coping with stress and cognitive challenges, and help adjusting with current

learning experiences. Findings from this mixed-method study have pedagogical

implications for LCT practices in English classes with ESL undergraduate students. This

research can serve as a framework for implementing professional development focused

specifically on non-learner-centered practices that impact, for example, culturally

relevant pedagogy, facilitative mechanisms, interpersonal relationship, and student

knowledge, and thus enhance opportunities for transitioning to learner-centeredness.

UNDERSTANDING ESL UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS' BELIEFS ABOUT

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Dr. Benjamin Forsyth, Chair

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Dr. Linda Fitzgerald, Committee Member

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University of Northern Iowa

May 2019

DEDICATION

To Papa and Mom.

It was their dream that I would get my doctoral degree one day.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

My first classroom observation of an undergraduate English class for ESL

students at University of Northern Iowa (UNI) was an intriguing experience. The

instructor, an English-speaking young man, wrote on the blackboard: "1. Quote 2. Why

you chose it. 3. Discussion question." There was an instruction for the next class, too:

"Next class: Objectives." As soon as the students began entering the room, they got busy

scribbling on their notepads. The instructor told the class to put a full-stop where they

were and asked them to take their place in the circle they had to form. When the students

sat in a circle, he asked them to start sharing their experience of reading the assigned

pages from Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*. There were periods of silence

broken by more dominant group members from time to time until the instructor joined the

circle and facilitated the discussion posing provoking questions and asking for opinions.

Gradually, the less active students started to participate. At one point, the instructor

exclaimed, "That is what I'm trying to steer you guys to! You are doing a great job!" To

me, it was a learner-centered English class for ESL students, with the instructor

encouraging the students to set their learning goals so that the activities became

meaningful for them, to make their own view of the world, to actively engage in the

learning process, and to co-construct knowledge through reflection and problem-posing.

I believe when students enjoy and engage in the learning process, it adds value to college

education. I wonder, though, if ESL students believe so, too. Hence, this study – an

exploration of undergraduate ESL students' beliefs about learner-centered teaching (LCT) practices in their English classes.

In the field of foreign language pedagogy and second language acquisition, there have been calls for more "communicative, democratic, student-centered, and meaningful student engagement in the second language (L2) classroom" (A. V. Brown, 2009, p.46). A significant shift from a teacher-centered to a learner-centered (LC) approach in ESL/ EFL has also occurred (Nosratinia, Saveiy, & Zaker, 2014). More commonly, language teachers today practice "principled eclecticism" (Larsen-Freeman, 2012), which is "more a cluster of approaches than a single methodology" (Nunan, 1988, p. 24). Learners' beliefs are influenced by the teaching-learning context they are exposed to and are likely to provide useful information about the effectiveness of the teaching practices. In fact, ESL/EFL researchers have been drawn to language learners' individual differences and their widely differing beliefs about foreign language (Shi, 2016).

<div align="center">Significance of the Study</div>

Several studies have focused on ESL students' beliefs about language learning and learning activities (Horwitz, 1985, 1987, 1988, 1989); discrepancies between the perspectives of ESL learners and their instructors (e.g., Barkhuizen, 1998; A. V. Brown, 2009; Eslami-Rasekh & Valizadeh, 2004); students' preferred activity types (e.g., Barkhuizen, 1998; Spratt, 1999); and the changing nature of students' beliefs (e.g., Amuzie & Winke, 2009; Hawkey, 2006; Morton, Storch, & Thompson, 2015). These studies make a case for considering English language or ESL learners' beliefs as they have been found to contribute positively to the language lesson.

None of these studies have, however, exclusively explored undergraduate ESL students' beliefs about their instructors' LC practices. In fact, references to learner-centered ESL programs are limited in the literature (Bista, 2011a). This is in spite of the fact that the American Psychological Association (APA), the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU), the American Educational Research Association (AERA), the National Science Foundation (NSF), the National Research Council (NRC), and the United States Armed Forces have adopted the Learner-centered Psychological Principles (LCPs) as best-practices for facilitating learning since the formulation of these principles (K. T. Henson, 2003; McCombs & Miller, 2007).

Importance of Applying Research-Validated Principles

The rationale for implementing learner-centered teaching (LCT) in the ESL learning context or any educational program emerges from several sources: national educational reform task forces, research on student learning outcomes, accreditation standards, and educational and psychological research. The LCPs (APA Presidential Task Force on Psychology in Education, 1993; see Appendix C), organized into four domains (i.e., metacognitive and cognitive; motivational and affective; developmental and social; and individual differences factors), holistically define a research-validated knowledge base about learning and learners so that appropriate factors can be addressed to facilitate learning for learners of all age groups (McCombs & Miller, 2007). These principles have been found to make a difference in the learning of individual students from diverse social, ethnic, and racial groups in K-20 education (McCombs, 2003a),

enabling learners to become co-learners with instructors and peers in diverse settings and across classroom boundaries (McCombs, 2001).

Importance of Investigating ESL Learners' Belief Systems

The number of international students at the higher education institutions in the US increasing by 1.5% in 2017/18 and reaching a new high of 1.09 million (IIE, 2018) indicates growing cultural diversity and the necessity of focus on LCT practices in English classes in higher education systems. This will necessitate instructors and syllabus designers to recognize that different tools used in the delivery of instruction influence student learning. Variations in students' perceptions of learning in LC environments need to be identified (Barkhuizen, 1998; Pillay, 2002) in order to facilitate effective LC learning of ESL students in English classes in higher education systems. Despite clear evidence of the effectiveness of LCT, research-validated LCPs and practices are not widely used (McCombs & Miller, 2007). As many higher education institutions and educational programs claim to be LC, it is also necessary to have ways to ascertain whether they are doing what they are claiming to do (Blumberg & Weimer, 2012). Moreover, it is prudent to investigate undergraduate ESL students' perceptions of learner-centeredness in English classes as it has the potential to help instructors make informed decisions. Besides, countering negative reactions would necessitate explaining the value of an LCT approach (Doyle, 2011), and this can be accomplished if investigative studies are conducted to identify different dimensions of LC practices about which students have low perceptions. Overall, the results of this study promise significant pedagogical implications for ESL instruction because any improvement in the

professional preparation of pre-service and in-service teachers teaching English or any other language ought to be informed by research (Freeman, 2002).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to determine undergraduate ESL students' experiences and beliefs about LCT practices in English classes and to understand to what extent learner-centered learning experience influences their beliefs about the quality of LCT practices.

The researcher used the Learner-centered Battery Student Survey (LCBSS) (see Appendix G for the instrument) to investigate ESL undergraduate students' perceptions of their instructors' LCT practices in English classes at a Midwestern university. This instrument is particularly appropriate when the institution under scrutiny is one with a learner-oriented vision. Two assumptions undergirded this study:

(1) Students' beliefs about LCT practices differ significantly with their perceptions of learner-centeredness of teaching practices in their English classes; and

(2) Learner-centered language learning experiences significantly influence ESL students' perceptions of the quality of LCT practices.

The study provides a better understanding of undergraduate ESL learners' beliefs about LCT. Their judgement of the LCT practices also reflect to what extent teaching practices in English courses are learner-centered.

This study set out to answer the following research questions:

(1) What beliefs and experiences do undergraduate ESL learners at a Midwestern

   university have about learner-centered teaching practices in English classes?

(2) How do learner-centered learning experiences affect their beliefs about the

   quality of learner-centered teaching practices?

<u>Overview of Chapters</u>

This dissertation is divided into six chapters, including the Introduction. Chapter

2 (Conceptual Framework) reviews the development and potential of the (LCBSS) and,

in the process, provides the rationale for the methodology of the study and the way to

interpret the findings of the study. Chapter 3 (Theoretical Framework and Literature

Review) reviews the literature on previous research of ESL/EFL students' language

learning beliefs with an emphasis on the various instruments used. The primary focus is

on studies measuring students' beliefs about LCT practices and the impact of LCPs. The

review shows that, despite the gradual shift from a teacher-directed approach to a learner-

centered approach in TESOL, ESL students' beliefs about LCT practices in the higher

education systems have not been examined, and thus justify an in-depth examination of

students' beliefs by means of the LCBSS in this study. Chapter 4 (Methodology)

describes the study design by explaining the context and participants, the instrumentation

including the measures taken for addressing reliability and validity issues, and the data

collection procedures and data analysis processes. The findings from the quantitative and

qualitative data are presented in Chapter 5 (Data Analysis and Results). This chapter also

includes an explanation of how the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the study are

interlinked. Chapter 6 (Discussion, Recommendations, and Conclusions) discusses the

findings of the study and their implications. The chapter also describes the limitations of the study and recommends heuristic direction for future studies.

CHAPTER 2

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter presents the conceptual framework gleaned from the relevant

literature on belief and learner-centered teaching (LCT). It includes definitions of

context (ESL/EFL), ESL learners, and belief in the first section. The second section first

focuses on the definition of learner-centered and the research-validated Learner-centered

Psychological Principles (LCPs) that are foundational to the definition of learner-centered

and LCT. The potential of the LCPs are discussed next. A review of the characteristics

of LCT is followed by a brief discussion of the challenges of LCT in ESL settings.

Finally, the potential of the Learner-centered Battery Student Survey (LCBSS) in a

university setting among ESL learners is discussed. Overall, the chapter offers the

rationale for the methodology used in the study and provides a way to interpret the

findings of the research that are summarized in Chapter 5.

<u>ESL Learners and their Language Learning Experience</u>

In a setting like the United States where English is used as the medium of

instruction, all students are English language learners. One distinction is whether English

is a first or additional language for any individual student. In the case of the latter,

students are referred to as English as a Second Language (ESL) students. In a context in

which English is not the language of the wider society or medium of instruction, English

is then being taught as a foreign language (EFL). Any student, native or non-native, is an

English language learner. The context, described as the different settings and diverse

groups of students a teacher is likely to be working with, is determined using two

variables: the role of English and the age and the goals of the students (Freeman &

Freeman, 1998). A significant contextual factor in the present study is the difference

between EFL and ESL. Generally, EFL and ESL contexts are recognized to provide

different linguistic environments to both students and teachers and importantly affect

pedagogy (Tomlinson, 2005). In the context of the study, English is the primary

language for most people living in the country (U.S.) and native and non-native students

are, therefore, exposed to English both inside and outside the classroom. For the

participants in the study who need English for academic purposes, English is either a

second or third or fourth language (Freeman & Freeman, 1998). To avoid a deficit view

that uses labels such as language minority, or limited English proficient, the research

participants are defined as ESL learners. These ESL learners are inherently digital

natives or digital learners. Hannum and McCombs (2008) described these young people

being born into the digital age as increasingly fluent, competent, and knowledgeable

about technology in its entirety. They warned that learning for them can often be an

isolated activity, as traditional K-20 educational systems characterize learning as

simplistic and memorization, emphasizing a linear teaching of knowledge and skill

standards. Horwitz (1999) argued that language learning is basically an active learner-

and-learning-oriented activity. Learners may address the task of learning a language by

using different means, driven by their language-learning beliefs.

Significantly, one learner characteristic that influences the approach of learning

an L2 are the beliefs that they have about language learning (Cotterall, 1999). Learners'

preconceived notions about language learning has the potential to influence their

experiences and actions as language learners as well as their effectiveness in classroom

(Horwitz, 1988, 1999). Moreover, L2 learners may have strong beliefs about the nature

of the L2, its challenges, its acquisition process, the usefulness of learning strategies, the

presence of aptitude, and their own expectations about success and teaching strategies

(Bernat & Gvozdenko, 2005). Learners bring to the teaching-learning context

assumptions and can make positive contributions to the language classroom (Cotterall,

1999; Horwitz, 1988). Recognizing learner-centered (LC) education as the new model

for university education, Pillay (2002) commented that sole attention on the processes of

LC education is not enough. He emphasized the necessity of "broaden[ing] the scope to

include learners' beliefs and conceptions about knowledge and learning" (p. 95).

Therefore, the study is aimed at examining (1) undergraduate ESL learners' beliefs and

experiences about LCT practices, and (2) how learner-centered learning experiences

affect their beliefs about the quality of LCT practices.

ESL Learners' Beliefs

Dewey's (1933, 1938) concept of experience provides the appropriate lens to

understand ESL students' learning beliefs as it underlines that beliefs are context- and

experience-based. Experience is the key concept in Dewey's (1938) philosophy:

"Teaching and learning are continuous processes of reconstruction of experience" (p.

111). The principle of continuity implied here refers to the connectivity of past and

future experiences. Dewey (1938) explained:

> As an individual passes from one situation to another, his world, his environment,
> expands or contracts. He does not find himself living in another world but in a
> different part or aspect of one and the same world. What he has learned in the way

of knowledge and skill in one situation becomes an instrument of understanding and dealing effectively with the situations which follow. The process goes on as long as life and learning continue. (p. 42)

An individual is seen as continuously involved in the process of growing and enhancing his learning from one experience to another, making connections to what is to come. The recognition that an individual "passes from one situation to another" indicates that experiences are also context-bound. Dewey (1933) defined beliefs as a form of thought that

covers all the matters of which we have no sure knowledge and yet which we are sufficiently confident of to act upon and also the matters that we now accept as certainly true, as knowledge, but which nevertheless may be questioned in the future – just as much as knowledge in the past has now passed into the limbo of mere opinion or of error. (p. 6)

In other words, beliefs are not static but are subject to change; although we might regard our present belief as knowledge and rely on it, it may become questionable as all past knowledge undergoes change. Beliefs, according to Dewey, are experience-based and context-bound. The research design of this study aims to consider the findings by looking at the beliefs of undergraduate ESL learners in the ESL context. The instrument employed includes predetermined categories that are research-validated and are based on the Learner-centered Psychological Principles (LCPs) (APA, 1993) that are foundational to LCT (McCombs, Lauer, & Peralez, 1997). The research participants focused on their English instructors' LCT practices as they experienced these, and these predetermined

categories might not have been present in the instructors' belief systems, thus giving them the impression that the instructors did not teach according to their beliefs.

In this study, following Dewey's ideas, knowledge and beliefs are seen as interrelated. Beliefs, Barcelos (2000) explained, are "paradoxical, and part of their paradox is their relationship with knowledge" (p. 36). Beliefs, in the study, are considered in the light of Dewey's (1933) definition, and the term "belief" has been used in reviewing the literature in the area of students' beliefs regarding LCT practices as well as ESL students' subjective evaluations of their teachers' behaviors in English classes. For the purpose of the study, 'belief' is operationalized to mean the research participants' psychologically held, personal, subjective beliefs about LCT practices, their observations of the frequency of specific teaching practices, and their assessments of those practices. Given the scope of the study, 'belief' adequately defines the individualistic, subjective nature of this study's target construct.

<div align="center">Learner-Centered Teaching</div>

Defining Learner-Centered

According to Nunan (1988), 'learner-centered teaching' is aimed at facilitating growth of learner autonomy and independence by allowing new learning experiences and sensitizing students to the learning process itself. Milambiling's (2001) definition can be placed on the continuum of a broad definition distinguishing LC education as context-sensitive. She argued that the culture of the learning context is as important to learning as the content and the methods used and recommended addressing the culture of the learner within specific learning contexts when designing the curricula. In other words, by

supporting a curriculum that speaks to the culture of the learner, instructors become

strong student advocates and learners themselves.

McCombs and Whisler (1997) defined learner-centered education as

> the perspective that couples a focus on individual learners (their heredity, experiences, perspectives, backgrounds, talents, interests, capacities, and needs) with a focus on learning (the best available knowledge about learning and how it occurs and about teaching practices that are most effective in promoting the highest levels of motivation, learning, and achievement for all learners). (p. 9)

In this definition, LC education is a perspective that combines a focus on the

characteristics of the learner with a concentration on best teaching practices for learning.

An awareness of individual learner characteristics that includes their heredity,

experiences, perspectives, backgrounds, talents, interests, capacities, and needs involves

addressing the personal domain. Additional focus is placed on learning, how it occurs,

and the best available knowledge about teaching and learning. The teaching practices,

therefore, have the potential to impact students' success in learning. The definition also

emphasizes that the LC model include the identification of individual learner as unique.

Recognition of these unique differences is essential for self-development to take place.

This study, though not part of an LC program, considers McCombs and Whisler's (1997)

broad definition of LC. It is important to examine and define learner-centeredness

through this research-based perspective in order to build our understanding of the ESL

learners' cognitive, motivational, and developmental needs in their educational setting.

McCombs and Whisler's definition is based on the 12 Learner-centered

Psychological Principles (LCPs) (APA, 1993), which are divided into four domains and

are applicable to all individuals from the very young to the very old, and all settings

(McCombs, 2001; McCombs & Miller, 2007; McCombs & Whisler, 1997). The four

domains – metacognitive and cognitive factors; motivational and affective factors;

developmental and social factors; and other individual differences factors – emphasize

both the learner and the learning and cover the principles. The LCPs are foundational to

the definition of learner-centered and form the theoretical base for LCT (McCombs &

Whisler, 1997). The revised model of the 14 LCPs (APA Work Group of the Board of

Educational Affairs, 1997) are presented in Appendix C. The next section focuses on the

LCPs that form the basis of LCT and can facilitate the LC instructors' instructional

practices as well as the non-learner-centered ones to adopt learner-centered practices.

Theoretical Base for Learner-Centered Teaching: Learner-Centered Principles

In 1990 the American Psychological Association (APA) appointed the

Presidential Task Force on Psychology in Education to (1) identify ways in which

psychological knowledge base related to learning, motivation, and, individual differences

could contribute directly to improvements in the quality of student achievement; and (2)

provide guidance to education systems to support individual student learning and

achievement (McCombs & Whisler, 1997). The joint effort by the task force and Mid-

continent Regional Educational Laboratory (McREL) involved multidimensional reviews

of the literature on learning and instruction, motivation and development (Alexander &

Murphy, 2000).

This resulted in an integrated set of principles that reflect the best practices to

improve education for all students as supported by psychological and educational

research. According to McCombs and Whisler (1997), "[t]aken as a whole [the learner-centered principles] provide an integrated perspective on factors influencing learning for all learners. Together, they are intended to be understood as an organized knowledge base that supports a learner-centered model" (p.3). First compiled by the APA Presidential Task Force on Psychology in Education (1993), a review from experts in the field of psychology started the validation of LCPs. Feedback from a diverse pool of experts warranted revisions to the document that yielded the revised model of 14 principles (APA, 1997) under four domains: (a) cognitive and metacognitive, (b) motivational and affective, (c) developmental and social, and (d) individual difference factors (Alexander & Murphy, 2000). The LCPs (APA, 1997) are presented in Appendix C.

Alexander and Murphy (2000) acknowledged the pragmatic and theoretical rationales for dissecting learning into essential dimensions – metacognitive and cognitive factors, affect, personal and social factors, and individual differences and development in the original principles. However, they underlined the limitations of this organizational strategy on the grounds that these dimensions are "inextricably intertwined in the real world" (p. 44).

The first domain, metacognitive and cognitive factors, comprises the first six LCPs: (1) nature of the learning process, (2) goals of the learning process, (3) construction of knowledge, (4) strategic thinking, (5) thinking about thinking, and (6) context of learning. An exhaustive research base supports each of the principles so that research related to the first domain is rooted in constructivist learning, cognitive learning,

and higher-order thinking strategies (Alexander & Murphy, 2000; APA, 1993, 1997; McCombs & Whisler, 1997).

The second domain, motivational and affective factors, comprises the three LCPs: (7) motivational influences on learning, (8) intrinsic motivation to learn, and (9) effects of motivation and effort. Similar to the first domain, the second one is also supported by an exhaustive research base (Alexander & Murphy, 2000; APA, 1993, 1997; McCombs & Whisler, 1997). Research focused on the interrelationships and interactions among intrinsic motivation, learning goals, anxiety, intellectual curiosity, and clinical applications of cognitive approaches (Alexander & Murphy, 2000; APA, 1993, 1997; McCombs & Whisler, 1997).

The third domain, developmental and social factors, includes two LCPs: (10) developmental influences on learning and (11) social influences on learning. Connected closely with research related to the first two domains, the third domain has a strong theoretical and clinical research grounding (Alexander & Murphy, 2000; APA, 1993, 1997; McCombs & Whisler, 1997).

Finally, the fourth domain, individual differences, comprises three LCPs: (12) individual differences in learning, (13) learning and diversity, and (14) standards and assessment. Research related to social constructivism, adaptive instruction, cultural diversity, self-esteem, socio-emotional support, and social psychology is important to this domain (Alexander & Murphy, 2000; APA, 1993, 1997; McCombs & Whisler, 1997)

The Potential of Employing Learner-Centered Principles

McCombs and Whisler (1997) made five conclusions about learners and learning

from their definition of learner-centered that is accompanied by the LCPs and called them

"Premises of the Learner-Centered Model". They drew implications for practice from

these premises: learners are included in educational decision-making processes; learners

are encouraged to perspective-taking; learners' individual differences are respected;

learners are acknowledged as co-creators in the teaching and learning process. Weimer

(2002) added a fifth one in her outline of the key premises of LCT, i.e., using learner-

based assessment: a shift of power occurs from teacher to a more egalitarian classroom;

content is used only to stimulate critical thinking among learners; a shift in an

authoritarian role of the teacher to facilitator so that they become co-creators of

knowledge with learners; learner responsibility for learning is encouraged; learner-based

assessment for promoting learning and not just assigning of grades is practiced.

The LCPs, validated by systematic and thorough research over a long period of

time (McCombs et al., 1997; McCombs, 2003b; McCombs & Miller, 2007), have

established that they and their practices form a "universal, systematic framework for

accomplishing high-quality instruction in any context" (McCombs, 2015). They can be

applied to all levels of learners (Hannum & McCombs, 2008; McCombs, 2003b;

McCombs & Vakili, 2005) both inside and outside the classroom (APA, 1993, 1997;

Schuh, 2003), and can support best practices with available synchronous and

asynchronous approaches (McCombs, 2015). The principles regard learning as a lifelong

process rather than a process that takes place only through young-adulthood (Lambert &

McCombs, 1998; McCombs & Miller, 2007). They provide "an essential framework to be incorporated in new designs for curriculum and instruction, and assessment systems for evaluating educational goal attainments" (APA, 1997, p. 1). Because the LCPs are supported by strong research evidence, the APA (1997) adopted them as a framework for redesigning K-20 education (McCombs & Miller, 2007). McCombs (2015) captured the essence of the LCPs in her explanation that "[l]earner-centered framework is ecological in that it examines the personal and contextual factors affecting learning and motivation" (p. 57).

For education systems, priority has to be given to the learners and their learning. Studies have suggested how LCPs provide a "solid framework for the new educational approaches," including computer-mediated communication modes (e.g., Chou, 2001), allowing teachers or facilitators to holistically and systematically address needs of all learners (Hannum, Irvin, Lei, & Farmer, 2008; McCombs & Miller, 2007). These principles about learners and learning provide a model of integrated factors that have the potential to facilitate deeper and more meaningful learning for all learners (McCombs & Vakili, 2005). However, Weinberger and McCombs (2003) warned that exclusive attention to research on learning without knowing anything about individual learners can result in an imbalance in the system. Higher education systems in the U.S. are increasingly diverse in terms of student population as well as student needs. In fact, the number of international students at the higher education institutions in the U.S. has surpassed one million for the third consecutive year (IIE, 2018). Therefore, the highest priority in the instructional process has to be given to individual requirements. This also

implies ensuring that information is not only transmitted to students but is meaningfully understood and relevant to students' future learning and activities. Most importantly, to overcome the negative dynamics that impede LCT, these principles can serve as a platform for growth-oriented learning and development. A review of the crucial aspects of LCT is presented next.

Characteristics of LCT

According to K. L. Brown (2003), research-based perspective of learner-centered is essential to create positive learning contexts for student success. Psychological literature strongly builds that for LCT (Blumberg & Weimer, 2012). Based on the literature reviewed, LCT has the following characteristics:

(1) It embraces an eclectic approach (Bista, 2011b; Freeman & Freeman, 1998).

(2) Learners are holistically viewed as human beings rather than as isolated clumps of characteristics or attributes (McCombs & Miller, 2007; Schuh, 2003).

(3) Learners' needs are central to the design and delivery of instruction (McCombs & Miller, 2007; McCombs & Whisler, 1997; Pillay, 2002); LCT emphasizes the person doing the learning (Weimer, 2013) and places the "learning characteristics of all learners under the microscope" (K. L. Brown, 2003, p. 50).

(4) Students engage in construction of knowledge through gathering and synthesizing information and integrate it with general skills of inquiry (Huba & Freed, 2000).

(5) It aims to create a conducive learning environment optimizing learners' opportunities to be attentive and actively engage in authentic and meaningful learning (Doyle, 2011).

(6) It views learning as a natural lifelong process and motivation as also natural, provided the learning context is supportive (McCombs & Miller, 2007).

(7) Instruction is developmentally appropriate as instructors ensure students have mastered requisite skills for concepts being studied (D. M. Brown, 2003).

(8) Potential of students are expanded (Freeman & Freeman, 1998) as learners are allowed to make choices regarding their assignments and how they do them (D. M. Brown, 2003).

(9) It emphasizes use of knowledge effectively to address emerging issues and problems in real-life situations (Huba & Freed, 2000) and, therefore, promotes students' learning by bringing the real world into the classroom through authentic learning (Doyle, 2011; Weimer, 2013).

(10) It emphasizes contextually relevant learning based on learners' prior learning (D. M. Brown, 2003) and authentic learning that involves interdisciplinary investigation (Doyle, 2011; Huba & Freed, 2000).

(11) It aims to achieve success for diverse learners (Barr & Tagg, 1995) and, therefore, utilizes a multisensory approach to learning to improve understanding and to help learners stop memorizing (Doyle, 2011).

(12) It encourages learners to take responsibility of their learning (Barr & Tagg, 1995) so that they develop as autonomous, self-directed, and self-regulating learners (Weimer, 2013).

(13) It promotes learning by teachers' facilitating the acquisition of knowledge rather than transmitting knowledge (Blumberg & Pontiggia, 2011; Huba & Freed, 2000;

Weimer, 2013), and therefore requires teachers to utilize scaffolding (Bonk & Cunningham, 1998; Doyle, 2011).

(14) It encourages learners to learn content themselves; content is "used" instead of "covered" to develop a knowledge base as well as learning skills that students need across a lifetime of learning (Weimer, 2013).

(15) It fosters sharing of power between students and teachers (Cullen, Harris, & Hill, 2012), and balancing of power (Blumberg & Weimer 2012) so that students assume more control of their learning (Blumberg & Pontiggia, 2011).

(16) It aims at creating and maintaining a conducive learning environment as students are oriented to learning differently, whether in the classroom or online (Weimer, 2013). It empowers students to learn via different means (Barr & Tagg, 1995), provides active learning opportunities (Lumpkin, Achen, & Dodd, 2015) and establishes positive interpersonal relationships even in synchronous and asynchronous practices to ensure students have multiple venues for connecting with others and overcoming technology fears (McCombs, 2015).

(17) A "moral partnership" prevails between the teacher as facilitator and the student as learner (Hansen & Stephens, 2000); LCT culture is "cooperative, collaborative, and supportive" (Huba & Freed, 2000, p. 5).

(18) It provides opportunities for students to explore and develop self- and peer-assessment skills (Weimer, 2013); assessment is aimed at promoting and diagnosing learning (Blumberg & Pontiggia, 2011), therefore, teaching and assessing are intertwined (Huba & Freed, 2000).

A review of the literature on the evolution of language teaching methodologies reveals how LCT is essentially a Western concept. It is informed by theories of learning and language (Larsen-Freeman, 2012) and not described as an educational theory or philosophy in the literature (Weimer, 2013). See Chapter 3 for a review of the evolution of language teaching methodologies and theories influencing LCT. The next section discusses the importance of a principled approach in instructional practices suggested by scholars advocating learner-centered education.

<u>A Principled Approach for Instructing ESL Students</u>

K. L. Brown (2003) stated that for 21st century instructors, the premise of "one teaching style fits all," attributed to teacher-directed instruction, does not work for increasingly diverse student populations. D. M. Brown (2003) suggested that revisiting basic learning principles can be useful for teachers to recognize the importance of creating an LC environment because studies reveal student success in learner-centered conditions. The literature on learner-centered education and language teaching emphasizes a principled approach or empirically-based outcomes (Finnochiaro, 1969; Freeman & Freeman, 1998; Hansen & Stephens, 2000; J. C. Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Finocchiaro (1969) noted that "individualization of instruction" is a necessity for effective teaching in English classes and advocated an eclectic approach. She strongly recommended exercising caution in preparing materials and procedures for teaching ESL students "*anywhere*" (author's emphasis) to attain two major goals: (1) acquiring abilities and skills crucial to expressing needs, interests, and ideas; and (2) enabling an understanding of socio-cultural aspects of the English-speaking community. Freeman

and Freeman (1998) suggested that a method must be adapted to the context of English language teaching and a set of principles for success be applied to the context. They emphasized that the principles they suggested are not a "panacea" but provide alternatives to the commonsense assumptions about teaching that many instructors have.

For college settings, principles that guide the implementation of LC instructional practice have also been suggested. Hansen and Stephens (2000) identified certain dynamics as destructive to an LCT environment but suggested these may help formulate a "code of ethics" that blend academic and ethical dimensions of LCT to "emancipate" and "empower" students, and make learning a true growth experience (p. 47). J. C. Richards and Rodgers (2001) argued that language teaching was in a "post-methods" era and that language teaching programs should operate on the basis of "informed eclecticism," involving selection of different design features and procedures drawn from different methods with explicit reference to program objectives. They recommended that teachers identify principles of effective language teaching for guidance in classroom decisions.

Many of these guiding principles feature in the LCPs (APA, 1997). They are sound principles but, to stimulate L2 acquisition, it is necessary to make context-driven decisions about the choice of activities for students and the required behavior on their part. The LCPs have the potential to holistically and systematically address the needs of all learners (Hannum et al., 2008) including ESL students in university settings. Components of these principles have been operationalized in the Learner-centered

Battery Student Survey (LCBSS) (McCombs et al., 1997) so that the instrument has

potential for use in university settings among ESL learners.

<div align="center">The Potential of LCBSS in University Settings among ESL Learners</div>

The Learner-centered Battery (LCB) (McCombs et al., 1997) is a set of

instruments that emerged from the theory and research-based Learner-centered

Psychological Principles (LCPs) (APA, 1997). McREL's researchers developed the

battery to assist educators to address the areas that impact LCPs (McCombs et al., 1997).

As part of the LCB, the Learner-centered Battery Student Survey (LCBSS) (see

Appendix G) is a self-report instrument that was developed to help students examine their

instructors' levels of awareness and reflective thinking regarding (a) their beliefs about

learners, instructors, and their relationship to the learning process, (b) the relationship of

these beliefs to their classroom practices, from the learners' perspectives, and (c) the

impact of these factors on learning (McCombs et al., 1997). Chapter 4 reports the

findings of validation studies that were conducted to establish the reliability and validity

for the LCBSS during its developmental phase. Several of the LCP components are

operationalized in the LCBSS and were found to be related to students' classroom

performance and motivation and to teacher quality as well in Fasko and Grubb's (1997)

study. Some of the subscales were reported to be good predictors of teacher quality.

Instructional practices are meant to work for the benefit of students and for

learning. However, often instructors are not aware of how their practices are experienced

by others. Perceptions of the classroom as reported by students on a measure of learner-

centeredness is "a source of information about the differences between their perceptions

and those of individual students, while focusing on the importance of seeing practices

from the students' perspectives" (McCombs et al., 1997). Student perceptions of their

classroom provide "viable" and better information (Schuh, 2004). The teacher is able to

see the need for changes in practice in particular domains from individual students'

perspectives. It thus provides an impetus for changes to better meet the needs of

students. The availability of tools for increasing their awareness and knowledge about

the impact of their instructional practices and the perceptions of the learning experiences

of students can help instructors make changes that are "self-initiated" (McCombs et al.,

1997). In addition, to help instructors improve instructional practices at all levels of the

education system, they have to be able to access student perceptions and thus devote time

for creating positive climates and relationships (Weinberger & McCombs, 2003). The

LCBSS has the potential to support these teachers.

<p style="text-align:center">Summary</p>

This chapter related four parts of the conceptual framework. The first part

presented concepts relevant to the context of the study that have been defined after

careful examination of the literature. In the second part, different aspects of LCT,

including a definition of learner-centered and the LCPs were put into focus. Next, the

necessity of a principled approach in learner-centered instructional practices was

discussed. In the last part, a brief overview of the development and potential of the

LCBSS, the instrument for the study, was provided.

The conceptual framework and the theoretical framework and literature review

are presented separately in two chapters as the conceptual framework is intended to set

the rationale for the methodology. The next chapter is devoted to reviewing the literature on the evolution of language teaching methodologies in ESL with specific emphasis on LCT practices, the focus of the study, debates about such practices, and educational theories related to learner-centered teaching. The literature is also reviewed on instruments used in ESL/EFL language learning belief studies, including both BALLI and non-BALLI ones. This is followed by studies on LCPs and LCT practices with emphasis on the instruments used in them. The chapter ends with the justification for using the LCBSS for the present study.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Theories are both things that we look at and examine themselves and things that we use to look at the world around us. (Geelan, 2006, p. 2)

This chapter presents the theoretical framework for the study and a review of the literature. First, an abbreviated summary on the evolution of language teaching methods shows how the shifting trends in language pedagogy have occurred. Given the study's focus on learner-centered teaching (LCT) practices as perceived by ESL learners, the review of language teaching methodologies and approaches focuses on the role of teachers and the preferred teaching practices as outlined by each methodology. Next, related to the study, the current approach to language teaching (i.e., LCT) is discussed, including debates about the approach. This is followed by a focus on its theoretical foundation. Finally, research related to investigating ESL and foreign language students' language learning beliefs is reviewed with emphasis on their use of various instruments, followed by studies that have measured students' beliefs about LCT practices and behaviors of instructors. This review seeks to establish that, although there has been a gradual shift from teacher-directed approach to learner-oriented approach in TESOL, belief studies have not exclusively examined ESL students' beliefs about their instructors' LCT practices in English classes in the higher education systems.

Language Teaching: Approaches and Methods in ESL

It is difficult to narrow down to one particular methodology or approach that embodies effective L2 teaching in all contexts. Over the years, the "changing winds and

shifting sands of language teaching" traces how "[e]ach new method broke from the old

but took with it some of the positive aspects of the previous practices" (H. D. Brown,

2001, p. 17-18). Effective L2 or foreign language instruction has been the goal for

decades; in fact, before the late nineteenth century, it mirrored the so-called Classical

Method of teaching Latin and Greek. In their historical overview in *Approaches and*

Methods in Language Teaching, J. C. Richards and Rogers (2001) began with the

teaching of Latin and Greek and its influence on language teaching that began 500 years

ago. Language students were schooled in the particulars of Latin through rote

memorization of grammar and sample sentences from the fifteenth century on through the

nineteenth century embodied by the Grammar-Translation method. H. D. Brown (2001)

noted that "languages were not being taught primarily to learn oral/aural communication,

but to learn for the sake of being 'scholarly' or…for reading proficiency" (p. 18).

Teachers were required to have thorough mastery of grammar, explain it in detail, model

it through decontextualized sentences, and provide instruction in the students' native

language or first language (L1). Even after foreign languages were added to the school

curriculum, the Grammar-Translation method valued the reading of a language's

literature in terms of mental exercise. This method continued strongly into the twentieth

century until a reaction against it surfaced with the rise of the reform movement. From

this grew the Natural method, which attempted to mirror first language acquisition

without recourse to L1 during the instructional phase. The Direct Method, the most well-

known of the natural methods adopted by Berlitz, focused on the oral and aural skills

with the entire class being taught in the target language, emphasized grammar teaching

inductively and vocabulary presentation through gestures, objects, and pictures (J. C.

Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Until World War II, reading and Grammar-Translation

methods governed public and university language teaching in the U.S. (Freeman &

Freeman, 1998).

The Direct Method had several drawbacks although it appeared to improve many

shortcomings of the Grammar-Translation Method. It demanded teachers to have fluency

in the target language and be skillful at communicating ideas and demonstrating

vocabulary items using gesture and body language while maintaining high motivation

level among students (J. C. Richards & Rogers, 2001). With the U.S. entering World

War II, Grammar-Translation Method was found to produce speakers unable to make

purposeful use of language and, therefore, with renewed emphasis on communication at

the university level, several communicative methods developed, bringing about

significant changes to language teaching methodology (H. D. Brown, 2001; Freeman &

Freeman, 1998).

Audiolingual Method surfaced as a way to afford language learners oral

communication skills that the Grammar-Translation Method could not. Audiolingualism

responded to the advances in behaviorist psychology that advocated stimulus-response

approaches to learning and linguistics that supported viewing language as consisting of

certain structural patterns (Freeman & Freeman, 1998). The U.S. government sought to

match the Russian advances in technology as a result of the Cold War and the launching

of Sputnik, and assumed that effort to improve science, math, and language learning in

schools would help bridge the gap. To improve American students' foreign language

abilities, the government invested heavily that included setting up language labs with teacher-controlled console and individual student stations equipped with audiocassette players, recorders, and headphones. The console teacher played sound clips for all simultaneously and, for practice, students were required to record what they repeated orally. The teacher had to produce native-like language and detect specific errors and error patterns among students. Despite its popularity, the Audiolingual Method's effectiveness was questioned as students failed to develop communicative ability as they memorized set phrases and articulated them flawlessly. An amalgamation of audiolingual and Grammar-Translation techniques occurred where classes focused on the drilling typical of Audiolingual Method with rule explanations and grammatical sequencing of materials, but this too was short-lived (H. D. Brown, 2001).

The 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, as J. C. Richards and Rogers (2001) described, saw the birth of other methods and approaches, some of which were followed more than others: the Silent Way, Natural Approach, Total Physical Response, Suggestopedia, Counseling-Learning, and Communicative Language Teaching all provided ideas on how to teach effectively and what the role of the teacher entailed. While the Silent Way, Suggestopedia, and Counseling-Learning approaches assigned a more passive role to teachers who supported as counselors and interpreters, the Natural Approach, Total Physical Response, and Communicative Language Teaching required a more active role of the teacher as facilitator and instigator of language learning and interaction. Task-based language teaching, Content-based instruction, Problem Posing, and Proficiency-based approaches focused more on learning outcomes and required the teacher to be

actively involved and select carefully tasks, content, and activities students were to be exposed to. As for Multiple Intelligences, Cooperative Learning, and Whole Language, these were trends from outside the field of L2 learning that were used in language teaching and demanded effort on the teachers' part to have knowledge and awareness about the students' abilities and learning preferences (J. C. Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

A revolutionary change occurred in L2 and foreign language education as the focus shifted to what students can do in the language. During the 1960s and 1970s, the development of second language acquisition research initiated by Robert Lado, Rod Ellis, and Stephen Krashen set up a new momentum in language teaching by seeing learners as active learners rather than passive recipients of whatever knowledge teachers decided to give (Cook, 2009). Since the 1970s, most teaching involved the student in building up or constructing knowledge by employing learning strategies and processing language meaningfully (Cook, 2009). In other words, learning became the student's responsibility. Therefore, focus on the learner has been one important outcome of the continuing attempt to identify effective teaching. Instructors' increased sense of individualism and resistance towards adherence to a single methodology led to a general preference for an eclecticism that meant greater responsibility of the instructor to select procedures and materials based on a set of principles (Tarone & Yule, 1989).

In the special anniversary issue of *English Teaching Forum*, Diane Larsen-Freeman (2012) reviewed the methodological developments in the field of language teaching over the past 25 years and recalled how "[i]t is not uncommon for teachers today to practice a principled eclecticism, combining techniques and principles from various

methods in a carefully reasoned manner" (p. 34). This principled approach is "more a cluster of approaches than a single methodology" identified as learner-centered language teaching (Nunan, 1988, p. 24). In L2 teaching, adopting a "toolbox" approach to theory allows freedom to L2 instructors to "pick and choose" from a pool of critical theories appropriate for diverse students (Canagarajah, 2005, p. 932). While an eclectic approach is possibly more reasonable to consider for diverse groups of ESL learners, Larsen-Freeman (2012) pointed out that the two important goals of most English language teaching today are to help students prepare to communicate in English and to help students develop a repertoire of learning strategies that will support lifelong learning. Therefore, the current teaching trend is learner-centered (Larsen-Freeman, 2012), more so in higher education, to address learners' needs (Barr & Tagg, 1995; Pillay, 2002). Terms related to student learning abound in the professional literature that are based on notions of learner-centered education variously represented as "collaborative, cooperative, active, inquiry-based, and so on" (Hansen & Stephens, 2000, p. 41). The Learner-Centered Model (McCombs & Miller, 2007) emphasizes the person doing the learning as opposed to traditional methods of teaching that are instructor-centered (Weimer, 2013).

<div align="center">Debates about Learner-Centered Teaching</div>

Learner-centered Teaching (LCT) is not without its criticism as several points have been raised. First, critics of LCT complain that learner-centered (LC) instructors refrain from active involvement in the learners' learning process and that there is no a priori structure to the lesson. Larsen-Freeman (2012) disagreed, explaining that they still

play "traditional roles of presenters of language, evaluators of student performance, and classroom managers" (p.36). She outlined the distinct features of the teaching-learning process: teachers as facilitators "step aside" once activities are initiated, thus reducing teacher talk and maximizing student involvement; peer learning is encouraged through pair-work and small-group work; and the self-directed learning process is initiated. Moreover, rather than being entirely pre-determined, content and learning objectives are shaped and refined during the course of program delivery as learners' skills and self-awareness develop and their perceived needs change (Nunan, 1988).

Second, LCT may appear to entrust power to students. Students frequently become reticent, viewing the teacher as abdicating his or her responsibilities as the giver of knowledge (Doyle, 2008), but the strength of this approach lies in the fostering and sharing of power between students and teachers (Cullen et al., 2012), and the balancing of power (Blumberg, 2009; Weimer, 2013) that a learner-centered course can have, depending on the type of course and level of students. Blumberg and Weimer (2012) opposed the view that chaos and no learning can follow from entrusting power to students and emphasized how fruitful the teaching/learning is likely to become when transforming a course toward more learner-centered approaches: "When you make the balance of power more equitable, your students will take advantage of opportunities to learn and will understand the consequences of not taking such opportunities….You will also have more confidence and trust in your students and therefore be more willing to give up some control" (p. 187). Balancing of power is beneficial to both the parties – students and instructors alike. This implies instructors ought to transition to a more LC approach in an

incremental way to redistribute power, keeping in mind students' maturity, motivation, prior learning experience, and socio-cultural background.

For instructors to effectively implement LCT and enable learners to achieve success, a deeper understanding of what LCT entails is required. As a modern-day methodology, LCT is informed by theories of learning and language (Larsen-Freeman, 2012) and not described as an educational theory or philosophy in the literature (Weimer, 2013). The key characteristics of LCT (discussed in Chapter 2) emerge from and integrate a number of different educational theories like those highlighted next. The next section focuses on the theoretical foundation of LCT.

<div align="center">Theoretical Foundation for Learner-Centered Teaching</div>

Schwab (1969) noted that "[a]ll theories, even the best of them in the simplest sciences, necessarily neglect some aspects and facets of the facts of the case" (p. 11). Canagarajah (2005) voiced the same opinion that theories can be both "enabling" as well as "limiting" but reiterated that an activity or practice is informed by assumptions and requires a specific explanatory framework for understanding it. Therefore, in order to avoid the tunnel vision that a single perspective may lead to, theories influencing learner-centered teaching (LCT) practices are reviewed. According to Ertmer, Newby, and Medsker (2013), three schools of thought that underlie learner-centered concepts include behavioral, cognitive, and constructivist. They contended that learning can be categorized into these three schools of thought. The behaviorist concept of stimulus-response mechanism can be utilized for teaching facts. Cognitive strategies can be employed to help learners relate new information to existing knowledge, thus making

knowledge meaningful. The constructivist view of learning to instruction can help move from passive transfer of facts to active application of ideas in problem-solving. In the context of the study, the 14 LCPs were developed based on current theories of learning, including constructivism and social constructivism (APA, 1997). Educational theories that are foundational in LCT approaches help explain how and why a learner-centered way of teaching promotes learning (Weimer, 2013), and therefore a few of those have been reviewed.

Constructivism and Cognitivism

Originating from Piaget's dynamic theory of knowing and supported by research from various disciplines, constructivism has several forms (Bowers, 2005; Cullen et al., 2012; Geelan, 2006; Phillips, 1995, 1997). Geelan used a set of Cartesian coordinates and chose to characterize selected constructivist papers of well-known authors and identify the particular quadrant they fell into. According to him some forms of constructivism include social objectivist (Solomon, Tobin, and Vygotsky), social-relativist (Cobern, Taylor, Gergen, O'Loughlin, Steier), personal-relativist (Bettencourt, von Glaserfeld), and personal-objectivist (Driver & Easley, Driver & Oldham, Fosnot, and Pines & West). Reviewing the varieties of constructivism that presently exist is beyond the scope of this study. Therefore, only those aspects that are relevant to the understanding of LCT will be considered. In general, constructivists believe knowledge is constructed rather than received, and the act of knowledge construction is based on previously constructed and interpreted knowledge. An individual learner must actively build knowledge and skills (Bruner, 1990). A unique representation of the world is

possible as interpretation of new experiences and materials occur through existing

cognitive structures and interaction with the experiential world (Marshall, 2000).

According to Phillips (1995), the source of the complexity and confusion about varieties

of constructivism stems from the idea that "human knowledge – whether it be the bodies

of public knowledge known as the various disciplines, or the cognitive structures of

individual knowers or learners – is *constructed*" (p. 5, author's emphasis). He attributed

the confusion to explicit differences among the varieties: while there are two extreme

groups – one focusing on the psychological mechanisms and cognitive content in

individuals, the other on the public bodies of knowledge and understandings available in

a culture – a third group emphasizes both the processes (psychological and social) by

which knowledge is constructed.

Because of the complexity of various forms of constructivism, Phillips (1995,

1997) proposed a framework for comparing constructivism so that some amount of order

and clarity can be attained. Spread out on a continuum, those closer along one axis are

likely to be apart from the others, and he explained that the major constructivists can be

identified along this continuum so that their relationships and differences can be

understood. Primary theorists among the psychological constructivists are Bruner (1990)

and Piaget (1972b), while Vygotsky (1978) is the major theorist among social

constructivists. Both Piaget and Vygotsky, belonging to the first axis, are concerned

about how individuals construct knowledge. The former focuses solely on the

individual's construction of knowledge discovered through biological or psychological

mechanisms and interaction with the environment and the latter, though primarily

interested in the individual, acknowledges the importance of the influence of social

groups in the knowledge constructing effort (Bonk & Cunningham, 1998; Phillips, 1997).

Included in the second axis, Phillips (1995) explained, are many recent feminist

epistemologists, while in the middle would be Ernst von Glaserfeld and several others

who take interest in both how individuals construct bodies of knowledge and how

communities build bodies of knowledge.

Cullen et al. (2012) noted that, according to both cognitive constructivist and

sociocultural constructivist views, self-regulation and recursive examination of one's own

knowledge through interpretation and testing are important processes of an individual's

active knowledge construction. The difference in the two lies in that one sees the

individual's own construction of knowledge often with the guidance of an expert, and the

latter focuses on the role of social and cultural interactions that shape an individual's

construction of knowledge through construction and reconstruction (K. T. Henson, 2003;

Hoidn, 2016; Marshall, 2000). Clearly, knowledge is the primary focus in both (Phillips,

1995, 1997).

Constructivism and cognitivism underlying LCT practices. Learner-centered

teaching (LCT) practices are consistent with constructivism as LCT places value on the

learner's perspective and on the development of meaningful learning through self-

regulation and recursive learning. Most importantly, LCT emphasizes students'

interaction with the content so that they build on their existing knowledge (Weimer,

2013). Social constructivists further enhance the understanding in LC approaches that

dynamic and ongoing interactions among learners help construct more than content

(Marshall, 2000). Russian psychologist and sociologist Lev Vygotsky considered the social environment critical for learning as it influences cognition through "tools," namely, its cultural objects. Zone of proximal development (ZPD) conceptualized by Vygotsky (1978) is a useful means for the LC instructor to understand a learner's internal course of development. In the ZPD, the learner can only proceed in his or her current stage with the help of the instructor(s) or peers, the "more knowledgeable others" (Vygotsky, 1978), until the shift in the ZPD occurs to a point the learner can conduct steps alone.

This process of mediating interaction captures the very idea of the mentoring role LCT requires an instructor to play. Another LCT practice from Vygotsky's sociocultural theory includes scaffolding, which involves forms of support or assistance provided to a learner by the instructor or a more capable peer to facilitate accomplishment of a task or a problem that otherwise would be impossible without such support (Bonk & Cunningham, 1998). Also, instructors need to challenge students' thinking process once they have reached a conclusion by questioning them and preparing activities for them (Weimer, 2013). However, Weimer (2013) pointed out that though cooperative learning is being widely used, such learning structures are "marginally" constructivist and with the increased emergence of group work models like Process-Oriented Guided Inquiry, Guided Inquiry, and Peer-Led Team Learning, the distinction between collaborative and cooperative learning has become blurred. The application of the Learner-centered Psychological Principles (LCPs) can guide instructors in implementing cooperative learning to foster student learning because the fourteen LCPs were developed based on

different theories of learning, including constructivism and social constructivism (APA, 1997).

A cognitive view of motivation supports LC pedagogy: Instead of placing the learner within a stimulus-response frame, it places motivation within the realm of the learner (Cullen et al., 2012). According to social cognitive theory, motivation is in the mind and environment of the individual (Cullen et al., 2012). From an LC perspective, Piaget (1972a) focused on the learner as an individual. Instruction must be individualized as often as possible, but the teacher has to remain indispensable as an "organizer" and a "mentor stimulating initiative and research" (Piaget, 1972b, p. 16). He explained active learning as follows: "to understand is to discover, or reconstruct by rediscovery, and such conditions must be complied with if in the future individuals are to be formed who are capable of production and creativity and not simply repetition" (Piaget, 1972b, p. 20).

This implies that people learn through not only exploring the world around them but trying to make sense of the world by developing cognitive structures that support the reorganization of their existing beliefs; therefore, invention and creativity are possible if individuals are provided an opportunity to engage in such exploration. In this regard, as an LC practitioner, Dewey (1938) believed all significant learning was grounded in experience. His view of LC education supported the premise that each student is left motivated after each learning experience, and also that problem-solving should promote further inquiry. Moreover, Dewey's (1938) educational philosophy asserted that mindful learning is best accomplished by incorporating practical tasks, collaboration, and

application of learner information. Debates over the two perspectives have finally

resulted in the acknowledgement that the two complement each other (Hoidn, 2016).

In the next section, research related to investigating ESL and foreign language

students' language learning beliefs is reviewed with emphasis on their use of instrument

in the study, followed by studies that have measured students' beliefs about LCT

practices and behaviors of instructors.

Theoretical Implications of Learner-Centered Teaching for ESL Learners

In the field of L2 acquisition or foreign language acquisition (ESL/EFL), there

has been a gradual but significant shift from teacher-centered to learner-centered

approach in the past decades (Nosratini et al., 2014). Given that different educational

theories have influenced LCT, several issues in LCT that have relevance to the current

study are included in this review. There are concerns about the benefits of LC practices

in ESL or English classes and the perceptions that learners have about such practices.

Specific factors prevail in the teaching situation that influence the implementation of the

instructional program in the classroom (Finocchiaro, 1969). Some of these factors are

examined considering the implications there may be for actual teaching practice:

(1) The existence of varieties of constructivist theories can create confusion for

learner-centered instructors to follow. K. T. Henson (2003) suggested that to

address the needs of individual learner's instructional decisions should be

made based on an understanding of the learning process. However, Bonk and

Cunningham (1998) argued that no "canonical" form of constructivist theory

exists and neither have most constructivist revolutionaries provided instructors

the means to reorganize and embed constructivist ideas in their existing personal philosophies and teaching practices. With the already extensive literature on constructivism and one that is exponentially growing, the reader is bound to be in the middle of complexity and confusion (Phillips, 1995, 1997).

(2) ESL instructors' resistance to LCT approaches can be influenced by their own learning experience and deep-rooted beliefs about language learning that contradict the theories of learning foundational to LCT. Instructors reiterate the need for educational settings to change in order to accommodate the view of nurturing individual development, but their actions are controlled by "an opposing set of generally unarticulated and unexamined assumptions" (Rallis, 1995, p. 225). Besides, textbooks used in teacher education are likely to create misconceptions as they contain superficial references to "fathers" of constructivist thinking which give the impression that there is consensus among different educational theorists (Bowers, 2005).

(3) The practice of traditional education constrains the implementation of other possibilities like LCT. Constructivist approaches to educational reforms promoted in both English- and non-English-speaking countries maintain similar sources of origin and are based on the writings of Western or Western-influenced theorists (Bowers, 2005). Rallis (1995) explained that the common mindset of instructors influenced by their deep-rooted assumptions countering

learner-centered values becomes a barrier to the creation of learner-centered environment in educational settings.

(4) Instructors may vary in their perceptions and understanding of what LCT entails. Although LCT seeks to empower students by focusing on their needs (Blumberg, 2009), what we teach and how we teach it sends powerful and very different messages to learners. Clifford (2015) pointed out that group work is a learner-centered technique to some educators and minimal guidance to others. Although it is possible to acquire teaching skills, modifying the personality and attitude of an instructor may be more difficult (Finocchiaro, 1969).

(5) The measure of a good lesson for an instructor of ESL students is often where the activities work, and the students are happy. Cook (2009) argued that the learning process must be activated in a student's mind as the result of a teaching activity but, in reality, this truth is too often ignored in language teaching.

(6) Teaching in English classes having ESL students is different as the learners are diverse. Although it is common to come across students with a range of abilities and interests in any class, there will be enormous variations among ESL students in their basic language abilities (Finocchiaro, 1969). There has been progress in second language acquisition research, but no initiative has been taken to bridge the gap between research and classroom teaching (Cook, 2009).

(7) Today's learners are digital natives (Hannum & McCombs, 2008) and instructors run the risk of overusing technology in their attempt to optimize learning for students. But Finocchiaro (1969) emphasized that "*none of these educational aids is essential in teaching* [author's emphasis]" (p. 17) and the instructor must realize that "[t]eaching feeds on learning" (Cook, 2009, p. 139).

(8) Learner-centered instructors are likely to resort to resources that claim to follow learner-centered principles and techniques, but they may not be appropriate for ESL students. Cook (2009) warned that a learner's interlanguage or learner language (which is a system in its own right resulting from the learner's L2 and L1 or first language, and from his or her multiple cognitive processes) supported by the Processability Model goes through stages of development which are not similar to the sequences embedded in course books and language teaching syllabuses. This implies that students follow their built-in schedule and not those set by the course book or the instructor.

(9) In their foreign language learning experiences students will encounter difficulties in cognitive processing. If an individual or a learner notices a cognitive conflict, it serves as "a catalyst for initiating the interplay between assimilation and accommodation" (Hoidn, 2016, p. 25). Through adaptation and altering of new experiences to fit into existing structures and with the environment, new patterns are constructed, or old ones are replaced.

However, for ESL students, an awareness of cognitive conflict may not always lead to phases of assimilation and accommodation or such awareness may not even occur.

(10) Motivation among ESL students determines how willing they are to take charge of their learning. While ESL students will most likely have either integrative or instrumental motivation, they may not wish to come out of their long-endured comfort zone and show evidences of self-regulation or self-organization. Cook (2009) commented that there is inertia in deep-rooted motivation and attempting to influence such motivation would mean turning against their years of experiencing the attitudes of not only their schools but also their parents and societies towards L2 learning.

Instructional practices that impact ESL student learning have been constantly reviewed resulting in an evolution of language teaching approaches over the years. LCT practices in English classes with ESL students pose challenges for instructors, necessitating the establishment of concrete standards and principles that instructors and L2 learners can follow in their effort to achieve effective teaching and learning in the classroom. The literature on teaching principles illuminates their application in English classes and ESL contexts and current thinking regarding effective teaching and learning (e.g., Finnochiaro, 1969; Freeman & Freeman, 1998; Hansen & Stephens, 2000; J. C. Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Like other professional organizations, the TESOL International Association has presented specific standards for language learning and teaching articulated by experts to include central concerns in the teaching and learning of

languages, and, therefore, establish instructional guidance for instructors of ESL students. The eight Standards for ESL/EFL Teachers of Adults Framework (n.d.) (see Appendix E) address the following domains: planning; instructing; identity and context; language proficiency; learning; content; and commitment and professionalism. See Appendix F for a comparison of how some of the Learner-centered Psychological Principles (LCPs) embody several domains explained in the Standards for ESL/EFL Teachers of Adults Framework. Standards 5 and 8 exclusively refer to teacher demeanor and attitude to the profession and do not, unlike the LCPs, consider the personal domain of a learning environment. The LCPs encompass a wider range and description of factors that serve as a powerful tool in a learning environment.

Difficulties of Employing Existing Instruments to Measure Learner-Centered Practices

Researchers have employed several elicitation techniques including surveys, interviews, observations, journals, and reflective protocols. Dr. Elaine Horwitz (1985, 1987, 1988), a pioneering researcher on language learning beliefs, is generally credited with initiating studies about language learning beliefs. She developed the Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) to assess students', teachers' and pre-service teachers' beliefs on a variety of issues relating to language learning (Horwitz, 1985, 1987, 1988, 1989). Since its inception, BALLI has been extensively used in small- and large-scale studies focusing on ESL students' beliefs about language learning and learning activities. Other instruments include Barkhuizen's (1998) ENLEAS-Q (name of the questionnaire is derived from *en*joyment, *l*earn *E*nglish, *a*fter *s*chool) Garrett and Shortall's (2002) adapted version of ENLEAS-Q, A. V. Brown's (2009) adapted

questionnaire, and the author-generated questionnaire of Cotterral (1999) and that of

Lumpkin et al. (2015). Table 1 presents a summary of BALLI studies in ESL and studies

that have used various other instruments to examine L2 and foreign language learners'

beliefs.

Table 1. Major Studies on Language Learning Beliefs with Instruments Used

Studies	Purpose	Participants	Methodology	Results
Horwitz (1985)	To describe an instrument for eliciting student beliefs about language learning & teaching.	25 undergraduates in final year of teacher education at the University of Texas, Austin.	Inventories: FLAS (Foreign Language Survey) BALLI	Student teachers voiced belief in the concept of foreign language aptitude, language hierarchy, and importance of repetition.
Horwitz (1987)	To describe the development of an instrument used to measure ESL students' beliefs about language learning.	32 intermediate-level students at an Intensive English Program at the University of Texas, Austin.	BALLI (ESL version)	Most students believed in language aptitude, language hierarchy, learning vocabulary & grammar, learning in the target country; importance of repetition & practice.
Barkhuizen (1998)	To examine ESL students' beliefs about learning English and language learning activities.	241 grade 8-11 foreign students in South Africa.	ENLEAS-Q and group interviews were used to collect data.	Students preferred traditional classroom activities.

(Table continues)

Studies	Purpose	Participants	Methodology	Results
Cotterral (1999)	To investigate ESL students' "readiness for autonomy."	131 undergraduate ESL students enrolled in EAP courses at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand.	Author-generated including Likert items, ranking items, and open-ended writing task.	Results showed students not "ready" for autonomy as they held traditional views of the teachers' role.
Garrett & Shortall (2002)	To investigate students' beliefs about affective and learning outcomes of classroom activities (teacher-centered, learner-centered and pairwork)	103 Brazilian EFL students at a language school within the age range of 11-48.	Adapted version of ENLEAS-Q in which each item was followed by open-ended item.	Students felt teacher-fronted grammar activities were better for learning than student-centered grammar activities.
A. V. Brown (2009)	To identify students' and teachers' ideals of several areas of FL pedagogy and compare individual teachers' beliefs.	1606 1st and 2nd year EFL students aged 18-23 across 9 languages and 49 FL teachers.	Adapted Bell's (2005) questionnaire.	Students favored grammar-based approach as opposed to the teachers' preference for a more communicative classroom.
Lumpkin et al. (2015)	To examine college students' perceptions about in-class and out-of-class learning activities, and instructional materials and those that impact their learning experience.	230 undergraduate and 38 graduate students in 9 different courses at 2 universities participated.	Author-generated questionnaire including open-ended question were employed.	Most students found activation of learning strategies in learner-centered environments that involved collaborative tasks and technology-based activities.

Note. For the purpose of this study, I comment on only a few studies. For a review of studies using the BALLI, see Horwitz (1999).

The instruments in the studies in Table 1 have been used in English-speaking contexts. However, they are not optimally suited to the purpose of the present study for two reasons: the setting for which they were originally constructed, and issues related to specific teaching practices. Except for Barkhuizen's (1998) study, in most of the studies, the instruments were developed primarily for use with foreign and L2 students in university settings (A.V. Brown, 2009; Horwitz, 1987, 1988, 1989), and the content and wording of the items reflect that. None of the instruments' items, however, were generated with the objective of measuring students' perceptions about LCT practices. For instance, Horwitz's Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) emerged from a brainstorming session that she had with language teachers. This teacher-generated list of beliefs that students might have about language learning were compiled and developed into an instrument for her study, which she called BALLI after having consulted specialists in cognitive science and psychology. In the present study, this is of particular significance as the statements are not grounded on a clear definition of learner-centered and research-validated LCPs like the LCBSS (McCombs et al., 1997). Although the LCPs appear broad and eclectic, leaving a number of questions about the nature of knowledge unanswered (Bonk & Cunningham, 1998), LCT provides one dimension along which classrooms can be differentiated with respect to the role of an ESL student's personal experience and knowledge.

A. V. Brown (2009) investigated teachers' and students' perspectives on L2 teaching practices. An existing questionnaire was adapted to address the purpose of the study, which required administering similarly worded instruments to both the groups of

students and teachers. In contrast, the use of an author-generated questionnaire, including qualitative and quantitative questions in Lumpkin and his colleagues' (2015) study, was used for investigating student perceptions in nine courses across different disciplines. Though both A. V. Brown (2009) and Lumpkin and his colleagues' (2015) studies focused on teaching practices, they are not coherent with the practices that this study intends to focus on.

In investigating learner beliefs, researchers are engaging in employing data collection techniques other than questionnaires. Barkhuizen (1998) criticized that students are almost never asked overtly and systematically about their learning experience. He applied several techniques to discover students' perspectives: students were asked to write a one-page composition about their English class at school, and groups of six students having different positions from each grade level were interviewed to elaborate points raised in the compositions and ranking of items in the ENLEAS-Q. Also, Cotterral (1999) extended the questionnaire she used in her 1995 study and added two parts in which students were required to draw a diagram about learning and write a letter to a friend providing advice on language learning. Such adaptations and use of other tools suggest that the researchers were attempting to validate the questionnaire by providing students with opportunities to express their own perspectives.

While these studies establish the necessity of having an emic view in belief studies, the questionnaires are not grounded in principles applicable to LCT practices, the focus of the present study. Besides, when conducting focus groups for this study, the researcher in a moderator's role determined the kind of information she wished to extract

and pre-identified particular comments and information that the participants were likely to provide (Vaughn, Schumm, & Sinagub, 1996). This necessitated the application of LCBSS that McCombs et al. (1997) explained addresses students' perceptions of their teachers' classroom practices and their experiences in the classroom. The authors developed a pool of items that were a reflection of best practices from the teachers' perspective as well as parallel items from the students' perspective to construct teacher and student surveys. In this study, the aim was to understand what perceptions and experiences undergraduate students have about their instructors' LCT practices and whether learner-centered learning experiences affect their beliefs about the quality of LCT practices in English classes.

Studies Focusing on Learner-Centered Principles and Learner-Centeredness

The publication of the Learner-centered Psychological Principles (LCPs) has inspired a great number of studies. These have indicated the feasibility of embedding LCPs within a teacher-centered environment (Schuh, 2004); the potentialities of utilizing a Learner-centered Battery (LCB) for improving teaching-learning practices (McCombs et al., 1997); the effectiveness of learner-centered practices in promoting academic engagement and achievement (e.g., Fasko & Grubb, 1997; Meece, Herman, & McCombs, 2003); the improved motivation for learning (e.g., McCombs & Vakili, 2005); the occurrence of less student attrition in learner-centered asynchronous environment (e.g., Hannum et al., 2008); and the learning interests and student connectedness via synchronous and asynchronous computer-mediated communication systems (McCombs, 2015).

Salinas, Kane-Johnson, and Vasil-Miller (2008) observed that the practice of LCT has been increasingly popular in K-12. They claimed a gap exists between what is happening at the elementary level and the higher education systems even though college-level students are likely to achieve a greater sense of knowledge if they are subject to LCT. They stated that this notion cannot be supported due to a dearth of research at the higher education level. In fact, there is limited reference to learner-centered English classes at the college level in the literature, but the learning of ESL students who have multicultural and multiethnic backgrounds could be much more effective if they have the opportunity to take responsibility of their learning (Bista, 2011a). This study has been initiated to add to the literature on the learner-centered teaching practices of ESL students in English classes in higher education systems. Table 2 presents a summary of selected significant studies on Learner-centered Psychological Principles (LCP) and LCT practices.

Table 2. Summary of Selected Studies on LCPs and LCT Practices

Studies	Purpose	Participants	Methodology	Results
Fasko & Grubb (1997)	To explore the use of LCP measures in the LCB with teachers to assess their beliefs and perceptions; to identify relationship of student responses on the LCB to student motivation, achievement, and teaching practices; to evaluate usefulness of LCB for PD programs.	Participants included 12 middle and 26 high school teachers and 655 students from a rural eastern Kentucky school system (U.S.).	Data came from LCB Teacher Survey, LCB Student Survey, and student achievement ratings.	Quality of teacher could be predicted with LCB (effective teachers from less effective ones). Effective teachers displayed 4 learner-centered domains of practice and score higher than ineffective teachers. Students' self-efficacy ratings, higher order thinking were significant predictors of student achievement with effective teachers.
McCombs et al. (1997)	To validate the LCB and establish the content validity and internal reliability of teacher and student surveys in the LCB.	In study 1, 4,828 students and 672 teachers from rural, urban, and suburban public schools in Arizona, Colorado, Illinois, and Nebraska in the U.S. participated. In study 2, 4,894 students and 236 teachers from rural, urban, and suburban public schools in Alaska, Illinois, Kentucky, Michigan, and North Carolina took part.	LCB, a set of self-assessment tools.	Overall, all scales indicated moderate to high internal consistencies and factor structures conceptually consistent with the LCPs (APA, 1993) that were used in the development of the LCB.

(Table continues)

Studies	Purpose	Participants	Methodology	Results
King (2000)	To examine connection between college students' perceptions of teacher effectiveness on four dimensions.	Approximately 1300 college students and 64 instructors at the Art Institute of Dallas, Texas (U.S.) participated in the study.	IDEA Survey provided by Kansas State University (IDEA Center) and ALCP Beliefs Portion of the Postsecondary Level Instructor Survey (College Level) (McCombs, 1999) were employed.	On average students rated learner-centered instructors higher than non- learner-centered instructors on each of the 4 dimensions. There was statistically no significant difference in students' perceptions. However, few instructors rated themselves as learner-centered.
Weinberger & McCombs (2003)	To examine the role of high school student and teacher perceptions of learner-centered practices in student achievement and motivation using ALCP surveys.	High school students in the U.S.	Assessment of Learner-centered Practices (ALCP) survey.	Results confirmed that teacher perceptions of teaching practices are not as significantly related to student motivation and achievement as student perceptions of their teacher's practices.
Meece et al. (2003)	To investigate to usefulness of LCT practices for enhancing the academic engagement and achievement of adolescents.	4615 students and 256 teachers from middle and high school in 6 states across the U.S. participated in the study.	ALCP teacher and student surveys (McCombs, 1999) were used.	When students regarded their teachers to be learner-centered, they reported stronger mastery focus.

(Table continues)

Studies	Purpose	Participants	Methodology	Results
Barrett, Bower, & Donovan (2007)	To examine teaching styles of online instructors in order to determine if they had adopted learner-centered approaches.	292 online instructors in 28 community colleges in Florida, U.S.	Principles of Adult Learning Scale (PALS) was used.	Instructors were more teacher-centered; many were somewhat committed to both teacher-centered and learner-centered styles.
Deakin-Crick, McCombs, Haddon, Broadfoot, & Tew (2007)	To investigate how learner-centered classroom environment can be supported by development of "students' ownership of their own learning power, teacher learner-centered practices which respect student voice and through an emotionally literate school climate" (p. 268).	724 students aged 9-14 and 15 teachers from 5 schools in the U.S.	Administered 3 instruments: learning profiles for individual students (ELLI), ALCPs for teachers and their classes, and the Emotional literacy audit (ELA); qualitative data was gathered through participant observation, semi-structured interview, and focus group.	Self-evaluation tools alone were inadequate for creating a learning culture in classroom/school. Other variables impact: quality of relationship between students and teachers, curriculum nature; emotional climate of classroom, teachers' instructional practices, and quality of educational leadership.

Studies	Purpose	Participants	Methodology	Results
Hannum et al. (2008)	To examine effectiveness of training online facilitators to apply LCPs in supporting online students would speed up their persistence in completing the course.	246 students from 36 rural schools in the U.S. and 2 instructors teaching Advanced Placement (AP) English Literature and Composition course participated in the study.	ALCP Student and Teacher Surveys.	Students with facilitators having learner-centered training remained in online course more weeks completed at a higher rate than control group with facilitators without learner-centered training.
Salinas et al. (2008)	To determine relationship between teaching using LCPs and long-term learning as measured by final examinations.	42 college students enrolled in entry-level psychology courses at Central Connecticut State University (CCSU) in the U.S.	Data collected using multiple-choice class exams; Teacher-Belief Survey (TBS); Teacher Classroom Practices Questionnaire (TCPQ) (McCombs & Whisler, 1997)	A decline in performance was found in both learner-centered and non- learner-centered classrooms, but in the latter the decline was more significant than the former.
Wohlfarth et al., (2008)	To increase understanding of LCT through student perspective	21 graduate students in a psychology program in a small liberal arts school in southeastern U.S.	Data collected through course evaluation forms: one based on Brookfield's (1995) work & another Weimer's (2013) tenets of LC classes.	Students' experiences of paradigm changes congruent with Weimer's (2013) tenets of LC classes were regarded as a positive shift.

Studies	Purpose	Participants	Methodology	Results
Salinas & Garr (2009)	To explore the effects of learner-centered classrooms and schools on the academic performance of minority and non-minority students.	Participants were 236 elementary school students from 6 learner-centered and 6 matched control schools across U.S.	Battery of tests were used: NCLB standard test; ALCP - Student Form; KMMPI (Morse & Khatena, 1991), CES (Fischer &Fraser, 1983), & The M-GUDS-Short Scale (Miville et al., 1999).	Minorities in highly learner-centered classrooms and schools had test scores statistically equal of their white peers. Also, in the non-traditional measures, students in learner-centered schools showed higher scores.
Vanchu-Orosco, McCombs, & Culpepper (2010)	To determine the effects of learner-centered practices on pre-adolescent academic engagement and achievement.	Participants included 1,413 4th and 5th graders from a variety of rural, urban, and suburban school sites from several states (U.S.).	Several subscales from ALCP surveys (McCombs, 1999) were used.	Students were more likely to be self-efficacious, task mastery-oriented, and less likely to avoid work or require extrinsic motivation if they believed their teachers provided learner-centered environment.
Gomez (2015)	To understand to what extent undergraduate students in Educational Psychology courses perceived their instructors' teaching practices to be learner-centered.	196 undergraduate students in a southwest university (U.S.).	LCBSS (McCombs et al., 1997) and an author-generated open-ended Student Perceptions Questionnaire was used.	Significant differences were found on the perception and motivational scale scores as well as 11 subscales.

Note. For the purpose of the study, I comment on significant studies that have been conducted in educational systems in the U.S. only.

Application of Learner-Centered Battery in Diverse Geographical Settings

During the 1990-95 time period, B. L. McCombs and her colleagues at the Mid-continent Regional Educational Laboratory (McREL) as part of the Presidential Task Force on Psychology in Education appointed by APA came up with the LCPs (APA, 1993). This led to the development of a battery of surveys, initially known as the Learner-centered Battery (LCB) (McCombs et al., 1997) but now known as the Assessment of Learner-centered Practices (ALCP) (McCombs, 2003b). McCombs with several of her colleagues, having conducted validation studies including over 25,000 students and their teachers from K-20, made empirically tested and research-validated teacher and student surveys available for use (McCombs, 2003a; McCombs, 2003b; McCombs & Miller, 2007). Validation of the original instrument occurred in a large-scale study involving high school students ($N = 9,722$) and teachers ($N = 908$) from diverse geographic regions of the U.S. (McCombs et al., 1997) and was successfully employed in many studies (e.g., Deakin-Crick et al., 2007; Fasko & Grubb, 1995; Fasko & Grubb, 1997; Hannum et al., 2008; Gomez, 2015; King, 2000; Meece et al., 2003; Salinas & Garr, 2009; Salinas et al., 2008; Vanchu-Orosco et al., 2010; Weinberger & McCombs, 2003). Instruments are being developed to help teachers at all levels of the K-20 educational system look at their own and their students' perceptions of their learning experiences. The studies mentioned above made use of the LCBSS/ALCP Student Survey, in addition to other tools such as Principles of Adult Learning Scale (PALS), state standardized tests (NCLB standard test), the Khatena-Morse Multitalent Perception

Inventory (KMMPI), the Classroom Environment Scale (CES), and the Miville-Guzman

Universality-Diversity Scale.

Of particular relevance to the present study are the results of phases I and II of the

validation study conducted by McCombs et al. (1997) that has been thoroughly explained

in Chapter 4. Suffice it to say, reliability and correlational analyses of scales computed

on the data gathered from the pilot study led to revision that involved "(a) deleting items

that clearly showed poor internal consistency (item-total correlation < .4), (b) rewording

items that were confusing or unclear, and (c) adding items to balance learner-centered

versus non-learner-centered practices" (p. 11). In testing their hypotheses, the

researchers concluded that "the validity of the *Learner-Centered Psychological*

Principles for all learners in the system is confirmed and the LCB is a promising tool for

assessing the common factors that define effective teachers" (p. 35).

Results from Fasko and Grubb's (1997) study "compare favorably with results of

McREL validation studies completed with the Learner-Centered Battery," (p. 16) a set of

instruments including the Learner-centered Battery Student Survey (the LCBSS

considered for the present study). Students' perceptions were measured on four domains

of practice that included items such as "My teacher helps me feel good about my

abilities." They reported that effective teachers, measured by improvement in student

grades and student perceptions, demonstrated a greater degree of implementation of

learner-centered domains of practice than did less-effective teachers. They also

mentioned the usefulness of the LCB in predicting "high quality teaching (i.e., reliably

differentiate effective from less effective teachers)" (p. 23). This is of relevance to this

study as one of the purposes was to explore how learner-centered learner experiences affect ESL learners' beliefs about the quality of LCT practices.

Studies on Online Learner-Centered Learning Environments

Online learning environments are suitable for promoting LCT approach. Barrett et al. (2007) identified instructional styles as being on a continuum from learner-centered to teacher-centered and used McCombs and Whisler's (1997) broad definition of LCT in their study. Barrett et al. (2007) examined the teaching styles of online instructors in community colleges using the instrument, PALS, and found many displaying commitment to both teacher-centered and learner-centered styles as well as those that were more teacher-centered. The concern is how reliable the self-reported data are when community college instructors teach many courses in multiple environments and results depend on their ability to reflect on their experiences in one online course. The other concern is the reliability of using PALS to collect data regarding online environment as opposed to the face-to-face environment for which the PALS was designed. The feasibility of increasing student engagement and a variety of learning outcomes is indicated in other studies where the use of LCPs and effective practices facilitated connectedness in synchronous and asynchronous ways. One such study is Hannum and colleagues' (2008). The researchers aimed to examine effectiveness of training facilitators to apply LCPs in supporting online students to speed up their persistence in completing the course. Findings from administering the ALCP Student Survey showed students with learner-centered trained facilitators in secondary schools remained in the online Advanced Placement (AP) English Literature and Composition course for more

weeks and completed statistically at a higher rate than the control group (NLC) with non-learner-centered trained facilitators.

Impact of Using Learner-Centered Psychological Principles and Learner-Centered Model on Diverse Age Groups and Education Systems

The Salinas et al. (2008) study conducted in the higher education system was aimed to determine the relationship between teaching using LCPs and long-term learning as measured by a final examination. Results revealed that the learner-centered group (LC) had a small decline in score of 8.5 points, or 11.3% whereas the non-learner-centered (NLC) had a significant mean decline of 27.8 points, or 33.5%; an unpaired *t*-test on post scores of the LC and NLC groups indicated a significant difference of $t = 2.71$, $p = 0.01$. The effects of learner-centered classrooms and schools on the academic performance of minority and non-minority elementary school students was examined in Salinas and Garr's (2009) study. No significant difference was found between the minority ($M = .11$; $SD = .70$) and non-minority ($M = .08$; $SD = 1.03$) students in the LC model ($t = .161$, $p > .87$). Students in the LC school scored better in six of the seven factors (self-efficacy, state epistemic curiosity, active learning strategies, effort avoidance strategies, task mastery goals, performance-oriented goals, work avoidance goals) in the LCBSS.

In 2003, Meece et al. conducted a study on middle and high school students whose instructors received training on the learner-centered model. The administration of the LCBSS showed students had a stronger mastery focus when they regarded their teachers to be learner-centered that involved promoting higher-order thinking, honoring student voices, creating supportive relations, and adapting instruction to individual and

developmental needs. More importantly, their study suggested that "students are active interpreters of their classroom experiences" (p. 471). When Weinberger and McCombs (2003) applied the LCPs to high schools using the ALCP surveys, teachers acknowledged its utility in supporting them to change their practices to effectively reach students. Thus, the gap between teacher and student perceptions decreased. The importance given to domains of practice appear to differ according to age groups. In determining the effects of LCT practices on pre-adolescents, a different age-group from Meece et al.'s (2003) study, Vanchu-Orosco et al. (2010) found that students were more likely to be self-efficacious, task mastery-oriented, and less likely to avoid work or require extrinsic motivation if they believed their teachers provided a learner-centered environment.

In Wohlfarth et al.'s (2008) study on 21 graduate students in a psychology program, the courses were designed to reflect a learner-centered philosophy. The term "learner-centered" and Weimer's (2002) five tenets were explained to the students and they were told that the course would be taught in an LC style. Qualitative data indicated all students to have been able to identify Weimer's tenets in a remarkably positive manner. Students, however, reported experiencing initial difficulties and expressed concern regarding fully shifting to a learner-centered mode. Several suggested a "blend" of traditional teaching with more LC concepts.

Investigative Studies Using Mixed-Methods

Students' beliefs about their instructor's teaching practices can be best understood while they are enrolled in a course. Barkhuizen (1998) pointed out that after learners have experienced learning activities and made sense of what they have perceived, they do

several things: the three interrelated things they can do are "express a feeling," "make a judgement," and "make a prediction," (Barkhuizen, 1998, p. 90). Research reports support the idea that students' ratings of instructors, along with more in-depth information about their perceptions in their own voices can provide useful insight. For instance, in Gomez's (2015) study involving undergraduates, the use of the LCBSS helped to understand students' perceptions of LCT practices in a college setting. A statistically significant mean difference (omnibus effect $F(1, 195) = 4856.826$, $p < .01$, $\omega^2 = .961$) between the perception and motivation scale scores with a big effect size was reported. In the measurement of components of LCT practices, for the students, motivation showed to be a higher order indicator of such practices, and more important to them than the perception scale. Considering the ethnic composition of the participants, White ($n = 82$), Hispanic ($n = 85$), and others ($n = 29$), in terms of epistemic curiosity, interestingly, the mean score for Whites was larger ($M = 3.49$) than the mean for Hispanics ($M = 3.25$), although the effect size was small. There is a dearth of literature on race, ethnicity, culture, and learner-centeredness (Gomez, 2015). The present study, focusing on a culturally diverse group of ESL students, has the potential to contribute to the literature in these areas with the Learner-centered Battery Student Survey (LCBSS) based on research-validated LCPs.

For nurturing a culture of learning through the creation of LC classrooms, Deakin-Crick et al. (2007), however, discovered that administering self-evaluation tools such as ALCPs, and creating Effective Lifelong Learning Inventory (ELLI) learning profiles alone were not enough. Qualitative data gathered through participant

observations, semi-structured interviews, and focus groups revealed variables that influenced learning: the quality of relationships between students and teachers, the nature of the curriculum; the emotional climate of the classroom, the teachers' instructional practices, and the quality of educational leadership. Similarly, the qualitative part of Gomez's (2015) study indicated what influenced learner-centered learning: group work, discussion, curriculum, psychological safety, student voice, student-centered learning, and online instruction. In the context of the present study, focus group interviews as a source of data has immense potential in the field of TESOL as it provides a means of understanding the "professional world of interactional events" (K. Richards, 2003, p. 50).

The present study explored the beliefs, as a non-linguistic outcome, of ESL students toward the language learning and teaching practices in their English undergraduate courses. To this end, the LCBSS (see Appendix G) provided the ability to identify the degree to which the ESL students' instructors demonstrate learner-centered or non-learner-centered practices. The choice of such an instrument is particularly appropriate when the institution under scrutiny is one with a learner-oriented vision. The vision of the University of Northern Iowa (UNI), the site selected, clearly indicates that: "Offering personalized attention to students, the University of Northern Iowa will be a diverse and inclusive campus community that provides an engaged education, empowering students to lead locally and globally" (University of Northern Iowa 2017-2018 fact book, n.d.). Educational institutions are likely to be more successful with a greater number of students when operating within the frame LCPs that "*focus on learners*

and learning and that are translated into a core philosophy and culture" (McCombs & Whisler, 1997, p. 19, authors' emphasis).

Summary

This chapter provided a review of the theories that have influenced LCT, and a review of the LT methodologies that have evolved, necessitated by the proficiency needs of learners and the influence of theories and findings from other fields, such as psychology and linguistics. Studies were reviewed with a focus on their data collection techniques.

The next chapter presents the methodology for the study. The rationale for the mixed-methods design is explained. The context, the participants, and the instrumentation, including measures taken for addressing the reliability and validity issues, are described. A detailed description of the data collection procedures is presented. The chapter ends with the data analysis processes used in this mixed-methods study.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

In this study, undergraduate ESL students' beliefs about learner-centered teaching (LCT) practices were investigated in English courses at a Midwestern university. The aim was to understand what beliefs these students have about their ESL instructors' LCT practices and how learner-centered (LC) learning experiences affect students' beliefs about the quality of LCT practices in English courses. In this chapter, the design, methods, and process of the study are discussed. First, the research design, including assumptions and rationale for using a mixed-methods approach, is explained. Next, a description of the context, participants, instrumentation, and data collection procedures is provided. The chapter ends with an explanation of the data analysis processes used.

Rationale for Mixed-Methods Design

This study was designed to explore two research questions via an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design, which involved first collecting quantitative data and then qualitative data, enabling the researcher to gather information that uses the best features of both quantitative and qualitative data collection (Creswell, 2012; Onwuegbuzi & Johnson, 2006). The research design used descriptive as well as correlational design components. Given the scope and objectives of the study, as well as the complexity and unobservable characteristics of beliefs about language learning, the rationale for the explanatory sequential mixed-methods design is that whereas the quantitative data and results provide a general picture, more analyses through qualitative data collection "refine, extend, or explain the general picture" (Creswell, 2012, p. 542). Two major

complementary sources of data were used in the present study to find answers to the two research questions:

(1) What beliefs and experiences do undergraduate ESL learners at a Midwestern university have about learner-centered teaching practices in English classes?

(2) How do learner-centered learning experiences affect their beliefs about the quality of learner-centered teaching practices?

Distribution of a Learner-centered Battery Student Survey (LCBSS) (McCombs et al., 1997) (see Appendix G) provided quantitative data and focus groups "promoting self-disclosure among participants" in a "focused discussion" (Krueger & Casey, 2015, pp. 4-6) provided qualitative data. The focus group participants were recruited from among survey respondents.

According to Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, and Turner (2007), "Mixed methods research is, generally speaking, an approach to knowledge (theory and practice) that attempts to consider multiple viewpoints, perspectives, positions, and standpoints (always including the standpoints of qualitative and quantitative research)" (p. 113). One particularly "exciting" outcome Onwuegbuzie and Johnson (2006) claimed is that by using a single study not only practical questions can be addressed, and multiple perspectives attained, but "if well documented, practitioners can obtain some sense of what might be useful in their local situations" (p. 49). Hesse-Biber (2010) stated that a mixed-methods design is useful for several reasons: (1) Triangulation enhances the credibility of the research study and fortifies the study's conclusions; (2)

Complementarity is achievable using both quantitative and qualitative data and not just numerical data or narrative data alone; and, (3) The development of the research project is facilitated by the data collected from a quantitative method to shape focus group interview questions for the qualitative part of the study. However, Barbour (2001) reminded that "data collection using different methods come in different forms and defy direct comparison" and this is actually the case for the "more obvious differences between qualitative and quantitative data" (p. 1117).

In a belief study, conducting a questionnaire research is said to provide only a snapshot of a learner's beliefs, not revealing anything about their functions (Benson & Lor, 1999). Therefore, A. V. Brown (2009), referring to his own belief study, suggested adding qualitative inquiry. More importantly, understanding the LC model through the eyes of students requires "collecting data from a student perspective" which is "consistent with a learner-centered philosophy" (Wohlfarth et al., 2008). Because the target population was composed of different ethnicities and nationalities, a focus group interview as a versatile tool had the potential to elicit greater "in-depth understanding of perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, and experiences from multiple points of view and to document the context from which of those understandings were derived" (Vaughn et al., 1996, p. 16). Figure 1 presents a conceptual model of the procedures used in the Explanatory Sequential QUAN → QUAL design.

Data collection: online survey, in-person survey	Data analysis: descriptive & inferential statistics	Sample selection: data protocol development	Data collection: focus group interviews	Data analysis: codes & themes	Interpreta- tion based on QUAN & QUAL results
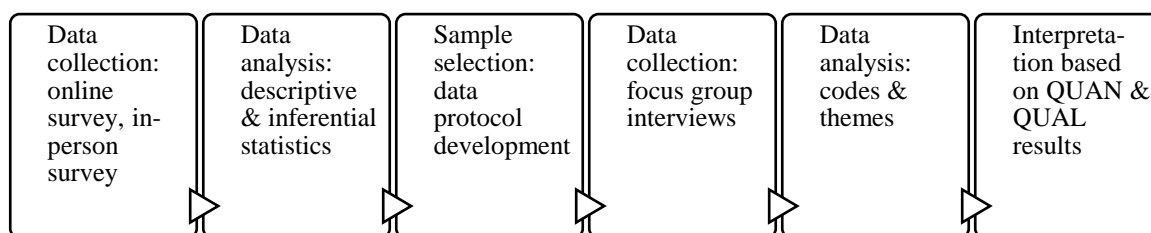
Figure 1. Conceptual Model of Procedures

<div align="center">Research Participants</div>

Setting

The setting of this study was a small, Midwestern public university, the

University of Northern Iowa (UNI). During Fall 2017, UNI had a total student

population of 11,907, including 373 undergraduate and 174 graduate international

students (see Table 3). The university offers 90+ undergraduate majors including the

number-one teacher education program in the region and 50+ graduate programs in

different study areas.

This setting was chosen for several reasons. First, two universities in the

Midwest, popular among international students, having a large number of undergraduate

international students enrolled in ESL credit courses, were considered for recruiting

research participants. Whereas one of these two universities refused entry to the site,

there was no response to emails sent out to the contact persons in charge of ESL research

at the other. Second, another popular university among international students in the south

had been considered. Unfortunately, declining enrollment had led to the closure of the

English Language Institute there in Fall 2017, thus ending the possibility of accessing

that site. Third, e-mail exchanges and telephone calls to gatekeepers in a few other

universities proved futile. In fact, to respect the sites with minimal disruption,

gatekeepers at multiple levels were contacted (Creswell, 2012), but there seemed to be

strong reservations on their part regarding involving international students in particular.

Hence, unfavorable timing and time constraints meant participants had to be

recruited from the researcher's university where she was completing her doctoral studies.

Moreover, due to low enrollment of undergraduate ESL students in Liberal Arts Core

(LAC) courses in English skills in the university, sections devoted to only this particular

category of students were no longer offered. Therefore, it was not possible to recruit

cohorts of participants from a particular academic year.

Table 3. Summary of Fall 2017 International Student Profile by College

	Total University Students	Business	Education	Humanities, Arts & Sciences	Social & Behavioral Sciences	No Specific College
TOTAL	11,907	2,164	2,769	3,747	1,871	1,356
Percent	100	18	23	31	16	11
International Students:						
Undergraduate	373	148	23	119	35	48
Graduate	174	93	38	33	8	2

Source: University of Northern Iowa fact book 2017-2018 (n.d.)

<u>Population</u>

A purposive sample population, homogenous in nature, was created to ensure appropriate participants were included (Vaughn et al., 1996). Participants included international undergraduate students who were enrolled in or had completed LAC core courses in English skills, irrespective of their academic standing. For the purpose of the study, the homogenous participants are called undergraduate ESL students. The targeted courses *College Writing and Research,* focusing on reading and writing skills, and *First-Year Cornerstone: Integrated Communication I* and *II*, focusing on speaking and listening skills, are required for all undergraduate students, including international students, depending on their English proficiency test scores on admission or transferable credits. One hundred and twelve ($N = 112$) participants from various programs took part in the LCBSS. An a priori power analysis with a margin of error of 5% and confidence level of 95% indicated that a sample size of 83 was required.

In terms of potential learner-centeredness or non-learner-centeredness, the population of international students or undergraduate ESL students in this study seemed appropriate because the institution claims to be learner-centered in its mission statement.

<div align="center">Instrumentation</div>

<u>Learner-Centered Battery Student Survey</u>

The Learner-centered Battery (LCB) (McCombs et al., 1997) is a set of instruments that emerged from the theory and research-based Learner-centered Psychological Principles (LCPs) (APA, 1993). As part of the LCB, the Learner-centered Battery Student Survey (LCBSS) (McCombs et al., 1997) (see Appendix G) was used to

measure ESL learners' beliefs and experiences about teaching practices in English

classes. The survey is a self-report and reflection tool designed to help students measure

their instructors' levels of awareness and reflective thinking regarding (a) their beliefs

about learners, instructors, and their relationship to the learning process, (b) the

relationship of these beliefs to their classroom practices, from the learners' perspectives,

and (c) the impact of these factors on student learning, motivation, and achievement

(McCombs et al., 1997).

The 77-item self-report scale, LCBSS, has 72 Likert-type statements divided into

two scales and 11 factors. The answer choices are 1 = *Almost Never*; 2 = *Sometimes*; 3 =

Often; and 4 = *Almost Always*. The most preferred score (MPS) for each scale indicates

the general direction of scores for LCT based on the validation data (McCombs et al.,

1997). A score of 4 indicated that the participant believed a particular aspect of teaching

being scrutinized in that question to be learner-centered (LC) as opposed to a score of 1

that meant more teacher-centered. Scores 2 and 3 suggested that the participant believed

the teaching practices were moving toward LC approaches. Table 15 in Chapter 5

includes the subscale mean scores (PosRel, StuVoic, HOTS, and AIDD) for the students'

perceptions of teaching practice along with the MPS.

The LCBSS (McCombs et al., 1997) was kept intact, but three questions related to

the demographic profile – age, country of origin, and college status (instead of grade

level) – were added to the already existing two, gender and ethnic/cultural background

(see Appendix G). Demographic information was used to describe participant

characteristics and look at possible differences between groups. Since LCT aims to

optimize learning for learners by various means (Blumberg & Weimer, 2012; Weimer, 2002), the teaching practices as reflected in the LCBSS inhere both synchronous and asynchronous dimensions of LCT practices. The instrument has been developed for use in educational settings by instructors, administrators, and principals. It has been validated with over 25,000 K-20 students (McCombs, 2003b).

    <u>Student perception scales and factors contained in the LCBSS</u>. Table 4 presents a summary of the two scales (in the LCBSS) along with their subscales, the items in each subscale, and sample item including reverse item where relevant. Scale 1 measured student perceptions of the instructor's teaching practices and is divided into four subscales and Scale 2 measured student motivation variables and is divided into seven subscales.

Table 4. Summary of LCBSS Components

	Items	Total items	Sample items
Scale 1: student perception of teaching practice			
(1) Creates positive interpersonal relationships (PosRel)	1, 5, 9, 3, 17, 21, & 24	7	Item 1: My instructor shows me that he or she appreciates me as an individual.
(2) Honors student voice, provides challenge, and encourages perspective taking (StuVoic)	2, 6, 10, 14, 18, 22, & 25	7	Item 14: My instructor helps me understand different points of view.
(3) Encourages higher-order thinking and self-regulation (HOTS)	3, 7, 11, 15, 19, & 23	6	Item 15: My instructor helps me see how I can reflect on my thinking and learning.
(4) Adapts to individual developmental differences (AIDD)	4, 8, 12, 16, & 20	5	Item 20: My instructor makes an effort to get to know me and my background.

(Table continues)

	Items	Total items	Sample items
Scale 2: student motivation variables			
(1) Self-efficacy ratings: Beliefs in competency to learn and achieve	26, 33, 40, 47, 54, & 61	6	Item 54: Even when the work in this course is hard, I can learn it. Reverse statement (Item 61): No matter how much I try, there is some work in this course I'll never understand.
(2) Effort-avoidance strategies (Eas): Strategies directed at avoiding effort while learning	28, 35, 42, 49, 56, 63, 69, & 72	8	Item 35: I do my work without thinking too hard.
(3) Performance-oriented goals (Pog): Extrinsic motivational orientation directed to achieving high grades or scores rather than to learning	30, 37, 44, 51, 58, & 65	6	Item 65: I want to do well in this course, so the instructor will think I am smart.
(4) State epistemic curiosity (Sect): Knowledge-seeking curiosity in learning situations	32, 39, 46, 53, 60, 67, & 70	7	Item 32: The material in this course is very interesting to me. Reverse statement (Item 53): I feel that the material in this course will be boring. Item 46: I think it is fun to increase my understanding about the subject matter. Reverse statement (Item 39): I find it difficult to concentrate on this material. (Item 67): I enjoy learning material in this course which is unfamiliar to me. Reverse statement (item 70): I find myself losing interest when complex material is presented in this course.
(5) Active learning strategies (Als): Strategies directed at being actively engaged while learning	27, 34, 41, 48, 55, 62, 68, & 71	8	Item 48: When we have a difficult assignment in this course, I try to figure out the hard parts on my own.
(6) Task-mastery goals (Tmg): Intrinsic motivational orientation directed to learning and mastering task goals	29, 36, 43, 50, 57, & 64	6	Item 64: I want to do my work in this course because it really makes me think.
(7) Work-avoidant goals (Wag): Motivational orientation directed to avoiding assignments and other work involved in learning	31, 38, 51, 52, 59, & 66	6	Item 59: When I do work in this course, I just want to get it done as quickly as possible.

Reliability and validity of the LCBSS. The LCBSS has been extensively

validated with large-scale middle and high school students from diverse geographic

locations in the U.S. (McCombs et al., 1997). Validations of the LCBSS were conducted

in two phases. In phase I, 4,828 students participated. The validation sought to establish

factor structures or theoretically appropriate subscales related to LC beliefs and practices,

and determine the internal consistency coefficient (McCombs et al., 1997). The

validation study indicated moderate-to-high internal consistencies with Cronbach's alpha

coefficients ranging from .67 to .96. Factor structures were conceptually consistent with

the theoretical framework, more precisely the LCPs (APA, 1993) which were used in the

development of the LCBSS. In phase II, 4,894 students participated. It sought to

establish predictive validity and further demonstrate construct validity of the revised

survey instrument using factor analyses and reliability analyses. Phase II factor analyses

replicated Phase I analyses.

In general, the data supported the LCBSS's content, construct, and predictive

validity. Results indicated that learners' perceptions of their instructors' LC practices

were good predictors of academic motivation. This finding is consistent with the overall

learner-centered perspective as the focus is on the experiences and perceptions of learners

rather than of the instructors. Moreover, the relationships among group variables (i.e.,

teachers' characteristics, their LC beliefs, student perceptions of the teachers' learner-

centered practices, student motivation, and student achievement), revealed through the

multiple regression analyses, strongly suggest that the overall LC model is a valuable tool

for assessment and intervention.

In another validation study with 655 students, conducted by Fasko and Grubb (1997), reliability coefficients ranging from .71 to .92, indicating modest-to-high internal consistency for the measures on the 72 items in the LCBSS, was reported. Of relevance to this study's Research Question 1 (What beliefs and experiences do college ESL learners at a Midwestern university have about learner-centered teaching practices?) is Scale 1 (student perceptions of teaching practice). This scale containing 25 items divided into four subscales had Cronbach alpha reliabilities ranging from .71 to .91 in the national validation study (McCombs et al., 1997): (1) Personal/Social domain – practices that create Positive interpersonal Relationships and classroom climate (PosRel) (7 items, α = .91); (2) Affective/motivational domain – practices that honor Student Voice, provide challenge, and encourage perspective taking (StuVoic) (7 items, α = .84); (3) Metacognitive/cognitive domain – practices that encourage Higher-order Thinking and Self-regulated learning (HOTS) (6 items, α = .85); and (4) Developmental/Individual differences domain – practices that Adapt to Individual Differences (AIDD) (5 items, α = .71). In Meece et al.'s (2003) study, with a national sample of 4615 U.S. middle and high school students, alphas reported on the four domains respectively were as follows: (α = .92), (α = .84), (α = .86), and (α = .69). For Gomez's (2015) more recent study, with 196 U.S. undergraduate college students, alphas reported on the four domains were quite similar to the validation study: (α = .92), (α = .80), (α = .85), and (α = .80).

Assessment of Instrument Quality for the Present Study

The use of multiple kinds of evidence to report estimated reliability and validity is a good practice (Huck, 2008). In this study, two statistical methods were employed with which validity and reliability of the LCBSS was estimated: Cronbach's alpha and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Reliability, a characteristic of data and not of the instrument LCBSS that produced the data, can vary across groups that differ in gender, age, or any other characteristic (Huck, 2008). It has been recommended that researchers should report reliability for their own data and not rely on estimates from prior research or test manuals (R. K. Henson, 2001). Therefore, as a good practice, reliability for the current study was reestablished (Huck, 2008).

This study represented a novel use of McCombs and her colleagues' (1997) survey, LCBSS: The focus was on experiences in English classes of a sample diverse in nature in terms of age, nationality, and ethnicity in a new academic environment. Although a pilot study would have been useful, with such a small number of undergraduate ESL students in the research site it was not feasible. Therefore, before distributing the survey, a small group of potential study participants were asked to do a form of cognitive interviewing using the instrument to understand whether the statements made sense to the study population. Also, the researcher's academic experience prior to post-graduate work had been both within and outside her own country; in terms of professional experience, her teaching career spanned 19 years in the higher education systems interacting with groups of learners diverse in terms of age, nationality, and ethnicity. This background helped to a great extent to anticipate the kind of issues

associated with the measurement tool: for instance, language issues like words having slightly different meaning in the culture of the participant than in the culture for which it was originally designed. Although upon interrogation, the small group responded similarly within the group without indicating any lack of understanding, it was impossible to anticipate difficulties unique to different ethnic groups as the researcher was not an actual member of any of the groups.

Cronbach's alpha. In any study, reliability of the scores is crucial to the understanding of the observed relationships between variables (R. K. Henson, 2001). A general standard of reliability was accepted. As a rule of thumb, a set of items are considered reliable if it has an alpha level of .70 or higher (Urdan, 2010). However, referring to Nunnally, R. K. Henson (2001) suggested that reliabilities of .60 or .50 can be considered sufficiently reliable. For this study, Cronbach's alphas of .65 to .69 were considered tolerable minimum levels of reliability, alphas of .70 to .89 good, and alphas of .90 and above excellent for determining the reliability of subscale scores. For tests consisting of scales measuring different constructs, each scale should be assessed separately for internal consistency (R. K. Henson, 2001).

Reliability analyses were used to compute the internal consistency coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) of student perceptions (PosRel, StuVoic, HOTS, AIDD) and student motivation (Sec, Eas, Pog, Sect, Als, Tmg, Wag) subscale scores. Reliability estimates for the LCBSS scores are shown in Table 5. Three of the four student perceptions of teaching practices factors (PosRel, StuVoic, HOTS) had Cronbach's α of more than .80 and the fourth (AIDD) had Cronbach α of .78 indicating good acceptable ranges of

reliability. Also, within acceptable range were five of the seven motivation factors (Sec, Eas, Pog, Als) that had Cronbach's α within the range of .70 and .79. However, reliability scores for two of the motivation factors (sect, wag) were lower than the other motivation subscales .55 and .69 respectively but within acceptable ranges (R. K. Henson, 2001). Cronbach's α for the instrument, LCBSS, was .93, indicating a high level of internal consistency for the scale (Huck, 2008; Urdan, 2010).

Table 5. Mean, Standard Deviations, Reliability Coefficients for ESL Student Scales

Scales	No. of items	*M*	*SD*	Cronbach's Alpha
Perceptions of teaching practice that:				
Creates positive interpersonal relationships (PosRel)	7	3.07	.62	.85
Honors student voice, provides challenge, and encourages perspective taking (StuVoic)	7	3.07	.61	.84
Encourages higher-order thinking and self-regulated learning (HOTS)	6	2.98	.66	.85
Adapts to individual differences (AIDD)	5	2.63	.73	.78
Student motivation:				
Self-efficacy (Sec)	6	2.97	.53	.75
Effort-avoidance strategies (Eas)	8	2.34	.61	.79
Performance-oriented goals (Pog)	6	2.65	.62	.70
State epistemic curiosity (Sect)	7	2.76	.45	.55
Active learning strategies (Als)	8	2.95	.47	.75
Task-mastery goals (Tmg)	6	3	.54	.77
Work-avoidant goals (Wag)	6	2.78	.53	.69

For Scale 1 that measures perceptions of teaching practices and is related to this study, several things were noted. Cronbach's α remains about the same for each of the

factors, PosRel, Stuvoic, HOTS, and AIDD if any of the items are deleted. The corrected item-total correlation, indicating how much each item correlates with the overall survey score, showed low ($r = .41$) to high ($r = .74$) correlation. Inter-correlations among the items under the four different factors were not consistent for all the items. Appendix R reports inter-item correlation matrix. For Factor 1 (PosRel) with 7 items, factor 3 (HOTS) with 6 items, and factor 4 (AIDD) with 5 items, most of the correlations among the items are concentrated around $r = .40$ which suggests low correlations between the items. Also, for Factor 2 (StuVoic) with 7 items, most of the correlations among the items are concentrated around $r = .30$ which suggests low correlations between the items.

Confirmatory factor analysis. In this study, principal component analysis (PCA) was considered unsuitable as it is merely a data reduction method disregarding any underlying structure caused by latent variables (Costello & Osborne, 2005). Among the set of instruments that belong to the Learner-centered Battery (LCB) (McCombs et al., 1997), the LCBSS emerged from the theory and research-based Learner-centered Psychological Principles (LCPs) (APA, 1993). Based on theoretical considerations and past empirical research (e.g., Hannum et al., 2008; McCombs et al., 1997; McCombs & Whisler, 1997; Meece et al., 2003; Salinas & Garr, 2009; Weinberger & McCombs, 2003), the researcher assumed that the set of the survey items should go together but needed to test the assumption with some statistics and CFA allowed organizing the items according to a strong theoretical rationale (Urdan, 2010). CFA was used to examine relationships between the set of observed variables and the set of continuous latent

variables as it is a more reliable instrument evaluation method than PCA (Costello & Osborne, 2005).

To perform a reliable factor analysis, the following prerequisites had to be considered: the variables had to be measured at an interval level, the data had to be normally distributed to be able to generalize beyond the sample, and the sample size had to be large enough (Costello & Osborne, 2005; Field, 2009; Hof, 2012; Urdan, 2010). The common rule of thumb is to have 10-15 participants per item, but how large the size a sample needs to be depends largely on the proportion of variance in a dataset that a factor explains (Hof, 2012). A high percentage of research studies report factor analyses using relatively small samples (Costello & Osborne, 2005). This study had 112. There were no missing data.

To conduct the CFA, items were organized according to a strong theoretical rationale (Urdan, 2010) consistent with the five domains represented in the Learner-centered Principles (LCPs) (APA, 1997). Based on validation studies with large nationally representative samples (McCombs et al., 1997; Fasko & Grubb, 1995), it was expected for items 1, 5, 9, 13, 17, 21, and 24 to form Factor 1 (Creates positive interpersonal relationships or PosRel), items 2, 6, 10, 14, 18, 22, and 25 to form Factor 2 (Honors student voice, provides challenge, and encourages perspective taking or StuVoic), items 3, 7, 11, 15, 19, and 23 to form Factor 3 (Encourages higher-order thinking and self-regulated learning or HOTS), and items 4, 8, 12, 16, and 20 to form Factor 4 (Adapts to individual differences or AIDD). This hypothesized 4-factor structure is presented in Figure 2.
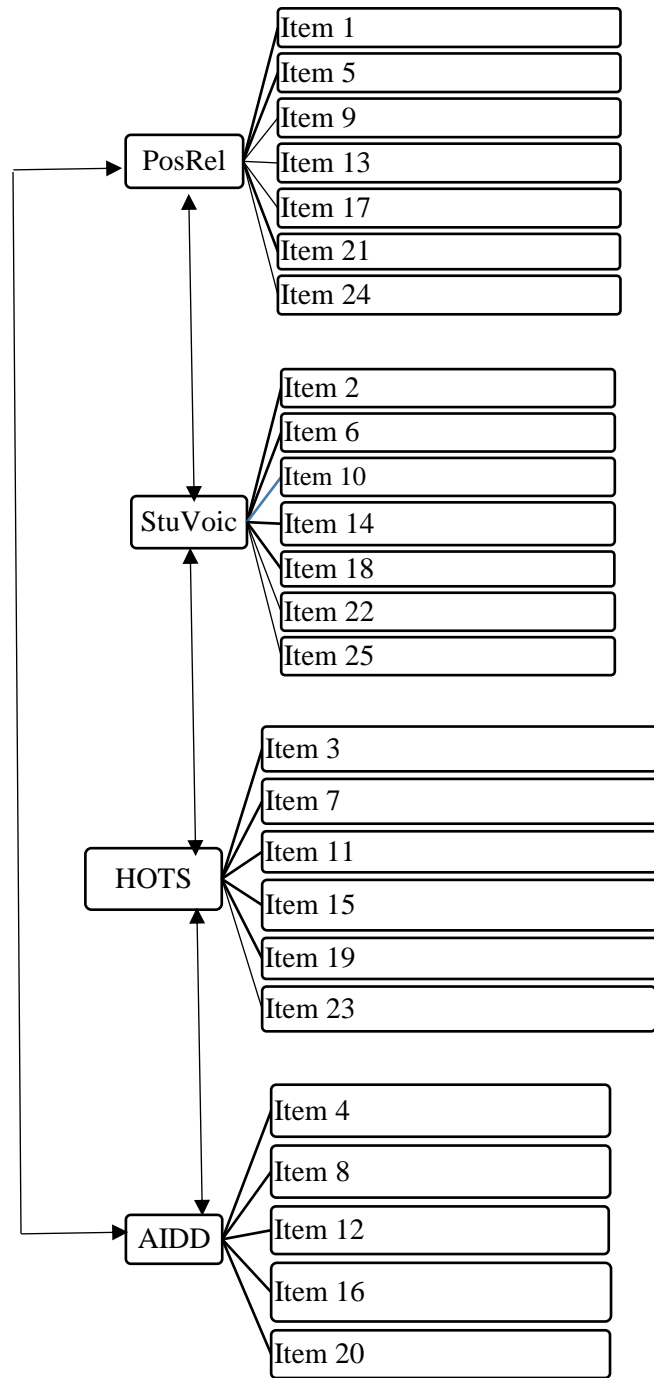
Figure 2. Theoretical Model for Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The 4 LCBSS domain scores of the 112 participants were subjected to a CFA to test a 4-factor model of ESL undergraduate students' perceptions of teaching practices. The 72 items in the LCBSS were rated on a 4-point Likert-type scale that assessed the frequency at which students perceived their teacher performing various practices (1 – *Almost never* to 4 – *Almost always*) (McCombs et al., 1997). The scores from the survey were treated as continuous variables in the analysis. The descriptions for all observed variables are provided in chapter 5. For running CFA, the model was fit using Lavaan version 0.6 – 3. Estimation used was maximum likelihood. The variables were standardized to have a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1. The model fit was acceptable but not excellent having comparative fit index (CFI) of .83, Tucker-Lewis fit index (TLI) of .82, and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) of .091 with 90% CI from .07 to .10. The items all showed positive factor loadings ranging from .84 to 1.80 (see Table 6); factor with four or more loadings greater than 0.6 is considered reliable (Field, 2009).

Table 6. Factor Loadings for Student Perceptions of Teaching Practices Scale

Items	Factor*			
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
1. My instructor shows me that he or she appreciates me as an individual.	1.00			
5. My instructor provides support and encouragement when I'm worried I won't perform well.	1.25			
9. My instructor makes me feel that he or she cares about me.	1.30			
13. My instructor makes me feel that he or she appreciates me for I am, not just for how well I do.	1.80			

(Table continues)

Items	Factor*			
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 1	Factor 4
17. My instructor helps me feel good about my abilities.	1.05			
21. My instructor helps me feel like I belong in the course.	1.14			
24. My instructor treats me with respect.	0.84			
2. My instructor lets me express my own thoughts and beliefs.		1.00		
6. My instructor provides opportunities for me to learn how to take someone else's perspective.		1.17		
10. My instructor encourages me to challenge myself while learning.		1.42		
14. My instructor helps me understand different points of view.		1.19		
18. My instructor encourages me to think things out for myself while learning.		1.35		
22. My instructor asks me to listen to and think about my classmates' opinions, even when I don't agree with them.		1.14		
25. My instructor lets me work on activities that are challenging.		1.02		
3. My instructor helps me learn how to organize what I'm learning so I can remember it more easily.			1.00	
7. My instructor helps me think through what I'm interested in learning.			1.12	
11. My instructor helps me put information together with what I already know so that it makes sense to me.			1.23	
15. My instructor helps me see how I can reflect on my thinking and learning.			1.02	
19. My instructor helps me learn how well I understand what I am learning.			1.18	
23. My instructor helps me by explaining and teaching in different ways when I am having trouble understanding.			1.24	
4. My instructor changes learning assignments when I seem to be failing.				1.00
8. My instructor encourages me to work with other students when I have trouble with an assignment.				1.45
12. My instructor encourages me to tell him or her the way I would like to learn.				1.45
16. My instructor teaches me how to deal with stress that affects my learning.				1.57
20. My instructor makes an effort to get to know me and my background.				1.33

Note. *Factor 1 = Creates positive interpersonal relationships/climate; Factor 2 = Honors student voice, provides challenge, & encourages perspective taking; Factor 3 = Encourages higher-order thinking & self-regulation; Factor 4 = Adapts to individual developmental differences.

There were also significant positive correlations among all three latent factors (see Table 7), indicating that students who perceived teaching practices to be learner-centered in one dimension were more likely to perceive it in the others as well.

Table 7. Latent Factor Correlations

Factor 1	Factor 2	Correlation	Sig
Posrel	Stuvoic	0.209	***
Posrel	Hots	0.248	***
Posrel	Aidd	0.207	***
Stuvoic	Hots	0.247	***
Stuvoic	Aidd	0.184	***
Hots	Aidd	0.213	***

*** $p \leq .05$

These results are consistent with the characterization of LCT practices as comprising distinct factors for LCT practices that create Positive interpersonal Relationships (PosRel), honor Student Voice (StuVoic), encourage Higher-order Thinking and Self-regulation (HOTS), and Adapt to Individual Developmental Differences (AIDD), as has been proposed in the literature (McCombs et al., 1997).

<u>Focus Group</u>

A phenomenological approach (Creswell, 2013) to focus group interview was initiated in which the researcher had initial knowledge about the topic but was interested to develop a more in-depth understanding from the everyday knowledge and perceptions of key stakeholders (Vaughn et al., 1996) through depth interviewing (Merton, Fiske, & Kendall, 1990). A focus group is "a carefully planned series of discussions designed to

obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, nonthreatening

environment" (Krueger & Casey, 2015, p.2). Defined in such a way, focus groups have

immense potential in the field of TESOL as they provide a means of understanding the

professional world of interactional events (K. Richards, 2003). Multiple focus groups

were formed. Self-contained focus groups disclose aspects of experiences and

perspectives that otherwise would not have been accessible without group interaction

(Morgan, 1997). It allowed the ESL focus group participants to express themselves

better, using both verbal and non-verbal means in the company of their peers with whom

they were at ease.

Focus group participants were informants in the truest sense of the word. Taylor

and Bogdan (1984) explained, "They [informants] act as the researcher's observer, his or

her eyes and ears in the field. As informants, their role is not simply to reveal their own

views, but to describe what happened and how others viewed it" (p. 79). Although the

focus group participants were briefed as to what their roles were as informants and group

members, this did not include their responsibility to reflect on how others experienced

LCT in their English classes. In this study, the fact that the focus group participants as

informants revealed in their discussion how their peers experienced LCT practices was

treated as additional information.

Focused interview. To generate rich data, it was necessary to have participants in

multiple groups "to have been involved in a *particular situation* [author's emphasis]" and

to "encourage informants to reminisce about their experiences" (Merton et al., 1990, pp.

3-5). The primary objective of the focused interview was to elicit as far as possible a

complete picture of the learner-centered (LC) learning experiences in English classes so that both their experiences and beliefs stand out. Otherwise, Merton et al. (1990) warned that "the resulting qualitative data from the interview will not encompass the qualities of range, depth, specificity and personal context essential to an understanding of the nature and meaning of the responses" (p. 21). Therefore, following these authors, a "reinstatement" of the original experience required that an ESL focus group participant be led to "recall of the *stimulus situation* [authors' emphasis] to which he was exposed" and "recall of *his reactions* [authors' emphasis] to it" (p. 23). For instance, in one group, participants were asked: "Think for a moment about your English classes. What were your experiences like in your English classes here at UNI?" that was followed by "How did the instructor make you feel?" Having asked the participants to focus on English courses, participants were further asked, "Explain more about what learner-centered teaching means to you," to which each participant gave a detailed description of a particular class activity each had done in English class and what they found enjoyable and helpful and what they did not (see Appendix O for transcripts, FG4, l.70-120).

Krueger (1994) advocated using a homogenous group for eliciting detailed information related to a common experience. The focus of the study required that participants should share some similar characteristics in terms of college experience such as college status (undergraduate), course completion (at least one required English course), and language use (ESL learner). Group participants should preferably not know each other (Merriam, 2009) to encourage honest and spontaneous flow of views (Creswell, 2013). However, most of the focus group participants who had taken part in

the survey were acquainted. These groups were used since it was likely that by being acquainted they could be encouraged to relate to each other's comments (Kitzinger, 1994) and allow views to be expressed in a non-threatening environment (Littoseletti, 2003; Merriam, 2009). It has also been argued that the researcher's presence may alter the behavior of the participants; however, interaction among group participants is likely to reduce interaction between the facilitator or moderator and the individual members of the group (Madriz, 2000). In this study, this interactive process placed more weight on the group members' opinions and reduced the influence of the researcher-moderator. Additionally, the fact that the researcher-moderator herself is of Asian origin probably had an impact on the group members. It was very likely that the participants could identify themselves with the researcher-moderator and thus felt at ease to participate. The extent of compatibility among the group members encouraged the expression of views.

Assessment of Research Quality and Rigor

For the qualitative research component in this study, a single, generalizable truth perceived by all would be impossible, because for any individual, perspective-taking occurs through the lens of cultural, experiential, environmental, and other contextual influences. However, a general consensus within the academic community is that qualitative researchers must demonstrate in some way or the other the credibility of their studies (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Creswell and Miller (2000) identified nine commonly used verification procedures that may be appropriate for different traditions in qualitative literature: (1) triangulation, (2) disconfirming evidence, (3) researcher reflexivity, (4)

member checking, (5) prolonged engagement in the field, (6) collaboration, (7) the audit trail, (8) thick, rich description, and (9) peer debriefing (pp. 126-129). Shenton (2004) advocated strategies based on Guba's constructs that many have accepted, namely, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability that resulted from undertaking his PhD studies. Creswell (2013) recommended qualitative researchers to engage in at least two of the eight verification procedures in a given study.

Since the concepts of reliability and validity from the positivist paradigm cannot be applied to naturalistic work, naturalistic investigators have used different terminologies as a way to distance themselves from the positivist paradigm. Rigor, in qualitative terms, and reliability and validity, in quantitative terms, are approaches to establish trust or credibility in the research findings. Just as the question of reliability and validity in the quantitative research part of this mixed-methods study was considered, so was rigor addressed in the qualitative research part. Rigor was operationalized using the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability proposed first by Lincoln and Guba (1985). The strategies that the researcher employed have been explained thoroughly in the next section titled "Data Collection Procedures." A summary of the procedures is presented in Table 8.

Table 8. Qualitative Criteria for Assessing Research Quality and Rigor

Qualitative term	Lens	Strategy employed
Credibility	Lens of study participants	• On the spot member-checks relating to the accuracy of the data & encouraging honesty in informants (Shenton, 2004) • Use of iterative questioning & probes to elicit detailed data; researcher returns to matters previously raised and extracts related data through rephrased questions (Shenton, 2004). • Complete transcription done by researcher (Litosseliti, 2003; Merriam, 2009) • Moderating own focus group (Litosseliti, 2003)
Transferability	Lens of people external to the study	• Thick, rich description (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Miller, 2000)
	Lens of participant	• Purposive sampling (Cypress, 2017)
Dependability	Lens of researcher	• Operational detail of data gathering (Shenton, 2004);
	Lens of researcher	• Established criteria used as a framework for interpreting coded data: frequency; extensiveness; intensity; specificity; internal consistency; participant perception of importance (Krueger & Casey, 2015).
	Lens of participants	• Prolonged engagement in the field (Creswell & Miller, 2000) to reach data saturation (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) in general and across-group saturation in particular (Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech, & Zoran, 2009) • Use of multiple groups to assess emergence of themes across groups (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009)
Confirmability	Lens of researcher	• Researcher reflexivity (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Miller, 2000; Cypress, 2017; Shenton, 2004) • Role of researcher: audit trail of how the researcher maintained self-awareness of role as "instrument" of the study • Detailed methodological description to help reader determine acceptability of data and constructs emerging from it (Shenton, 2004).

Note. Lens refers to the inquirer's use of a viewpoint for establishing validity in a study (Creswell & Miller, 2009)

Data Collection Procedures

Institutional Review Board Approval

In order to protect human participants, the university Institutional Review Board

granted permission to carry out the study prior to data collection (see Appendix M).

Administration of Survey

Survey in language research is a resourceful method because of the many types of

data that can be gathered and the possibility of exploring phenomena, behaviors, and

attitudes (H. D. Brown, 2001). Data was collected during Spring 2018 semester. The

Learner-centered Battery Student Survey (LBCSS) (McCombs et al., 1997) was set up

using the university Qualtrics Survey Platform, a web-based survey and data analysis

service. The registrar's office provided a mailing list of international undergraduate

students at the university. An electronic cover letter (see Appendix L) accompanying the

LCBSS (see Appendix G) was sent out using the mailing list. The letter requested the

students to participate in the study, both in the web-based LCBSS and focus groups, and

express their beliefs about their English instructor's teaching practices. It also explained

the role of the researcher and importance of the information provided by the participant

and emphasized that participation in the study as well as a $50 gift-card drawing was

voluntary. The initial filtering question asked each participant to indicate his or her

informed consent (see Appendix J for informed consent for survey participant) for

participation in the study. A "no" response directed the participant away from the

remainder of the survey. Interested participants in the study completed the survey either

on paper or online. A paper-and-pencil participant was also required to indicate his or

her informed consent (see Appendix J). The informed consent included an assurance of confidentiality, and no deception, nor anticipated harm or risk to participants. Paper-and-pencil surveys were collected by the researcher.

Initially, there were only 29 online survey responses. The mailing list sent by the registrar's office included students who had dropped English course(s) or were waivered after registering for the course or had transferred to other universities. Therefore, other response boosting strategies had to be initiated as this did not help in reaching the targeted population. The first three response boosting strategies already implemented were (1) offering the chance to win in a drawing one of five $50 gift cards for survey participants, (2) offering $25 gift card for every focus group participant after completion of all focus groups, and (3) reminding participants to complete the survey. The researcher decided to include in-person surveys and got IRB approval for that as well. In-person surveys required active involvement of the researcher. The following additional response boosting strategies were added: (4) distributing the survey personally in the library, in student involvement centers, and in classes having international students with the instructors' prior permission; (5) forwarding survey link, distributing surveys, and recruiting focus group participants through snowball sampling; (6) contacting instructors/professors in different departments and requesting student participation by sending them the anonymous link; and (7) contacting and sending out the anonymous link through different associations and programs at the university. This resulted in an increase in survey responses from 29 to 112.

The first 25 items in the instrument were forced responses in the web-based survey to ensure students responded as they were directly related to Research Question 1 of the study. Although such a strategy could not be applied to the pen-and-pencil version of the survey, fortunately those distributed were all returned complete. After the completion of data gathering, raw data from the electronic survey were downloaded to a personal computer. Data from pen-and-pencil surveys were added to it. Five winners in the drawing for survey participants were each mailed a $50 Amazon e-gift card. A second drawing was necessary when one winner did not respond, even after being reminded through e-mail. Identifying information for each participant was deleted once the drawing for gift cards was over and the focus groups had been completed. A numeric code was assigned to each participant whose data was included in the study.

<u>Focus Group Participant Recruitment and Number of Focus Groups</u>

There is little consensus as to what the most appropriate sample size of a focus group should be. Both Krueger (1994) and Litosseliti (2003) endorsed the use of small groups or mini-focus groups and Morgan (1997) emphasized taking both the purpose of the study and the field constraints into account for selecting group size. These authors suggested group sizes could be as small as three or four. Krueger (1994) and Morgan (1997) stated also that three to six focus groups were enough to reach data "saturation" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) with the group meeting once or several times. Multiple groups are suggested in order to balance out the idiosyncrasies of individuals and groups, and to accommodate enough participants who can best provide information and insight into what is being explored (Krueger & Casey, 2015). Confidence in the findings of focus

groups is very likely to increase with multiple groups (Kidd & Parshall, 2000) and "collective human interaction" (Madriz, 2000, p. 836). The systematic use of multiple groups allowed the researcher in this study to assess whether the themes that were emerging from one group were also emerging from other groups (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009).

In this study, interested survey participants were asked to provide their contact details at the end of the survey. Prior to being sent a doodle poll invitation, interested focus group participants were notified through e-mail. The doodle poll was aimed to create minimal disruption in their academic and non-academic engagements. Though twenty-three participants showed interest in participating in a focus group in the survey, only a few participated. When in-person survey responses were collected, a number of Middle Eastern students were willing to participate in the focus groups after it was explained that they would have the opportunity to share their experiences and thoughts about teaching practices in their English classes that they could not do in the survey. However, only the interested Asian participants turned up on the scheduled focus group meetings. Snowball sampling allowed more participants to be recruited for the focus groups. This process resulted in a total of 17 focus group participants divided into four groups. Focus Groups 1 (FG1), FG2, and FG4 each had four participants and FG3 had five. All the group members of FG1 attended the second meeting but only two members (P5 and P6) from FG2 attended the second meeting. FG3 and FG4 did not meet a second time as the researcher determined that data saturation had been reached after having moderated four focus group discussions with FG1 and FG2 and reviewing the data

(viewing audio-video recordings and beginning the transcribing).   Multiple focus groups allowed prolonged periods of engagement in the field (Creswell & Miller, 2000) to reach data saturation (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) in general and across-group saturation in particular (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009). Purposive sampling was used to include people who knew most about the topic (Merriam, 2009) and, therefore, enhanced transferability (Cypress, 2017; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). A summary of the multiple focus group participants, their composition and the number of meetings held with each group is presented in Table 9.

Table 9. Summary of Focus Group Profile and Meeting

Participants	Focus Group	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Country of Origin	College Credit	# of meetings attended
P1	FG 1	F	18-22	Asian	South Korea	Sophomore	2
P2		M	18-22	Asian	Pakistan	Junior	2
P3		F	18-22	Asian	India	Junior	2
P4		F	18-22	Asian	Burma	Junior	2
P5	FG 2	M	-	Asian	Pakistan	Junior	1
P6		F	18-22	Asian	India	Junior	2
P7		M	18-22	Asian	Nepal	Junior	2
P8		M	18-22	Asian	Pakistan	Sophomore	1
P9	FG 3	F	23-26	Asian	South Korea	Junior	1
P10		M	18-22	Asian	Pakistan	Junior	1
P11		M	18-22	Asian	Pakistan	Freshman	1
P12		M	18-22	Asian	Pakistan	Senior	1
P13		M	18-22	Asian	Pakistan	Senior	1
P14	FG 4	M	18-22	Asian	Pakistan	Freshman	1
P15		F	-	Asian	Malaysia	Senior	1
P16		M	18-22	Asian	Pakistan	Freshman	1
P17		M	18-22	Asian	Pakistan	Freshman	1

Note. FG1.1 denotes Focus Group 1, Meeting 1. P denotes participant. Other group references follow the same pattern. Meeting duration: FG1.1 = 50 minutes; FG1.2 = 55mins; FG2.1 = 46mins; FG2.2 = 26mins; FG3.1 = 70mins; FG4.1 = 70mins.

Researcher as Moderator

The benefit of being the researcher-moderator was that there was "more insight and in-context knowledge about the research overall" (Litosseliti, 2003) but for the novice researcher it also meant being aware that the degree of structure and flexibility in moderating focus groups would affect the results. Therefore, the novice researcher had to prepare herself as far as possible to take on the task of moderating the ESL focus group interviews. Krueger and Casey's (2015) suggestions were followed to consider necessary skills for moderating as well as the preferences and characteristics of the target focus group participants. In addition to reviewing literature on moderating focus groups and communicating with researchers experienced in conducting this procedure, the researcher-moderator relied on her pedagogical skills of facilitating group discussions mastered during her 19-year teaching career.

Initially, the "questioning route" (Krueger & Casey, 2015) was used as a resource to maintain the balance between the focus of the study and the group discussion (Morgan, 1997). The researcher-moderator, and not the interview guide, was the "research tool" so that the role entailed "not merely obtaining answers but learning what questions to ask and how to ask them" (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984, p. 77). Therefore, flexibility was allowed for additional questions based on the information provided by the participants in the focus groups as well as the trend identified in the responses to the items in the Learner-centered Battery Student Survey (LCBSS) (McCombs et al., 1997). To stimulate the discussion, more open-ended questions suggested by Merriam (2009) were used such as experience and behavior questions, opinion and values questions, and feeling

questions. Because the focus group schedules were not far apart, it was not possible for the researcher-moderator to transcribe each interview fully between the sessions. Instead, she had to resort to using the audio-visual recording to add questions to the interview guide (Krueger & Casey, 2015). Sample questions included, "How about your English classes? Any English class you had here, think about that class" or "Did you have a similar experience in English class?" that was followed by, "How did you feel when you were a part of that circle?" and then, "Do you think that is an example of learner-centered practice?" Questions were added focusing on the survey. A focus group was asked, "A lot of participants said sometimes their assignments were changed if they seemed to be failing or the instructor taught them how to cope with stress or encouraged them to tell him how they wanted to learn. What do you think? Did you have this kind of experience? How often did you have that kind of experience?" Another group was asked, "I found out that many participants said they were often helped by their instructors and P3 gave a good example. Some of you gave examples. Can you give me more examples of what kind of support the teacher in the English class provided to you?"

The researcher-moderator used iterative questioning and probes to elicit detailed data and returned to matters previously raised through rephrased questions (Shenton, 2004). For instance, questions in a focus group depending on the flow of discussion included: "Tell me more about that"; another group was asked after they had talked about learning activities they had done in English classes, "In the English class you had the experience of doing project work, right?" which was followed by, "What were your experiences like doing project work with others?" Then, aiming at others, "What were

your experiences with others?" Other questions seeking confirmation included, "Do you think that is an example of learner-centered practice?" and, "You didn't have that experience in your English class?"

According to experienced moderators, groups are unpredictable and, therefore, differences between groups should be expected (Krueger & Casey, 2015). This necessitated the researcher-moderator to follow Krueger and Casey's recommendation: To maintain consistency in the way group discussion is introduced, follow the pattern of first welcoming the FG participants, then providing an overview of the topic, next providing ground rules or things that will allow smooth discussion, and finally starting with the first question. A script was prepared to help the researcher-moderator (see Appendix H). The script emphasized that there was no right or wrong answers and was aimed at establishing rapport with the participants so that they would be encouraged to be open from the beginning of each session and be honest (Shenton, 2004).

Conducting the Focus Group Interview

On the first day of the meeting with each group, the researcher greeted the focus group participants when they arrived. On each occasion every group sat in a circle including the researcher. A Yeti USB microphone was placed on a table in the middle for recording. A small USB camera was clipped on to the top edge of a display monitor. The audio and video setting of the Zoom Cloud Meetings app was used for recording the focus group interviews. Should the recording fail, a second digital audio recorder was used. A computer screen was within the view of the participants so that they could view the definition of learner-centered (McCombs et al., 1997) when it was shown to them. A

back-up printed copy was kept and had to be used with Focus Group 4 as the computer

stopped working. Introductory remarks were made by the researcher (see Appendix H

for script for starting the focus group). The remarks included an explanation of the

purpose of the research, assurance of confidentiality, emphasis on the researcher's role as

the moderator and the focus group participant's role as an informant and a group

member, and the possibility of multiple meetings. The participants were given separate

consent forms (see Appendix K) for the focus group interview. The forms were collected

after they were read and signed. The focus groups lasted between 50-70 minutes. The

first meeting with Focus Group 1 was held in a small classroom. All other meetings were

held in group study rooms of the university library, which the research participants found

to be more convenient. With the first two groups, more than one meeting was necessary

as the researcher-moderator determined the point of saturation (Krueger & Casey, 2015)

had not been reached after the first meeting. At the post-discussion session, the

researcher-moderator invited the participants to make any comments they had and

thanked them.

To conduct effective focus-group interviews, Merton et al.'s (1990) four broad

criteria (i.e., range, specificity, depth, and personal context) were considered. The

questioning route (see Appendix I) had the following elements: it started with an easy

question like referring to the LCBSS that all group members could answer, was

sequential for the conversation to flow naturally from one question to another, began with

general questions and gradually narrowed down to more specific questions, and made

efficient use of time (Krueger & Casey's, 2015) (Interview questions are presented in

Appendix I). For instance, in one focus group interview, after the initial phase of

introductory remarks made by the interviewer-researcher, followed by student

introductions, students were asked to reflect on their experience of taking part in the

survey and what it had made them think about ("What did the survey make you think

about?"). With brief answers such as "I feel like I am the main one who can read my…",

the researcher asked probing questions "Why do you think that? What made you feel

that?" to stimulate the discussion. The reference to the survey was aimed to set the

environment for the topic discussion, help them recall survey content, and verify to what

extent they had understood the survey content. After all group participants had expressed

their opinion, they were told, "Explain more about what learner-centered teaching means

to you." A little later, they were requested to focus on English classes: "Think for a

moment about your English classes, what were your experiences like in your English

classes here at UNI?" It was expected that the participants would talk about language

skills the instructors taught, so in order to "maximize the range of the interview by

eliciting as many anticipated and unanticipated responses as possible" (Merton et al.,

1990, p.43), the researcher asked further, "Did you have similar experiences like P7? He

was saying that he had one on one interaction with the teacher. Did you all have similar

experiences?"

Approximately 8-10 minutes into the discussion, a monitor was used to display

very briefly the definition of learner-centered teaching (McCombs et al., 1997). The

display of the definition prompted focus group participants to evaluate teaching practices

through that lens. Literature abounds with definitions of learner-centeredness. The

purpose of the study was not to understand the participants' definition of learner-centeredness but to help them identify the LCT practices in their English classes and reveal their perceptions about them and their quality. Participants were encouraged to express their opinions about the definition first and further their discussion by reflecting on their experiences in English classes. For instance, in one group, the participants were asked, "Tell me more about in which course you faced this learner-centered teaching method," which was followed by "Was it less learner-centered in the English classes?", "Can you all give me examples of learner-centered classes?", "Can you tell me more about the English class?" To elicit elaborate responses and more depth, other questions included "How did you feel when you were a part of that circle?" and, "Do you think that is an example of learner-centered practice?"

For the purpose of the study, it was essential to focus on those situations of learner-centered experiences with which the participants identified (i.e., their personal context). Therefore, questions included frequent reference to the stimulus situation (Merton et al., 1990). For example, one participant in the group was asked about something she had said in a previous meeting: "You pointed out, P6, that your experience of doing Kernel, an English class, required extensive work…. And it helped with college as in, not specifically with English, but you said with the college overall. Can you tell me how it is or is not learner-centered?" Another focus group was asked, "P16, P17 had pointed out earlier, right at the beginning about assignments. If you remember, he had talked about assignments that are given to students that you know they should progress…. Is that learner-centered where assignments are assigned considering a

student's ability?" This kind of tracking back and forth was helpful in ensuring consistency in a participant's thought processes as well as in redirecting the discussion toward the material in which participants had already indicated their interest (Morgan, 1997). To encourage and maintain "retrospection" (Merton et al., 1990), field notes were made to make direct and indirect references to the original experience in as many questions as possible. One participant was asked, "You also pointed out that a certain kind of relationship between teacher and student is built. Tell me more about that relationship that you mentioned the last time." Another participant was asked, "How about English class?" That was followed by "Even in the group discussion, what was your experience?" Then, finally, "They were not 'super positive'?" Such questions were also aimed at member checking (Creswell, 2012; Shenton, 2004), done in real time while each focus group was being conducted (Vaughn et al., 1996).

Each focus group ended with addressing the group and asking for a final reflection and statement. Questions included "Do you all feel good about having said whatever you wanted to about this topic?" or "Is there anything related to learner-centered teaching methods which has not been discussed that you feel strongly about?" This kind of final statement may allow focus group participants to feel that they would not be interrupted or challenged and thus make a contribution (Morgan, 1997). Overall, the participants enthusiastically took part in the discussions that resulted in lively, interactive sessions. The fact that the participants already knew each other contributed to a friendly atmosphere. One of the interactive processes included spontaneous responses from the members of the group that eased their involvement and participation. After the

completion of the focus group interviews, the participants were each sent a $25 Amazon e-gift card, which they all accepted.

The focus group data from audio-video (from both the sources) were downloaded and stored in a secure computer. In the transcripts, names were replaced with code names. The consent forms were also stored in a secure folder and put in a locked file. The stream of data from focus groups included audio-video recordings, a methodological logbook for maintaining a record of changes made in the study design and participant record, descriptive field notes, a reflective journal, analytic memos (see Appendix Q for sample analytic memo), and a full transcription (see Appendix O for transcripts and Appendix N for underlying transcription rules). These served as the trail of evidence for verification of findings.

<div align="center">Data Analysis</div>

Quantitative Data Analysis

Independent and dependent variables. The study was designed to explore answers to two research questions. It also sought to collect data on multiple variables to ascertain relationships between variables. Independent variables in this study were the undergraduate ESL students' characteristics and LCT practices that they were exposed to in English classes. Two dependent variables included students' perceptions about teaching practices and their learner-centered learning experiences, measured quantitatively by the LCBSS (McCombs et al., 1997) as well as qualitatively through focus groups.

Screening the data. Raw data from the electronic survey were first downloaded to a personal computer. Data from pen-and-pencil surveys were added. Identifying information for each participant was deleted once the drawing for gift cards was over and the focus groups had been completed. A numeric code was assigned to each participant whose data was included in the study. Entire data was prepared before analyzing it. It was first visually inspected to identify data-entry errors and outliers. Exclusion criteria were as follows: (1) if a case indicated non-response to items 1-25 or (2) if a case showed 100% nonresponse. Because of different patterns of missing variables, the sample size varies from Scale 1 to Scale 2. Items 39, 53, 61, and 70 needed to be reverse coded before undertaking the reliability analyses (Field, 2009). Detection of outliers involved inspecting box plots and normal probability plots. Outliers were included in the analysis as it was believed that the result would not be seriously affected.

Descriptive statistics. Information from the demographic profile of the survey was used to present frequencies and percentages for age, sex, ethnicity, country of origin, and class status. This was done to describe participant characteristics and look at possible differences between groups (e.g., male vs. female; different ethnicities; younger vs. older age groups). The IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24 was used for the descriptive analysis.

Relevant to this study were 25 items in Scale 1 (student perceptions of teaching practices) that included four factors, PosRel, StuVoic, HOTS, and AIDD. The items were rated on a four-point Likert-type scale (1 = *Almost Never*, 2 = *Sometimes*, 3 = *Often*, 4 = *Almost Always*) that assessed the frequency at which they perceived their instructor to

be performing various practices, in other words to what extent they perceived teaching

practices to be LC.

Accordingly, the total score possible for Factor 1, PosRel (7 items), ranged from a

low of 7 (7 X 1) to a high of 28 (7 X 4). The total score possible for Factor 2, StuVoic (7

items), ranged from a low of 7 (7 X 1) to a high of 28 (7 X 4). The total score possible

for Factor 3, HOTS (6 items), ranged from a low of 6 (6 X 1) to a high of 24 (6 X 4).

The total score possible for Factor 4, AIDD (5 items), ranged from a low of 5 (5 X 1) to a

high of 20 (5 X 4). Calculations revealed to what extent students perceived teaching

practices to be learner-centered. LC scores had the following meanings: entirely teacher-

centered (1.00-1.49); low level of transitioning to LC (1.50-2.49); high level of

transitioning to LC (2.50-3.49); and entirely LC (3.50-4.00).

Scores were analyzed using the LCBSS means and standard deviations for the

total LCBSS. Perception total score (Scale 1), motivation score (Scale 2), and summaries

of the LCBSS total score are provided in Tables 11, 12, and 13 in chapter 5 (Data

Analysis and Results). Frequencies of the average LC scores were calculated (see Table

14, Chapter 5) to answer Research Question 1: What beliefs and experiences do college

ESL learners at a Midwestern university have about learner-centered teaching practices?

Additionally, to calculate the overall mean perception required averaging Likert scale

scores given by each survey participant for the four factors of teaching practices (PosRel,

StuVoic, HOTS, and AIDD) (see Table 15 for mean scores of students' perceptions of

teaching practices in four subscales in Chapter 5). The researcher used only this overall,

or average, LC score for each research participant.

Inferential statistics. Using the IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24, a software program that assists with converting raw data into useful information (Field, 2009), data from descriptive statistics were analyzed using independent measures *t*-Tests, and Analysis of Variance to answer Research Question 2: How do learner-centered learning experiences affect learners' beliefs about the quality of learner-centered teaching practices? To determine if differences existed between different age groups and between males and females, *t*-tests were run on the four factors in Scale 1 (student perceptions of teaching practices). A series of ANOVAs were conducted for the four subscales in Scale 1 to examine the relationship to college credits, and then the relationship to ethnicity. The results are presented in Chapter 5 (Data Analysis and Results).

Reliability and validity. Two statistical methods were employed with which validity and reliability of the LCBSS was estimated: Cronbach's alpha and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Reliability analyses were used to compute the internal consistency coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) of student perceptions (Scale 1) and student motivation (Scale 2) subscale scores in the LCBSS. The IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24 was used for this purpose.

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to examine relationships between the set of observed variables and the set of continuous latent variables. For running CFA, the model was fit using lavaan version 0.6 – 3. The estimation used was maximum likelihood. The variables were standardized to have a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Managing and sorting out interview data. Data from focus group interviews digitally collected via both a digital audio recording and digital video recording downloaded and stored in the researcher's personal computer were subject to transcription to make it accessible for analysis. Because the qualitative data was aimed to fulfill the two-fold purpose of the study–identifying undergraduate ESL students' perceptions and experiences of LCT practices and understanding how such experiences affect their perceptions about the quality of LCT practices, a simple transcript was adopted where transcription conventions prioritized content and focus on readability (Dresing, Pehl, & Schmieder, 2015). A set of underlying transcription rules were followed (see Appendix N). Complete transcription of each focus group interview is more rigorous and productive than abridged transcripts (Litosseliti, 2003). Because transcribing one's own interviews is a great source of generating insights and capturing what the data is indicating (Merriam, 2009), the researcher did full transcription (see Appendix O for the transcripts) of all six focus group interviews. Being the researcher, transcriber, moderator, and analyst of the focus groups, provided "the advantage of having more insight and in-context knowledge about the research overall, and so [being] able to establish a variety of important links between the research questions/aims and the data gathered" (Litosseliti, 2003, p. 85).

Analytic Framework Used and Interpretation. Being the moderator of the focus group, the researcher already had first-hand knowledge of the data. Besides, transcribing her own focus group interviews gave the researcher a general sense of the participant

responses and provided an initial sense of overall depth. The advantage of using the

audio-visual recording for transcribing was that physical gestures such as indicating

agreement or disagreement could be noted. Throughout the data collection stage, the

researcher used a reflective journal for constant analysis and note taking to capture the

emerging ideas.

The process of the data collection and analysis occurred simultaneously with the

focus group interviews (Kreuger & Casey, 2015; Merriam, 2009; Taylor & Bogdan,

1984). From Kreuger and Casey's (2015) description of analytic frameworks used in

focus group interviews, constant-comparative framework was chosen keeping in mind the

purpose of the study. Although the constant comparative method of analysis, first

proposed by Glaser and Strauss (1967), is a means for developing grounded theory, it is

inductive and comparative and has been extensively used in qualitative research without

building a grounded theory (Merriam, 2009). In fact, Onwuegbuzie et al. (2009)

described this design where a researcher has the scope of using the multiple groups to

assess if the themes that emerged from one group also emerged from other groups as the

"emergent-systematic focus group" in which "the term *emergent* refers to the focus

groups that are used for exploratory purposes and *systematic* refers to the focus groups

that are used for verification purposes" (p. 6, author's emphasis). In this study, this

exploratory, systematic use of multiple groups assisted the researcher to assess

"saturation" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) in general and across-group saturation in particular

(Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009). The complex process of data analysis involved "moving

back and forth between concrete bits of data and abstract concepts, between inductive and

deductive reasoning, between description and interpretation. These meanings or understandings or insights constitute the findings of [the] study" (Merriam, 2009, p. 176). Although data collection and analysis were continuous, it was not until the data could be seen in its entirety and all the evidences were collected toward the end of the research that the researcher concentrated most on the data analysis and interpretation.

A hard copy of a preliminary code list was developed a priori for coding the data. Creswell (2013) questioned the use of "prefigured" codes on the grounds that it limits the analysis to these particular codes. However, he recommended researchers to be open to emerging codes during the analysis if a "prefigured coding" scheme is used (p. 185). In this study, the code list included additional codes that emerged while gathering the data. The list was reviewed periodically so that while coding progressed its current contents and possible evolution could be determined. The code list was prepared because Saldaña (2009) stated that "[m]aintaining this list provides an analytic opportunity to organize and reorganize the codes into major categories and subcategories" (p. 21). This management strategy also served the purpose of a comparative list for the multiple focus groups (Saldaña, 2009).

Initially, the researcher engaged in thorough readings of the transcripts while making memos and jotting in the margins of printed copies tentative ideas for codes, topics, and noticeable patterns, an action that Saldaña (2009) said all methodologists recommend. The initial phase of the coding process began with open coding in which each transcript was reviewed line by line; this preliminary method of categorization led to identification of trends and patterns in the perceptions and views of the participants.

Through open coding, a variety of codes surfaced such as opportunities, help, activities,

challenge, interpersonal, interactions, learner-focused, perspective, student voice,

environment, needs, interests, and learning. As subsequent focus group interviews

indicated similar as well as new ideas, the researcher started making connections and

identifying differences among the open codes; color coding helped in keeping track of

commonalities and differences. Then lean coding, which is the process of looking for

relationships between categories with shorthand labels or codes (Creswell, 2013), was

started to determine where and how categories could be combined into themes. The

process involved review and re-review of the data. Finally, these were reduced and

combined into themes. The researcher used a spreadsheet to organize the open codes into

categories and themes. See Appendix P for a sample table displaying the emergence of

themes for Research Question 1.

<div align="center">Summary</div>

In Chapter 5, data collected from the survey and the focus group interviews is

This chapter presented the research questions and described the rationale for the

study design. The description also included the context and participants, the

instrumentation including measures taken for addressing reliability and validity issues,

the data collection procedures and data analysis processes for this mixed-methods study.

In Chapter 5, data collected from the survey and the focus group interviews is

presented and examined. The bulk of the chapter is dedicated to presenting results from

quantitative and qualitative data analysis, as appropriate, in view of each of the research

questions of the study.

CHAPTER 5

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

In this chapter, the findings of this study are presented in two sections: the quantitative and the qualitative. In the first section, a brief summary of instrumentation and data collection is provided. Then, a detailed description of the demographics of survey participants and descriptive statistics of the instrument, Learner-centered Battery Student Survey (LCBSS), is given. Next, answers to Research Question 1 are provided. Finally, hypotheses and data analysis methodologies used for the purpose of finding answers to Research Question 2 are presented followed by a detailed explanation of the findings. The second section begins with an explanation of how the quantitative and the qualitative are interlinked. A brief review of focus group interview and data collection is presented. Next, a short explanation of data management and the analytic framework is provided. Finally, findings from research questions 1 and 2 are presented with description and analysis supported by interview extracts and followed by interpretation.

There were two main goals for the study. The first goal was to understand what perceptions and experiences college ESL students have about learner-centered teaching (LCT) practices in English classes. Sources of data included distribution of the LCBSS (McCombs et al., 1997) and focus group discussions (Krueger & Casey, 2015) and provided "complementary strength" (Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006) to make this characterization. The second goal was to understand to what extent learner-centered learning experiences influenced students' beliefs about the quality of LCT practices. Focus groups within the framework of phenomenology that includes not only people's

experiences, meanings and understandings, but attitudes, opinions, knowledge and beliefs as subsets (Wilkinson, 1998) provided the data for both goals of the study.

<div align="center">Quantitative Data Analysis and Results</div>

Summary of Instrumentation and Data Collection

Data were collected using the Learner-centered Battery Student Survey (McCombs et al., 1997) that had 72 Likert-type statements divided into two scales. For the purpose of this study data from scale 1 (items 1 – 25), measuring student perceptions of instructor's teaching practices, was used. The Likert-type scale assessed the frequency of performing various practices (1 = *Almost Never*; 2 = *Sometimes*; 3 = *Often*; and 4 = *Almost Always*). A score of 4 indicated that the participant believed a particular aspect of teaching being described in that question to be learner-centered as opposed to a score of 1 that meant it was more teacher-centered (TC). Scores 2 and 3 suggested that the participant believed the teaching practices were transitioning toward learner-centered approaches.

See Chapter 4, Methodology, for a detailed description of instrumentation, data collection procedures, and assessment of instrument quality.

Demographic Information

The target population was a purposive sample created to ensure selection of participants (Vaughn et al., 1996). For the purpose of the study, participant recruitment was limited to ESL undergraduate students who were enrolled in or had completed LAC core courses in English skills at UNI, a Midwestern university, irrespective of college status. Targeted courses were two English courses focusing on English Language Skills:

College Writing and Research, and *First-Year Cornerstone: Integrated Communication I and II*. These are required courses for all undergraduate students, including international students, but enrollment depended on their English Proficiency test scores on admission or transferable credits. The population of ESL undergraduate students chosen was deemed appropriate because the university included claims to be learner-centered in its mission statement. An a priori power analysis (Huck, 2008) with a margin of error of 5% and confidence level of 95% showed that a sample of 83 was needed.

A total of 112 ($N = 112$) undergraduate ESL students at UNI completed scale 1 (student perceptions of teaching practices) of the survey LCBSS that was relevant to the study. Demographic data included gender, age, ethnicity, country of origin, and college credits earned. Not all the 112 participants provided complete demographic information. Of the total valid participants ($N = 112$), 37.5% were female ($n = 42$) and 54.5% were males ($n = 61$). The majority of the participants ($n = 74$; 66.1%) were within the 18-22 age group with fewer in the 23-26 ($n = 18$; 16.1%) and 27-30 ($n = 12$; 10.7%) age groups. Categories of student ethnicities were: Asian ($n = 63$; 56.3%), Middle Eastern ($n = 33$; 29.5%), African ($n = 1$; 0.9%), two or more races (term used in the survey) ($n = 2$; 1.8%), and Other ($n = 5$; 4.5%). Participants were also requested to report the number of college credits they had earned. Valid participants ($N = 112$) were represented by a variety of academic levels that included freshman ($n = 15$; 13.4%), sophomore ($n = 14$; 12.5 %), and equal number of junior and senior ($n = 37$; 33%). Table 10 presents a summary of the participant demographics.

Table 10. Descriptive Statistics for Sample Population

Variable label	n (%)
Gender:	
Male	61(54.5%)
Female	42(37.5%)
Missing	9(8%)
Age:	
18 – 22	74(66.1%)
23 – 26	18(16.1%)
27 – 30	12(10.7%)
Missing	8(7.1%)
Student Classification:	
Freshmen	15(13.4%)
Sophomore	14(12.5%)
Junior	37(33%)
Senior	37(33%)
Missing	9(8%)
Country of Origin	
Chile	1(0.9%)
China	21(18.8%)
India	3(3.6%)
Italy	1(0.9%)
Japan	2(1.8%)
Malaysia	4(3.6%)
Myanmar	1(0.9%)
Nepal	2(1.8%)
Nigeria	1(0.9%)
Oman	7(6.3%)
Pakistan	14(12.5%)
Peru	1(0.9%)
Saudi Arabia	22(19.6%)
South Korea	4(3.6%)
Thailand	1(0.9%)
Turkey	1(0.9%)
Ukraine	1(0.9%)
United Arab Emirates	1(0.9%)
Vietnam	1(0.9%)
Ethnicity:	
Asian	63(56.3%)
Middle Eastern	33(29.5%)
Other	8(7.2%)
Missing	8(7.1%)
Total (N)	112 (100%)

N = number of cases

Descriptive Statistics for the LCBSS

Survey results are categorized based on the total score for each of the two scales, student perception of teaching practices (items 1-25) and motivation and achievement scale (items 26-72), in the LCBSS. In the computation of the total scores utilizing SPSS version 24, data from every case in the data set was included, irrespective of a partial nonresponse. Tables 11, 12, and 13 provide summaries of perception total score of scale 1, motivation total score of scale 2, and total score of the LCBSS respectively.

Table 11. Descriptive Statistics: Perception Total Score

	N	Minimum	Maximum	M	SD
Scale 1: Perception total score	112	35	100	74.06	14.73
Valid N (list wise)	112				

Note. Possible range for perception: 25-100

Table 12. Descriptive Statistics: Motivation Total Score

	N	Minimum	Maximum	M	SD
Scale 2: Motivation total score	107	0*	176	127.10	19.12
Valid N (list wise)	107				

Note. Possible range for motivation: 47-188; *Items in scale 2 were not forced response (online version); a few participants did not complete the items in this scale.

Table 13. Descriptive statistics: LCBSS total score

	N	Minimum	Maximum	M	SD
LCBSS total score	112	76	276	195.49	37.51
Valid N (list wise)	112				

Note. Possible range for the survey, LCBSS: 72-288

Findings from Research Question 1. What beliefs and experiences do college

ESL learners at a Midwestern university have about learner-centered teaching practices?

To answer this research question, frequency of the average LC scores was calculated first

(see Table 14). The majority of the responses fell in the high level of transitioning to

learner-centered category as shown in Tables 14 and 15.

Table 14. Frequency of Average LC Scores of Four Subscales

LC Score (four subscales)	Meaning of LC score			
	Entirely TC (1 = *Almost Never*)	Low level of transitioning to LC (2 = *Sometimes*)	High level of transitioning to LC (3 = *Often*)	Entirely LC (4 = *Almost Always*)
	1.00-1.49	1.50-2.49	2.50-3.49	3.50-4.00
PosRel				
f	1	22	56	33
%	0.9	19.6	50	29.5
StuVoic				
f	0	25	57	30
%	0	22.3	50.9	26.8
HOTS				
f	2	21	59	30
%	1.8	18.8	52.6	26.8
AIDD				
f	9	38	50	15
%	8.1	33.9	44.6	13.4

Note. TC = Teacher-centered, LC = Learner-centered, *f* = frequency, % = percentage; Creates positive interpersonal relationships/climate (PosRel); Honors student voice, provides challenge, & encourages perspective taking (StuVoic); Encourages higher-order thinking & self-regulation (HOTS); Adapts to individual developmental differences (AIDD).

Although only 13.4% rated teaching practices that Adapt to Individual

Developmental Differences (AIDD) as being entirely learner-centered, a combined total

of 78.7% (low level of transitioning to LC + high level of transitioning to LC) rated such

practices as transitioning towards learner-centeredness, followed by 73.5% rating

practices that Honor Student Voice (StuVoic), 71.4% rating practices that Encourage

Higher-order Thinking (HOTS), and 69.6% rating practices that Create Positive

Interpersonal Relationships (PosRel) (see Table 14). No participants reported practices

being entirely teacher-centered for StuVoic-related practices; one participant reported in

the case of PosRel, two in the case of HOTS, and nine in the case of AIDD. Measures of

central tendency for the average learner-centered score data was calculated. The mean

score was calculated by averaging the Likert-type scale scores given by each of the 112

participants ($N = 112$) for the four different aspects of teaching practices (PosRel,

StuVoic, HOTS, and AIDD) (see Table 15).

Table 15. Results of Subscales on Student Perceptions of Teaching Practices

Subscale	*M*	*SD*	*R*	Most preferred score (MPS)
Creates positive interpersonal relationships/climate (PosRel)	3.07	0.62	1.43-4.00	High ≥ 3.3
Honors student voice, provides challenge (StuVoic)	3.07	0.60	1.71-4.00	High ≥ 3.2
Encourages higher order thinking & self-regulation (HOTS)	2.98	0.65	1.17-4.00	High ≥ 3.1
Adapts to individual developmental differences (AIDD)	2.63	0.73	1.20-4.00	High ≥ 2.6

Note. M = mean; *SD* = standard deviation; *R* = range; 4-point Likert-type scale in the LCBSS assessed frequency of performing various practices: 1 = *Almost Never*; 2 = *Sometimes*; 3 = *Often*; and 4 = *Almost Always*.

As both Tables 14 and 15 indicate, participants on average rated teaching

practices in English classes at UNI as being at a high level of transitioning to learner-

centered approaches. McCombs et al. (1997) identified statistical measures of learner-

centeredness in teaching practices known as the most preferred score (MPS) for each subscale. Based on the validation samples, the metric creates a boundary above which a classroom may be described as learner-centered. Although the majority of the students did not perceive English classes to be entirely learner-centered (average scores range from 2.63 to 3.07) as subscale scores show, the MPS suggest that the classes likely contained elements of learner-centered principles from which the students probably developed their perceptions. The AIDD score falls within the MPS for the subscales while PosRel, StuVoic, and HOTS are near the MPS range (see Table 15). Possible explanations of this aspect of the study results are provided in Chapter 6 (Discussion).

   Findings from Research Question 2. How do learner-centered learning experiences affect learners' beliefs about the quality of learner-centered teaching practices? To answer this question descriptive statistics of the participants' demographic information including gender, age, ethnicity, and college status were analyzed and used along with the average Likert-type scale score. For this research question, hypotheses and data analysis methodologies were determined based on literature on the theoretical base for LCT, the LCPs (APA, 1997), and studies and programs inspired by LCT practices and LCPs. They are presented in Table 16.

Table 16. Hypotheses and Data Analysis Methodologies

Type of test	H_o	H_a
f, M, *t*-Test	(1) Student perceptions of LCT practices (as defined by the four factors in scale 1 of the LCBSS) will not be significantly different between male and female.	(1) Student perceptions of LCT practices (as defined by the four factors in scale 1 of the LCBSS) will be significantly different between male and female.
f, M, *t*-Test	(2) Student perceptions of LCT practices (as defined by the four factors in scale 1 of the LCBSS) will not be significantly different between younger and older age groups.	(2) Student perceptions of LCT practices (as defined by the four factors in scale 1 of the LCBSS) will be significantly different between younger and older age groups.
f, M One-way ANOVA	(3) There will not be significant differences based on college credits in ESL student perceptions of LCT practices (as defined by the four factors in scale 1 of the LCBSS).	(3) There will be significant differences based on college credits in ESL student perceptions of LCT practices (as defined by the four factors in scale 1 of the LCBSS).
f, M One-way ANOVA	(4) There will not be significant differences based on ethnicity in ESL student perceptions of LCT practices (as defined by the four factors in scale 1 of the LCBSS).	(4) There will be significant differences based on ethnicity in ESL student perceptions of LCT practices (as defined by the four factors in scale 1 of the LCBSS).

Note. f = frequency, *M* = mean, *H$_o$* = Null Hypothesis, *H$_a$* = Alternative Hypothesis

Using the procedures described in Field (2009), calculated *t*-test values were used to evaluate null hypotheses and alternative hypotheses (see Table 16). *T*-test is a "versatile statistic" that can be used to test whether two group means are different (Field, 2009, p. 324). For each *t*-test, the *H$_o$* was that no significant difference existed between the groups, and the *H$_a$* was that a significant difference did exist between the groups. Using the procedures described in Field (2009), calculated ANOVA test values were used to evaluate the null hypothesis and alternative hypothesis (see Table 16). Using a one-

way ANOVA was appropriate since it "examines equality of population means for a quantitative outcome and a single categorical variable with any number of levels" (Seltman, 2015, p. 171). For each of the one-way ANOVAs, the H_o was that no significant difference existed between the groups, and the H_a was that a significant difference did exist between the groups.

To make an informed decision, it was necessary to perform some assumption checking before considering conclusions of any analysis (Field, 2009; Seltman, 2015). Therefore, preliminary analyses included checking data for outliers, normality, and homogeneity for each of the *t*-tests and One-way ANOVAs that were run. The importance of reporting these have been emphasized in literature (Huck, 2008; Seltman, 2015; Urdan, 2010). Vacha-Haase and Thompson (2004) emphasized that since one-size-fits-all rules of thumb are not always very helpful in interpreting effect sizes, direct comparisons of effects across studies are critical. They recommended reporting both significant and nonsignificant effect sizes so that through such comparisons, and not through statistical testing, the replicability of results can be evaluated in the context of the study. Computations were done using SPSS version 24 unless otherwise stated. The results of the *t*-tests are reported in the next section followed by ANOVA results.

Gender. Independent samples *t*-tests were run comparing males and females on the four factors in scale 1 (student perceptions of teaching practices) to determine whether significant differences ($\alpha < .05$) existed between the two groups. The independent variable was gender, which had two groups – male vs. female, and the dependent variables were perceptions of teaching practices (PosRel, StuVoic, HOTS, and

AIDD). Participants were classified into two groups: Male (61) and female (42). As assessed by inspection of a boxplot, there were no outliers in the data except for one in the case of HOTS (case 77). The outlier was not removed in the analysis as it was believed the result would not be grievously affected. PosRel, StuVoic, and AIDD scores for each level of gender were normally distributed, as assessed by Shapiro-Wilk's test ($p > .05$). For male participants, HOTS scores were normally distributed but not for female participants ($p = .03$). Homogeneity of variance was met for PosRel, StuVoic, HOTS, and AIDD, assessed by Levene's test for equality of variances, with p values ranging from .467 to .938. A summary of the analyses is provided in Table 17.

Table 17. Perception Score as Measured by Composite Factor Scores and Relationship to Gender

	Male ($n = 61$)		Female ($n = 42$)					
	M	SD	M	SD	t(101)	F	Cohen's d	p
PosRel	3.02	.58	3.09	.65	-.549	.533	.11	.584
StuVoic	2.98	.61	3.17	.61	-1.534	.006	.31	.128
HOTS	2.87	.63	3.1	.67	-1.729	.011	.33	.087
AIDD	2.63	.72	2.62	.79	.048	.358	.01	.962

*$p < 0.05$

Independent sample t-tests revealed no significant differences between male and female participants for PosRel $t(101) = -.549$, $p = .584$), StuVoic $t(101) = -1.534$, $p = .128$), HOTS $t(101) = -1.729$, $p = .087$), and AIDD $t(101) = .048$, $p = .962$). However, there were small effect sizes (with 95% CI): StuVoic ($d = .31$; Cohen, 1988) and HOTS ($d = .33$; Cohen, 1988). Although the AIDD mean scores for both the males and females

are slightly lower ($M = 2.6$) than the other mean scores, they are within the identified statistical measures of learner-centeredness, MPS, for this particular factor (McCombs et al., 1997). Possible explanations of the results of this aspect of the study are provided in Chapter 6 (Discussion).

With regard to overall student perceptions of teaching practices represented by scale 1, mean scores of males ($M = 2.90$, $SD = .56$) and females ($M = 3.02$, $SD = .63$) did not differ, i.e., both the males and females reported teaching practices in English classes that were highly transitioning towards learner-centeredness as opposed to entirely teacher-centeredness. The overall perception mean scores of the male and female participants are displayed in Figure. 3. Therefore, based on the calculated t-test values used to evaluate H_o and H_a, the H_o was not rejected. Hence, the data supported the H_o that student perceptions of LCT practices (as defined by the four factors in scale 1 of the LCBSS) did not significantly differ between the male and female participants.
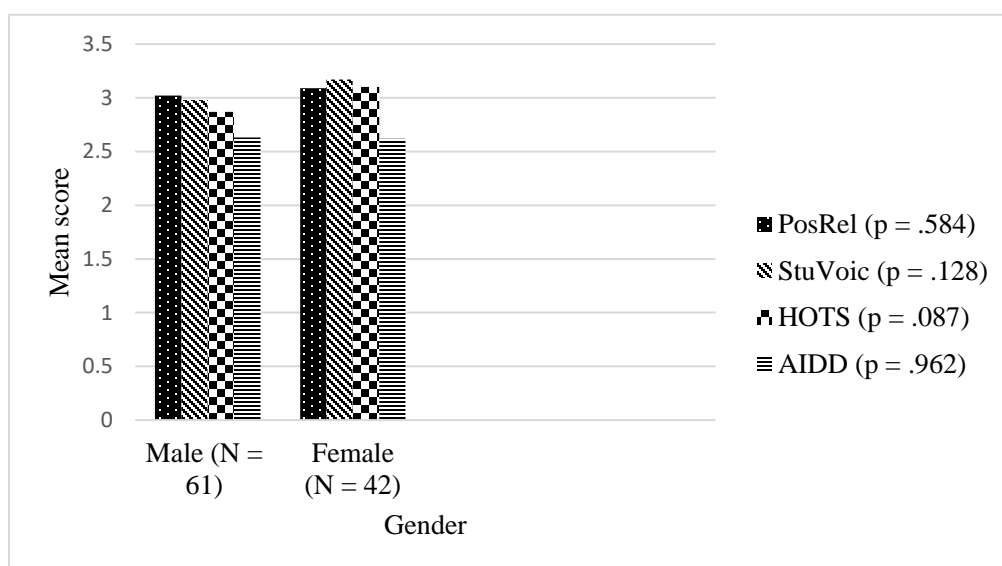

Figure 3. Overall Perception Mean Score of Male and Female Participants

Age. Independent samples *t*-tests were run comparing younger (18-22) and older (23-30) age groups on scores of all the four subscales in scale 1 (student perceptions of teaching practices) to determine whether significant differences ($\alpha < .05$) existed between the two groups. The independent variable was age, split into two groups 18- to 21-year olds and 22- to 30-year olds. The size of the three different age groups differed: 18-22 (*n* = 74), 23-26 (*n* = 18), and 27-30 (*n* =12). Therefore, based on the closeness of the age range, the 23-26 and 27-30 age groups were collapsed into one category "23-30" while the other group 18-23 remained intact. The dependent variables were perceptions of teaching practices (PosRel, StuVoic, HOTS, and AIDD).

Participants were classified into two groups: 18-22 (*n* = 74) and 23-30 (*n* = 30). As assessed by inspection of a boxplot, there were few outliers in the data for HOTS (case 77) and AIDD (case 23). The outliers were not removed in the analysis as it was believed the result would not be grievously affected. For the younger age group (18-22), assumption of normality was violated for each of the four scores – PosRel, StuVoic, HOTS, and AIDD – as assessed by Shapiro-Wilk's test (*p* < .05), with *p* values ranging from .003 to .043. Homogeneity of variance was met for PosRel, StuVoic, HOTS, and AIDD, assessed by Levene's test for equality of variances, with *p* values ranging from .713 to .935. See Table 18 for a summary of the analysis.

Table 18. Perception Score as Measured by Composite Factor Scores and
Relationship to Age

	18-22 (n = 72)		23-30 (n = 30)					
	M	SD	M	SD	t(102)	F	Cohen's d	P
PosRel	3.11	.60	2.9	.64	1.814	.136	.34	.073
StuVoic	3.14	.61	2.84	.59	2.250	.013	.50	.027*
HOTS	3.01	.65	2.83	.64	1.335	.007	.28	.185
AIDD	2.70	.72	2.41	.77	1.828	.099	.39	.071

*$p < 0.05$

Independent sample t-tests revealed no significant differences between older and younger participants for PosRel $t(102) = 1.814$, $p = .073$), HOTS $t(102) = 1.335$, $p = .185$, and AIDD $t(102) = 1.828$, $p = .071$ but for StuVoic for the younger group ($M = 3.14$, $SD = .60$) and the older group ($M = 2.85$, $SD = .59$) it differed significantly: $t(102) = 2.250$, $p = .027$). Small effect size (with 95% CI) was detected for all four scores (ranging from $d = .28$ to $d = .50$; Cohen, 1988).

With regard to overall student perceptions of teaching practices represented by scale 1, mean scores for the younger (18-22) group ($M = 3.01$, $SD = .59$) and older (23-30) group ($M = 2.76$, $SD = .57$) did not differ, i.e., both the younger and older groups reported teaching practices in English classes to be highly transitioning towards learner-centeredness. The means of the younger and older groups are displayed in fig. 4. Therefore, the H_o was not rejected. Hence, the data supported the H_o that student perceptions of LCT practices (as defined by the four factors in scale 1 of the LCBSS) did not significantly differ between the younger and older participants.
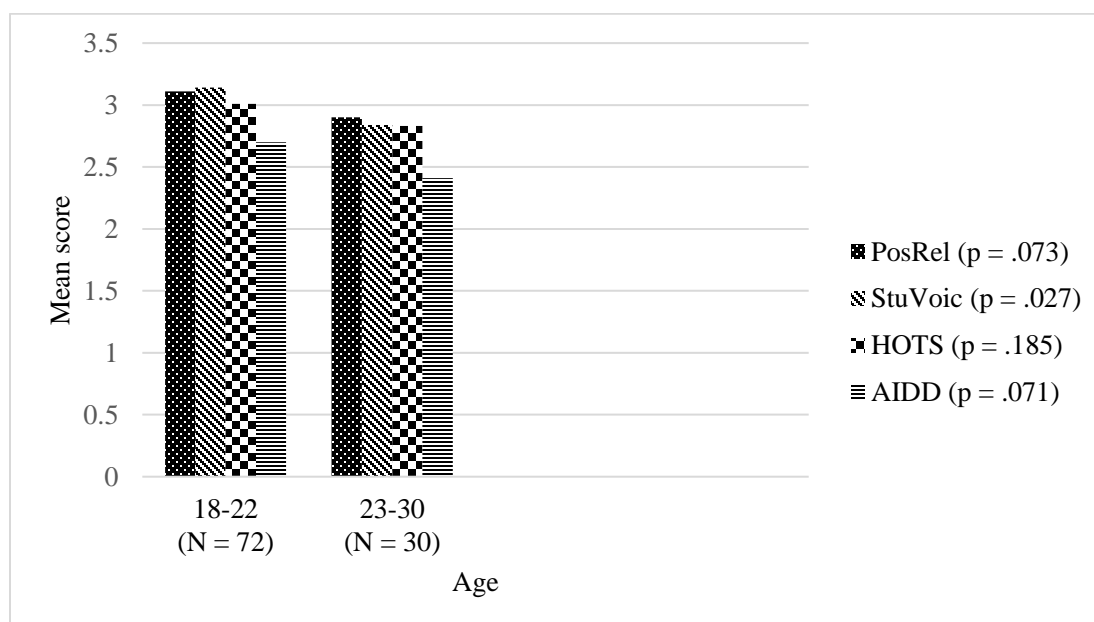
Figure 4. Overall Mean Perception Scores of Younger and Older Age Groups

College credits. Series of one-way ANOVAs were conducted for the composite

scores in scale 1 to examine the relationship to college credits with perceptions of

teaching practices (i.e., composite scores that included PosRel, StuVoic, HOTS, and

AIDD) as the dependent variable and college credit group (i.e., freshman, sophomore,

junior, and senior) as the between-subjects or independent variable.

A one-way ANOVA was computed to determine if the PosRel, StuVoic, HOTS,

and AIDD scores differed based on college credits. Participants were classified into four

groups: freshman ($n = 15$), sophomore ($n = 14$), junior ($n = 37$), and senior ($n = 37$).

The assumption of normality for PosRel, StuVoic, HOTS, and AIDD scores was satisfied

by the two groups, freshman and senior, as assessed by Shapiro-Wilks test ($p > .05$).

However, for sophomore, normality was violated for PosRel and AIDD scores and for

juniors, normality was violated for StuVoic and HOTS (p values ranged from .009 to

.036). There was homogeneity of variances as assessed by Levene's test for equality of

variances for all four subscale scores with *p* values ranging from .261 to .916. Data is

presented as mean ± standard deviation. One-way ANOVAs for college credits is

presented in Table 19. Differences in subscale means according to college credit is

presented in Table 20.

Table 19. One-way ANOVAs for College Credits (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior)

	Df	*SS*	*MS*
POSREL			
Between groups	3	1.22	.40
Within groups	99	37.35	.37
Total	102	38.58	
STUVOIC			
Between groups	3	1.63	.54
Within groups	99	36.30	.36
Total	102	37.93	
HOTS			
Between groups	3	1.68	.56
Within groups	99	41.18	.41
Total	102	42.86	
AIDD			
Between groups	3	3.51	1.17
Within groups	99	51.44	.52
Total	102	54.95	

Table 20. Differences in Subscale Means According to College Credit Patterns of ESL Undergraduate Students

	0-30 credits (Freshman) (*n* = 15)	31-60 credits (Sophomore) (*n* = 14)	61-90 credits (Junior) (*n* = 37)	91-124 credits (Senior) (*n* = 37)			
	M (SD)	*M (SD)*	*M (SD)*	*M (SD)*	*p* (Between groups)	*F*	ω^2
PosRel	3.06(.62)	3.06(.68)	3.15(.59)	2.90(.61)	.359	1.085	.00
StuVoic	3.21(.62)	3.03(.43)	3.14(.65)	2.89(.61)	.224	1.482	.01
HOTS	2.98(.58)	2.86(.60)	3.11(.68)	2.82(.65)	.263	1.349	.01
AIDD	2.71(.71)	2.50(.67)	2.82(.70)	2.40(.76)	.087	2.254	.03

*p < 0.05

One-way ANOVAs revealed no significant difference between groups holding various college status (i.e., freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior) for PosRel F (3, 99) = 1.085, p = .359; StuVoic F (3, 99) = 1.482, p = .224; and HOTS F (3, 99) = 1.349, p =

.263. Although the mean score for AIDD (2.40 ± .76) was lower for the senior as

opposed to the freshman (2.71 ± .71), sophomore (2.50 ± .67), and junior (2.82 ± .70)

college credit groups, the differences between these groups was not statistically

significant F (3, 99) = 2.254, p = .087. However, effect size, Omega Squared (ω^2), was

calculated by hand and results indicated small effect size for StuVoic (ω^2 = .01), HOTS

(ω^2 = .01), and AIDD (ω^2 = .03). Therefore, based on the calculated test values used to

evaluate the H_o and the H_a, the H_o was not rejected. Hence, the data supported the H_o that

student perceptions of LCT practices (as defined by the four factors in scale 1 of the

LCBSS) did not significantly differ among the participants based on college credits.

　　　Ethnicity. One-way ANOVAs were performed for the composite score in scale 1

to examine the relationship to ethnicity with perceptions of teaching practices (i.e.,

composite scores that included PosRel, StuVoic, HOTS, and AIDD) as the dependent

variable and ethnic group (i.e., Asian, Middle Eastern, and Other) as the between-subjects

or independent variable. For all analyses, ethnicity was collapsed into "Asian," "Middle

Eastern," and "Other." Due to the fact that there was only one in the "African," two in

the "Two or more races," (term used in the survey) and five in the "Other" categories, all

these were collapsed into the "Other" category (Babbie, 2010). Participants were

classified into three groups: Asian (n = 63), Middle Eastern (n = 33), and Other (n = 8).

For the Middle Eastern and Other groups, assumption of normality was satisfied for the

PosRel, StuVoic, and HOTS score, as assessed by Sapiro-Wilk's test with p values

ranging from .144 to .622. For all three groups, assumption of normality was violated for

the AIDD score (p < .05). For the Asians, assumption of normality was violated for all

four subscale scores with p values ranging from .013 to .044. There was homogeneity of

variances as assessed by Levene's test for equality of variances for all four subscale

scores with p values ranging from .335 to .945. One-way ANOVAs for ethnicity are

presented in Table 21 and differences in subscale means according to ethnicity are

presented in Table 22.

Table 21. One-way ANOVA for Ethnicity (Asian, $n = 63$; Middle Eastern, $n = 33$; Other, $n = 8$)

	Df	SS	MS
POSREL			
Between groups	2	3.28	1.64
Within groups	101	36.22	.35
Total	103	39.50	
STUVOIC			
Between groups	2	5.22	2.61
Within groups	101	33.61	.33
Total	103	38.83	
HOTS			
Between groups	2	2.38	1.19
Within groups	101	41.57	.41
Total	103	43.95	
AIDD			
Between groups	2	4.29	2.14
Within groups	101	52.06	.51
Total	103	56.36	

$*p < 0.05$

Table 22. Differences in Subscale Means According to Ethnicity

Subscales	Asian (*n* = 63)	Middle Eastern (*n* = 33)	Others (*n* = 8)	*p* (Between groups)	*F*	ω^2
	M(SD)	*M(SD)*	*M(SD)*			
PosRel	3.13(.61)	2.80 (.58)	3.36(.57)	.012*	4.584	.06
StuVoic	3.18(.57)	2.74(.59)	3.38(.56)	.001*	7.845	.11
HOTS	3.05(.63)	2.74(.61)	3.15(.86)	.060	2.893	.03
AIDD	2.76(.68)	2.32(.79)	2.78(.72)	.018*	4.167	.05

*p < 0.05

One-way ANOVAs revealed statistically significant differences between ethnic groups for PosRel F (2, 101) = 4.584, p = .012; StuVoic F (2, 101) = 7.845, p = .001; and AIDD F (2, 101) = 4.167, p = .018. Effect size, Omega Squared (ω^2), was calculated by hand and results indicated small to large effect sizes (PosRel, ω^2 = .06; StuVoic, ω^2 = .11; HOTS, ω^2 = .03; and AIDD, ω^2 = .05).

However, as the frequencies in the Middle Eastern (*n* = 33) and the Other (*n* = 8), were particularly low, the researcher was concerned about the possibility of a type I error having occurred, i.e., believing that there is a genuine effect in the population, when there isn't. The inclusion of these undersized samples in the ANOVA may have led to an inaccurate representation of these data. To address these issues, pairwise differences among the means for the PosRel, StuVoic, and AIDD scores needed to be evaluated. Tukey procedure, more powerful (less conservative) than the corresponding Bonferroni procedure, is valid specifically for comparing any and all pairs of group population means (Seltman, 2015). In order to maintain a low likelihood of type I error in any post

hoc data analysis, applying a penalty is necessary and this penalty was assessed by applying Tukey HSD, the most useful post-hoc procedure (Seltman, 2015).

Since significant pairwise differences were found using Tukey HSD, effect size, Omega Squared (ω^2), was calculated by hand for each of these significant pairs. According to the Post-hoc Tukey HSD tests, the mean differences in PosRel scores between the Asian (3.13 ± 0.61) and Middle Eastern ($2.80 \pm .58$) groups ($p = .028$; $\omega^2 = .56$) and between the Other ($3.36 \pm .57$) and Middle Eastern ($2.80 \pm .58$) groups ($p = .05$; $\omega^2 = .94$) were found to be statistically significant; mean differences in StuVoic scores between the Asian ($3.18 \pm .57$) and Middle Eastern ($2.74 \pm .59$) groups ($p = .001$; $\omega^2 = .78$) and between the Other ($3.38 \pm .56$) and Middle Eastern ($2.74 \pm .59$) groups ($p = .016$; $\omega^2 = 1.11$) were found to be statistically significant; mean differences in AIDD scores between the Asian ($2.76 \pm .68$) and Middle Eastern ($2.32 \pm .79$) groups ($p = .016$; $\omega^2 = .60$) were found to be statistically significant. However, HOTS score means between the different ethnic groups did not differ significantly $F(2, 101) = 2.893$, $p = .060$.

Based on the calculated Tukey HSD test values, the H_o (that student perceptions of LCT practices as defined by the four factors in scale 1 of the LCBSS will not significantly differ based on ethnicity) was rejected. Hence, the data supported the H_a that student perceptions of LCT practices (as defined by the four factors in scale 1 of the LCBSS) did significantly differ based on ethnicity.

<u>Qualitative Data Analysis and Results</u>

The collection of quantitative data in tandem with qualitative research raises the question to what extent the two types of research can be combined and to what extent one analysis can influence the other (Bryman & Burgess, 1994). In this study, the purpose was not to check findings against each other or triangulate the two sets of data but to allow the quantitative data to map out general trends and the qualitative phase to reveal through the perspectives of selected survey participants the quality of learner-centered teaching (LCT) practices in English classes. Simply put, each method analyzes the phenomenon under study in a specific manner. Qualitative data are characteristically generated through a purposeful use of interaction or group dynamics (Morgan, 1997) and are very different in nature from those obtained via surveys. In the context of the study, the following is relevant:

> It is important to keep in mind that the intent of focus groups is not to infer but to understand, not to generalize but to determine the range, not to make statements about the population but to provide insights about how people perceive a situation. (Krueger, 1994, p. 87)

Therefore, as Krueger pointed out, ESL focus groups in this study primarily generated qualitative data via the narratives of the ESL focus group participants so that the researcher could gain a deep understanding of the group members' perceptions of LCT practices experienced in English classes. The next section presents the qualitative examination of students' understandings of learner-centeredness explored through focus group interviews to answer the two following research questions:

RQ1: What beliefs and experiences do undergraduate ESL learners in a Midwestern university have about learner-centered teaching practices in English classes?

RQ2: How do learner-centered learning experiences affect learners' beliefs about the quality of learner-centered teaching practices?

First, a brief review of focus group interview and data collection is presented. Next, a short explanation of data management and preparation for analysis as well as the analytic framework used is mentioned. Finally, findings from research question 1 and 2 are presented with description and analysis supported by interview extracts followed by interpretation.

<u>Summary of Focus Group Interview and Data Collection</u>

Four "mini-focus groups" (Krueger, 1994, p. 17) were formed, recruited from interested survey participants and through snowball sampling. All ESL focus group participants were Asian. Multiple focus groups facilitated by the researcher-moderator aimed at satisfying Merton et al.'s (1990) four criteria of range, specificity, depth, and personal context for an effective focus group interview. The researcher-moderator, and not the interview guide, was the "research tool" (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984, p. 77). Flexibility was allowed for additional questions based on the information provided by the participants in the focus groups as well as the trend identified in the responses to the items in the Learner-centered Battery Student Survey (LCBSS) (McCombs et al., 1997). A detailed description of the participant recruitment, data collection, nature of the focus

groups, and conducting the focus group interviews is presented in Chapter 4

(Methodology).

Data Management, Analytic Framework, and Interpretation

Digital video recording of the focus group interviews was transcribed to make it

accessible for analysis. A simple transcript was adopted where transcription conventions

prioritized content and focus on readability (Dresing et al., 2015). The researcher did full

transcription (see Appendix O for transcripts) of all six focus group interviews. Being

the researcher, transcriber, moderator, and analyst of the focus groups provided "the

advantage of having more insight and in-context knowledge about the research overall,

and so [being] able to establish a variety of important links between the research

questions/aims and the data gathered" (Litosseliti, 2003, p. 85). A constant-comparative

framework, an analytic framework used in focus group interviews (Krueger & Casey,

2015), was chosen keeping in mind the purpose of the study. Additionally, the seven

established criteria suggested by Krueger and Casey (2015) were used as a framework for

interpreting the coded data: words and the context; frequency; extensiveness; intensity;

specificity; internal consistency; and participant perception of importance. A thorough

description of data management, analytic framework, coding processes, and interpretation

is provided in Chapter 4. Above all, rigor was operationalized using the criteria of

credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability proposed first by Lincoln

and Guba (1985) (see Chapter 4 for a detailed explanation of the strategies).

The identification of the themes led to organizing the presentation of the themes.

See Appendix P for a sample table displaying the emergence of themes for Research

Question 1. Priority was given to the most powerful idea that was highlighted. In the major categories (or sub-headings) under each theme, those ideas for which ESL focus group participants went into deeper explanations, emphasized, and agreed with each other were considered. Their use of gesticulations was noted too. In selecting illustrative examples of data under different sub-headings for the themes that emerged, the aim was to draw attention to common responses that align with the purpose of the study. Also, those experiences were cited that were relevant to English courses ESL focus group participants had taken. Krueger and Casey's (2015) framework for interpreting the coded data was applied in selecting both quotations and extracts from the focus group interview. Effort was made as far as possible to maintain a balanced representation, not one that confirms the researcher's expectations and ideological presuppositions. Because pre-existing focus groups were considered for qualitative data, the focus group environment was comfortable and flexible; participants knew each other as undergraduate students at UNI. The researcher-moderator also tried to maintain friendly, yet vibrant discussions.

In the following sections, findings from Research Question 1 are presented. Description and analysis of findings from each research question are followed by interpretation.

<p align="center">Findings from Research Question 1</p>

Understandings of the ESL focus group participants' perceptions of LCT practices are presented and supported by extracts from group discussions. Three prominent themes emerged which reflect their beliefs and experiences: (1) LCT practices are characteristically learner-focused and learning-focused; (2) LCT practices lead to

academic and non-academic outcomes; and (3) LCT practices set challenges in learning environments. Major categories have been added under each theme where it was necessary.

LCT Practices are Characteristically Learner-focused and Learning-focused

ESL focus group participants described a variety of learning experiences that resulted from a variety of learning activities. Their experiences exemplified LCT practices that characteristically focused on the learner and the learning process. These experiences influenced their existing beliefs about LCT practices. In the next section their experiences and beliefs are presented under three sub-headings: (1) Learning-oriented learner focus; (2) Role of instructor; and (3) Learning opportunities and the learning environment.

Learning-oriented learner focus. One of the strongest themes that emerged from the focus group interviews, even before the participant had been introduced to the definition of learner-centered (McCombs & Whisler, 1997), was how students' experiences in English classes were learning-oriented through the learning activities they encountered. Focus group 2 was asked, "Think for a moment about your English classes. What were your experiences like in your English classes here at UNI?" For P5, learning entailed building language skills in an integrated form. The instructor "used to give us assignments and we have to like we had, we had to read the article and then write a reflection paper on it, then we have to read in the class. Like this we were having a listening through speaking, writing and reading. It really helped me a lot improving my English language" (FG2.1, l.25-28). P6, P7, and P8 all had similar experiences (see

Appendix O, FG2.1, l502-524). P6's experience of doing a research project and P7's oral

presentation involved all four language skills for the presentations they did and included

peer feedback. P8 had a similar experience of preparing a speech for class that involved

all four skills, but he noted that the peer feedback, along with the video of his speech,

were available for him to use to write a reflection paper which he thought was a complete

learning process: "It's like a holistic process." P7 noted too that instructors' learning-

oriented learner-centeredness is indicated by their concern for students' success in the

educational setting so that they helped students to develop "a wide range of skills"

(FG2.2, l. 34-36).

Other focus group participants shared experiences and beliefs about learning-

oriented learner focus that resulted from activities they engaged in. P14, P15, P16, and

P17, who had very similar experiences in English classes, recollected how the way the

activities were implemented facilitated the students' learning. They responded to the

interview prompt, "Explain more about what learner-centered teaching means to you."

P17 expressed his belief that learning occurs beyond the classroom and exemplified this

through his experience of having to write a journal. His instructor subjected the students

to playing basketball outside and later on prompted them to reflect on the act of throwing

a basketball, thinking about someone special in the basketball activity and how that might

change the way they threw the ball and then write a journal entry about this reflection:

> I think education is not just confined to four walls or it should not be just confined
> to four walls. It is much more than that.... I really enjoyed that 8am class when we
> had to play ball outside and she somehow related it to English. She asked us to
> close our eyes and think of basketball as someone who was special to us and more
> exactly would change when we were throwing the ball around and how if we

knew already that this was that special person in that basketball, how would we change our way of throwing it. Then we had to write a journal about it. So, I think that involving creativity into a class is really important. (P17, FG4, l.71-82)

P14 and P15 both had the same instructor and had similar experiences of engaging in out-of-class activities: students participated in a game of truth or dare seated in a circle. P14 stated that the very act of having to express yourself in the presence of others enabled the students' writing process. This also had an impact on how they interpreted articles and books they read:

> What my English professor, Sirus, would do is he would also take us out and he would make us sit down in a circle while we're facing each other and he would want us to create truth or dare...That way students would get to express themselves and….That particular expression of when they were talking to people in person, I think that further turned into their writing and it really affected how we approached our articles and books. (P14, FG4, l. 83-91)

To stimulate student participation, P15 pointed out that his instructor was innovative in the sense that he created a learning environment by taking them outside the class frequently. The students were made to sit in a circle for the purpose of interaction. But the instructor devoted the last part of the class for instruction:

> I had the same professor...He brought us out as many times as he could because…people were literally falling asleep the whole hour. He brought us out and he said asking us sit in a circle start sharing our thoughts. He used the last 20 minutes to forty minutes to teach English. I really liked that way of creativity, his creativeness. (P15, FG4, l. 92-98)

P16 engaged in peer discussion after completing his reading. This activity, P16 recalled, was a useful experience for him:

What my professor, Elvis, like always give some topic from the book he recommended book for us. Before class he told us that, "you have to read this topic but the next time you have to discuss this." In the next class we students discussed the topic between each other...I think that was a very good experience for me. (P16, FG4, l. 99-103)

Each of them expressed that they had enjoyed the creative aspect of the LCT practices. Both P6 and P7 agreed that one-on-one interaction was learner-centered. P7 reported that individual meetings allowed his instructor to focus on each student exclusively and discuss their writing and provide feedback on it:

M: So, one was about one-on-one interaction that I think P7 mentioned with the teacher. I would like you to tell me how is this learner-centered where you have one-on-one interaction with the teacher?
P7: Because the teacher is not focusing on the class as a whole, the teacher is focusing on learners as a whole because she invited each one of us in the class, personally, so it was one-on-one meetings that she wanted and what she did during that time more so than give us feedback on what we wrote was pretty much just ask us questions about what we wrote. It was trying to gauge what kind of individuals we were and then after she knew that, then she would give us feedback based on that information. And that is learner-centered because she is not using one criteria for all people she's using specific criteria for a specific person. So, it's better catered to their needs.
M: Would you agree with that?
P6: Agreed. (Extract 1. FG2.2, l.2-14)

Similarly, P14 observed that while interaction happens in various grouping patterns, one-on-one feedback was an important part of LCT practice. P17 also noted that meeting "individually," "one-on-one" allowed students to deal with the "fear of being humiliated in front of the class" (see Appendix O for transcript FG4, l.618).

One focus group participant summarized the perceptions of LCT practices based on their learning experience that emerged repeatedly from the group discussions:

In learner-centered teaching practice the teacher puts himself or herself in the position of a student and tries to envision that if I present it this way, will the students get it? If I present it the other way, how would the students rate it? Will this student understand it better than the other student?" (P14, FG4, l.497-500)

The focus group participants believed that the objectives of the teaching practices were considered with a view to facilitating the ESL learners' learning processes.

Role of instructor. Focus group participants talked about the learning environment and the instructor's role in describing their experiences about LCT practices. Instructors' interest to know about the learner initially included, but was not limited to, "icebreaker sessions" as P1, P2, P3, P4, P7, and P8 pointed out. P10 recalled taking a psychology test aimed to learn about each student at the beginning of the semester in an English course. His instructor used the information on each student to identify how best to support each student's learning when selecting learning activities:

It gave all the details of every individual student and she had that on an excel and everything, and she used to use that data to design all the projects for each individual student. (P10, FG3, l.192-194)

In fact, focus group participants P1, P2, and P3 agreed in their discussion that their instructors wanted to know about their background (see FG1.1, l. 125-140). The instructor showed eagerness in P1's background to ensure what was culturally appropriate. This effort made P1 feel that they could connect:

Yeah, I felt like she was generally interested because she asked, "Is this appropriate in your country?" She'd ask questions more about like my country, or she'd kind of just ask questions about myself. We could make personal connections. (P1, FG1.1, l.138-140)

As for assessing learner performance, referring to the discussion activity in a circle, P14 observed that "There are always [incomprehensible] to how professors learn their students" (FG4, l. 269). P7 observed that the instructor determined the learner's "ability" in English and took into account his/her ability when assessing. More precisely, he emphasized how the learner was assessed "by their own standards" and not being pushed into following set standards. He felt that the instructor's willingness to know about the student and focus on the student's ability was "learner-centered" because it placed the student in the "middle":

> What I experienced over here is....and after your first assignment or two, they will, they can gauge your ability with English and then next time you meet them, they will grade you according to your ability, instead of that one expectation that they have and that means that the student is never like under pressure to adhere to someone else's standards. But they can be judged by their own standards. So that is a kind of learner-centered because it puts the student in the middle of that. (P7, FG2.1, l. 71-79)

P8 agreed with P7 and added that the section on disability in the syllabus indicated that learning was considered for all learners regardless of ability and that they were to be assessed on their own merit: "There is a disability section. You are going to be analyzed subjectively and it just depends on who you are as a person, not what standard preconceived notions are there in the society" (FG2.1, l.82-84). P16 too said his instructor identified his level and graded him based on his improvements and not the mistakes he made (FG4, l.159-165) while P9 was awarded a grade based on individual achievement even in group projects (FG3, l.431-444).

The instructor also demonstrated facilitating learners' active involvement in their learning by providing learner choices, navigating learning difficulties, and supporting as a resource person. P10 reported how the power relationship was negated in his English classes by involving the learners in the decision-making process where the instructor would normally decide what assignments they would do. The activities that he did required him to independently think about his own need and choose what to do and be supported by his instructor at the same time:

> The level of decision-making power we have while in the class like the teacher doesn't come in and say, "Hey, let's write an essay on your favorite food." ... In my Kernel in the whole semester we did one research essay, one presentation, and one personal narrative. Each of the topics were never told by the tutor. It was more like you decide what you need to write. We can help you to write whatever you need to write. (P10, FG3, l.107-113)

Most of the participants recognized that the instructor was a resource person whose role included, but was not limited to, helping students with their language difficulties and exposing them to other support systems. P3, P9 and P12 shared the kind of experiences they had with the instructor. P3 described how her instructor navigated the difficulties she had with the speech she had to prepare for her Oral Presentation class (see Appendix O, FG1.1, l.157-167). She would "usually give him the outline of my speech, whatever the topic was. He used to help me with that" so that she felt "he was really interested." Despite the fact that it was her first experience of giving an oral presentation, what became very obvious for her was that "he wanted that to be the best actually very good (?). That's how he helped me."

P9 reported being comforted by her instructor in her struggle with English. The instructor took into account P9's background and provided her the extensive support she needed: "the instructor knows I'm from [a] different country. So, he or she try to explain until I get it….they say, "You deserve to learn something from me" (FG3, l. 1.116-121). Even if it meant approaching the instructor for something that was not included in the course, P12 felt the instructor provided the learning opportunity:

> It's not in our course to learn about past, present tense. It's just basic grammar that you just [Incomprehensible]. If I go to my professor now and I want to learn this kind of stuff, he would help me. This is something like beyond the class kind of scope. (P12, FG3, l.474-478)

In whole-class discussion in a circle, P15, who was accustomed to doing her own assignment in her home country, reported not being "forced" to take part in the conversation: "He's like if you're comfortable sharing you can share, if not, I'm definitely going to read your paper, so I will know it from there" (FG4, l.266.267).

Instructors used creativity in learning activities to address variety in learning and foster relationships. P14 and P17 noted creativity underlying teaching practices that instructors had chosen for them (FG4, l.70-98). P14 noted creativity in his instructor's choice of having students sit in a circle and engage in truth and dare he thought may sound "stupid" but the "concept of creativity" promoted students to express themselves and interact. P17 experienced having to engage in thinking about thinking after a game of basketball and stated, "I think that involving creativity into a class is really important." The creative elements in the LCT practices of the instructor nurtured the student-teacher relationship also as someone pointed out: "It actually promotes two people to talk to each

other. It actually promotes an environment where it is made easy for two people to talk to each other, relate to the teacher" (P14, FG4, l.533-535). P8 believed "the professor would need to be really creative in the ideas or approaches," and so P8 had to "make a film for Kernel, which is like a two-minute video" (FG2.1, l.345-353).

Motivation was provided by the instructor by addressing students' affective needs. Focus group participants P14, P15, and P16 all agreed with P17's belief that teacher "recognition and appreciation… really motivate student a lot" and added that "it's one of the major concepts of learner-centered," (P14) "feeling encouraged" (P16) (see Appendix O, FG4, l.416-422 for the discussion). Even when a student is struggling, the instructor praised her: "Then I say I'm really struggling with English, but he says, 'Your English is pretty well don't worry about that!' They try to praise me" (P9, FG3, l.130-133). In fact, the instructors demonstrate learner-centeredness in that "they care about their learner outside of their class and how they succeed in the university" (P7, FG2.2, l.38-395) and that they make students "feel proud of the fact that someone is caring about his or her thoughts, opinions, background" (P11, FG3, l.165-168).

Learning opportunities and learning environment. Availability of resources and learning opportunities that instructors provided were apparent to the focus group participants. This was recognized through the learning environment they experienced. About activities, a student noted how, "we learn things differently by doing some group work, some projects together, maybe doing research papers in many classes" (P13, FG3, l.212-214). Another stated, "there are different opportunities…the peers and group work I value most" (P10, FG3, l.242-244); about feedback one explained that "the draft is

being checked by every student in your group" then later the "opportunity how as a teacher, how they look at your paper [Incomprehensible] how you should be aware of those things in future" (P11, FG3, l.245-251); about student-teacher interaction one observed that arguments between the two are "constructive" (P17, FG4, l.560) and the usefulness of one-on-one feedback from instructors (P6, P7, P14, P17); about accommodating individual differences, "I feel like instructors wants to take interest in my interest in something to learn more. Then sometimes I feel like he or a she wants to give me more opportunity to learn" (P9, FG3, l.199-206); about on-campus resources "we go to the Academic Center…. They actually explain you why you should do that, say why don't you try rephrasing this and then we rephrase it and they will check it" (P1, FG1.1, l.427-429).

All four participants, P1, P2, P3, and P4 (see transcripts in Appendix O, FG1.1 lines 383-434) indicated learning opportunities they had having similar experiences that involved them in diverse, real-life experiences, interacting with community members off campus and individuals on-campus; sharing socio-cultural information; encouraging them to make use of support structures; interacting with instructors through face-to-face individual meetings.

P7 noted that the first step the teacher took in setting the environment was to let them challenge their instructors and also tolerate students' mistakes so that they don't feel "inferior" (see Extract 2). Learners' active involvement in their own learning and active thinking are important aspects of the learning environment.

> M: Can you say a little bit more about what you mean when you say that the environment is important in learner-centered teaching?
> P7: Well, the teacher first of all creates the environment where students are open to make mistakes….They don't scold you for making mistakes and then they don't make you feel inferior….you're allowed to challenge them….you're forced to think about things instead of being a recipient of information you're actively participating in your own learning and those two things I feel are vital for that environment. Extract 2. FG2.1, l.193-208

P7, P6, and P5 also agreed that the teachers challenged the learning process. P8 felt that in this environment the learners were encouraged to actively engage in their learning and think independently rather than just receive information. He expanded and explained that the students were placed in an environment where they were made to think; it was the learner who could challenge himself or herself in this setting if s/he wanted to. P5, P6, and P7 agreed with him. Also, P8 felt that the instructor was responsible for being available both inside and outside the class to support students' learning (see Extract 3 for their discussion).

> P6: I believe the idea also to be able to use the resources that you have available is also so cool.
> M: Is that the kind of challenge that P7 was talking about a little while ago that teachers challenge the learning process?
> [P7, P6 & P5 nodded in agreement]
> P8: It's not just challenging. It's more like they provide you to think in the atmosphere that they create. [P7 and P5 nodded in agreement with P8] And if you want to be challenged can perhaps get challenged….it is important for professors, not to just be there in class, but also use their office hours to inculcate knowledge or help their students in different things that they might be struggling with. (Extract 3. FG2.1, l.209-235)

An environment of trust permeated discussions, group projects, and oral presentations which were regular activities in English classes: a participant expressed feeling "flexible"

with what group members wanted to talk about; another remembered interacting with members who were "open-minded and respectful"; one felt others made him feel "important" and showed "respect."

The next section presents the second theme that emerged from the ESL focus group participants' interviews addressing the first research question: What beliefs and experiences do undergraduate ESL learners at a Midwestern university have about learner-centered teaching practices?

<u>LCT Practices Set Challenges</u>

Focus group participants noted challenges that LCT practices set for both the ESL learner and the instructor. Their experiences and beliefs are summarized under five headings: (1) Internal variables in learning activities; (2) Motivational and affective support; (3) Learner independence; (4) Learner's prior learning; and (5) Diversity in learning and class size.

<u>Internal variables in learning activities.</u> Discussions indicated that learning activities that the focus group participants experienced had issues related to assessment, student background, and facilitative strategies. P9 shared her friend's experience of having to work in a group with students having diverse ethnic backgrounds and getting a grade not worth her effort (FG3, l.256-265). The friend ended up doing the entire project herself as her other group members, who spoke a different language and could not communicate with her, gave her the responsibility. P9 declared that she was "not a fan of group projects" but "it depends on people who are in the group" for the activity to be LC.

She felt that the instructor's role was important in a group activity although the instructor's opinion was "less" so.

P10, P11, P12, and P13 talked about the task of selecting and organizing grouping patterns as well as lack of requisite skills, issues closely related to student assessment in group activity. P10, P11, P12, and P13 expressed their understanding of the use of group activity for learning and also highlighted the lack of facilitative mechanisms in selecting and organizing grouping patterns (see Extract 4). P10 agreed with P13 that, because in life people do not have the option of choosing who they think is right for them, the purpose of group projects was learning to deal with this. However, he also noted that students lacked the requisite skills of cooperating when they initially started working on group projects. He added that being an international student was difficult enough.

> P9: So, compared to the group which worked together her group project is more lower. So even though she worked hard, she got lower grade. I think this is another bad side of group project. It depends on people who are in the group.
> M: Would you agree with her or would you like to add something to that?
> P13: In a way it's building your skills and abilities to get along with different kinds of people talking in different language, you could say that they want to participate too…. You still have to get things done because most of the time your grade depends on it. So, you just have to deal with it. That's one important learning skill.
> M: Would you all agree with P13?
> [P9 and P11 nodded in agreement]
> P10: I think no. If it's a learner-centered then the professor should know that the works are not being done the way she or he intended it because I remember there was one group in our class who had the same issue…. The presentation itself reflected that there was not a coordination between the group and she took points off. I mean, I agree with P13 to the point that, yes, we don't get to choose the right people in our life, but at this point, the purpose is to learn that how we can deal with it. At the very beginning of our experiences it's very hard to actually cooperate because we don't even know how to cooperate. It's like we will do 1, 2, 3 to 10 different projects, after which will develop the skill to deal with people whom we don't even like, but we still need to stay. But at the very beginning of

your learning experience it's very hard and even being international you are
already unlucky.
P11: I would both agree and disagree. The point is that I had a really bad
experience in the past. This semester I like group discussion. (Extract 4. FG3, l.
262-299)

Motivational and affective influences. Focus group participants' discussions also

highlighted that teaching practices had motivational and emotional influences on their

learning. Focus group participants expressed feeling low at different times. When

approaching her instructor, P9 felt guilty for not knowing something she should:

"Sometimes I feel guilty something I should know" (FG3, l.134). She was embarrassed

that she had to disturb her instructor: "I feel very sorry about that because it's a bother for

him or her" (FG3, l.118-121). P4's oral presentation made her nervous having to face an

audience: "It was a real challenge and kind of anxious activity for me to speak in front of

people and all of that because of the class" (FG1.1, l.59-60). P2 had a similar feeling: "I

felt, initially, I felt a bit amazed like uncomfortable with it because this was like the first

time I was speaking English in front of anyone" (FG1.1, l.114-116). P4 stated that the

instructor did not take "specific interest" in her so that she did not feel "comfortable" the

way she had desired being an international student (see Extract 18).

The group activity P1 participated in did not have much interaction (see Extract

5). Despite her efforts to put the other group members at ease being aware that they may

lack requisite communication skills to participate in group discussion, and the instructor's

initiatives to modulate the environment, P1 did not see any effect on the group

participants. The group participants did not interact much which P1 assumed could be

because they felt uneasy not knowing whether they were right or wrong. The instructor's

addressing the group as a whole inquiring how their discussion was going or even asking

for opinions appeared to give some relief to the students. For P2, the grouping pattern

that the instructor had left for the students to create did not work to the advantage of P2

and his friend, another non-native speaker of English. They were isolated as they were

outnumbered by native speakers of English who had formed their own groups. Finally,

they were accommodated in one group only because there were an insufficient number of

members in it.

> M: Even in the group discussion, what was your experience?
> P1: Yeah, well, for me, I felt like unless they were confident in speaking English, even if I like recommended, like, do you have an opinion or what do you think about that. They would be really short in their answers. Unless the professor was like combined like, "how's everything going?" My experiences weren't super positive. But yeah.
> M: They were not super positive?
> P1: They were just neutral. I think it's normal for students to like be hesitative about talking in group discussions because like they might feel like what if they think like it's stupid or like what if I'm wrong. But I guess, as the professor goes around asking about opinions, encouraging to talk, it does help them kind of feel relieved and speak more but just for me I just couldn't see it in other students.
> M: What about you P2?
> P2: I was also paired up with another Pakistani student.
> M: Was this the English class?
> P2: Yes, Oral Presentation. I think she thought that we would have better understanding, you know, because we are from the same culture. She put us on the same, like both of us in the same group. And when you know when the time came for a group project, like a big group project with five students, we had to wait till the end. The professor said, "You guys can start making your group." But nobody wanted us, nobody asked or they just like all the American students made their groups within themselves. And then, at the last minute, some people didn't have enough members. They just, like, put us in there. (Extract 5, FG1.1, l.320-342)

Regarding group projects, P11 felt that "Americans are not a big fan of international students" and P12 agreed that "They don't like internationals, they just wanted to do things on their own" (FG3, l.346-349).

While talking about group projects, P10 expressed his belief that all students should not be regarded in the same way in a LC environment. He believed every student was "different"; they were "designed" in a specific way and so should be considered as they were. He stressed that in a learner-centered environment individual differences needed to be recognized:

> I am a big fan of saying that every person is not the same. It's [Incomprehensible] treating everyone equally. It's more like you need to treat every person, the way they are designed rather than just saying equally because class like every person is different. And you need to deal with every person in a different way. (P10, FG3, l. 359-363)

P8 did not foresee a "holistic" experience for himself in the English class. It was not the instructor, but P8 as the learner who took charge of his own learning and decided to challenge himself. He pointed out that he might not have had the desired level of holistic experience but he was determined, "even if the holistic class experience is not up to the level" (FG2.1, l. 59-60).

Learner independence. Discussions reflected focus group participants' beliefs about the issues related to independent decision-making and the student-teacher power relationship. Learner choice did not always work to the advantage of the ESL students. When asked by the instructor to form groups the two non-native speakers of English were left until all the native speakers of English had formed their groups as seen in Extract 5.

P7 said that learner choice may cause difficulty in decision-making for the ESL learner as

it "opens up a world of possibilities" for them that they are not accustomed to. The

decision-making power that had rested in the hands of the instructor in their previous

learning settings now would be shifted to their hands creating a challenge for them:

> Oh well, just the fact that like P6 said she could write on whatever she wanted. I'm sure many international students that have the education, kind of like the authoritarian education might at first struggle with that. Because we're more used to being like the teacher saying okay you write on x, y, z, and you write on x, y, z. And now that the teacher says you can write whatever you want opens up a world of possibilities. (P7, FG2.2, l.57-61)

In the case of the student-teacher power relationship, focus group participants

believed LCT practices require accepting student's voice. P14 believes the LC

instructor's responsibility is to allow the learner to express his opinion and not regard it

as a threat to his status.

> In a learner centered environment, the teacher should, for example, if the student says something and the student turns out to be right at that particular time the teacher should not consider it as him transgressing his boundaries of being a student. (P14, FG4, l.565-567)

P10 identified the instructor as someone who cannot be challenged whether in an LC

environment or a teacher-centered environment because they have a professional

obligation to certify mastery of the goal; they are still responsible for student assessment.

However, he explained that the issue is that of the control of power that concerns

instructors who identify themselves through their authoritarian role. Voicing P14's

belief, he emphasized that accepting an alternative perspective does not mean an

instructor is losing his status as the instructor. He believes that for such instructors who

are yet to transition toward LC approaches lending themselves to alternative perspectives

may mean loss of power to students:

> The role of the teacher is never challenge him even if it's a learner-centered class because you're still the teacher, you still have the power. The only thing valuing someone else's opinion does not mean that you are losing your role being a teacher, being a professor.…It doesn't mean that if you are going to value someone else's opinion when you're, like there is a concept still in some areas in the world where teachers think that if they are going to listen a lot to the student they're gonna lose their status being a teacher whatever. You're still a teacher even in a learner-centered class. All you're doing is listening to your students and valuing their/ that way you have a healthy relationship.…You still need to grade their papers and you still have that power [Incomprehensible] (P10, FG3, l.407-417).

P17 voiced the same opinion as P14 and P10.

Learner's prior and current learning experiences. Focus group participants

recalled difficulties that they had dealing with unfamiliar activities and relating existing

knowledge with current learning experience. P14, P15, P16, and P17 (see Extract 6)

expressed their experiences and thoughts about reflection. Reflection was an unfamiliar

activity given to them at the beginning of the course and required a set of skills that they

had yet to master. P10 and P11 had similar beliefs regarding skills required in a group

activity (see Extract 4). The practice of writing reflections was an unenjoyable,

meaningless task and caused boredom for P16 and P17. P14 explained that the process of

reflection was a "burden" for them as they were unaccustomed to it initially. P15 noted

that what made things worse was the prevailing differences in linguistic competence

among the ESL students.

P16: Everybody has a different set of mind. The thing which I didn't like about that like we had to write a reflection every time. That was, you know, we, very (…)
P17: Tiring
P16: Yeah, tiring! …. I have to submit this assignment which was a burden.
P14: Exactly….what was that that during the very start, we were not familiar with that particular concept and thus we found it very hard to express our proper thoughts and convey them to the professor…One thing is that it shouldn't have been monotonous; it shouldn't have been the same all along…
M: Anything more you would like to say?
P15: Adding on to what he said.…we came from various backgrounds so English is something where like some people, they are very good in English, some people they are not. (Extract 6. FG4, l.147-156)

Although P17 believed he had the requisite skills for doing a writing task that he was given, his current learning experience indicated otherwise. Based on his confidence in his prior knowledge and experience, P17 had used it in his present learning situation only to be disappointed that it did not meet the standards set by his instructor. He reported his experience of reproducing an essay on which he had received an A grade when he had done his 'O' and 'A' levels and receiving a 'C' in his English Language course at UNI. He was aware of how he was different and so he felt unsure of his competency: "Maybe we were considered good back home. Maybe it's not [Incomprehensible]. So, once we get used to or immune to what they require of us here, I think we'll be able to perform better. (P17, FG4, l.156-158)

Not being aware of ethical issues related to writing ownership was a thing unknown to P3. She admitted to not knowing that copying from other sources was "plagiarism" as something "we don't come across back in our home countries" (FG1.1, l.183-184).

Diversity in learning and class size. The issue of having to accommodate for diverse groups of learners was identified by the focus group participants. Maintaining student interest is important but can be difficult in the case of ESL students. P14 and P17 talked about student interest. Whereas P14 thought addressing student interest in the LC atmosphere was important, P17 believed it could be an issue with international students. Examples used by instructors were often not "easy" to associate with or not accessible to students due to different socio-cultural orientation and needed to be more "universal" (see Extract 7).

> P14: Keeping the interest of a student is very important in a learner-centered environment.
> P17: This can actually be a problem for us international students as I mentioned earlier....I don't have know-how about American football. I don't know much about the Chicago Cubs or other teams which are in the National Football League... But I believe that examples should be more universal. Let's talk about the sun or the moon or something that every person knows belonging from any part of the world. For an example that is too American-centered maybe it is not a very easy for us to relate to it. (Extract 7, FG4, l.283-292)

P14 thought universal examples can be accessible to native speakers of English. But he commented that instructional practices were influenced by the composition of the class. He justified the instructor's decision of using "local examples" on the ground that the majority of the students were native speakers of English, instead of using more universal ones, the teacher often decided to cite local examples to reach more students than a few handful of international students:

> On one hand, there are 25 American students on the other hand there are two international students. Although him giving a universal example would not hamper the ability of American students to grasp the concept but still, I think why

the instructor states local example is because they want the larger part of the class to get the proper idea what's happening. (P14, FG4, l. 337-342)

However, he also emphasized that if the instructor's innovative practices in class were not culturally accessible and within the range of the learner's prior experiences or knowledge, then it would not be LC:

Whatever creative methods you're using, you're bringing in slides, you are being a Joker into the class but if the student does not get the concept, then that creative method was not learner-centered. (P14, FG4, l. 545-547)

P3 gave her opinion about accessing knowledge and emphasized that "real-life examples" are LC as they support a learner's comprehension: "If you're not comparing to the reality of the world and probably it's kind of not learner centric. If you've real-life examples, you understand it more. Let's put it that way" (FG1.2, l.394-395).

Focus group participants raised their concern with the feasibility of having learner-centeredness in all kinds of educational settings. The English courses that the focus group participants took are a few of the Liberal Arts (LA) courses where the class sizes are small. P1, P2, P3, and P4 all agreed that their classes were small, and P1 felt that the class size of 15-16 students that she was in, was "leader-focused" or learner-centered (see Appendix O for transcript, FG1.1, l.86-98). Having attended two English classes P2 noted that "if the class is too big….providing individual personalized support to every student is quite difficult. And the only class I think we take with less students for liberal arts is Oral Presentation and the Academic Writing in College" (FG1.1, l.238-244). P7 believed that in large classes instructors can attempt to focus on students' needs

by encouraging them to ask questions and "that's about what they can do, you can't do more than that" (see Appendix O for transcript FG2.2, l.274-277).

The next section presents the third theme that emerged from the ESL focus group participants' interviews addressing the first research question: what beliefs and experiences do undergraduate ESL learners at a Midwestern university have about learner-centered teaching practices?

LCT Practices Lead to Academic and Non-Academic Outcomes

There was a general consensus among ESL focus group participants regarding academic and non-academic outcomes of LCT practices. They generally did not perceive LCT practices in English classes to be restricted to only improving their English language skills (i.e., reading, writing, speaking, and listening). Their experiences and beliefs about the outcome of LCT practices are described in the next section under four headings: (1) "Ongoing" learning; (2) Skill building; (3) Construction of knowledge; and (4) Alternative perspective and acculturation.

"Ongoing" learning. Learning for several focus group participants is an all-encompassing process so that the learner learnt to be an independent learner. P14 believed "acting" on peer feedback "helps with the growth of an intellect of a student" and if the instructor is "vigilant" of the students' needs and talents "when that thing happens the students' growth, mental growth, obviously, and his intellect reaches a level" (FG4, l.236-237). P8 perceived learning for the ESL learner as "growth" of the learner in a broader term: the ESL learner with diverse background, gaining access to the new academic environment involved learning to adapt and adjust to it. He believed learning

included, but was not limited to, emotional and psychological factors. P8 emphasized

that ESL learner's learning extended far beyond the academic boundary embracing

whole-person learning within the academic setting as well as the community as a whole.

P8 suggested that by the time a learner reached a point of stability in all these

dimensions, a person was expected to have had enhanced growth. That is the desirable

academic and non-academic outcome he foresaw for ESL learners in the LC

environment:

> Learning leads to something that I would define it as growth essentially. So,
> learning is not just one aspect of it, perhaps, adding another part of growth would
> be something that I personally would add to this definition which would mean
> that learning is not academic, it can be mentally, emotionally or everything
> because we as international students come from different backgrounds and
> coming a long way from home. We have to face emotional stability as well. You
> have to face academic stability as well because it's a different structure of
> education. It's a different structure of living in a society. There are multiple
> aspects we need to look forward to. So, by the end of it, this also leads to an
> enhanced improvement in our emotional growth as well. (P8, FG2.1, l.117-125)

LCT practices nurtured learner independence and engaged the learner in active learning

that prepared them not only for English courses. P6 shared her experience of being

supported by her instructor that aimed to prepare her for the college as being LC in that

the learning aimed "to develop as a whole and be ready for college, it's not something so

the professor is not just doing or teaching something for the class, but also preparing each

and every individual for their college experience ahead" (FG 2.2, l.22-25). P7 expanded

P6's idea of "develop as a whole" to include "a wide range of skills" that instructors

facilitated in helping students to develop. He believed how learners fared in their

academic endeavor was of concern to the instructors so that they supported the learning

of requisite skills development:

> Some of the skills I would say like we're learning how to write a paper …the proper way to take notes, how do you prepare for an exam, when your professor's talking what do you focus on, what notes do you want to take. So, stuff like that that really helps you throughout. (P7, FG2.2, l. 39-42).

P7 added that allowing learner choices liberated the learner in a way that had a far-

reaching effect on the learner's life:

> The teacher says you can write whatever you want opens up a world of possibilities, but at the same time you learn how to be decisive, you know what you want, what you don't want. So, it opens up this path of self-reflection that ability to make your choice or choose your type of learning. So that really goes outside the classroom and even outside education. It kind of applies to your whole life, those qualities, I'd say. (P7, FG2.2, l.60-64)

He explained that when the instructor promotes learner choices in a LC class, the learner

learns to engage himself in the decision-making process. The self-reflection that is

triggered, he felt, enhances decision-making ability regarding the learner's own learning

preferences; the skills that the learner acquires can be applied throughout his/her life.

Being Asians, based on their background, P5, P6, P7, and P8 all agreed that their

prior learning experiences emphasized learning which ends with receiving a degree, but

their current learning experiences were different (see Appendix O; FG2.1, 1.270-291).

Both P7 and P8 realized that learning was never-ending (see Extract 8). Regarding

current experiences in English courses, P8 made the following observation: "Just keep

learning! Here it's like it's just one part of your life. It's going to go further!" P8 further

highlighted that a person should look for learning opportunity because, "You learn from

every moment of your life!" P7 summed up that he, along with others, came to the

realization that learning was "ongoing" because of the learning environment that the

instructor had created for them so that they could think, and think critically. He stated

that it was self-realization and not the instructor who had directly told him that "how

much ever you learn, the more you learn that you don't know much."

> M: Is that what learner-centered teaching is about or teaching practice is about,
> that learning is/
> P7: Ongoing?
> M: You think it's ongoing? That's what the idea is behind learner-centered
> teaching practice?
> P8: Where you find it grab it. You learn from every moment of your life.
> P7: I feel like the reason why all of us here can come to that conclusion is because
> the teachers here have given us that environment to think and because of the
> things we think and, you know, critically think about things we come up with, no
> one told us that, no one told me, hey, you know, I didn't go to class and my
> professor told me, hey, P7, remember that how much ever you learn, the more you
> learn that you don't know much. (Extract 8. FG2.1, l.286-296)

Skill-building. Focus group participants identified skill-building opportunities in

the learning environment that were not limited to only academic gains. Transfer of skills

across disciplines and their application beyond the academic environment emerged from

their discussions. Several participants voiced the importance of learning how to learn.

P13 noted that learner involvement in group projects was aimed at helping learners to

experience what team building involved. The group work entailed experiencing what it

would be like not being able to choose the people you wanted to work with and yet

getting along with them although you did not like them. P13 believed that the learning

how to learn skill was important in the world of work that this learning activity nurtured.

> Group projects are designed for the intention of for the most part team building because when you are in the real world outside the university, you're not going to choose people you're going to work with…. You have to get along with them, whether you like them or not…. So, you just have to deal with it. That's one important learning skill. (P13, FG3, l.268-277).

The participants generally felt that critical thinking was an important component of their learning experience. Some participants identified what the process entailed, and the attitude students had to develop. P13 noted that for critical thinking skills to develop, it entails interacting, questioning, discussing, agreeing and disagreeing and students "must be critically thinking and saying, Okay, whatever you are saying it's fine," but in accepting other's opinions they must be respectful and saying, "I respect your opinion but I don't agree with you and everybody is fine with that" (FG3, l.427-428).

P9 and P11's experiences included the instructor helping them develop their critical thinking processes through perspective taking (see Extract 9). P11 recalled having to read a variety of books and then focusing on a particular one to engage in a sort of a debate. They were required to discuss their own reaction to the book through critical analysis and also listen to others' views. His instructor did not focus on grammatical accuracy but prioritized critical thinking on the grounds that in academic classes P11 would be expected to be "thinking out of the box." P9 recalled her prior learning experience where she was not allowed to express her opinion. In the English courses she took, she was encouraged to express her opinion and participate in discussion on topics that generated a lot of disagreement. She realized that these experiences helped build her critical thinking ability.

M: Have you had somewhat similar experiences in your English classes where you were challenged to think critically?

P11: Yes.

M: What kind of activities were they?

P11: One of the activities was we were supposed to discuss about these books and there were some different books. We had covered like four or five books. There was one book about war and feminism and stuff like that. We were supposed to talk about our feelings and how we feel about wars and how we feel about everything like that. It's more like critically analyzing your points and accepting others. It was kind of like a debate.…One of the major things I learned in my English class is that professor was totally focused on critical thinking instead of like looking for grammar errors.... She said that the critical thinking is more important than grammar. If you're taking class next semester, the professor expects you to be thinking out of the box.

P9: When I was in Korea. Disagreement with my instructor is very [Incomprehensible]. So, it's really hard to say own opinion. When I was in IEC, the English learning program, they want to get my own opinion and then the reason, especially in the writing class they need supporting ideas. I was in listening and speaking class. There's discussion about testing animal testing and then there was more disagreement with that. I think that it helped me to increase my critical thinking. (Extract 9. FG3, l.440-470)

Construction of knowledge. Instructors provide learning opportunities by encouraging students to create relationships through activities (see Extract 10). P7 recognized how the instructor facilitated the process of constructing knowledge through building relationships in group work: Each group of students, assigned an individual chapter for presentation had to depend on the information in the other chapters from the presentations of other individuals in the group. P7 reported that the students' learning process depended on their construction of knowledge with their peers. He explained that the learner-centeredness of the group presentation lay in that the students were the focus as they had to take charge of their own learning while the instructor's role was that of a facilitator. Whereas P7 identified the academic gain in this activity, P8 observed that there was non-academic gain as well. In a group, members were similar in nature who

were very likely to have similar questions and chances were good that an unexpected

question could arise. This experience of questioning and exploring in group discussions,

he believed, has academic as well as non-academic contribution in that it "can help you in

other aspects of life as well, not just curriculums and academically." Questioning can

help in decision-making in life.

> P7: And then there's also the aspect of your relying on other students to learn like the professor is like, okay, I'm going to divide you guys into groups of you know, into four groups and each group will read a chapter and focus on that chapter and give a presentation. So that one group will focus on that chapter, and the remaining three chapters is information they're getting from other groups' other students. And the teacher in that point is exactly, that's the example what I meant when I said facilitate. They just say, "You do that!" and the students are at the center of deriving their own way. And we're kind of relying on other students for that learning process and kind of adding on to what they said with examples.
> P8: That's a very good point because that's one thing I analyzed as well. It was the very idea that when you're in group and you've people with similar nature, you probably have similar questions when you're in a group. And when you ask each other those similar questions, one might pop up with a different question that you might not have thought of first and that can kind of enhance your experience of asking questions and exploration, which is very important in my eyes because that is that can help you in other aspects of life as well, not just curriculums and academically. You can ask questions in any other part of your life and help you reach conclusions or decisions. (Extract 10. FG2.1, l.171-185)

Similarly, P15 felt that "communicating with students is better because our levels are

almost the same rather than sharing with a professor and he giving his output" (FG4,

l.367-368) with which P14 agreed.

Acknowledging group activity as an LCT practice that stimulates student

interaction, P5 said that the student could gain knowledge in two ways: the professor or

the interactive group activity (see Extract 11). He thought the knowledge the student

could get from his instructor was based on the instructor's perspective; however, the LC

group activity prompted group members to express their individual opinion. Both P5 and

P7 agreed that this way the student was able to gain more knowledge.

> M: Going back to student interaction and I can hear that in your conversation, the importance of student interaction. What kind of LCT practices actually engage students and student interactions? Can you give me examples from your English classes? Why do you think that is learner-centered?
> P5: I would say group study. Like we four are sitting here, we can put on our own perspective, our own opinions. We would get to learn more and more instead of going to the professor and getting to know about his experience or his knowledge. If you go to a professor you're just gaining whatever he's saying based on his experience. But if four are sitting here like we all are students and whatever he is saying it could be right or could be wrong. Whatever I'm saying could be right or could be wrong. So, we all get to know more about knowledge this way.
> P7: Yeah. (Extract 11, FG2.1, lines 322-332)

Alternative perspective and acculturation. Whereas frequent group activities, peer

activity, and group projects encouraged perspective taking among the ESL students, out-

of-class activities requiring them to meet and interact with local people helped gain

cultural insights. Students experienced listening to alternative perspectives and realized

how important it was (see Extract 12). P1, P3, and P4 agreed that listening to the

perspectives of other people improved their understanding of a topic. P3 said the process

of agreeing and disagreeing enhanced their learning and helped them come to a

conclusion about a topic. P1 added that listening to other viewpoints allowed the student

to see things from a different perspective that would otherwise not have been possible by

the student alone and, thus, nurtured open-mindedness.

> M: She talked about how it's important listening to other perspectives. Can you build on that?
> P3: Listening to other people's perspectives can make us more clear about the particular topic.

P4: Yeah!
P3: And if we are not agreeing on a certain point, if you hear everyone other's perspectives probably we can start agreeing on that point when you were disagreeing on that point earlier so you can probably come to a conclusion.
P4: Yeah!
P1: I guess like going along with P3, it's like you're creating an open mind, because you hear from others. I wouldn't have thought about if I was thinking about it alone. That'll be another point on perspective. (Extract 12, FG1.2, l.70-80)

In fact, all the focus group participants were required to do activities that involved interviewing an American and writing a report (see Extract 13). P3 pointed out that the essential ethnic differences between the Americans and them (international students) meant there were differences in perspectives too. ESL students gain more information as they hear the views of the others. P1 added that getting to hear the American point of view was effective because the non-native speakers of English needed to learn the culture of the Americans, the native speakers of English. Conducting the interview required P1, P2, and P3 to share information and ask questions about culture, religion, family, relationship and anything that helped them to know about the American culture. P3 observed that as first-year students the activity helped them as they all experienced "culture shock."

P3: We are different from the American people, so we have entirely different perspectives on some topics. Probably we gather more information because we hear about the American people speaking than our own points.
P1: I think it's effective and like culturally, especially for international students like who need to learn the American culture like how the more we discuss we know like how these people speak and how many words they would normally use like what their perspectives be in general.
P2: I remember we took that Academic [strategies?] where we had an assignment to interview a person, American people and then write a report on that.
[Everyone nodded in agreement]

P3: We had to ask questions based on culture and what religion?
P2: Culture, religion, family, family structure.
P3: Relationship?
P1: Anything related that's like inside this culture.
P3: I talked to my resident assistant. I think I talked to two people. One of them was my RA, I think I talked to two RAs and asked them their perspective, then I told them what my perspectives are and how our culture is very different from what theirs is like. I think it was really helpful for us first-year students who all experience culture shock when we come first in like we've come to a country that was really helpful. (Extract 13. FG1.2, l.81-98)

P10 recalled being given the choice of doing eight "fun activities," including volunteer work, and writing reports about them. As an out-of-class fun activity, "going to volunteer an hour or going to a party attending any ethnic festival" (FG3, l.497-498) would not have been something permissible in his own education system.

Interpretation

The recounting of learning experiences across all the focus groups indicated that they had learning opportunities in a variety of learning environments that were aimed to nurture their potential. Teaching practices included activities involving learners in reflection, thinking about thinking, critical thinking, active learning, peer learning, cooperative learning, and collaborative learning that facilitated their understanding of what was expected of learners in learner-centered environments.

Based on their experiences and beliefs, several ideas about the nature of learning in learner-centered teaching practices and what LCT involves emerge: (1) Learning is not restricted to the class only. (2) LCT requires a "holistic" approach to learning and the learner. (3) Learning involves all-encompassing growth. (4) LCT instills the importance of learner responsibility and learner independence. (5) LCT practices inculcate the value

of lifelong learning. (6) Learning involves shared responsibility. (7) Learning thrives in

a non-threatening environment prompting learners to cope with emotional, affective,

developmental, and social barriers. (8) Learning requires support systems to thrive. Seen

this way, LCT prepares a learner not only for advancing in the academic community but

nurturing learners' potential in a way that facilitate their transfer to the world of work.

However, LCT is not free of challenges. ESL Focus group participants'

experiences and beliefs indicate that challenges are inherent. Although instructors were

viewed more as facilitators supporting their learning process, participants recognized that

some power was still attached to the instructors' role because they assigned grades to the

students. Some reported experiences suggested that there were instructors who were

more inclined to provide learner-based assessment. They considered the effort and

overall progress the student made over a period of time or focused on the individual's

role and contribution in group projects when assessing student performance. Whereas

another report showed a learner not receiving due credit for his performance as the

instructor awarded a low grade because of lack of coordination that was apparent in the

group performance. These reports indicated that ESL focus group participants found

differences in the teaching practices in English classes that contradicted what they

perceived as LC.

In the following section, findings from Research Question 2 are presented.

<u>Findings from Research Question 2</u>

How do learner-centered learning experiences affect learners' beliefs about the quality of learner-centered teaching practices? Learner-centered learning experiences prompted focus group participants to recognize that there are fundamental differences between learner-centered practices and teacher-centered practices and appreciate the conducive conditions that LCT practices provide to nurture learners' potential. At the same time, through their LC learning experiences they identified what was not LC in their English classes that did not lead to the quality of the experiences being very positive. Two broad themes are presented in the next section: (1) evaluating LCT learning via past learning experiences; and (2) identifying learner-centered and non-learner-centered teaching practices. Major categories (subheadings) have been added under each theme where it was necessary.

<u>Evaluating LCT Learning via Past Learning Experiences</u>

The ESL focus group participants were all Asians and had a traditional learning background with which they all commonly identified themselves. They frequently evaluated their LC learning experiences contrasting them with their prior learning experiences and identified qualitative differences. Their beliefs about the quality of LCT practices have emerged from this. They are summarized under five sub-headings: (1) "Learning never ends"; (2) "Retention vs. application"; (3) "Doing it myself" vs. "doing more things"; (4) Uniformity vs. "Individuality"; and (5) Guided instruction vs. independent thinking.

"Learning never ends." The most powerful belief that emerged from the focus group discussion on the quality of the LC learning experience was the idea of lifelong learning. One participant realized "learning never ends all your life." Having gained LC learning experiences, several participants revealed what they understood learning entailed. P5, P6, P7, and P8 shared similar feelings about their previous learning experiences that meant engaging in meaningless learning. They expanded on each other's thoughts (see Extract 14). P6 expressed how "all of this" (i.e., recalling their previous academic experiences of teacher-dominated classes while talking about their experiences in English classes) had made them see the difference between teacher-centered and learner-centered classes. She said, previously, they did not know why they "crammed" what they were supposedly "learning," but now "we understand why it's important" what they are learning. P6 felt a sense of awe, realizing that recalling past experience "helps" them all to "cherish" the learning that was happening in the new academic environment because they realized the importance of what they were learning.

> P6: I feel like at the end of the day, all of this helps us to cherish the time we're spending learning here, because if you are not, we're just criticizing our educational system. Why, because we just crammed everything. And we did not know why we were learning this.
> [P7 and P5 nodded in agreement]
> P6: Because it wasn't. It's not necessary to just learn everything and not understand it, but now we're seeing the difference we're comparing and we're actually cherishing what we're learning now because we understand why it's important. (Extract 14. FG2.1, l.258-264)

Participants explicitly expressed their feelings about the two education systems they have all experienced, highlighting their differences. P7 summed up the difference as

being "retention versus application!" Although P5 and P8 were from the same country, Pakistan, P6 was from India and P7 from Nepal, they all perceived commonalities in their education systems. P5 and P8 acknowledged that their education system was "complicated" and P5 recalled having to "just remember stuff" because "we just know we have to." They all agreed that this practice had been meaningless. P7 and P8 summed up their perceptions of traditional classes as those that make a learner think of learning as something that one just puts an end to with the earning of a degree. However, they were inspired and motivated by the kind of experiences they had in the English course at UNI, as they perceived learning more meaningfully than before: learning for P8 is a lifelong process in that "it's like it's just one part of your life. It's going to go further." P7 modestly expressed, "it's kind of a humbling experience" as the desire for learning does not end with the knowledge gained as "you want to know more."

> M: So that's how learner-centered teaching practice differs?
> P7: Yeah, it's retention versus application.
> P5: Over there in Pakistan Education is so complicated, very complicated I would say.
> P8: Hugely complicated!!
> P5: Just remember stuff, just remember stuff, we don't know but we're reading, we just know we have to do it.
> P8: The idea is that learning never ends all your life. But back in our country was like, okay, I'm going to learn, go to school go to college, then have a job that's it. I'm not even learning.
> P7: Your learning is finished!
> P8: Yeah! Your learning is finished!
> P5: Even in learning there's no concern, just keep learning.
> P8: Just keep learning! Here it's like it's just one part of your life. It's going to go further.
> P7: More, you know, kind of more you know, how much you don't know the more you want to know. I just know maybe the tip of vast iceberg of knowledge that's out there and it's kind of a humbling experience!
> P8: Yeah, yeah! (Extract 15, FG2.1, l.270-285).

P10 and P13 expressed similar feelings about traditional learning (FG3, l.387-392). The instructor merely pours information in and "so that's about it and then you are tested on it and then you learn it or not it's up to you" (P13). Agreeing with P13, P10 noted, "I think learning is done when, it's an opinion but I don't know, I really strongly believe that is, yes, the way P13 said."

"Retention vs. application." Almost all the participants identified their prior learning experiences as having been mindless regurgitation and reproduction. This notion emerged repeatedly in their discussions. Traditional learning in the educational contexts they come from is summed up as producing passive learners whose learning "never stays with you":

> Critical thinking zero. You're just passive. You're not active learners you're passive learners. You're listening but you're not hearing. I mean, you're hearing what you're not listening. Information goes in, it comes out. You memorize stuff, regurgitated during the exam. It never stays with you. So many examples. (P7, FG2.2, l.232-235)

In contrast, P5 described how at present having to do presentations had involved him actively in researching a topic and preparing himself (see Appendix O, FG2.1, l.144-159). He became excited as he talked and exclaimed, "Now I'm sitting here talking to you, like, I cannot do that! And that time I cannot do that. I think I have lack of confidence, lack of everything I'd say." He attributed his lacking to the fact that he is a product of a system where there is no "ritual of doing, I would say, presentations and researching on something." What the instructor provides, the students just memorize and produce it and "don't even know what is going on." Recalling their first experience of

LC learning in English courses, P1 and P3 agreed that their prior learning experiences were different from what they presently did. P3 explained that what was required of them was "memorizing the stuff and then just writing down on our exams. But here it was like more focused on understanding the concepts and then writing it down" (FG1.1, l.55-56).

English courses required focus group participants to use various resources such as the Academic Learning Center, library, and online resources for doing a variety of activities. P7 said that, considering the type of educational setting that they all come from, being able to use resources like the Academic Learning Center and Google or other resources, "it's such a big thing." P7 encapsulated the learning experiences of students in traditional learning environments where they are all from and those from the more learner-centered environment in the ESL setting in the phrase he used: "retention versus application" (see Extract 15). Here, the information that the instructor provides has to be applied for the instructor to understand how well a student knows it. Then there are resources as well to make use of:

> Academic Learning Center, and again, like the ability just to use a calculator and use Google really it's so, like, it's such a big thing for like when we come from that kind of education…. And again, it all comes back to retention versus application. Most of our education at home is all about retention. Teacher gives you information you retain it and you show how much you retain at the exam. Here teacher gives you information you learn how to apply it and you show them how well you can apply it in the exam. So again. Yeah, that's right. And you use all these resources. (P7, FG2.1, l.243-251)

P6 added that the availability of resources and being able to use what was not possible back in her country was "cool" and that way "retaining of information" could be avoided.

"Doing it by myself" vs. "doing more things." Active learning is promoted through presentations and collaborative activities because of interactional opportunities. Both P12 and P13 recognized learner-centered and teacher-centered teaching to be contrasting modes of teaching (see Appendix O for transcript, FG4, l.383-392). P13 noted that LCT was "a lot more interacting!" and "dramatically different" from what "used to be a lot back in the days." P10 claimed that, because of his background, he was aware that there was no room for personal opinion, creativity and learning, nurturing of students' inherent skills in teacher-centered teaching. Among a variety of learning opportunities now available, he appreciated the most "peer mentors" and "group work" where he found the possibilities of learning through peer feedback:

> I had two peer mentors in a class of 20...when all your classmates whom you see as kind of your partners grades you or give you opinions on your word...there are different opportunities, but to me, the peers and the group work I value the most. (P10, FG3, l.233-243)

Not being familiar with an activity can cause uneasiness as it did for P2, P3, P4, and P15. Most of the participants' initial experience was not very positive due to inexperience. Group activity was not a pleasant experience for P2 and P15 as they both felt uncomfortable. In her previous setting, P15 was more accustomed to learning on her own. The concept of collaborative learning was totally new to her. She stated:

> I was never comfortable sitting in group learning. Because back home I never used to sit in a group and learn things. I used to sit alone and learn anything or even in class, we didn't have group works or anything. So, coming here I feel like I like that doing more things with group compared to sitting and doing it by myself. (P15, FG4, l.581-586)

P2, who was not used to speaking English for a stretch of time, had initially felt

"uncomfortable" in taking part in discussions seated in a circle but "after a while, I

started to become confident in sharing my views because I didn't feel overwhelmed

because I started to know the students that were with me in the class" (FG1.1, l.115-118).

Similarly, P3 stated:

> I don't know back in India we're not used to giving speech in front of people. So, it was like a totally new experience for me giving speeches in front of people and it actually was different. It was hard for the students to understand it. (P3, FG1.1, l.158-161)

P4 felt having to do oral presentations in English was "a real challenge and kind of

anxious activity" because "it's a bit different for me from which I have learned back in

my country." She realized that an LC class offered preferably better opportunities and

her hope was that she had "improved a little" (FG1.1, l.58-64).

Uniformity vs. "individuality." Nonthreatening learning environments are created

whereby interpersonal relations, individual differences or learner's uniqueness and

preferences, learner choices and opportunities are taken into consideration. The

participants reported having experienced all this in English courses. P7 recalled

traditional learning:

> In our schools they want us to sit up straight, all of us, wear the same uniform. Sit up straight like that and do whatever teacher tells us, and what's the difference between me and her? We are different people, but we're not allowed to be different. (FG2.2, l.217-219)

In contrast, several participants (e.g., P1, P2, P15, P16) shared group discussion experiences where they could decide to participate whenever they wanted and were not forced so that they felt "comfortable." P6 described how the environment was made "comfortable" by her instructor:

> She made sure that we were comfortable with her. She would share her personal experiences, talk about her family, and she didn't require us to raise our hands like we used to do in school. [Others nodded in agreement] you can just speak up you're more comfortable. (P6, FG2.1, l.383-386)

P7 expanded on the importance of "feeling comfortable" that P6 talked about and described how "back home it'd be like okay, you sit up straight," but "here they take your individuality into account." He described how his habit of doodling was regarded in the two different education systems:

> What teachers did back home was they told me not to doodle but teachers here they don't care and while doodling I'm still listening. I'm just occupying my hands with something else. I'm just a fidgety person. (P7, FG2.1, l.395-397)

P7 agreed with P6 on what "makes a student feel comfortable and that is so important if you want to get feedback out of them or if you want them to participate in class" (FG2.1, l.399-401).

P10 recalled the experience of doing eight "fun activity" of their own choice. The assignments were writing reflection papers but the activities that preceded them involved him in "going to volunteer an hour or going to a party attending any ethnic festival." He was "really surprised" because "I don't think back home any of the English course would

require us to do like a fun activity for our own choice and then write about it" (see

Appendix O, FG3, l.494-506).

    <u>Guided instruction vs. independent learning.</u> The role of the instructor is that of a

facilitator in LC courses. The participants indicated that the instructors displayed

attitudes and dispositions that were very different from the kind of education system they

as Asians are used to. P7 remembered that "back home like teacher takes up the role of

I'm right and you're wrong," which was very discouraging, making it unlikely that

students would "venture out of their comfort zone and try new things, trying new ideas.

And that really stifles your critical thinking and learning process." However, here, P7

noted, "they create this environment where it's okay to make mistakes.... Instead of being

a recipient of information you're actively participating in your own learning" (FG2.1,

l.195-208). P3 experienced it, too. She was not accustomed to delivering speeches and

said it was "hard for the students to understand." But her instructor made use of the

mistakes she made to teach her so that she realized that her instructor wanted the very

best out of her:

> I don't know back in India we're not used to giving speech in front of people….
> He used to help me with that, "I think this sentence wouldn't be appropriate, this
> sentence would be good. Such types of words are not used in America, placement
> of this word is that." That's how I used to get help with... He was really
> interested, and he wanted my own speech and whatever speech I gave to him in
> class he wanted that to be the best actually very good. (P3, FG1.1, l. 159-167)

    While instructors were open to students' mistakes, they capitalized on that to

nurture self-improvement and facilitate students' understanding of academic practices

unknown to them. All the participants reported a variety of learning experiences that

show teaching practices supporting self-improvement and learner independence. P3

admitted to having plagiarized in an assignment. Plagiarism was a new concept

introduced during the first few weeks of her class. She explained it was something not

familiar to those in "our home countries." Her instructor "helped" her by explaining to

her the importance of writing papers in college and what it entails. She was also

"helped" to identify resources she could use to determine how much of her work was

plagiarized and avoid plagiarizing:

> In the first weeks we came to know about this thing called plagiarism which we
> don't come across back in our home countries. So, I think my second paper was
> like, I think it was kind of plagiarized. I did. I copied from Google, I will actually
> accept the fact. So, he kind of helped me telling me that you should know the
> main thing about going to college is writing papers. You shouldn't have
> plagiarized copies, copy it from books, not right from google of course, so they
> have helped me like how and then showed me the website where you can actually
> compare your paper. How are they different? How much isn't plagiarized? So
> that's how he helped me with the plagiarism thing. (P3, FG1.1, l.183-190)

P9 recognized the increased interest of the instructor in facilitating her learning

process unlike her previous learning experience in a lecture-based environment where

students' inquiry was limited to textbook information. However, here, her instructor

sought to address her interest, need, and desire by providing her learning opportunities:

> I feel like instructors wants to take interest in my interest in something to learn
> more. Then sometimes I feel like he or she wants to give me more opportunity to
> learn something rather than textbook. Like my instructor gave me another
> YouTube lecture video if I am interested or I want to learn something or I need
> some help in something particular. They try to give me some link too. (P9, FG3,
> l.199-206)

Both P6 and P13 talked about how learning for them depended on the knowledge and

instruction provided by the instructor. For P13, it used to be "the instructor coming, just

speaking saying or whatever they want to do and then just walks away" (FG3, l.387-388).

P6 was used to learning from the information the instructor provided, revising, and

reading the chapter. It is just the reverse now, having to read the chapter first and taking

a quiz. She expressed how contrasting her previous learning experience to the current

one helped her identify the differences, and value, the new experiences. However, the

lens used at times obstructed her understanding of the rationale behind a particular

teaching practice she encountered in their English class:

> But I feel like I'm still not accustomed to reading the chapter beforehand and taking a quiz. I just feel like that's new material. I'm supposed to go and learn it in class. But the idea is to get familiar with the topic I guess first. And go and enhance on it in class, discuss on it. So that's definitely learner-focused too. (P6, FG2.1, l.162-169)

Even though P8's orientation is very traditional, being a sophomore and having had

experiences which others in his English class did not have, he took charge of his own

learning when he did not feel challenged. He decided to write about an unknown topic to

enhance his current learning experience.

The next section presents the second theme that emerged from the ESL focus

group participants' interviews addressing the second research question: How do learner-

centered learning experiences affect learners' beliefs about the quality of learner-centered

teaching practices?

Identifying Learner-Centeredness and Non-Learner-Centeredness in LCT Practices

The participants identified both learner-centeredness and non-learner-centeredness in the teaching practices of the instructors. These have been presented under four headings: (1) Learning activity; (2) Interpersonal relations; (3) Student knowledge and student's existing learning experiences; and (4) Providing challenges for learning. Learning activity has two sub-categories: (a) individual activity, and (b) cooperative and collaborative activities.

Learning activity. To address the variety in learning, learning opportunities need to include a variety of learning activities. The participants reported taking part in a variety of activities and the learning opportunities that these entailed.

Individual activity. Writing reflection papers, essays, and journals were some common activities that several participants said they found to be positive experiences. Being allowed to choose her own topic of interest motivated one participant: She realized it made "you want to spend more time and you will learn more about how to research on that topic." Yet another concluded after recalling how for oral presentations the instructor recognized individual differences in terms of skills and language proficiency and allowed "option for students to learn in the way that is best for them." Another participant, when writing a journal, was engaged in thinking about a thinking activity; this was tied to a game of volleyball that students played, and he felt that adding "creativity into the class, it actually helped a lot" so that he "really enjoyed" the activity. Another described that the instructor "would put smile on my sentences" because "learning in learner-centered is also to encourage the student."

Positive feelings emerged from phrases like "really helped me a lot improving my English language," "really helped me a lot," "help me out," "That's how he helped me," "looking through my paper or help me with how I structure my sentences" and "they would refer me to other resources," "people are willing to help you out in some sort of way, indirectly or directly," "it helped me to increase my critical thinking," "I learn how to look at and analyze it," "really relevant to the course."

Several participants had reservations about reflection: it was "tiring," a "burden"; it was too frequently done: "the thing which I didn't like about that like we had to write a reflection every time;" it was forcefully done: "We didn't focus much on reading instead we just like to, you have to read it, like, just to get a grade." What the focus group pointed out was that they lacked the requisite skills so that they had negative feelings about the activity: it was an unfamiliar activity: "not familiar with that particular concept"; it was too difficult: "found it very hard to express our proper thoughts;" it was not communicative: "did not actually show what we actually wanted to write;" it was not up to the standard: "they were not up to that level;" it was time-consuming: "it takes time for us to get the concept." The non-learner-centeredness of the teaching practice stems from the feeling that "One thing is that it shouldn't have been monotonous; it shouldn't have been the same all along" (P14, FG4, l.117-118).

While learner choice was a pattern noticeable in the reporting of most participants, one stated the limited options he had in the choice of essays but what compounded his frustration was not having any experience with the assigned topic:

In English class [Incomprehensible] The way she gave us the assignment, there were four essays. Four essays, in the whole semester. One was a research [Incomprehensible], one of them was a song related to your personal life and the impact of that in your life. I never experienced that's why I can't talk about something that I had never experienced. (P11, FG3, l.552-558)

Assigned readings and other assignments caused difficulty for a participant who struggled to complete her readings before class and during the class collecting relevant information:

In one of my classes, there was reading assignment and it was effecting 30% of the grade. So, if I don't do every assignment I lose every percent of my grade. Maximum will be C. [Incomprehensible] Other example is one of my class there's reading assignment before class and then my instructor wants student know at least some of the [Incomprehensible] Class material. He wants to understand everything after the class. Sometime when I did an assignment before the class, it's really hard to get information during the class. (P9, FG3, l.554-549)

A participant's experience indicated lack of shared responsibility. She felt that in her learning process it was up to her to avail the learning opportunities and support. Support systems were available to help her that "they [professors] would refer me to," but the instructor would step in only if she could demonstrate that she needed help and would be "willing to help you out in some sort of way, indirectly or directly":

I guess most of my supportive experiences is like/ it's not like the professors come to me first because I'm an international student or something…. It's mostly like I as a student go up to the professor and if I would ask him or her for help…. There were people looking through my paper or help me with how I structure my sentences or sometimes they would refer me to other resources on campus for that support…. If you can show your professors that you need help, then people are willing to help you out in some sort of way, indirectly or directly. (P1, FG1, l. 191-197)

Cooperative and collaborative activities. Collaboration among peers occurred in class discussions and group projects. These were reportedly frequent through which the participants encountered diverse learning experiences. Mostly, the participants perceived opportunities of learning through peer interaction and feedback. All participants described discussions that were held in a "circle." One participant observed creativity in the activity itself: students "shared their thoughts," and he "liked that way of creativity." Another saw the possibility of hearing a different voice: it was a "very good experience" because "everybody has a different set of mind." One participant described the affective influence: the instructor moving around "asking about opinions, encouraging to talk" was a kind of a boost to "help them kind of feel relieved and speak more." Another participant noted interactional opportunities in the seating arrangement and as a way to alleviate fear: While a person expressed his/her opinion another person could simply agree by nodding and this occurred "when you're sitting in a circle;" he further explained that the group dynamic also provided "confidence to display your opinion" and hearing similar voices it worked as a "stimulant." One participant pointed out the "comfortable" and non-threatening environment: He recalled sitting in a "big" circle on "discussion days" when "it was comfortable environment" for "everyone had their freedom to speak" and if someone was unwilling to participate, "they could either say 'pass' and then it goes to the next person."

An environment of trust emanated from group projects and presentations. One person credited the group environment and relationship: she felt "we were really flexible with whatever we wanted to talk about" and decided to use a variety of resources for

information so that they "were going to be prepared" and that "helped us to make our presentation more better." One participant noted the role of responsibility as an individual and as a group in a trusted atmosphere: "Everyone knew their roles, what they wanted to do" as they asked each other and "everyone was so open-minded and respectful" and "we used to consult each other like is it, you know. Is this image offensive to someone?" before the final presentation. Another participant acknowledged that the "group experience was good and positive" because he felt that "they made me feel important and gave me respect" and "even among their peers." One participant thought that, while it facilitated alternative perspectives as "everyone gives their own perspective," for the international students it was possible to "learn a lot about other students" and also "learn from other persons" and was a way to "adjust with the American environment, interact with the American students."

However, the participants did not always have positive experiences, for instance, with cooperative activities. P4's English classes did not include diverse learning activities. In her experience, the instructor provided less opportunity for in-class interaction. The interaction was limited to only exchanging personal information:

> The only time that we have to discuss is like that day the professor will sign and he would like say, "You have 15 minutes. Talk to your group mates and exchange numbers and contact info and all of that and start doing the outline." And that is the only time. (P4, FG1.1, l.300-303)

Also, reading an assigned book was "interesting" but involved using it only for citations and the instructor "teaching from the textbook." She felt a better use of the reading could be made:

> But the only thing he did was write an essay of our some part of our lives that we want to say, and you use the reference from the book. It's not really much of a use of a book….And the rest of the class is just him teaching from the textbook so it's not much of discussion-based. (P4, FG1.1, l.473-478)

In another focus group meeting, she expressed dissatisfaction in not feeling comfortable with the conversation partner activity. Even with the on-campus, out-of-class peer activity, she was not sure if in the role of a conversation partner the preference was for a native speaker of English rather than a non-native speaker of English like her:

> One of the activities that I did in Kernel, I'm not sure if I mentioned it before, being a part of conversation partner for IEC, I'm not sure if they were happy about having me as a partner because, you know, they would rather have the student talk to the native speaker than to international students who has learnt English two years ago. (P4, FG1.2, l.579-582)

The same peer activity was reported to be unproductive in that the "learner" in the paired conversation activity did not meet the other partner. P1 observed that the learner-centeredness of the conversation activity was derived from the learner, one of the conversation partners, but the non-learner-centeredness was in the act of the learner not wanting to participate:

> There was this other person who did the same IEC conversation thing, but he never had the chance to like meet the student because the student never wanted to talk to him. So, even though it's the same method, it's not learner-centered at all. I think the most important thing like if you want it to be *learner-centered* [emphasis] the *learner* [emphasis] wants to learn. You know, be engaged like *know* [emphasis] that thing. Yeah! That's all I want to say. (P1, FG1.2, 566-571)

> Collaborative activities did not always have the intended outcome, either. Other participants reported the influence of diversity in learning on group activities. Sometimes

lack of coordination among peers in group projects was visible: for group members with diverse backgrounds "the presentation itself reflected that there was not a coordination between the group and she [instructor] took points off." One participant reported a grading issue: a "bad side of group project" was that when her friend who had done the entire group project herself found "her group project is more lower" so that "even though she worked hard, she got lower grade. I think this is another bad side of group project." Several participants attributed ESL students' difficulty to their traditional learning background, lack of requisite skills, and their status as an international student: one participant pointed out that they are a product of a system where there is no "ritual of doing, I would say, presentations and researching on something;" two others indicated that it is "hard" at the beginning of their learning experience: one stated it is difficult to "cooperate because we don't even know how to cooperate," and another emphasized that "even being international you are already unlucky."

Interpersonal relationships. Learner-centeredness requires nurturing of interpersonal relationships among students and between a student and an instructor. The participants expressed this belief upon recounting their experience. P10's instructor's queries about his background and prior learning experiences allowed him in "effectively carrying the learner-centered class." Therefore, he believed, first, the student and the teacher should "know each other" for a "healthy relationship," which would place both in a "comfortable zone" breaking the "stranger thing." P7 believed learner-centeredness resided in the very idea that his instructor was eager "to know me more, wants to connect to me more. He wants to relate to me more" (see Extract 16).

M: You also pointed out that a certain kind of relationship between teacher and student is built. Tell me more about that relationship that you mentioned the last time.

P7: It's just the fact that the teacher wants to get to know you more, there's already a relationship in there. When I go to my Oral Presentation class every day, the teacher asks me, "Hey, what did you do over the weekend?" What's the point of that? In the context of the class, in the context of me passing that classroom or his grading me that has no effect at all. But the fact that this is learner-centered means he wants to know me more, wants to connect to me more. He wants to relate to me more. (Extract 16, FG2.2, l.103-110)

Based on his personal experience when the teacher would ask about his weekend or share personal information, P7 said that, in this process, it was possible to see "individual relationship developing between the teacher and the student where you're kind of catering to each other's needs and what the other expects" (FG2.2, l.116-118).

P1 experienced the connectivity that P7 and P10 described: "She'd ask questions more about like my country, or she'd kind of just ask questions about myself. We could make personal connections" (P1, FG1.1, l.138-140). P9 explained how her instructor was "helpful" knowing that she had a different background and "So he or she try to explain until I get it." She felt "guilty" but her instructor comforted her as she felt "he usually try to cheer me up" because she was "trying" (see Extract 17).

M: How about your English classes? Any English class did you have here, think about that class.

P9: Usually when I need help, I go to the instructor and then the instructor knows I'm from different country. So, he or she try to explain until I get it. I feel very sorry about that because it's a bother for him or her. They were sorry about that, but they say, "You deserve to learn something from me." That is so helpful.

M: How did the instructor make you feel?

P9: Sometimes I feel guilty asking something I should know. But my instructor [would] say, "It's okay, nobody knows about that." I don't have to feel guilty or feel sorry about that. He usually try to cheer me up. I think mostly my instructor

try to give some credit for myself, because at least I'm trying. (Extract 17, FG3, l.116-126)

Even among students, they shared and understood each other. In discussions, students exchanged personal and cultural information and shared views: one participant said, "In some part of our discussion, I always used to share something some kind of an opinion or experience back home, like in Pakistan"; another commented, "I didn't feel overwhelmed because I started to knew the students"; one described that when one student struggled with learning, "the other students were understanding, like they understood what she'd [the instructor] do with us."

However, P4 did not have similar experiences to P7 and P10 as her instructor did not take "specific interest" in her so that she did not feel "comfortable" the way she expected to as an international student (see Extract 18).

> M: You didn't have that experience in your English class?
> P4: Not very similarly. But maybe also because (…) he was [hesitant to speak] I don't want to say like he was not very welcoming in a way that I couldn't meet him after classes because his office hour was kind of weird with my schedule for one thing. I couldn't (…)
> P1: You couldn't connect with him?
> P4: Yeah! I couldn't make connection with him. I don't want to say like he didn't try. He showed interest in all of the students and all of that, but not specific interest, just because I'm an international student in a way which makes me feel comfortable but I'm not sure. (Extract 18, FG1.1, l. 149-156)

Student knowledge and student's existing learning experiences. In LC environments instructors have knowledge about the learners that includes knowing about their prior learning experience, and is not limited to their needs, interests, and wants. Also, learners are adequately challenged to activate their learning process. The

participants reported that instructors ascertained students' "capacity," did not penalize them for making "mistakes," and made the effort to "focusing on learners as a whole."

P10 was "impressed" and "amazed" seeing how his instructor used the learner profile she had from the psychology test students took at the beginning of the semester. It was "really surprising" for him when his instructor gave him an "alternative assignment" when he had some personal problem. He got an A, which he thought was based on what he had done the entire semester. He believed the one-on-one interaction between the student and the instructor embraced the idea of learner-centeredness, informing the instructor "what is the learning capability of each of the students" and "breaks the stranger thing" by placing both the learner and the instructor in a "comfortable zone" (FG3, l.509-523).

P3 recounted her experience of giving a speech in her Oral Presentation class which she assumed no one could understand and she thought "which makes sense" because of her academic orientation. She "used to get help with" improving her work and she felt that "he (the instructor) was really interested and he wanted my own speech" and made her give her best so that "whatever speech I gave to him in class he wanted that to be the best actually very good" (FG1.1, l.158.167). P16 said his instructor "never graded me on the basis of like what were my mistakes, the positive points. Like this is wrong, this is right" and allowed him "to improve with time" so that he thought it was a "positive point" (FG.4, l.159-165). P7 explained how the instructor "invited each one of us in the class personally" and took the opportunity to listen to each student individually; in doing so the instructor was "focusing on learners as a whole" and this he felt was

"learner-centered because she is not using one criteria for all people. She's using specific criteria for a specific person. So, it's better catered to their needs" (FG2.2, l.6-12).

While some focus group participants indicated instructors were open to students' mistakes and capitalized on that to nurture self-improvement and were sensitive to students' learning experiences, students did not always experience learner-centeredness in the teaching practices. P17 described how he was unable to connect his prior learning experience with his current learning experience and concluded that "maybe we were considered good back home." He did not expect to receive a low grade on an essay that he had received an A on earlier in his high school. His instructor expressed the difficulty that his writing had caused because of the words he had used. This was exactly what P17 had been taught to do, "that the better the words I use the better grade I'll get." His instructor's words had made him feel that he was considered good according to the standards of the previous education system he had been in:

> So, I went to the professor in office hours, and she said, "I couldn't even read your paper! You don't have to make your audience, you put me in difficulty well I had to read it all I had to look for words in the dictionary. Why did you use such kind of words?" Like all my life I've been brought up like that, that the better the words I use the better grade I'll get. I think that we come from diverse backgrounds and we have different ways to look at things. Maybe we were considered good back home. Maybe it's not [incomprehensible]. So, once we get used to or immune to what they require of us here, I think we'll be able to perform better. (P17, FG4, l.147-158)

P16 and P17 had contrasting experiences in their English classes. Whereas the instructor paid attention to the ESL learners' interests in P16's class, "student got interested in those and they did a very good discussion about those topics," in P17's class

the instructor did not consider the ESL learner's interest and cultural orientation. P14 felt

that "keeping the interest of a student is very important in a learner-centered

environment." P17 believed maintaining students' interest would be difficult because

"for an example that is too American-centered maybe it is not very easy for us to relate to

it." P15 concluded that it is "American-centered learning" and as learners they have to

"amend" themselves to be able to learn. A feeling of being forced into a very

westernized mode of learning is shared by both P17 and P15 (Extract 19).

> P15: I realized that it is going to be American-centered learning. They are not
> going to change because we came to their country…. They're not gonna change if
> they are, they're just going to give you one or two examples. It's only going to be
> for one or two weeks. Other than that, they couldn't be like you have to learn it. I
> feel like we choose this country we have to like amend ourself too.
> P14: Exactly, but this totally goes against the concept of a learner-centered
> environment.
> M: Do you agree with him?
> P17: I think that I partly agree here (indicating P15) and I partly agree with him. I
> think she's right too. We have chosen this country and they have all the right to
> keep it as they want to.
> P14: Exactly!
> [Others voiced in agreement] (Extract 19, FG4, l.299-313)

Providing challenges for learning. Challenge is needed in learner-centered classes

for activating learning. The participants experienced and identified challenges that

instructors provided, but there were a few who did not feel adequately challenged. For

some, challenges activated their learning process so they felt motivated to have achieved

something. P4 said, "It was a real challenge and kind of anxious activity for me…. I

believe that has improved a little I hope at least" and admitted, "you learn that all the

opportunities that is better for you in the learner-centered class" (FG1.1, l.58-64). P2

"struggled" with writing and felt "I don't have enough words" but he "practiced" so the "thing" he sensed "just went away" (FG1.1, l.40-42). P6 reported that she "felt like it was a lot of extensive work…. and I hadn't done that before," but at the same time her instructor "guided" and "helped" her so that she felt "in general, helped me with college."

However, P8 did not feel challenged enough in his English class and considered it to be "quite useless." He was "bored" and he "did not like" it for "there were things in Kernel I have been doing." P8 took responsibility for his own learning. He used the option of choosing an unfamiliar topic. For his individual assignment, the responsibility he took was twofold: setting the objective of having a meaningful learning outcome and challenging himself. He was determined to learn something even though the "holistic class experience" he expected would not be achievable (see Extract 20):

> M: Did you have similar experiences like P7? He was saying that he had one on one interaction with the teacher. Did you all have similar experiences?
>
> P8: For me it was quite different, because essentially when I came in my Kernel class, it was quite useless for me because I had been studying English all my life I've been reading, writing, all my life. So, Kernel was just a class where I was bored. That was the only class which I did not like. But that's where the learner-centered part came and because while I realize that there were things in Kernel that I have been doing on since the past three years, there were people in the class who have never done that. So, in order to make the class interesting for me where there were people writing papers about exercises, steroids, and health issues, I thought it would be better if I myself increase my level and write something that could be interesting to me and could give me something that I did not know at the end, so I wrote a paper on virtues instead. It took more time, but I did learn something.
>
> P7: On what?
>
> P8: On virtues so I would say, it at least, because of the learner-centered idea, I'm going to do something that is going to give *me* [emphasis] something by the end of the class, even if the holistic class experience is not up to the level I've been [incomprehensible]. So that was my idea behind Kernel.
>
> M: Do you think that's learner-centered?

[P6 and P7 agreed] (Extract 20. FG2.1, l. 45-63)

P1 cited an example of a learning situation where the instructor "really helped the student with the citation and writing." But she was not sure if it was "efficient" or whether it was the student who "just couldn't understand." She felt by decreasing the citation tasks the student had to do, the instructor was trying "to match the level of the learner because she thought if this is too much, she would just level it down." But P1 believed that, if the lowering of the level was "constant throughout the semester that wouldn't be/ I wouldn't think of that as learner-centered because that would be/ the student wouldn't be learning anything, even though the learner is being like respected by the professor or instructor" (FG1.1, l.259-261). On a similar note, P14 thought that LCT is a "progressive learning system," and, referring to assignments, he thought it must be an "integrated system where the difficulty of the paper and everything is on a progression" (FG4, l.137-139).

On another occasion, P1 did not experience authentic interaction in a discussion and did not feel sufficiently challenged (see Appendix O, FG1.1.320-330). The quality of the collaborative learning that was supposed to result from the group discussion was not to her liking as "they (group members) would be really short in their answers." Despite her own efforts to stimulate the discussion, interactive learning did not take place. She felt the students did not respond "unless they were confident in speaking" and they were "hesitative" because "they might feel like what if they think like it's stupid or like what if I'm wrong." The group dynamics were not there and thus the group discussion failed to be LC.

Interpretation

        The ESL focus group participants enthusiastically participated in the discussion. One participant referred less to his experiences in English classes and expressed more of his beliefs that either emerged as he agreed or disagreed with others or when he made references to experiences in other classes. In fact, participants referred to their LC learning experiences in other courses. Therefore, the researcher-moderator had to steer the discussion to experiences in English courses they had taken or were taking. Questions asked included "How about your English classes?," "What kind of teaching practices did you encounter in your English classes where your learning was addressed? Can you recall?" In one group, two participants were dominating the discussion so the research-moderator had to skillfully make it possible for others to participate. Turning to them, they were asked: "P_?", "P_, would you like to add to that?", "Do you disagree at any point amongst yourselves?", "Do you agree with him?", "Would you like to add or say something?"

        The focus group discussion produced an impressionistic view of LCT practices and the presence of the ESL participants also meant that the participants sometimes produced a collective view. The striking differences they identified between the traditional learning experiences and the learner-centered learning experiences prompted them to be appreciative of the authentic learning opportunities and the non-threatening learning environment they have that has been enabling them in adjusting to the new mode of learning. It has been enriching for several participants as LCT practices have provided tools of learning that they had never explored. The focus group discussion by itself

provided them a platform to explore their own beliefs through recalling their experiences, listening to others, and building on each other's thoughts. For several of them, they showed clear understanding that learning is multidimensional and interpersonal and requires a learner to make use of learning opportunities.

However, some level of frustration emanated from their learning experiences as well. These can be attributed to the non-learner-centeredness of the teaching practices that some experienced or reported of others who had experienced it. It could also be that the participants' traditional learning background was still obstructing their ability to embrace LC learning experiences. But several reports of students not feeling adequately challenged or unhappy about not being able to connect prior knowledge with current knowledge indicated that instructors were not exhibiting learner-centeredness by respecting student knowledge and nurturing student potential optimally. Moreover, the non-learner-centeredness in the teaching practices that the ESL focus group participants determined suggest that their learning needed to be supported across all four domains: cognitive and metacognitive; motivational and affective; developmental and social; and individual differences. In fact, not all participants reported experiences that indicated that the "holistic" approach to learning and the learner had been applied in English courses.

<u>Researcher Subjectivity</u>

In qualitative research, reflexivity is a must to expose that the researcher is "conscious of the biases, values, and experiences that he or she brings" (Creswell, 2013, p. 216). In this study, because of self-consciousness the researcher maintained a reflective journal and analytic memos (see Appendix Q for samples of analytic memo). Self-reflection also resulted in relaying past experiences (see Preface). This "active reflexivity" was a way to confront and challenge my own assumptions about the study (Mason, 2002) and be aware that they may potentially shape the findings, the conclusions, and the interpretations.

For conducting the focus group interview, the researcher in the role of a moderator was cognizant of the fact that "[t]he moderator is a person, a member of a racial group, an age category, a gender, and so on, and any one of these factors could inhibit or prompt openness within the group" (Krueger & Casey, 2015). Therefore, in order to reduce the effect of any of these factors as far as possible, the researcher-moderator described her role (see chapter 4, Methodology). She explained that as the researcher, her interest was in having a better understanding of the experiences the participants had in English classes. They were encouraged to share negative and positive experiences as there were no right or wrong answers. They could rely on her as the listener as all information would be kept confidential. The participants were recruited from the institution where the researcher is a doctoral candidate, but they were familiar faces to her only. However, the participants, who were Asian, were very likely to have identified themselves with the researcher-moderator who was of Asian origin as well.

This was an added advantage as it had an impact on the flow of the discussion as well as the atmosphere. The richness of the data depended on how much they trusted her, and their uninhibited responses demonstrated some degree of trust they had in her.

The researcher-moderator was conscious of the interview skills she had mastered to conduct standardized language proficiency tests for over a decade. She reminded herself that "the role of a moderator should not be that of an interviewer" (Morgan, 1997, p. 48) and made efforts to educate herself through reviewing literature and seeking expert opinion. However, due to time constraints she did not have time to practice focus group interviewing as suggested by most scholars (e.g., Krueger & Casey, 2015; Merton et al., 1990; Morgan, 1997). The researcher was aware that "any description of lived experience by participants needs to be seen in the context of that individual's life" (Finlay, 2012) and so through in-depth interviewing (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984) tried to stimulate the participants to be as transparent as possible. This allowed the researcher to place herself in their situation and bracket herself as far as possible.

<u>Summary of Qualitative Findings</u>

Findings from the qualitative data covering beliefs and experiences of college ESL undergraduate students demonstrated that LCT practices are characteristically focused on the learner and the learning process, that they set challenges for both the learner and the instructor, and that they have both academic and non-academic outcomes.

Findings from the qualitative data also showed that LC learning experiences prompted focus group participants to recognize that there are fundamental differences between learner-centered and teacher-centered practices. Although most participants had

positive experiences and appreciated the conducive conditions that LCT practices created

to nurture learners' potential, they also identified non-learner-centeredness in the

practices so that their expectations remained unfulfilled.

Chapter 6 presents the discussion, conclusions, and recommendations.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, the major findings presented in Chapter 5 are discussed. An analysis of their significance has been made by referring to each research question guiding the study and by connecting them to the conceptual framework and literature review presented in Chapters 2 and 3 respectively. Implications for ESL practice and future research are stated. The chapter ends with conclusions drawn from the study.

Discussion

This mixed-methods study sought to investigate ESL undergraduate student perceptions of learner-centered teaching (LCT) practices in English courses and how learner-centered (LC) learning experiences affect their beliefs about the quality of LCT practices. Two studies, using complementary approaches of quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis, were conducted.

The answers to the research questions cannot be formed without reference to the conceptual framework and the theoretical framework. As explained in Chapter 2 and 3, this study considered learner-centeredness through a research-based perspective that McCombs and Whisler's (1997) broad definition of learner-centered embodies. Most importantly, the Learner-centered Psychological Principles (LCPs) (APA, 1993) are foundational to the definition. The LCPs, categorized into four major domains, refer to major areas of human functioning that are "holistically involved in the process of learning – for all learners, cradle to grave" (McCombs & Miller, 2007, p. 45) form the theoretical base of LCT. In fact, the LCPs use cognitive, metacognitive, motivational,

affective, developmental, personal, social, and individual difference factors to comprehensively define learner-centered teaching. The Learner-centered Battery Student Survey (LCBSS) is part of the Learner-centered Battery (LCB) that emerged from the theory and research-based LCPs. Therefore, both the definition and the survey were purposefully used in the study to determine undergraduate ESL students' experiences and beliefs about LCT practices in English classes and to understand to what extent their learning experiences influenced their beliefs about the quality of LCT practices in English classes.

A total of 112 ESL undergraduate students in a Midwestern university participated in the LCBSS. For the purpose of the study, results from Scale 1 measuring student perceptions of teaching practices in English classes were considered. Multiple focus groups were conducted with 17 survey participants. The analysis of the significance of the findings is made in two ways: (1) by referring to each research question, and (2) by connecting the findings to the literature reviewed in Chapter 3.

Findings Related to Research Question 1

The studies revealed that, on the whole, ESL undergraduate students held positive beliefs about LCT practices in English courses. Ample evidence was provided by focus group participants supporting learner-centeredness in the teaching practices they experienced. They acknowledged that a variety of learning activities were offered that ranged from individual tasks such as reflective reading, essay writing, journal writing, oral presentation to collaborative and cooperative activities such as peer feedback, discussion, group work. They all deemed one-on-one interaction with, and feedback

from, the instructor as useful, and found the discussions enjoyable and educational. They considered the learning environment to be healthy, comfortable, flexible, and non-threatening. They felt special as their instructors respected them for their cultural and personal attributes and helped adequately equip them for the current academic community. They were conscious about the usefulness of learning to overcome the challenges they faced and expected the instructors to offer facilitative strategies. In short, focus group participants' discussions suggest that their learning was influenced within and across all four domains of cognitive and metacognitive, motivational and affective, developmental and social, and individual differences.

Some of the findings were similar to two other studies. In Gomez's (2015) study in a psychology undergraduate course, participants responded to the open-ended questions about what they perceived to be LC instruction in their classes. Several findings were similar such as learner-focused instruction, modification of lessons to accommodate learner interest, use of diverse learning tools, interactive discussions encouraging student voice and construction of knowledge, learner-focused rather than instructor-focused discussions, peer learning, skill-building and opportunities for perspective-taking through collaborative activities, nurturing critical thinking, and creating a safe environment.

In Wohlfarth et al.'s (2008) study, graduate students in a psychology program identified learner-centeredness after being told that their courses would be taught following Weimer's (2002) five tenets of LC. Similar to the findings of the qualitative part in this mixed-methods study, a majority of the students felt that they were respected

and trusted, critical thinking and not memorization was encouraged, reflection and discussion were prevalent, learner responsibility and independent learning was emphasized, academic and non-academic outcomes were highlighted, and learner-based feedback was practiced. These similarities suggest that such practices are most commonly demonstrated by LC instructors in these institutions. Findings from this study showed exclusively that ESL students perceived LCT to impact the "growth" of a learner in several ways: (1) It involves learners in the process of acculturation. (2) It requires nurturing of interpersonal relationships. (3) It inculcates the values of lifelong learning.

Further examination of the quantitative and qualitative data showed that the overall trend in the teaching practices in the UNI undergraduate English courses was that of highly transitioning to LC. To determine the level of learner-centeredness in English classes, the means from each of the four factors in Scale 1 were statistically compared to the validation means of MPS (most preferred scores) (McCombs et al., 1997).   As reported in Chapter 5 (see Table 15), the average score for Factor 4 (AIDD) was within the MPS but close for Factors 1, 2, and 3 (PosRel, StuVoic, HOTS), thus suggesting that English classes demonstrated some characteristics of the LCPs.

These findings are consistent with other studies (Fasko & Grubb, 1997; Gomez, 2015; McCombs et al., 1997; Schuh, 2004) including the validation study that examined student perceptions of teaching practices. Pre-service teachers in two undergraduate educational psychology courses in Fasko and Grubb's (1997) study had mean scores that exhibited high levels of LC practices in PosRel ($M = 3.15$), StuVoic ($M = 3.14$), HOTS ($M = 3.02$), but not in AIDD ($M = 2.39$). In Gomez's (2015) study, mean scores of

teaching practices in PosRel ($M = 2.97$), StuVoic ($M = 3.20$), and HOTS ($M = 2.93$) showed instructors transitioning toward a high level of LC, but the AIDD ($M = 2.24$) score was below the MPS.

Similarly, mean scores from the validation study conducted by McCombs et al. (1997) showed instructors exhibited high levels of LC practices in PosRel ($M = 2.94$), StuVoic ($M = 3.05$), HOTS ($M = 2.98$), but not on AIDD ($M = 2.56$). Schuh (2004) reported similar low AIDD score ($M = 2.17$) below the MPS. In a case study of a single classroom, she used the LCB along with observation and interview and found principles of LC perspective embedded within a traditional teacher-centered environment. Mean scores were near about the MPS for PosRel ($M = 3.18$), StuVoic ($M = 2.95$), and HOTS ($M = 3.09$), quite similar to the present study as well as Gomez's (2015) study.

Although statistical tests did not show significant differences in terms of age, gender, or college credit, results from previous studies as well as the present study suggest that instructors have more difficulty with AIDD practices. While in the present study, AIDD mean scores indicated teachers showed high levels of LC practices ($M = 2.63$), qualitative data collected from ESL focus group participants' reports of their English class experiences showed issues related to such practices. Survey participants also reported a not so high-level of transitioning to LC as shown in Table 14 (combined total = entirely teacher-centered + low level of transitioning to LC): 20.5% identified teaching practices that showed a low level of transitioning in the case of PosRel; 22.5% in the case of StuVoic; 20.6% in the case of HOTS. Most strikingly, 42.1% identified AIDD practices that showed low level transitioning to LC.

Explanation provided by focus group participants about AIDD teaching practices could suggest why survey respondents may have responded the way they did to this particular aspect of LCT practice. Items that measured the construct included the following: "My instructor changes learning assignments when I seem to be failing," "My instructor encourages me to work with other students when I have trouble with an assignment," "My instructor encourages me to tell him or her the way I would like to learn", "My instructor teaches me how to deal with stress that affects my learning," "My instructor makes an effort to get to know me and my background." Some references to the ideas represented in these statements can be seen in a focus group discussion (see Extract 21):

> M: A lot of participants marked that sometimes the assignments were changed if they seemed to be failing or the instructor taught them how to cope with stress or encourage them to tell him how they wanted to learn. What were your experiences? Did you often experience this?
> P2, P1, P4, [P3 nodded in agreement]: No
> P1: No, I don't think, I think I had.
> P3: Not in English class for sure.
> Extract 21. FG1.1, l.233-239

The idea that learning is a "shared responsibility" (McCombs & Whisler, 1997) did not appear to be strengthened by the instructor so that learners were instructed to exchange personal information only:

> Well, in my English class, we didn't usually have discussions in class. The only time that we have to discuss is like that day the professor will sign and he would like say, "You have 15 minutes. Talk to your group mates and exchange numbers and contact info and all of that and start doing the outline". And that is the only time. (P4, FG1.1, l.300-303)

The focus group participants reported having choices for essay topics but not for learning activities, which suggests they could not express how they would like to learn. Moreover, although the reflection activity after reading a book initially was burdensome and unenjoyable for several participants, none of them reported having been helped by their instructors to cope with the stress. In short, the focus group participants' descriptions did not always indicate that the instructors were fully aware of what learner-centeredness required. They were not always mindful of the affective needs, cognitive challenges, lack of connectivity between the ESL students' prior learning experiences and current learning experiences or individual differences the students had. Nor were they thoughtful about the facilitative mechanisms certain learning activities required.

Findings Related to Research Question 2

In this mixed-methods study, results from the quantitative part did not indicate any relationship to age, gender, and college status with student perceptions of teaching practices. In fact, all students irrespective of gender, age, or college status found teaching practices to be highly transitioning towards learner-centeredness. However, the quantitative data supported that student perceptions of LCT practices significantly differed based on ethnicity. Significant pairwise differences were found using Tukey HSD between ethnic groups for PosRel, StuVoic, and AIDD mean scores. Suffice it to say, second language or foreign language learning is not similar to other types of learning (Shi, 2016). Besides, in LCT, each of the four domains of the LCPs combine and interact to affect the learners and their learning in a unique way (McCombs & Miller, 2007) when any teaching practice is encountered. The responses to the survey items may have been

influenced by their background as well as how efficiently their learning processes were activated in their minds as a result of a teaching activity in their English classes. As was indicated in the qualitative data in this study, the Asian participants cited differences between their previous and current learning experiences and this had an impact on how they evaluated the LCT practices of their English instructors. Therefore, how the Middle Eastern group fared in understanding and adapting to a new mode of learning would impact how they responded to the items in the survey. Although the focus group interviews allowed further exploration of students' beliefs, the multiple focus groups were predominantly made up of Asians and there was not the opportunity to explore the Middle Eastern students' beliefs due to the absence of Middle Eastern or "Other" survey participants in the focus groups.

Overall, the qualitative data suggested that the ESL focus group participants had remarkably satisfactory LCT experiences. The idea that students were engaged in active learning in which they learned by doing and gained learner independence in an environment of trust was reiterated by ESL focus group participants. All the focus group participants recognized the usefulness in collaborative and cooperative learning that prepared them for academic and non-academic settings. They realized how acquiring requisite skills that activities like reflection papers, project work, and group work were meant to develop was a necessity in the real world. The activity that they found most rewarding was discussion. Such an activity promoted a learning environment that was comfortable and flexible so that it helped them develop personal relationships, allowed perspective-taking, being heard, refining knowledge through the exchange of information

and views, and argumentation. Among most focus group participants there was self-realization too that learning opportunities are everywhere, and the instructor is a resource person, a facilitator. A great amount of research, which includes a meta-analysis of the effectiveness of active learning (Blumberg, 2009), supports active learning so that increased active learning opportunities can be at the center of creating a LC environment in higher education (Lumpkin et al., 2015).

Above all, ESL focus group participants reported both academic and non-academic gains. Through collaborative learning, authentic learning and experiential learning, building of relationships and understanding within the academic setting and the community were fostered. They found out-of-class activities like interviewing people in the community and on campus worthwhile as they greatly facilitated their process of acculturation. Interactive activities lead to stimulus of different perspectives (Rallis, 1995) and increased sensitivity and understanding for others and meaningful human relations (Papalia, 1976). The idea that learning opportunities, learning environment, and variety in learning activities are elements that the LC instructor specifically takes into consideration was very prominent in the ESL focus group discussions. A result of their LC learning experiences was that they had been enriched in different ways. Integration of language skills in the learning activities had improved their skills and boosted their confidence. Availability of different support systems allowed them to make appropriate use of the resources. Collaborative and cooperative activities prompted them to realize the value of co-construction of knowledge and shared responsibility. Skill-building opportunities helped them to be prepared for college experience and beyond. The most

powerful influence of LC learning experience was that it instilled the importance of lifelong learning.

The results from the qualitative study implied that the instructors had enormous influence over the learning processes of the ESL students. In fact, in LCT, instructors are "facilitators of student learning or creators of an environment for learning" (Blumberg, 2009, p. 3) who focus on what students will learn, how they will learn it, and how they can use the learning (Weimer, 2013). Constructing multidimensional learning environments is a must so that students can be promoted to realize their potential (Papalia, 1976).

<center>Limitations, Implications for Practice, Future Research</center>

Limitations

The setting for this study was a small, public institution in the Midwest with a dwindling international student population. The results from this study may be generalized to only small public institutions with not a large number of undergraduate international students. There were limitations in the recruitment process of research participants. First, the study was limited by the number of students who decided to take part in the survey and in the focus groups. Loss of information occurred due to lack of participation by non-responders. Second, although the undergraduate ESL student population was said to be 373 in Fall 2017 (UNI fact book), this included those who might not have been required to take any of the English courses. This meant a drop in the sample size. Third, due to low enrollment of ESL undergraduate students in Liberal Arts Core (LAC) courses in English skills in the university, sections devoted to only this

particular category of students were no longer offered. Therefore, it was not possible to recruit cohorts of participants from a particular academic year.

A self-reporting survey, such as the LCBSS used in this study, could have led to an unreliable data source because of participants misinterpreting a question, responding superficially or dishonestly, or their poor memory. The focus group interviews included participants with varied levels of language proficiency and self-reflection skills, which may have been a limiting factor. The passage of time since their experiences in English classes may also have impacted their ability to recall specific teaching practices related to English class. This may have impacted responses both to the survey items and focus group interviews.

<u>Implications for ESL Learner-Centered Teaching Practices</u>

A number of implications and recommendations for practice can be extrapolated from the findings that emerged from this mixed-methods study. With regard to principles of teaching, instructors in ESL programs and English classes need to be cognizant of principles that are aligned with LC education so that these principles become transparent in their academic dealings through their character and beliefs. In fact, the practice of "principled eclecticism" (Larsen-Freeman, 2012) implies that ESL instructors be aware of principles that are aligned with LCT. A comparison of the LCPs (APA, 1997) embodying several domains explained in the Standards for ESL/EFL Teachers of Adults Framework (n.d.) demonstrates an important difference. Standards 5 and 8 exclusively refer to teacher demeanor and attitude to the profession and do not, unlike the LCPs, consider the personal domain of a learning environment (see Appendix F for the

comparison). The LCPs, as the comparison indicated, encompass a wider range and description of factors that serve as a powerful tool in a learning environment. It is recommended that ESL instructors be introduced to these LCPs.

Reflection, critical thinking, independent learning, and active learning are modes of learning that require a different mindset than what ESL learners are accustomed to as they are likely to have had language learning experiences that are very different. Additionally, academic orientation that has involved them in approaching listening, speaking, reading, and writing requires tremendous effort in their thought processes. In other words, unlearning what they have been habituated to that is contrary to LC learning is extremely difficult but a necessary step (McCombs, 2003b) and not impossible. As affective factors in language learning, attribution and self-efficacy are closely related (Shi, 2016) and forcing ESL learners to unlearn things that they have put effort into may have negative impact on their self-esteem. Therefore, current learning experiences should be facilitated by calling upon existing knowledge to serve as a point of reference and as a foundation from which new knowledge can be built. Opportunities need to be created for ESL students to reflect on what they already know and how it is related to and supported by their existing knowledge. Additionally, it is necessary to provide success experiences to help modify the self-concept positively (Papalia, 1976).

Closely related to the issue of connecting prior learning experience to current learning experience are the processes of independent learning, critical thinking, and learning how to learn. Prior learning experiences for most ESL learners are different. Therefore, priority should be given to individual differences as well as socio-cultural and

academic background. Tasks should be introduced that are sequentially arranged. Prior to fostering critical thinking, instructors need to raise students' confidence in their ability to contribute to class. This should include fostering critical thinking processes by employing a variety of learning activities, but paying attention to specific details that stimulate learner involvement such as arranging class seating in discussions that encourage student participation, calling on students to answer questions, and grading on individual student participation. ESL/EFL learners have reported experiencing greater growth in critical thinking through writing assignments and class discussions (Tsui, 2002). Incorporating learning-to-learn strategies and learner choices to nurture independent thinking earlier in the course can assist the ESL learners to appreciate, understand, and gradually acquire these skills. Beginning students in First Year Experience or College Success courses are often assisted to acquire and practice basic learning-to-learn skills (Blumberg, 2009).

Supporting ESL learners' learning processes requires having adequate student knowledge as well as being sensitive to the different relationships that a learner has in a learning environment. The instructor's responsibility includes and is not limited to determining their needs, interests, abilities, and preferences, as well as social and cultural orientation. Students have expectations that are not only limited to content knowledge they gain but also the attitude and interest others have in the learning environment. Learners' negative feelings like anxiety, frustration, and uneasiness can raise their affective filter and make them less successful in their learning process. Therefore, the instructor should be sensitive towards interpersonal relationships that need to be nurtured

within a learning environment. Self-efficacy plays a significant role in L2 and foreign language learning as learners having high self-efficacy are likely to perform better academically, effectively use more learning strategies, maintain low language anxiety and show healthy attributions (Shi, 2016). Besides, when considering collaborative and cooperative learning activities, the instructor should use a variety of grouping patterns to adapt learning environments to individual differences. In fact, the instructor should be aware of the series of relationships that a learning environment encompasses: between the student and the self, the student and other students, the student and the teacher, the student and the curriculum materials, and the student and the method of instruction (Papalia, 1976).

Recommendations for Future Research

This study makes it clear that there is a need for continued research on understanding the nature of ESL undergraduate students' LC experiences in English classes. It highlights ESL students' perceptions of teaching practices in English classes and demonstrates how students' beliefs are affected by the LC learning experiences they have; they are primarily driven by contrasting their prior learning experiences with current learning experiences and identification of non-learner-centeredness in teaching practices. It also reveals that English courses in a Midwestern university are highly transitioning towards learner-centeredness. Further research on learner-centeredness would contribute to expanding the knowledge base of how to facilitate both the ESL students and ESL/English instructors and improving ESL programs in the institutions of higher education.

A replication of this study should take place in larger universities with significantly larger and more diverse ESL student enrollment. This would increase the likelihood of differentiating or segmenting the data into various ethnic groups, for instance, the Middle Eastern group, which had shown significant pairwise differences in perceptions of teaching practices in the present study. Their absence in focus group interviews did not allow further investigations into their beliefs to ascertain the actual differences that may have existed. Conducting the study using a diverse sample would also increase the likelihood of identifying perceptions that are group-specific. An increased and carefully selected sample size would increase the generalizability of the findings.

Future research also needs to determine the variables that influence ESL students' beliefs about LCT in English courses and ESL programs. There remains remarkably little, if any, empirical research on those variables that influence ESL undergraduate students' beliefs about LCT practices. Larger universities with significant and diverse ESL student enrollment should be considered. This can increase the chances of accurately reflecting the perceptions of a particular demographic sample. Besides, identifying variables that influence ESL students' beliefs can assist the students themselves to manipulate these beliefs in a way that can help them transition to this new paradigm more smoothly. Instructors and ESL program coordinators can use the information for similar purposes.

Finally, research needs to focus on instructors who teach ESL or English courses along with their students to ascertain whether, and to what extent, difference exists

between each group. This mixed-methods study indicated non-learner-centeredness in the teaching practices as well as challenges that LCT practices set. Therefore, using the Assessment of Learner-centered Practices (ALCP): Beliefs Portion of the Postsecondary Level Instructor Survey (College Level) (McCombs, 1999), instructors can examine their own beliefs and contrast them with the student data collected through the LCBSS (McCombs et al., 1997).

<div align="center">Conclusion</div>

The results from this study suggested that investigating ESL students' perceptions of learner-centered teaching practices in English classes is essential for understanding whether effective and successful implementation of a learner-centered environment in institutions of higher education is taking place.   This mixed-methods study does not support characterization of higher education as teacher-centered, rather than learner-centered (e.g., Barr & Tagg, 1995; Blumberg, 2009; Doyle, 2011; Weimer, 2013). It does not support Blumberg and Pontiggia's (2011) study which used Weimer's (2002) five dimensions of LCT to create a rubric based on literature on LCT (Alexander & Murphy, 2000; Lambert & McCombs, 1998), and found that the majority of courses in higher education rated at a low-level of transitioning to LC methods, with only one class rated at a high-level of transitioning to LC methods, and no classes rated entirely LC.

On the other hand, this mixed-methods study's findings are similar to several studies that found educational institutions to be not entirely LC, but highly transitioning toward LC (Fasko & Grubb, 1997; Gomez, 2015; McCombs et al., 1997; Schuh, 2004). This study did not find statistical significance with respect to a difference in LC

perceptions in terms of gender, age, or college status as measured by the LCBSS

(McCombs et al., 1997). However, the quantitative data supported that student

perceptions of LCT practices significantly differed based on ethnicity.   It was not

possible to investigate further and determine the differences from qualitative data sources

as the focus group participants were all Asians.

In the field of language teaching, instructors practice "principled eclecticism"

(Larsen-Freeman, 2012) that involves a mix of different approaches identified as learner-

centered teaching (Nunan, 1988). Moreover, in English-speaking settings such as the

U.S., instructors are frequently unprepared for students with diverse cultural and

linguistic backgrounds (Freeman & Freeman, 1998). This calls for some mechanism in

ESL programs and English courses in higher education systems that have an LC mission

to support both the instructors and the ESL students in reflecting on their own beliefs

about LCT practices. This mixed-methods study allowed ESL undergraduate students in

a small Midwestern university to express their own beliefs about teaching practices in

English courses and has important implications for the students and instructors alike.

There were interpretations that were useful in the qualitative study that did not unfold in

the quantitative part. The study contributes to the data that is lacking in higher education

institutions in that there are educational programs and courses that actually demonstrate

that they are highly transitioning to LC.

Given the rising number of ESL learners with diverse social, cultural, and

linguistic backgrounds, this research can serve as a framework for implementing

professional development focused specifically on non-learner-centered practices that

impact, for example, culturally relevant pedagogy, facilitative mechanisms, interpersonal relationship, and student knowledge. This way the opportunities for transitioning to more learner-centeredness will be enhanced. The results from this mixed-methods study will provide institutions of higher education, specifically ESL programs and English courses in the Midwest, with a quantitative measure of the extent to which English/ESL instructors engage in LCT practices. The qualitative component allowed insight into the actual experiences and beliefs that the research participants had that could not be extracted otherwise through quantitative measure.

Finally, this mixed-methods study aimed to investigate LCT in an institution of higher education. From that perspective, it points the way to future research on LCT in higher education. It suggests important implications for future research on LCT practices, adds to the knowledge base on learner-centeredness, and contributes to the literature on LCT practices in terms of ESL students' perceptions of learner-centeredness in their instructors' teaching practices.

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APPENDIX A

Abbreviations

APA	American Psychological Association
EAP	English for Academic Purposes
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second language
LCB	Learner-centered Battery
LCBSS	Learner-centered Battery Student Survey
L1	First language
L2	Second language
LC	Learner-centered
LCPs	Learner-centered psychological principles
LCT	Learner-centered teaching
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
ZPD	Zone of proximal development

APPENDIX B

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Beliefs: According to Dewey (1933), beliefs are matters that we have no sure knowledge, but feel confident to act upon, matters that we accept as true, but which in future may be questioned.

English as a Second Language (ESL): It refers to a setting in which English is the primary language for most people living in the country so that students are exposed to English in/outside the classroom (Freeman & Freeman, 1998). For instance, English is taught as a second language to international students in the U.S. or in other English-speaking countries.

English as a Foreign Language (EFL): People who learn English as a Foreign language (EFL) already use at least one language and live in a community in which English is not used widely (Tomlinson, 2005).

Learner-centered: A perspective that considers individual learners, their heredity, experiences, perspectives, backgrounds, talents, interests, capacities, and needs, with a focus on learning.

Learner-centered Psychological Principles (LCPs): 14 Psychological principles, pertaining to the learner and the learning process are divided into cognitive and metacognitive, motivational and affective, developmental and social, and individual difference factors influencing learners and learning (APA, 1997). See Appendix C for the LCPs.

Learner-centered teaching (LCT): As opposed to teacher-centered education where the teacher controls and decides the learning of the learners, LCT "place[s] students at the center … and respect[s] their learning needs, strategies, and styles" (K. L. Brown, 2003).

L1/L2: A person's first language is L1. L2 is the target language or a second language the person has or speaks. According to Cook (2007) L2 learners are different from L2 users in that L2 learners are "acquiring a system for later use; they interact in information-gap games, they make up sentences, they plan activities in groups" (pp. 241-242).

*Target Language (*also *L2)*: "The language which a person is learning in contrast to a first language or mother tongue" (J. C. Richards, Platt, & Platt, 1992, p. 373).

APPENDIX C

LEARNER-CENTERED PSYCHOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES

The 14 learner-centered psychological principles (LCPs), first organized into four domains of factors, and later into five in the validation studies (McCombs et al., 1997) (see Appendix D), are foundational to the LCBSS, the instrument used in the present study. The following 14 psychological principles pertain to the learner and the learning process[*]. They focus on psychological factors that are primarily internal to and under the control of the learner rather than conditioned habits or physiological factors. However, the principles also attempt to acknowledge external environment or contextual factors that interact with these internal factors.
The principles are intended to deal holistically with learners in the context of real-world learning situations. Thus, they are best understood as an organized set of principles; no principle should be viewed in isolation. The 14 principles are divided into those referring to cognitive and metacognitive, motivational and affective, developmental and social, and individual difference factors influencing learners and learning. Finally, the principles are intended to apply to all learners – from children, to teachers, to administrators, to parents, and to community members involved in our educational system.

Cognitive and Metacognitive Factors

1. **Nature of the learning process.**
   The learning of complex subject matter is most effective when it is an intentional process of constructing meaning from information and experience.
   There are different types of learning processes, for example, habit formation in motor learning; and learning that involves the generation of knowledge, or cognitive skills and learning strategies. Learning in schools emphasizes the use of intentional processes that students can use to construct meaning from information, experiences, and their own thoughts and beliefs. Successful learners are active, goal-directed, self-regulating, and assume personal responsibility for contributing to their own learning. The principles set forth in this document focus on this type of learning.

2. **Goals of the learning process.**
   The successful learner, over time and with support and instructional guidance, can create meaningful, coherent representations of knowledge.
   The strategic nature of learning requires students to be goal directed. To construct useful representations of knowledge and to acquire the thinking and learning strategies necessary for continued learning success across the life span, students must generate and pursue personally relevant goals. Initially, students' short-term goals and learning may be sketchy in an area, but over time their understanding can be refined by filling gaps, resolving inconsistencies, and deepening their understanding of the subject matter so that they can reach longer-term goals. Educators can assist learners in creating meaningful learning goals that are consistent with both personal and educational aspirations and interests.

3. **Construction of knowledge.**

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[*] The development of each principle involved thorough discussions of the research supporting that principle. The multidisciplinary research expertise of the Task Force and Work Group members facilitated an examination of each principle from a number of different research perspectives.

The successful learner can link new information with existing knowledge in meaningful ways.

Knowledge widens and deepens as students continue to build links between new information and experiences and their existing knowledge base. The nature of these links can take a variety of forms, such as adding to, modifying, or reorganizing existing knowledge or skills. How these links are made or develop may vary in different subject areas, and among students with varying talents, interests, and abilities. However, unless new knowledge becomes integrated with the learner's prior knowledge and understanding, this new knowledge remains isolated, cannot be used most effectively in new tasks, and does not transfer readily to new situations. Educators can assist learners in acquiring and integrating knowledge by a number of strategies that have been shown to be effective with learners of varying abilities, such as concept mapping and thematic organization or categorizing.

4.   **Strategic thinking.**
The successful learner can create and use a repertoire of thinking and reasoning strategies to achieve complex learning goals.

Successful learners use strategic thinking in their approach to learning, reasoning, problem solving, and concept learning. They understand and can use a variety of strategies to help them reach learning and performance goals, and to apply their knowledge in novel situations. They also continue to expand their repertoire of strategies by reflecting on the methods they use to see which work well for them, by receiving guided instruction and feedback, and by observing or interacting with appropriate models. Learning outcomes can be enhanced if educators assist learners in developing, applying, and assessing their strategic learning skills.

5.   **Thinking about thinking.**
Higher order strategies for selecting and monitoring mental operations facilitate creative and critical thinking.

Successful learners can reflect on how they think and learn, set reasonable learning or performance goals, select potentially appropriate learning strategies or methods, and monitor their progress toward these goals. In addition, successful learners know what to do if a problem occurs or if they are not making sufficient or timely progress toward a goal. They can generate alternative methods to reach their goal (or reassess the appropriateness and utility of the goal). Instructional methods that focus on helping learners develop these higher order (metacognitive) strategies can enhance student learning and personal responsibility for learning.

6.   **Context of learning.**
Learning is influenced by environmental factors, including culture, technology, and instructional practices.

Learning does not occur in a vacuum. Teachers a major interactive role with both the learner and the learning environment. Cultural or group influences on students can impact many educationally relevant variables, such as motivation, orientation toward learning, and ways of thinking.

Technologies and instructional practices must be appropriate for learners' level of prior knowledge, cognitive abilities, and their learning and thinking strategies. The classroom environment, particularly the degree to which it is nurturing or not, can also have significant impacts on student learning.

Motivational and Affective Factors

7.   **Motivational and emotional influences on learning.**
What and how much is learned is influenced by the motivation. Motivation to learn, in turn, is influenced by the individual's emotional states, beliefs, interests and goals, and habits of thinking.
The rich internal world of thoughts, beliefs, goals, and expectations for success or failure can enhance or interfere the learner's quality of thinking and information processing. Students' beliefs about themselves as learners and the nature of learning have a marked influence on motivation. Motivational and emotional factors also influence both the quality of thinking and information processing as well as an individual's motivation to learn. Positive emotions, such as curiosity, generally enhance motivation and facilitate learning and performance. Mild anxiety can also enhance learning and performance by focusing the learner's attention on a particular task.
However, intense negative emotions (e.g., anxiety, panic, rage, insecurity) and related thoughts (e.g., worrying about competence, ruminating about failure, fearing punishment, ridicule, or stigmatizing labels) generally detract from motivation, interfere with learning, and contribute to low performance.

8.   **Intrinsic motivation to learn.**
The learner's creativity, higher order thinking, and natural curiosity all contribute to motivation to learn. Intrinsic motivation is stimulated by tasks of optimal novelty and difficulty, relevant to personal interests, and providing for personal choice and control.
Curiosity, flexible and insightful thinking, and creativity are major indicators of the learners' intrinsic motivation to learn, which is in large part a function of meeting basic needs to be competent and to exercise personal control. Intrinsic motivation is facilitated on tasks that learners perceive as interesting and personally relevant and meaningful, appropriate in complexity and difficulty to the learners' abilities, and on which they believe they can succeed. Intrinsic motivation is also facilitated on tasks that are comparable to real-world situations and meet needs for choice and control. Educators can encourage and support learners' natural curiosity and motivation to learn by attending to individual differences in learners' perceptions of optimal novelty and difficulty, relevance, and personal choice and control.

9.   **Effects of motivation on effort.**
Acquisition of complex knowledge and skills requires extended learner effort and guided practice. Without learners' motivation to learn, the willingness to exert this effort is unlikely without coercion.
Effort is another major indicator of motivation to learn. The acquisition of complex knowledge and skills demands the investment of considerable learner energy and strategic effort, along with persistence over time. Educators need to be concerned with facilitating motivation by strategies that enhance learner effort and commitment to learning and to achieving high standards of comprehension and understanding. Effective strategies include purposeful learning activities, guided by practices that enhance positive emotions and intrinsic motivation to learn, and methods that increase learners' perceptions that a task is interesting and personally relevant.

Developmental and Social Factors

10. **Developmental influences on learning.**
    As individuals develop, there are different opportunities and constraints for learning. Learning is most effective when differential development within and across physical, intellectual, emotional, and social domains is taken into account.
    Individuals learn best when material is appropriate to their developmental level and is presented in an enjoyable and interesting way. Because individual development varies across intellectual, social, emotional, and physical domains, achievement in different instructional domains may also vary. Overemphasis on one type of developmental readiness--such as reading readiness, for example--may preclude learners from demonstrating that they are more capable in other areas of performance. The cognitive, emotional, and social development of individual learners and how they interpret life experiences are affected by prior schooling, home, culture, and community factors. Early and continuing parental involvement in schooling, and the quality of language interactions and two-way communications between adults and children can influence these developmental areas. Awareness and understanding of developmental differences among children with and without emotional, physical, or intellectual disabilities, can facilitate the creation of optimal learning contexts.

11. **Social influences on learning.**
    Learning is influenced by social interactions, interpersonal relations, and communication with others.
    Learning can be enhanced when the learner has an opportunity to interact and to collaborate with others on instructional tasks. Learning settings that allow for social interactions, and that respect diversity, encourage flexible thinking and social competence. In interactive and collaborative instructional contexts, individuals have an opportunity for perspective taking and reflective thinking that may lead to higher levels of cognitive, social, and moral development, as well as self-esteem. Quality personal relationships that provide stability, trust, and caring can increase learners' sense of belonging, self-respect and self-acceptance, and provide a positive climate for learning. Family influences, positive interpersonal support and instruction in self-motivation strategies can offset factors that interfere with optimal learning such as negative beliefs about competence in a particular subject, high levels of test anxiety, negative sex role expectations, and undue pressure to perform well. Positive learning climates can also help to establish the context for healthier levels of thinking, feeling, and behaving. Such contexts help learners feel safe to share ideas, actively participate in the learning process, and create a learning community.

Individual Differences Factors

12. **Individual differences in learning.**
    Learners have different strategies, approaches, and capabilities for learning that are a function of prior experience and heredity.
    Individuals are born with and develop their own capabilities and talents. In addition, through learning and social acculturation, they have acquired their own preferences for how they like to learn and the pace at which they learn. However, these preferences are not always useful in helping learners reach their learning goals. Educators need to help students examine their learning preferences and expand or modify them, if necessary. The

interaction between learner differences and curricular and environmental conditions is another key factor affecting learning outcomes. Educators need to be sensitive to individual differences, in general. They also need to attend to learner perceptions of the degree to which these differences are accepted and adapted to by varying instructional methods and materials.

13. **Learning and diversity.**
    Learning is most effective when differences in learners' linguistic, cultural, and social backgrounds are taken into account.
    The same basic principles of learning, motivation, and effective instruction apply to all learners. However, language, ethnicity, race, beliefs, and socioeconomic status all can influence learning. Careful attention to these factors in the instructional setting enhances the possibilities for designing and implementing appropriate learning environments. When learners perceive that their individual differences in abilities, backgrounds, cultures, and experiences are valued, respected, and accommodated in learning tasks and contexts, levels of motivation and achievement are enhanced.

14. **Standards and assessment.**
    Setting appropriately high and challenging standards and assessing the learner as well as learning progress – including diagnostic, process, and outcome assessment – are integral parts of the learning process.
    Assessment provides important information to both the learner and teacher at all stages of the learning process. Effective learning takes place when learners feel challenged to work towards appropriately high goals; therefore, appraisal of the learner's cognitive strengths and weaknesses, as well as current knowledge and skills, is important for the selection of instructional materials of an optimal degree of difficulty. Ongoing assessment of the learner's understanding of the curricular material can provide valuable feedback to both learners and teachers about progress toward the learning goals. Standardized assessment of learner progress and outcomes assessment provides one type of information about achievement levels both within and across individuals that can inform various types of programmatic decisions. Performance assessments can provide other sources of information about the attainment of learning outcomes. Self-assessments of learning progress can also improve students self-appraisal skills and enhance motivation and self-directed learning.

Source: APA Work Group of the Board of Educational Affairs. (1997). *Learner-centered Psychological Principles: A Framework for School Reform and Redesign*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. Retrieved from http://www.apa.org.proxy.lib.uni.edu/ed/governance/bea/learner-centered.pdf

APPENDIX D

DOMAINS OF LEARNER-CENTERED PRINCIPLES

To assess students' perspectives of classroom practices, items in the instrument, LCBSS, were developed in the five domains of the Learner-centered Psychological Principles (LCPs) (i.e., metacognitive/cognitive, affective, personal/social, developmental, and individual differences) as they are reflected in the two scales of the LCBSS. One scale measures student's beliefs about instructor's practices, broken into four subscales, and the other measures student motivation variables that include 11 subscales. In this study, scale one scores were analyzed using t-Tests and repeated measures ANOVAs to determine if there are significant differences among mean scores. Description of the five domains are given below.

Domain	Definition
Metacognitive and Cognitive	These four principles describe how a learner thinks and remembers. They describe factors involved in the construction of meaning from information and experiences. They also explain how the mind works to create sensible and organized views of the world, and to fit new information into the structure of what is already known. They conclude that thinking and directing one's own learning is a natural and active process that, even when subconscious, occurs all the time and with all people. What is learned, remembered, and thought about, however, is unique to each individual.
Affective	These three principles describe how beliefs, emotions, and motivation influence the way in which people perceive learning situations, how much people learn, and the effort they are willing to invest in learning. Our emotional state of mind, our beliefs about personal competence, our expectations about success, and our personal interests and goals all influence how motivated we are to learn. Although motivation to learn is natural under conditions and about things we perceive to be personally relevant and meaningful, motivation may need to be stimulated in situations that require us to learn what seems uninteresting or irrelevant to us.
Developmental	This principle recognizes capacities for learning that are known to develop or emerge over time. It is based on research documenting the changes in human capacities and capabilities over the life span. It informs us about the identifiable progressions of physical, intellectual, emotional, and social areas of development that are influenced by unique genetic or environmental factors. These progressions vary both across and within individuals, and thus cannot be overgeneralized for any one individual or group of individuals because of the risk of limiting opportunities for

learning. The important generalization in this domain is that we learn best when material is appropriate to our developmental level and presented in an enjoyable, interesting, and challenging way.

Personal and Social	These two principles describe the role that others play in the learning process, as well as the way people learn in groups. These principles reflect the research that shows that we learn from each other and can help each other learn through the sharing of our individual perspectives. If learners participate in respectful and caring relationships with others who see their potential, genuinely appreciate their unique talents, and accept them as individuals both learning and feelings of self-esteem are enhanced. Positive student-teacher relationships define the cornerstone of an effective learning environment – one that promotes both learning and positive self-development.
Individual Differences	These two principles describe how individuals' unique backgrounds and capabilities influence learning. These principles help explain why individuals learn different things, at different times, and in different ways. Although the same basic principles of learning, thinking, feeling, relating to others, and development apply to all of us, what we learn and how this learning is communicated differs in different environments (e.g., cultural or social groups) and as a function of heredity. From our environment and heredity, we create unique thoughts, beliefs, and understandings of ourselves and our world. Appreciating these differences and understanding how they may show up in learning situations is essential to creating effective learning environments for all students.

Source: from McCombs, B. L., Lauer, P. A., & Peralez, A. (1997). *Researcher test manual for the learner-centered battery (grades 6-12 version). A set of self-assessment and reflection tools for middle and high school teachers.* Aurora, CO. Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED422377.pdf

APPENDIX E

STANDARDS FOR ESL/EFL TEACHERS OF ADULTS FRAMEWORK

Standards for language learning and teaching are set by experts for TESOL International Association that establish instructional guidance for ESL instructors. The eight TESOL standards address the following domains: planning; instructing; identity and context; language proficiency; learning; content, and; commitment and professionalism.

Domain: Planning
Standard 1: Teachers plan instruction to promote learning and meet learner goals, and modify plans to assure learner engagement and achievement.

Domain: Instructing
Standard 2: Teachers create supportive environments that engage all learners in purposeful learning and promote respectful classroom interactions.

Domain: Assessing
Standard 3: Teachers recognize the importance of and are able to gather and interpret information about learning and performance to promote the continuous intellectual and linguistic development of each learner. Teachers use knowledge of student performance to make decisions about planning and instruction "on the spot" and for the future. Teachers involve learners in determining what will be assessed and provide constructive feedback to learners, based on assessments of their learning.

Domain: Identity and Context
Standard 4: Teachers understand the importance of who learners are and how their communities, heritages and goals shape learning and expectations of learning. Teachers recognize the importance how context contributes to identity formation and therefore influences learning. Teachers use this knowledge of identity and settings in planning, instructing, and assessing.

Domain: Language Proficiency
Standard 5: Teachers demonstrate proficiency in social, business/workplace and academic English. Proficiency in speaking, listening, reading and writing means that a teacher is functionally equivalent to a native speaker with some higher education.

Domain: Learning
Standard 6: Teachers draw on their knowledge of language and adult language learning to understand the processes by which learners acquire a new language in and out of classroom settings. They use this knowledge to support adult language learning.

Domain: Content
Standard 7: Teachers understand that language learning is most likely to occur when learners are trying to use the language for genuine communicative purposes. Teachers understand that the content of the language courser is the language that learners need in order to listen, to talk about, to read and write about a subject matter or content area. Teachers design their lessons to help

learners acquire the language they need to successfully communicate in the subject or content areas they want/need to learn about.

Domain: Commitment and Professionalism
Standard 8: Teachers continue to grow in their understanding of the relationship of second language teaching and learning to the community of English language teaching professionals, the broader teaching community, and communities at large, and use these understandings to inform and change themselves and these communities.

Source: Standards for ESL/EFL Teachers of Adults Framework. (n.d.). Retrieved from
http://www.tesol.org/docs/books/standards-for-esl-efl-teachers-of-adults-framework.pdf?sfvrsn=0

APPENDIX F

A COMPARISON OF LEARNER-CENTERED PRINCIPLES AND STANDARDS OF
ESL/EFL TEACHERS OF ADULTS FRAMEWORK

A comparison of LCPs embodying several domains explained in the Standards for ESL/EFL
Teachers of Adults Framework (n.d.) is presented below.

Standards for ESL/EFL Teachers of Adults Framework		Learner-centered Psychological Principles	
	Standard	Domain	Principle
Planning	1: Teachers plan instruction to promote learning and meet learner goals, and modify plans to assure learner engagement and achievement.	Cognitive & meta-cognitive	2. Goals of the learning process
Instructing	2: Teachers create supportive environments that engage all learners in purposeful learning and promote respectful classroom interactions.	Cognitive & meta-cognitive	3. Construction of knowledge
Assessing	3: Teachers recognize the importance of and are able to gather and interpret information about learning and performance to promote the continuous intellectual and linguistic development of each learner. Teachers use knowledge of student performance to make decisions about planning and instruction "on the spot" and for the future. Teachers involve learners in determining what will be assessed and provide constructive feedback to learners, based on assessments of their learning.	Individual differences	14. Standards & assessment
Identity & Context	4: Teachers understand the importance of who learners are and how their communities, heritages and goals shape learning and expectations of learning. Teachers recognize the importance how context contributes to identity formation and therefore influences learning. Teachers use this	Cognitive & meta-cognitive Individual differences Developmental & social	6. Context of learning 11. Social influences on learning

	knowledge of identity and settings in planning, instructing, and assessing.		12. Individual differences in learning
			13. Learning & diversity
Language proficiency	5. Teachers demonstrate proficiency in social, business/workplace and academic English. Proficiency in speaking, listening, reading and writing means that a teacher is functionally equivalent to a native speaker with some higher education.	[1]See footnote	
Learning	6. Teachers draw on their knowledge of language and adult language learning to understand the processes by which learners acquire a new language in and out of classroom settings. They use this knowledge to support adult language learning.	Cognitive & meta-cognitive	1. Nature of the learning process
Content	7. Teachers understand that language learning is most likely to occur when learners are trying to use the language for genuine communicative purposes. Teachers understand that the content of the language courser is the language that learners need in order to listen, to talk about, to read and write about a subject matter or content area. Teachers design their lessons to help learners acquire the language they need to successfully communicate in the subject or content areas they want/need to learn about.	Developmental & social	1. Nature of the learning process 11. Social influences on learning
Commitment & professionalism	8. Teachers continue to grow in their understanding of the relationship of second language teaching and learning to the community of English language teaching professionals, the broader teaching community, and communities at large, and use these understandings to inform and change themselves and these communities.	[1]See footnote	

Note.[1] Standards for ESL/EFL Teachers of Adults (n.d.) 5 and 8 exclusively refer to teacher demeanor and attitude to the profession and do not, unlike the LCPs, consider the personal domain of a learning environment. The LCPs as the comparison indicates encompass a wider range and description of factors that serve as a powerful tool in a learning environment.

APPENDIX G

LEARNER-CENTERED BATTERY STUDENT SURVEY

In this study, the Learner-centered Battery Student Survey (LBCSS) (McCombs et al., 1997), as a part of Learner-centered Battery, was used to measure ESL college students' beliefs about their English instructor's LCT practices.

Learner-Centered Battery Student Survey

PART I Directions: Think of the English language course you are currently doing at your university. Consider your instructor's classroom practices, including in-class and outside the class, and online learning assignments and activities. Read each of the following statements. Decide how often your instructor in the course does/did what is described in each statement – almost never, sometimes, often, or almost always. Answer carefully, but do not think too much about any one question. PLEASE ANSWER EVERY QUESTION. Mark ONE answer only. Your responses will be strictly confidential. Thank you for your help!

		Almost Never	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
1.	My instructor shows me that he or she appreciates me as an individual.	1	2	3	4
2.	My instructor lets me express my own thoughts and beliefs	1	2	3	4
3.	My instructor helps me learn how to organize what I'm learning so I can remember it more easily.	1	2	3	4
4.	My instructor changes learning assignments when I seem to be failing.	1	2	3	4
5.	My instructor provides support and encouragement when I'm worried I won't perform well.	1	2	3	4
6.	My instructor provides opportunities for me to learn how to take someone else's perspective.	1	2	3	4
7.	My instructor helps me think through what I'm interested in learning.	1	2	3	4
8.	My instructor encourages me to work with other students when I have trouble with an assignment	1	2	3	4
9.	My istructor makes me feel that he or she cares about me.	1	2	3	4
10.	My instructor encourages me to challenge myself while learning.	1	2	3	4
11.	My instructor helps me put information together with what I already know so that it makes sense to me.	1	2	3	4

		Almost Never	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
12.	My instructor encourages me to tell him or her the way I would like to learn.	1	2	3	4
13.	My instructor makes me feel that he or she appreciates me for who I am, not just for how well I do.	1	2	3	4
14.	My instructor helps me understand different points of view.	1	2	3	4
15.	My instructor helps me see how I can reflect on my thinking and learning.	1	2	3	4
16.	My instructor teaches me how to deal with stress that affects my learning.	1	2	3	4
17.	My instructor helps me feel good about my abilities.	1	2	3	4
18.	My instructor encourages me to think things out for myself while learning.	1	2	3	4
19.	My instructor helps me learn how to check how well I understand what I am learning.	1	2	3	4
20.	My instructor makes an effort to get to know me and my background.	1	2	3	4
21.	My instructor helps me feel like I belong in the course.	1	2	3	4
22.	My instructor asks me to listen to and think about my classmates opinions, even when I don't agree with them.	1	2	3	4
23.	My instructor helps me by explaining and teaching in different ways when I am having trouble understanding.	1	2	3	4
24.	My instructor treats me with respect.	1	2	3	4
25.	My instructor lets me work on activities that are challenging.	1	2	3	4

PART II Directions: A number of statements which students have used to describe themselves, their learning purposes are provided in this section. Read each statement and decide how you feel in this course. PLEASE ANSWER EVERY QUESTION. Mark ONE answer only.

		1	2	3	4
26.	I am certain I can do even the hardest work in this course if I try.	○	○	○	○
27.	I try to figure out how new work fits with what I have learned before taking this course.	○	○	○	○
28.	When doing work in this course, I guess a lot so I can finish quickly	○	○	○	○
29.	I do assignments in this course because I learn new things.	○	○	○	○
30.	I want to do well in this course so my parents will think I am smart.	○	○	○	○
31.	I feel most successful in this course when I can do my work without much effort.	○	○	○	○
32.	The material in this course is very interesting to me.	○	○	○	○
33.	I am sure I will do well in this course.	○	○	○	○
34.	I ask myself questions while I do my work to make sure I understand	○	○	○	○
35.	I do my work without thinking too hard.	○	○	○	○
36.	I want to learn as much as possible in this course.	○	○	○	○
37.	An important reason for why I do my course assignments is to get better grades than other students.	○	○	○	○

		Almost Never	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
38.	I feel most successful in this course when I get out of doing my work.	○ 1	○ 2	○ 3	○ 4
39.	I find it difficult to concentrate on course material.	○ 1	○ 2	○ 3	○ 4
40.	I am certain I will be able to learn the material in this course.	○ 1	○ 2	○ 3	○ 4
41.	I pay extra attention to the things the instructor in this course wants us to remember.	○ 1	○ 2	○ 3	○ 4
42.	When I have a difficult assignment in this course, I skip the hard parts.	○ 1	○ 2	○ 3	○ 4
43.	An important reason for why I do my work in this course is because I want to get better at it.	○ 1	○ 2	○ 3	○ 4
44.	I want to do well in this course so other students will think I'm smart.	○ 1	○ 2	○ 3	○ 4
45.	I try to do as little work as possible in this course.	○ 1	○ 2	○ 3	○ 4
46.	I think it is fun to increase my understanding about the subject matter in this course.	○ 1	○ 2	○ 3	○ 4
47.	I am sure I will get a good grade in this course.	○ 1	○ 2	○ 3	○ 4
48.	When we have a difficult assignment in this course, I try to figure out the hard parts on my own.	○ 1	○ 2	○ 3	○ 4
49.	When I have trouble with an assignment in this course, I give up.	○ 1	○ 2	○ 3	○ 4
50.	I do assignments in this course because I want to improve my skills.	○ 1	○ 2	○ 3	○ 4
51.	The main reason I do my work in this course is because I want to get the highest grade.	○ 1	○ 2	○ 3	○ 4

	Almost Never	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
52. In this course, I prefer assignments that are easy so I don't have to work very hard.	1	2	3	4
53. I feel that the material in this course will be boring	1	2	3	4
54. Even when the work in this course is hard, I can learn it.	1	2	3	4
55. I go back over assignments I don't understand	1	2	3	4
56. In this course, I only study things that will be on a test.	1	2	3	4
57. I do assignments in this course because the work is interesting.	1	2	3	4
58. When I do work in this course, it doesn't matter to me if other students get a better grade.	1	2	3	4
59. When I do work in this course, I just want to get it done as quickly as possible	1	2	3	4
60. It is fascinating to me to learn new information in this course.	1	2	3	4
61. No matter how much I try, there is some work in this course I'll never understand.	1	2	3	4
62. When I have trouble figuring out an assignment in this course, I try to think about it in different ways.	1	2	3	4
63. When I don't undersstand an assignment in this course, I get answers from my friends.	1	2	3	4
64. I want to do my work in this course because it really makes me think.	1	2	3	4
65. I want to do well in this course so the instructor will think I am smart.	1	2	3	4

		Almost Never	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
66.	I feel most successful in this course when I get a good grade without working too hard.	O 1	O 2	O 3	O 4
67.	I enjoy learning material in this course which is unfamiliar to me.	O 1	O 2	O 3	O 4
68.	When I make mistakes in this course I try to figure out why.	O 1	O 2	O 3	O 4
69.	If I need help to do an assignment in this course, I skip it.	O 1	O 2	O 3	O 4
70.	I find myself losing interest when complex material is presented in this course.	O 1	O 2	O 3	O 4
71.	I spend some time thinking about how to do an assignment before I begin it.	O 1	O 2	O 3	O 4
72.	When I don't understand an assignment I just write down the first thing that comes to mind.	O 1	O 2	O 3	O 4

Part III. Directions: In this section, please provide demographic information. Read each question carefully and mark only one response.

73. Gender   1. ☐Male   2. ☐Female

74. What is your age?   1. ☐   18 – 22

                                     2. ☐   23 – 26

                                     3. ☐   27 – 30

75. Ethnicity/cultural background: How do you describe yourself?   1. ☐   Asian

                                     2. ☐   Middle Eastern

                                     3. ☐   African

                                     4. ☐   Two or more races

                                     5. ☐   Other: (please specify) _____

76. What is your country of origin?   _____

77. How many college credits have you earned?

   1. ☐   0 – 30 credits – Freshman

   2. ☐   31 – 60 credits - Sophomore

   3. ☐   61 – 90 credits - Junior

   4. ☐   91 – 124 credits – Senior

Thank you for participating in the survey!

If you do not wish to be entered into the five $50 drawings, you do not need to provide your contact information. To be entered into the drawing for prizes, please type your university email in the box below. Your email address/ID will not be associated with your answers so that they stay anonymous.

Email: _____

First Name: _____

Last Name: _____

University ID: _____

_____

You have the opportunity to share further ideas about learner-centered teaching practices that you have not been able to say in the survey. You can participate in a focus group interview that will last approximately 50 minutes to be held in a meeting room in your institution. There may be more than one meeting. There will be audio/visual recording. Please provide your email address if you wish to participate in a focus group interview.

Email: _____

Phone:

APPENDIX H

SCRIPT FOR STARTING THE FOCUS GROUP

In this study, for the purpose of conducting focus group interview a starting script was used. The idea was to maintain consistency through this in every focus group.

Script for starting the focus group

Good evening and welcome! Thank you for making time to join this discussion on learner-centered teaching practices. I am Mahjabeen Hussain. I am a doctoral candidate at the department of Curriculum and Instruction in the College of Education.
You are here today because of the survey you took part in as a part of my doctoral research project on learner-centered teaching (LCT) practices. You were invited because you all are undergraduate international students who have completed at least one English course at NU as a part of course requirement for the program you are in. I would like you to share and say more about your experiences and your beliefs about LCT practices in English classes.
The discussion is being recorded because I don't want to miss your valued comments. There are no right or wrong answers. I'm interested to know positive as well as negative things. Remember, your comments will be kept confidential. Your identity will not be disclosed. Here are the consent forms for you to sign. Please indicate whether you agree to participate in the project. You will receive a gift card after all the focus groups are completed. For that please provide your name, university ID, and e-mail address.
Please use the sticky notes to write your name and stick it somewhere visible. They help me remember your names and can also help you. For example, if you want to agree, disagree, or provide an example to what one of your group members have said, the name tag will help.
I am interested to hear you so I'll ask questions and listen. Give each other the chance to speak. Let's first introduce ourselves.

APPENDIX I

SAMPLE FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

In this study, focus group discussions as a source of data was conducted after administering LCBSS. Interview questions were generated based on participants' responses to the instrument. A few probable questions have been provided below following Krueger and Casey's (2015) "questioning route."

Kreuger's categories	Focus group interview questions
Opening question	What experiences have you had of learner-centered teaching methods?
Introductory questions	In which of your courses have you faced learner-centered teaching methods?
Transition questions	What do you like about learner-centered teaching methods?
Key questions[†]	Would you consider your English classes to be learner-centered? Why or why were they not learner-centered? Please provide specific examples and describe them. What can you remember about the classes that make you think they were student-oriented or learner-centered?
	From your experience in the English classes, describe classroom practices that you believe reflect learner-centered instruction. Please provide specific examples.
	Identify use of different types of online learning experiences you had using your own computer or laptop in the English classes.
	How learner-centered/student-centered were they? Please provide specific examples.
	How could your English classes be more learner-centered/student-centered? Please provide specific examples.
Ending questions	Finally, is there anything related to learner-centered teaching methods which has not been discussed that you feel strongly about and would like to talk about more?

[†] For each of the key questions, to promote the group to elaborate their responses, or to assess their consensus, the interview guide included the following types of questions: Can you tell me more about it? Why do you feel/think that way? Does everyone have the same opinion?

APPENDIX J

A COPY OF THE INFORMED CONSENT FORM

The researcher sought participants' consent to participate in the study. Below is a copy of the informed consent form for survey participants.

Informed Consent of Survey Participants

HUMAN PARTICIPANTS REVIEW
Project Title: Understanding English as a Second Language Undergraduate Students' Beliefs about Learner-centered Teaching Practices
Name of Investigator: Mahjabeen Hussain
Invitation to Participate: You are invited to participate in a research project conducted through the University of Northern Iowa. The following information is provided to help you make an informed decision about whether or not to participate.
Nature and Purpose: This survey asks questions related to beliefs about your ESL/English instructor's teaching practices, including in-class and outside the class, and online learning assignments and activities.
Explanation of Procedures: The online survey focuses on your ESL/English instructor's teaching practices. It will take approximately twenty-five minutes. The information you provide will be used in a doctoral thesis project to make general conclusions about students' beliefs about instructor's teaching practices.
Discomfort and Risks: This survey carries a minimal risk of discomfort or burden. Risks to participation are similar to those experienced in day-to-day life.
Benefits and Compensation: The findings from this project will help in improving ESL instructional practices.
Respondents of the current survey will be automatically entered into a draw and five lucky ones will each receive a $50 gift card.
If you win the gift card, your name associated with this study will be forwarded to the office of business operations (OBO). You can choose not to enter your name in the drawing if you prefer not to have your name associated with the study to the OBO.
Confidentiality: Your responses are completely confidential. Indirect information obtained during this study which could identify you will be kept confidential. The summarized findings with no identifying information may be published in an academic journal or presented at a scholarly conference. Confidentiality will be maintained to the degree permitted by the technology used. No guarantees can be made regarding the interception of data via third parties.
Right to Refuse or Withdraw: Your participation is completely voluntary. You are free to withdraw from participation at any time or to choose not to participate at all, and by doing so, you will not be penalized.
Questions: If you have questions about the study or desire information in the future regarding your participation or the study generally, you can contact Mahjabeen Hussain at 319-859-4249 or the project investigator's faculty advisor Dr. Benjamin R. Forsyth at the Department of Educational Psychology & Foundations, University of Northern Iowa. You can also contact the office of the IRB Administrator, University of Northern Iowa, at 319-273-6148, for answers to questions about rights of research participants and the participant review process.
Agreement:

Ticking on the I CONSENT option below indicates that I am fully aware of the nature and extent of my participation in this project as stated above and the possible risks arising from it. I hereby agree to participate in this project. I am 18 years of age or older.

- ○ I Consent

- ◉ I Do Not Consent

APPENDIX K

A COPY OF INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

The researcher sought participants' consent to participate in focus group interviews. Below is the informed consent form for focus group participants.

Informed Consent of Focus Group Participants

Invitation to Participate: You are invited to participate in a focus group interview. The following information is provided to help you make an informed decision about whether or not to participate.

Nature and Purpose: In the focus groups, questions will be asked about learner-centered teaching practices so that you can elaborately describe and share your beliefs and experiences with the group members. Participation in the conversations will help in better understanding what you have expressed in the survey.

Procedure: The focus group will be held in your college campus. You will be one among the 8-10 focus group members. As a facilitator, I will help the group in engaging in the conversation. This may last approximately 50 minutes. There will be audio/visual recording. You may be invited to more than one group interview if required.

Benefits: The findings from the focus group interviews will help in gaining a better understanding of your beliefs and experiences and thus help make improvements in English courses. Participants will be automatically entered into a draw and ten lucky ones will each receive a $25 gift card.

If you win the gift card, your name associated with this study will be forwarded to university business office for tax purposes. You can choose not to enter your name in the drawing if you prefer not to have your name associated with the study.

Confidentiality: I will carefully protect your confidentiality and it is the expectation that all members of the group will protect the confidentiality of others after the focus group is completed. However, I **cannot guarantee** that other members will protect your confidentiality outside of this group.

Identifiers (name and emails) will not be recorded as part of the information you provide during this event. Direct quotes, without identifying information, from the interviews will be used when presenting the results of this study

Questions: If you have questions about the study or desire information in the future regarding your participation or the study generally, you can contact Mahjabeen Hussain at 319-859-4249 or the project investigator's faculty advisor Dr. Bejamin R Forsyth at the Department of Educational Psychology & Foundations, University of Northern Iowa. You can also contact the office of the IRB Administrator, University of Northern Iowa, at 319-273-6148, for answers to questions about rights of research participants and the participant review process.

Agreement:

Ticking on the I CONSENT option below indicates that I am fully aware of the nature and extent of my participation in this project as stated above and the possible risks arising from it. I hereby agree to participate in this project. I am 18 years of age or older.

- ☐ I Consent
- ☐ I Do Not Consent

APPENDIX L

A DRAFT OF ELECTRONIC COVER LETTER

To recruit participants for the study, the registrar's office was contacted after receiving IRB approval. An electronic cover letter will be sent out first. A draft of the letter is given below.

Electronic Cover Letter

Subject: Participate in a Survey and Win a $50 gift card!

UNDERSTANDING ESL UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS' BELIEFS ABOUT LEARNER-

CENTERED INSTRUCTION

Dear Participant,

I am writing to request you to participate in a survey. I am a graduate student at UNI working towards my doctoral degree. I am conducting a survey on undergraduate students' beliefs about learner-centeredness. The purpose of the study is to identify what beliefs English as a Second Language (ESL) students have about their English instructor's learner-centered teaching practices. The information you provide will be used to make general conclusions about ESL students' beliefs about learner-centered practices. This will contribute towards improving ESL or English courses offered at UNI as well as other colleges and universities. The survey will take approximately 25 minutes.

Upon completion of the survey you will be entered into a drawing. You may opt out of the drawing if you wish and not provide your contact information. Keep in mind there will be a drawing of five $50 gift cards so there are high possibilities of you randomly being selected to win!

At the end of the survey you will be asked if you would like to share further ideas about learner-centered teaching practices in focus group interviews. A group interview which may last approximately 50 minutes will be held in a meeting room at UNI. More than one group interview may be required. There will be a drawing of ten $25 gift cards. You may opt out of the drawing if you wish and not provide your contact information.

Follow this link to the Survey: _____

Or copy and paste the URL below into your internet browser:

_____

Thank you for your participation!
Mahjabeen Hussain
Graduate Research Assistant (Doctoral candidate)
Richard O Jacobson Center for Comprehensive Literacy
University of Northern Iowa

APPENDIX M

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL DOCUMENT

Office of Research and Sponsored Programs   University of Northern Iowa

HUMAN PARTICIPANT REVIEW COMMITTEE
UNI Institutional Review Board (IRB)
213 East Bartlett

Mahjabeen Hussain
2216 Clay Street
Cedar Falls, IA   50613

RE: 18-0109

Your study, Understanding ESL Undergraduate Students' Beliefs about Learner-centered Instruction, has been approved by the UNI IRB, effective 12/14/17. You may begin recruitment, data collection, and/or analysis for your project. You are required to adhere to the procedures and study materials approved during this review, as well as to follow all IRB policies and procedures for human subjects research posted on the IRB website at rsp/uni.edu/IRB-home.

Your study has been approved in the following category: Expedited 6.

Approval for your study will **expire one year** from your approval date above. Beyond that date, you may not recruit participants, or collect and/or analyze data without continuing approval. To renew approval for your project, submit the Continuing Review and Closure form before the expiration date. The IRB office will email you the form 4-6 weeks prior to expiration or you can download it from the IRB website. **When your study ends,** you must download and submit the Continuing Review and Closure form as a **brief final report on your project**. If you are a student and planning to leave campus at the end of the academic year, make sure to submit this before you leave.

If you need to make any changes to your study, you must request approval of the changes before continuing with the research. Requests for modifications should be emailed to the IRB Administrator at anita.gordon@uni.edu.

If **during the study you observe any problems** or events pertaining to participation in your study that are *serious* and *unexpected* (e.g., you did not include them in your IRB materials as a potential risk), you must report this to the IRB **within 10 days.** Examples include unexpected injury or emotional stress, missteps in the consent documentation, or breaches of confidentiality.

If you need a signed approval letter, contact the IRB office and one will be provided for your records.

Best wishes for your project success.

Anita Gordon
IRB Administrator

Cc: Benjamin Forsyth, Faculty Advisor

APPENDIX N

UNDERLYING TRANSCRIPTION RULES

A simple transcript where transcription conventions prioritized content and focus on readability was adopted. Transcription conventions followed were adapted from Dresing, Pehl, and Schmieder (2015).

Underlying Transcription Rules Followed

1. Literal transcription was done.
2. Informal contractions were approximated to written standard language (e.g., 'gonna' changed to 'going to'); syntactic errors were not fixed.
3. Discontinuation of words, sentences, or stutters were not included. Word doublings suggesting emphasis were transcribed (e.g., The instructor, I think, should really, really understand.). Half sentences were recorded and a slash / was used.
4. For legibility, punctuation was smoothed.
5. Frequently used fillers such as 'okay', 'you know', 'so', 'and' and repeated use of words and phrases were deleted.
6. Pauses were indicated by suspension marks in parentheses (…).
7. Affirmative utterances/noises/fillers and monosyllabic answers by the participants were transcribed, e.g., yes, right, uh-huh/yeah (affirmative) or Mhm (negative).
8. Specially emphasized word/s was/were indicated in italicized form followed by the word, emphasis: [emphasis].
9. Each contribution by a participant was indicated by its own paragraph. Short interjection too was indicated by its own paragraph.
10. Non-verbal utterances, including gestures and facial expressions, used by participants to indicate support, agreement, or elucidate statements (e.g., nodding of head, laughter) were transcribed in square brackets [ ].
11. Incomprehensible words were indicated as follows: [Incomprehensible]. Unintelligible passages were indicated as: [Unintelligible]. Unsure word was indicated by a question mark after the guess word in squared brackets: [competition?].
12. Moderator was marked by 'M:'; each focus group participant was marked by 'P' with a number added to it (e.g., participants in focus group 1: 'P1', 'P2', 'P3', and 'P4').
13. In case of speech overlap, the phrase "cross-talk" [CT] was used in square brackets immediately after the last identifiable speaker's text and picked up with next audible speaker.
14. Use of direct speech by a participant is marked by quotation marks (e.g., He said, "I have notes online so you can go there and can study it.").
15. Statement made by a participant of instance(s) of thinking aloud was indicated by single quotation mark (e.g., 'Oh, people have interest in us!').
16. If a participant used audio identifiers, i.e., spoke out another participant's name, it was replaced with code name (e.g., P1, P2, P3).
17. Instructors, course titles were all de-identified by using pseudonyms. Courses: Intensive English Course (IEC), Kernel, Academic Writing in College, Oral Presentation, Liberal Arts (LA); Instructors: Charlie Brown, Elvis, Kim Galehurst, Robert Frost, Sirus.

18. Learning-centered was replaced by learner-centered as the participant may not have been aware of the difference between the two terms. Since the study focused on learner-centered rather than learning-centered the substitution was considered important.

APPENDIX O

TRANSCRIPTS OF FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

Data from focus group interviews digitally collected via both a digital audio recording and digital video recording were subject to transcription to make it accessible for analysis. The researcher transcribed a total of six focus group interviews. The transcripts have been added here.

Focus Group 1, Meeting 1

1	**M: Good evening! I'm sorry we are fifteen minutes late. First, I have to thank you**
2	**again for making time to join this discussion. You know what it is about. You all**
3	**know me. I'm M. I'm a doctoral candidate at the Department of Curriculum**
4	**instruction. You are here today because I would like you to talk a little bit more**
5	**about learner centered teaching practices. You did participate in the survey and I**
6	**don't think it gave you the opportunity to say more about what you know and what**
7	**you'd like to share. I'd like you to share more about your experiences and your**
8	**feelings – what you think is LC teaching practices and what you have experienced**
9	**through your English classes. As you can see the discussion is being recorded**
10	**because I don't want to miss your valued opinions! There are no right or wrong**
11	**answers. I'm interested to know positive as well as negative things. Remember, your**
12	**comments will be kept confidential. Your identity will not be disclosed in anyway.**
13	**Here are some consent forms I'd like you to sign. Please indicate whether you'd like**
14	**to participate in the project. You will receive a gift card after all the focus groups**
15	**are completed, so we might need to meet again. For that reason, please provide your**
16	**name, ID, and university email address. There are sticky notes you can use for name**
17	**tags, but I think you know each other. I'm very bad with names, but I think I know**
18	**everyone's name. That's P2, P3, P1. Did I pronounce that correctly?**
19	P1: It's okay.
20	**M: It *has* [emphasis] to be right!**
21	P1: It's So-Yon
22	**M: So-Yon. Okay, I'm interested to hear you. I'll ask questions and listen. Give each**
23	**other chance to speak and let's first introduce ourselves very quickly, P2?**
24	P2: Hi! My name is P2, and I am from Karachi, Pakistan, and I am an Economics student.
25	P3: Hi, I'm P3 and I'm from India and my major is Electrical Engineering with a minor in
26	Spanish.
27	P4: I'm P3 from Burma. I'm currently a junior studying Biology and Biochemistry with a
28	minor in Mathematics.
29	P1: I'm P1. I'm from South Korea. My major is Accounting and I'm a sophomore, likely
30	to graduate next semester.
31	**M: Thank you! You all participated in a survey called the Learner-centered Battery**
32	**Student Survey that focused on the LCT practices in English course in your**
33	**university. What did the survey make you think about?**

34   P1: I guess like when I took ESL classes/ so I guess that's what reminded me when I was

35   taking the survey. It was a long time ago when I was in like sometimes elementary

36   school, or junior high school. It was kind of hard for me to remember.

37   **M: How about the English classes that you did here in the campus?**

38   P1: Like at college? They were pretty okay. They were easy for me. But I guess,

39   especially for like writing parts I saw a lot of other students struggle with that. Yeah.

40   **M: Anyone else wants to share their experience.**

41   P2: I mean, when I came here, in my first semester I struggled with forming structures in

42   English language like I always felt that, I don't have enough words to describe a situation

43   or something, but as I practised and I started writing more often that thing just went

44   away.

45   **M: Did that happen because of the class that you took?**

46   P2: Yeah! I took Academic Writing in College. That was the first English writing class

47   ever. There were reading assignments every week and then we had to suppose we have to

48   read a book and then we had to discuss it in class. That way and then we had to write

49   reflection paper, reaction papers on the chapter or the discussion we did. That really

50   helped me a lot.

51   P3: I never paid attention to student-centered teaching before coming to NU. I took this

52   class with Charlie Brown that was a course. That's when they made us see the difference

53   between learner-centered and lecture-centered class. We had a/ it was not a book but it

54   was like a small pamphlet telling us about what are the aspects of learner-centered and

55   lecture-centered classes. That's when I realized that learner-centered classes are better

56   because that's when the student understands the concepts and like, in spite of lecture-

57   centered where we're just memorizing the stuff. Because what usually happens in our

58   country was that we were doing memorization. That's what we're focused on, memorizing

59   the stuff and then just writing down on our exams. But here it was like more focused on

60   understanding the concepts and then writing it down.

61   [P1 and P4 nodded in agreement]

62   P4: I believe the weakest part before I came here before I took the Kernel in my first year

63   that would be presentation skills. It was a real challenge and kind of anxious activity for

64   me to speak in front of people and all of that because of the class. I believe that has

65   improved a little I hope at least. That would be one of the very first classes that I have

66   taken that is learner-centered. It's a bit different for me from which I have learned back in

67   my country although I've taken a few English classes under the native English speakers

68   under American Embassy. But still you learn that all the opportunities that is better for

69   you in the learner-centered class.

70   **M: Perhaps you can take a look at the definition of Learner-centeredness on the**

71   **screen. There are two aspects of learner-centeredness - one focusing on the *learner***

72   **[emphasis] - knowing about their background, heredity, experiences, opinions,**

73   **needs, talents, interests, and capacities. The other part, focusing on the *learning***

74   **[emphasis] of the learner. How would *you* [emphasis] define learning centeredness?**

75   P1: And yes, like if I just didn't know this part [pointing to the screen] and someone

76   asked me that question, - I would say that it's like a class where the students lead the

77   class. They would make the discussion or they would ask more questions independently,

78   rather than Professor saying like, "Does anyone have questions?" Then there's this weird
79   awkward silence and then he goes on. I guess the opposite of that would be learner-
80   centered, like the learners are actually focused in the class, trying to lead the subject. [P3
81   nodded in agreement]
82   **M: How about other definitions?**
83   P3: For me, it would be the interaction among the students like if there's a particular topic
84   and they're talking about it, they're giving their own point that what they think that their
85   perspective about that topic. Then they come to a certain point, conclude a certain point
86   that this point is right. That meets the interaction of the students.
87   **M: P1 said more about "me," like the "learner" and you said that it's more than**
88   **that. Also, interaction between/**
89   P3: The students.
90   **M: Between the students. Would the others agree with that?**
91   P3: Yeah! [others nodded in agreement]
92   **M: Tell me more about, you know, in which courses you faced this learner-centered**
93   **teaching methods.**
94   P4: Mostly for me would be an LA smaller classes. I have to take honors classes so those
95   LA classes are smaller than the usual [P1 and P2 shook their heads in agreement]. LA
96   classes are like in Seerley and Sabin and stuff. The other one would be in laboratories.
97   We have Chemistry and Biology laboratories, they don't really/ the professors don't
98   really talk much. You just have to just lead, you have to explore yourself, you have to do
99   the research on your own, experiment on your own. Those would be the good examples
100   of learner-centered.
101   **M: Was it different? Was it less learner-centered in the English classes?**
102   P1: For me, like my English class was the writing course LA. That was the small class. It
103   was only about like 15, 16 students. I felt that was leader-focused classroom but like all
104   my other major courses, especially they weren't really such a big class. I think I've only
105   experienced the leader-focused classes only LAs. LAs are like class specific.
106   **M: Can you all give me examples of learner-centered practices in the English classes**
107   **that you experienced?**
108   P2: Last semester I took Religions and Law. It is a Level 3 course, non-LA or anything.
109   The professor, he introduced a topic, every day for a class like suppose for today's topic
110   is on scientology. Then we had to do and there was a certain specific group in that class
111   for every day that had to lead the discussion. He would just sit on the side as a moderator
112   and then he would just see what other people or people's opinions arguments and the
113   leading group would lead the discussion. They would come prepared, they would ask the
114   questions from the students and the students would reply them back.
115   **M: Did you have similar experiences in English class? Can you tell me more about**
116   **the English class?**
117   P2: The English class? We like, for the Academic Writing in College, right? Yeah, we
118   had the similar experience. We read the chapter whatever the reading was for that day
119   and we used to discuss that in a group. We used to make a big round circle and then the
120   professor would ask like what are your views on the thing you've read.
121   **M: How did you feel when you were a part of that circle?**

122 P2: I felt, initially, I felt a bit amazed like uncomfortable with it because this was like the
123 first time I was speaking English in front of anyone. I used to do that, but not in like for
124 hours and you know and after a while, I started to become confident in sharing my views
125 because I didn't feel overwhelmed because I started to knew the students that were with
126 me in the class.
127 **M: Do you think that is an example of learner-centered practice?**
128 P2: Yes. Because I [CT]
129 P1: You can go!
130 P2: Because it's like in some part of our discussion, I always used to share something
131 some kind of an opinion or experience back home, like in Pakistan. I would share, "Oh,
132 this is what we used to do, you know, this is what this is how this happens." And then,
133 you know, so.
134 **M: Did the teacher want to know more about your social and cultural orientation?**
135 P2: Exactly, yeah!
136 **M: You think that's part of learner-centeredness?**
137 P2: Uhu-huh!
138 **Do you all agree with him that the teacher wants to know more about the student's**
139 **social cultural background?**
140 [P3 and P4 nodded in agreement]
141 P1: Going along with what P2 said, when I was having Academic Writing in College
142 course, the professor, she/ I went to her office hours quite a lot. She would constantly
143 check like "I don't know how you would have done this like Korea" or like for other
144 students "I don't know how you are in China, or Pakistan." But she would constantly
145 check like that's culturally appropriate. I guess that's one of my first/ I felt like that's
146 learner-centeredness.
147 **M: Did you feel that you were important to her because she asked you those**
148 **questions?**
149 P1: Yeah, I felt like she was generally interested because she asked, "Is this appropriate
150 in your country?" She'd ask questions more about like my country, or she'd kind of just
151 ask questions about myself. We could make personal connections.
152 **M: Did you have similar experiences? Others?**
153 P4: Not in my English class, but I had this very awesome professor in my Chemistry
154 department. He is very well-rounded. He travels to a lot of places, and he wants to know
155 more about every culture. And what he did was he learned how to write in my native
156 language, Burmese. Three words he started with that, 'excellent', 'very good' and (…) I
157 think 'good', 'very good', and 'excellent' to write on our exams and then quizzes. That is
158 very appreciative of him and very welcoming of him. I got him in my freshman year in a
159 way that, 'Oh people have interest in us!' That has a positive effect impact on my, or the
160 beginning of my university life.
161 **M: You didn't have that experience in your English class?**
162 P4: Not very similarly. But maybe also because (…) he was [hesitant to speak] I don't
163 want to say like he was not very welcoming in a way that I couldn't meet him after
164 classes because his office hour was kind of weird with my schedule for one thing. I
165 couldn't (…)

166   P1: You couldn't connect with him?
167   P4: Yeah! I couldn't make connection with him. I don't want to say like he didn't try. He
168   showed interest in all of the students and all of that, but not specific interest, just because
169   I'm an international student in a way which makes me feel comfortable but I'm not sure.
170   **M: How about you P3?**
171   P3: I did this Oral Presentation class during my second semester here at NU and there we
172   had to give a speech in front of the class. I don't know back in India we're not used to
173   giving speech in front of people. So it was like a totally new experience for me giving
174   speeches in front of people and it actually was different. It was hard for the students to
175   understand it. I think that totally makes sense because [Unintelligible] So professor like
176   would help me out. I'd usually give him the outline of my speech, whatever the topic
177   was. He used to help me with that, "I think this sentence wouldn't be appropriate, this
178   sentence would be good. Such types of words are not used in America, placement of this
179   word is that." That's how I used to get help with. He was really interested and he wanted
180   my own speech and whatever speech I gave to him in class he wanted that to be the best
181   actually very good. That's how he helped me.
182   **M: Would you say that your instructor supported your learning process?**
183   P3: Yeah, he did!
184   **M: In different ways?**
185   P3: What do you mean in different ways?
186   **M: One way it was, you said you sent him/**
187   P3: Yeah, outline of my speeches.
188   **M: Your outline.**
189   P3: Yeah, he did.
190   **M: So that was one way?**
191   P3: It really improved my speaking/ communication and speaking skills.
192   **M: Let's look at what kind of responses survey participants gave so I found out that**
193   **many survey participants said they were often helped by their instructors and you**
194   **like P3 gave a good example. Some of you gave examples so can you give me more**
195   **examples of what kind of support the teacher in the English class provided to you,**
196   **different kinds, not in one instance. Think of whether the teacher supported in**
197   **different ways.**
198   P3: In the first weeks we came to know about this thing called plagiarism which we don't
199   come across back in our home countries. So I think my second paper was like, I think it
200   was kind of plagiarized. I did. I copied from Google, I will actually accept the fact. So he
201   kind of helped me telling me that you should know the main thing about going to college
202   is writing papers. You shouldn't have plagiarized copies, copy it from books, not right
203   from google of course, so they have helped me like how and then showed me the website
204   where you can actually compare your paper. How are they different? How much isn't
205   plagiarized? So that's how he helped me with the plagiarism thing.
206   P1: I guess most of my supportive experiences is like/ it's not like the professors come to
207   me first because I'm an international student or something. It's not like that. It's mostly
208   like I as a student go up to the professor and if I would ask him or her for help, they
209   would help me like P3 says there were people looking through my paper or help me with

210   how I structure my sentences or sometimes they would refer me to other resources on
211   campus for that support. Well, I mean, not all professors were like that, I guess. If you
212   can show your professors that you need help, then people are willing to help you out in
213   some sort of way, indirectly or directly.
214   P2: My professor would help me with the grammar, because I was really bad in grammar.
215   So, he would just ask the class that "if anyone needs help with the grammar and if you
216   want me to just underline any grammar stuff just write on the paper and I'll do that." That
217   was really helpful for me.
218   P4: What I had was that is not really directly from the instructor. We have TAs in the
219   Kernel class and what she'd usually do is that she/ I think two or three times in the
220   semester to catch up with the students like, what is our experience in the class, what do
221   we need, do we need any help with the papers, presentations and I think once she even
222   checked in with us, like the general life, how's university going, how's your freshman
223   year going, and how's the residence life and all of that.
224   **M: Who is this person?**
225   P4: TA, teaching assistant of the class so not directly from the instructor in a way that
226   class is structured to help students. I got a lot of help from the TA.
227   **M: A lot of survey participants said sometimes their assignments were changed if**
228   **they seemed to be failing or the instructor taught them how to cope with stress or**
229   **encourage them to tell him how they wanted to learn. So what do you think? Did**
230   **you have this kind of experience? How often do you have that kind of experience?**
231   P1: Was the question like, I would like ask some professor that this assignment isn't what
232   the class material, is that what?
233   **M: Yeah, so a lot of participants marked that sometimes the assignments were**
234   **changed if they seemed to be failing or the instructor taught them how to cope with**
235   **stress or encourage them to tell him how they wanted to learn. What were your**
236   **experiences? Did you often experience this?**
237   P2, P1, P4, [P3 nodded in agreement]: No
238   P1: No, I don't think, I think I had.
239   P3: Not in English class for sure.
240   P2: They would curve the test, but not change the structure of the syllabus.
241   P1: I know in my writing class, there was this one student who really just didn't get the
242   citation at all, she couldn't. The student didn't know how to do it. The professor, right,
243   really helped the student with citation and writing. But I don't know if it was efficient or
244   the student just couldn't understand but she just ended up, kind of reducing
245   [Incomprehensible] for her. It was five citation, but she only had to do two or three. She
246   just couldn't get the concept of it unless someone else was next to her helping her like
247   you have to type this in or that in. But that was like the only time that she ever did that
248   and she apologized like "I didn't do that because I'm you know being biased." It's just that
249   she wanted to match the level of the learner because she thought if this is too much, she
250   would just level it down. But the other students were understanding, like they understood
251   what she'd do with us. Yeah, but it didn't happen in any other classes.
252   **M: What is your opinion about assignments or Individual focus on assignment? So**
253   **do you think that's part of learner-centered practice?**

254 P3: Like focusing?
255 **M: On the assignment, adjusting. You think that's learner-centered practice?**
256 P2: You mean that the professor should provide individual support to every student?
257 Well, I don't think that's possible if the class is too big and, you know, they only have 16
258 weeks to cover everything in the syllabus. Providing individual personalized support to
259 every student is quite difficult. And the only class I think we take with less students for
260 liberal arts is Oral Presentation and the Academic Writing in College, but the other
261 classes like, I don't know, Human Identity and Relationship that's like 150 humanities
262 that's hundred plus. Things like that. I don't think that's possible.
263 P3: The professor always encourage the students to come to them during office hours if
264 they've problems. But that depends if the students want to go or not. But from that it
265 would be really hard for the professor to go to individual student and ask them that what
266 problems are you going through the class.
267 P1: Yeah, I don't feel that Professor should be obligated to help each student with their
268 assignment, unless it's a really small group or, it's like a final project that's supposed to
269 be evaluated.
270 **M: We're talking about teacher-dominated versus learner-centered - we're focusing**
271 **exclusively on learner-centered teaching. I want to know more about what you**
272 **think, or what you believe learner-centered teaching is about. In that respect, how**
273 **do you think that the professor or the instructor should address the learner or the**
274 **student, or students' challenges or students' difficulties with whatever, it could be**
275 **assignments.**
276 P1: I mean for assignments if it's a really, really severe situation like the student/ those
277 are really understand it at all. I think if the professor or instructor chose level down the
278 material, it'll be okay in some way. But if that was to be constant throughout the
279 semester, that wouldn't be/ I wouldn't think of that as learner-centered because that would
280 be/ the student wouldn't be learning anything, even though the learner is being like
281 respected by the professor or instructor.
282 **M: Let's talk a little bit more about activities. You gave some examples of activities**
283 **like some of you said you know how you fared into certain activities that you were**
284 **given. I remember P3 giving the example of how interacting with other students**
285 **provide or that also means learner-centered. Can you tell me more about whether**
286 **activities differ in learner-centered classes as opposed to teacher-dominated classes?**
287 P2: At the beginning, they have this icebreaker sessions, icebreaking activities where they
288 learn about where the students are from the professor. And the students, they just like
289 introduce themselves. They ask, what's your interest, tell me one good thing about you.
290 Things like that. That really helps to know the person.
291 **M: Would you agree?**
292 P1: Yeah, sort of. I'm not saying anything bad!
293 [Others nodded in agreement]
294 **M: You've been talking more about how the activities are centered in the classroom.**
295 **How about any other activities outside the classroom?**
296 P1: Yes, definitely like professor's office hours. If you make appointments, that's
297 definitely learner-centered.

298   P4: Or group projects assigned to you, working outside the class.

299   **M: Tell me more about that.**

300   P4: Well, in my English class, we didn't usually have discussions in class. The only time

301   that we have to discuss is like that day the professor will sign and he would like say,

302   "You have 15 minutes. Talk to your group mates and exchange numbers and contact info

303   and all of that and start doing the outline." And that is the only time. But he always

304   encouraged us to meet outside the class and hang out. So that is the only time that I get to

305   communicate with the other students. And the other classes and I didn't even make any

306   friends. Because most of the time, the only time, that I might find I might make a

307   friendship is laboratory classes

308   **M: In the English classes you had the experience of doing project work, right?**

309   P4: Yes.

310   **M: What were your experiences like doing project work with others?**

311   P4: Overall very positive. They didn't act in a way that "Oh, you don't know anything!"

312   that we or they wouldn't stand behind and do nothing and take credits. None of them were

313   like that. That was very fortunate enough for me. So it was very positive experience and

314   they include me. They asked me what part I want to take care of the whole project

315   research, Powerpoint, draft, whatever it is.

316   **M: What were your experiences with others?**

317   P3: I think in group projects we learn a lot about other students. And that's how we, being

318   international students, adjust with the American environment, interact with the American

319   students. And also, like we discuss about a particular topic that's a part of our

320   presentation that we're going to talk about in the class. Everyone gives their own

321   perspective, everyone gives their own point. So I think that makes, (…) I would say (…)

322   **M: You were talking about perspective.**

323   P3: Yeah!

324   **M: Each of you were giving your own opinion or perspective**

325   P3: Yeah!

326   **M: What would that involve?**

327   P3: (…) I would say, I think even if you're saying something wrong, if our point is wrong

328   and the other person is saying the correct point, you probably learn from the other person.

329   And then we picture this in our own point of view and present it to the group. That kind

330   of makes sense.

331   P1: What I thought is like group projects, I'm not really a fan of them even though I

332   know it's kind of beneficial. I don't have positive experiences. Because although others

333   maybe inclusive asking for everyone's perspective. I don't know if it's just the Business

334   College, but it's usually like you do it, or we're going to do this, and this and that and if

335   you can't do this, this is not like you got to know, I mean, not, not every business

336   student's like that. But, for example, this is not everyone's experience but for my

337   marketing group project, I don't know if it was just this person but I wasn't paired up

338   with a traditional American student. I was paired up with an international student.

339   **M: How about English class?**

340   P1: In English classes, for group projects, I don't think I ever had a group project in my

341   English class, unless it was group discussion.

342   **M: Even in the group discussion, what was your experience?**
343   P1: Yeah, well, for me, I felt like unless they were confident in speaking English, even if
344   I like recommended, like, do you have an opinion or what do you think about that. They
345   would be really short in their answers. Unless the professor was like combined like,
346   "how's everything going?" My experiences weren't super positive. But yeah.
347   **M: They were not super positive?**
348   P1: They're not positive. But I want to say they weren't bad. They were just neutral. I
349   think it's normal for students to like be hesitant about talking in group discussions
350   because like they might feel like what if they think like it's stupid or like what if I'm
351   wrong. But I guess, as the professor goes around asking about opinions, encouraging to
352   talk, it does help them kind of feel relieved and speak more but just for me I just couldn't
353   see it in other students.
354   **M: What about you P2?**
355   P2: I was also paired up with another Pakistani student, Shayan, because I used to sit with
356   him so the teacher, I don't know, if she assumed since we just speak the same language,
357   we would just have better understanding.
358   **M: Was this the English class?**
359   P2: Yes, oral presentation. I think she thought that we would have better understanding,
360   you know, because we are from the same culture. She put us on the same, like both of us
361   in the same group. And when you know when the time came for a group project, like a
362   big group project with five students, we had to wait till the end. The professor said, "You
363   guys can start making your group." But nobody wanted us, nobody asked or they just like
364   all the American students made their groups within themselves. And then, at the last
365   minute, some people didn't have enough members. They just, like, put us in there. But I
366   mean, my group experience was good and positive because they made me feel important
367   and gave me respect, whatever, him and I shared with them and then they also asked me,
368   like, "What is your strength and where do you think you will best fit, which part of the
369   presentation do you want to work on?"
370   **M: Can you think about what P2 said at the end about his experience of being**
371   **respected by the group members and, going through strengths and weaknesses. Can**
372   **the others say something about that?**
373   P4: We have to take this, I don't even know the technical term for this, it's like, it's not
374   like Buzzfeed quest but a quiz where it gives you a rank of the strengths and weaknesses.
375   P1: StrengthsQuest?
376   P4: Yeah! StrengthsQuest. So we have to submit the results to the professor. Just go
377   through the list and put the people who are like strong. I don't remember the adjectives. If
378   I'm weak in something and someone is good at it and then we'll be paired together in
379   something like that. So we had that one project. Other than that, were grouped randomly
380   and I was respective.
381   **M: Many of the survey participants expressed that they often were encouraged,**
382   **appreciated, cared for, respected as a person. Some of you did talk about this. Can**
383   **you explain what that means from the learner-centered perspective? P1?**
384   P1: I guess the most time when I felt respected, I don't know if it is, but like if I had an
385   opinion in class or like I talked about anything, they would actually listen to what I say

386   and let me finish my sentence. And then they would give feedback about it. If they agree
387   with it or if they disagree with it or if they want to add anything along with it, I guess that
388   was my most time being respected.
389   **M: What kind of environment supports students' learning in learner-centered**
390   **teaching?**
391   P1: Environment?
392   **M: What kind of environment supports students' learning?**
393   P1: I would definitely say if it's like a small group, where everyone kind of knows each
394   other.
395   P3: And people hear each other and answer. They are ready to hear each other answer.
396   They're not interrupting in between. Being a good listener is very important thing too in
397   learner-centered class, I would say.
398   **M: We pretty much focused in the classroom and I had also asked you about the**
399   **outside experiences you had related to the classroom, right? In English classes, if**
400   **your instructor made you do activities outside the class and you did talk about**
401   **project work. Other than project work, did you have to do any other activities**
402   **where it involved you in looking for resources outside the classroom?**
403   P4: We were assigned to participate in at least two campus activities. Doesn't have to be
404   student org or doesn't have to be a play or anything. You can just do anything. So what I
405   did was, yeah, I went to, I think one of the plays, and also one of the other activities was I
406   signed up for IEC conversation partner. So that was what I did for my first semester and I
407   did a different thing on the second semester so it kind of helps you be involved on
408   campus as well because that's what most international students need or any freshmen
409   needs. We are afraid to get involved in all of that and afraid that we will do bad in our
410   classes. In a way that's very encouraging.
411   **M: Would you all agree that that's an example of learner centered activity or**
412   **learner-centered practice?**
413   P3: Yeah [nodded in agreement]
414   P1: Kind of/ It's like students would independently choose what they want to do, but it
415   will be so related like to that class.
416   [P4 nodded in agreement]
417   P2: Everyone is individually doing their own thing, so I don't think like the other person
418   is getting any feedback by the information about the background or opinions or anything.
419   [Everyone else nodded in agreement]
420   P1: I think like about that, I don't know if I'm right but when we were doing that, I don't
421   know if that's the one like the peer activity. She makes us write a report, mostly like for
422   me, I went to a Mexican heritage one for the activity and I really did that too in my
423   country back in Korea.
424   **M: It's a report that you had to write?**
425   [Everyone nodded in agreement]
426   P3: It's a one-page paragraph.
427   P1: Yeah, it's a one-page journal. It's not a fancy report like I don't have to cite anything
428   but by just like relating to my culture with campus activities and then structure reading

429   that and giving me feedback like, "Oh, like it was interesting to read about like your kind

430   of thoughts!."

431   **M: Did you all have similar experiences?**

432   P3: Yeah, we had the same experience.

433   P2: I remember in the [Incomprehensible], we had to do a presentation on the regional

434   differences. So yes, so we did like one on Chicago and Cedar Falls and it's a long shot,

435   but we did that. And then we made, instead of using the powerpoint, we made a video.

436   P1: Yeah! I remember that![P3 nodded]

437   P2: We acted in that video and then shared that with everyone. I think, that's learner-

438   centered.

439   **M: P2 pointed out that you had to use audio visual equipment, did others have**

440   **similar experiences using different devices for your learning?**

441   P1: Not for my English class when I did that for my Chinese class, because the final was

442   a video acting. The learning objectives, so like we had to think of our own script. We had

443   to record that. I think that was my only experience of using something else than a

444   powerpoint.

445   **M: You were going to say something, P3?**

446   P3: Yeah, I was thinking that, I am not sure whether it's an example of learner-centered,

447   but in this first-year class, we had the end of our semester we had to write this Culture

448   Informant paper.

449   P1: Oh yeah!

450   [P2 nodded in agreement]

451   **M: Culture and?**

452   P3: Culture Informant, where we had to interview two American people and learn about

453   their culture. And then when we had to write a paper and then we had to go to the

454   Academic/ I had to go to twice and make an appointment there. They were like see our

455   paper if there are any mistakes. You'd have to correct and then we had to go back to

456   Charlie and show her our paper. So I think that kind of process was, I would say learner-

457   centered cuz even professor was interested in knowing what you were writing that's why

458   she told us to go to the Academic Learning Center and proofread the papers. I think that

459   would be an example. Not sure, but it could be.

460   P1: Yeah, like the learner as we go to the Academic Center, they're not like Grammarly.

461   They don't auto correct it. They actually explain you why you should do that, say why

462   don't you try rephrasing this and then we rephrase it and they will check it. It does help

463   the learner to learn.

464   **M: So, you did the corrections?**

465   P1: Yeah, when I went to the Learning Center like they would help us do it that way.

466   P3: Told us to come again next time because they were like they've made mistakes and

467   there they'd be like, bring it back. And then they would again look there'd be some other

468   mistakes too. They'd help us correct them as well.

469   **M: Would you like to say anything?**

470   P4: I don't really have any examples with my English classes.

471   **M: You said that you don't have many examples, so how could your English classes**

472   **be more learner-centered or student-centered?**

473 P4: He can include more discussions in classes. We read a book I believe our every
474 Kernel reads different books every year. And the book we read was really interesting, but
475 the only thing he did was write an essay of our some part of our lives that we want to say,
476 and you use the reference from the book. It's not really much of a use of a book. So he
477 would have to add discussions to the class on that book. And the rest of the class is just
478 him teaching from the textbook so it's not much of discussion-based.
479 **M: You just heard that P3 did not have that much of a learner-centered classroom**
480 **experience in English class, so could you suggest how English class can be made**
481 **learner-centered? Can I have one comment from P1 before she leaves? What would**
482 **you suggest?**
483 P1: If the professor gives like more environment that makes discussion inside class more
484 easy just like by asking basic questions about like what do you think about the readings,
485 what did you write in your journal like going over that and making a discussion in class. I
486 think that'll be pretty learner-focused. Because then other students will actually know
487 what they learned, learn more about the specific topic more in depth from that rather than
488 just having their own perspective. It will be like communication to learner to learner
489 rather than professor to learner.
490 **M: I guess you have to go, thank you!**
491 P1: Thank you.
492 **M: Finally, is there anything related to learner-centered teaching which has not**
493 **been discussed that you feel very strongly about and would like to share? As P1 said**
494 **before leaving how more discussions, she explained how discussions could actually**
495 **give other opportunities.**
496 P2: Also the professor could allow students to lead the discussion that could really help
497 students to interact with the professors because for every discussion, like, you know,
498 professors are available to help that group to understand the topic or clarify the questions
499 they might have and then the class and students can learn better. They are discussing it
500 among themselves rather than the professor leading the discussion and asking questions
501 and answering the questions.
502 P3: More PowerPoints and more videos that could help students to understand the topic
503 and then from there they start discussing about that topic. Students could start discussing
504 the topic and what they learn from the video and how they can relate to the topic that
505 they're discussing in the class. And probably relate it to their own experiences. That
506 would happen at any point in time in their life.
507 P4: Related to what P2 said is I have this experience in one of my biology classes. What
508 professor did was he barely took part in the discussion. He just sat in the circle. And what
509 we have to do is ask him questions like its evolutionary ecology class so we can learn
510 everything from the book, so if there are questions that comes up, we have to ask him.
511 And then there will be a pair assigned together and we have to make a presentation. We
512 have to lead the class that day which means we have to collect the scholar papers and all
513 of that so that whenever someone poses a question, then we can answer it. I'm not sure
514 English classes can be changed into that old direction where students have to lead the
515 whole way because it's not just a subject, where it's not just the topic counted a subject
516 because English is a broad spectrum. Kernel is not just a subject.

M: Okay, thank you very much and I appreciate your giving so much time and
talking about your experiences. And you know what you do in learner-centered
teaching practices.

Focus Group 1, Meeting 2

1 **M: So let's begin our conversation. I have just a few points to remind you. I don't**
2 **want to be talking. I want to hear from you. Just a few things that I want you to**
3 **remember. I would like you all to interact with each other, whether it means**
4 **agreeing or disagreeing it doesn't matter. You are respectful to each other, so don't**
5 **feel hesitant about making a comment about someone else's point, okay? You can**
6 **express your understanding and feelings while respecting what others have to say.**
7 **I'll sometimes throw in a few questions. I was trying to recall what you all had been**
8 **saying in the last meeting. Something important that emerged from there was the,**
9 **you were talking at the end about the English classes, how could they be made more**
10 **learner-centered. And all of you, sort of, you know, said a few points but you didn't**
11 **get to expand on that. So I was thinking of starting from there. It's your ideas.**
12 P4 [Others agreed with her]: Can you remind us?
13 **M: It doesn't matter. Now it can be something new. How do you think English**
14 **classes can be made more learner centered? It's your ideas.**
15 P1: I'm trying to think about last week.
16 **M: You don't have to think about that.**
17 P3: I think we said that more interaction among students more videos.
18 **M: Okay, so P1 talked about discussion, having discussion in the class where there's**
19 **more interaction. P3 talked about audio-visual uses in the classroom and P4 talked**
20 **about teachers not taking part in the class but leading the students to do it.**
21 P4: Yeah.
22 **M: You can start thinking.**
23 P3: Do you want us to expand on those points?
24 **M: Or you can add, of course. Maybe you can think about what you believe learner**
25 **centered teaching practices are and then from there you can maybe start.**
26 P2: It's about knowing the student, their beliefs, their opinions, their culture.
27 **M: You can talk about that more.**
28 P2: I remember talking about the professor can give tailored assignments where they
29 have an opportunity to learn about the topic and present it in front of class. That really
30 gives an opportunity for the professor and the students to get to know the person who's
31 leading the discussion.
32 **M: You are saying tailored? Can you tell me more about that tailored activity. What**
33 **do you mean by that?**
34 P2: I know that some professors they actually divide the chapters in the book among
35 groups. Like this semester I'm taking Intro to Marketing. There's just like English course.
36 And the professor, there's twenty chapters. So the 20 chapters were divided among
37 groups, a group of two people. Every week, like one certain group has to give a case
38 study presentation. Now it's up to them to tailor the case study, according to their
39 perception and present it in front of class. That way people can learn about the students,

40   what they learned from that topic. And how are they relating it to their past experiences.
41   Suppose I did a case study presentation on I remember on car company. I shared my
42   experience back in Pakistan, like how are the car industries back home. So that really
43   helps the Professor to know like where does my student come from.
44   P4: And to add on that making tailored assignments. They can also practice students to do
45   research on their own like using more services from the library so that they not only learn
46   the material from the professor or the textbook. They can expand the topic on their own,
47   which means it's not just the classroom learning. It's them learning on their own.
48   P3: Oh, one of the top points that how we can improve learning, learner-centered thing
49   could be that if you're like, starting a new topic, the professor can give take home exams
50   like take home sheet to the students or like a passage from the chapter and the students
51   can read that chapter. When they come to the class the next day, they have whatever
52   doubts they can consult among themselves. They can consult with the professor. Probably
53   that'd make the discussions more effective as students professor can have better
54   interactions because they know that what they are going to talk about in the class because
55   they had the take home and they've read all through it.
56   P4: And maybe make that a requirement so that you have to at least come with one or two
57   questions. Then they will interact more than ask.
58   P1: Going along with P3, so it's not my English class, but I'm listed in Women and
59   Gender Study. It's an elective, but that's what they do. The instructor assigns the students
60   like readings or journals before the class. When we come in the instructor doesn't really
61   do anything what she does is like if anyone wants to share like their journal and then the
62   students would talk like saying what they wrote in their journals and then they would
63   give feedback to each other. Do they disagree or agree. Why would they think in those
64   kind of perspective. So the students are engaging into this topic, like she would assign
65   some journal and once she comes in we would talk about like our perspectives and our
66   backgrounds were like okay this mother...And she's like, if she's a Catholic, she would
67   have a different perspective. Like, I'm from Asia. I have a different perspective. And then
68   when we like discussed with each other then we know like, okay, that's another way. And
69   like, since we're discussing it within like us, it's easier to like memorize. But what we're
70   talking about like how this is relevant to our learning. Like, why is this important .
71   **M: Would anybody like to pick up the point that P1 highlighted, "perspective"? Do**
72   **you agree with her? Could you expand on that? Anyone else?**
73   P1: Would you want us to talk more about it?
74   **M: She talked about how it's important listening to other perspectives. Can you**
75   **build on that?**
76   P3: Listening to other people's perspectives can make us more clear about the particular
77   topic.
78   P4: Yeah!
79   P3: And if we are not agreeing on a certain point, if you hear everyone other's
80   perspectives probably we can start agreeing on that point when you were disagreeing on
81   that point earlier so you can probably come to a conclusion.
82   P4: Yeah!

83   P1: I guess like going along with P3, it's like you're creating an open mind, because you
84   hear from others. I wouldn't have thought about if I was thinking about it alone. That'll be
85   another point on perspective.
86   P3: We are different from the American people so we have entirely different perspectives
87   on some topics. Probably we gather more information because we hear about the
88   American people speaking than our own points.
89   P1: I think it's effective and like culturally, especially for international students like who
90   need to learn the American culture like how the more we discuss we know like how these
91   people speak and how many words they would normally use like what their perspectives
92   be in general.
93   P2: I remember we took that Academic [strategies?] where we had an assignment to
94   interview a person, American people and then write a report on that.
95   [Everyone nodded in agreement]
96   P3: We had to ask questions based on culture and what religion?
97   P2: Culture, religion, family, family structure.
98   P3: Relationship?
99   P1: Anything related that's like inside this culture
100 P3: I talked to my resident assistant. I think I talked to two people. One of them was my
101 RA, I think I talked to two RAs and asked them their perspective, then I told them what
102 my perspectives are and how our culture is very different from what theirs is like. I think
103 it was really helpful for us first year students who all experience culture shock when we
104 come first in like we've come to a country that was really helpful.
105 **M**: **P4**?
106 P4: Just sitting here and agreeing with everyone!
107 P3: Even if it's not correct?
108 **M**: **If you disagree, you can say what you like.**
109 P4: No, I don't disagree.
110 **M**: **P1 also made another point about open-mindedness. She observed when P3 was**
111 **expanding her point and she talked about open-mindedness. Maybe you can also**
112 **talk a little bit about that.**
113 P3: P4, you want to start?
114 P1: What do you think about open-mind thing? [to P4]
115 P4: I mean, just listen to everyone. Feel free to agree and disagree but in a respectful
116 manner in a civil manner.
117 P1: And I think that's important because like the class, it's not English class, again, it's
118 Women and gender study. I'm really sorry this isn't an English class. Since it's like a
119 sensitive kind of topic, there's a lot of discussion, which means there might be a lot of
120 conflicts. But during that process we learned how to communicate with each other like
121 when there's a conflict happening. We understand like, Okay, this is going too much we
122 need a break. Along was the class material we get to learn, like how to like generally
123 communicate or like communication skills like verbal skills like conflict management
124 skills, those kind of things.

125   **M**: **Do you think, you're talking about your experiences but do you think those can**
126   **be also a part of English classes? That kind of learner centered practices can also be**
127   **something that English classes can also have?**
128   P1: Yeah if it was implemented into those classrooms definitely but I've never had such
129   an English class.
130   P3: I think that learner-centered class gradually becomes open minded because we hear
131   everyone's perspective and even if you don't disagree, after a certain point in time you
132   start agreeing, because your brain is open to listen to all ideas. You have to be a really
133   good listener first of all to be in a learner centered class. I remember when I took my
134   English class - English class example- It was called Writing and Research. For me that
135   class, we had to read certain pages of the book that we were learning from. And then we
136   should come back to class and discuss considering everyone's points, everyone's
137   perspectives, what they thought about this particular thing. So these are all international
138   students they are from India, from Pakistan, from Saudi Arabia, China. So everyone had
139   their own perspectives and because of that, we learnt a lot of information. For the first
140   time people were like conservative while some of us were like really open minded. So I
141   think it helped both of us mutually to understand each others' views.
142   P1: Yeah. While you're in a classroom with other people like conservative and open-
143   minded, sometimes there can be conflict. But as time passes, and you do that again and
144   again you kind of find a little point like, oh, like I understand why you think like that like
145   I got it. Like, we're not going to make it a fight, but I got what you meant
146   **M: P4 also pointed out resources outside the classroom like doing research and**
147   **going to the library. Can you talk a little bit about that? That's outside the class,**
148   **right?**
149   P3: You can have group projects. We can meet outside.
150   P2: Yeah, group projects,field trips.
151   P1: Oh Yah! I think my only field trip was the Strategies Academic like that
152   P3: Oh yeah, that presentation thing?
153   P1: Yeah the presentation and then Christie sent us off on the field trip forthe Cedar Falls
154   area.
155   P3: I had a field trip for my Capstone class. We were just on the campus.
156   P1: But when we were talking about resources are you like asking us, like what kind of
157   resources that we use?
158   **M: For learner-centered practices.**
159   P1: I guess one thing about like searching resources out of class, it's just all voluntary so I
160   don't know if it's conscious or unconscious. It's like every resource like if I search
161   through the library like one search, it's going to be mostly in my perspective. So like the,
162   how would I say it?
163   P4: Oh, whatever you put in the Google search bar, it will be in...
164   P1: Yeah, it's, it's already like tailored and my bias. But like in group research like even if
165   I'm searching the same word like free..., they're going to have different results. So, like
166   having group projects out of the classroom would also benefit like learning new
167   perspectives.

168 **M: I think P2 also talked about it a little last time about the formation of groups and**
169 **then the involvement of the students in the groups.**
170 P2: That's actually when I was taking Oral Presentation and we had a group project on
171 some assignment, Informative Speech. Everyone knew their roles, what they wanted to
172 do. And everyone was so open-minded and respectful that, they asked each other, what
173 part of the presentation do you want to work on. And while we were using the outside
174 resources such as the Internet, everything, we used to consult each other like is it, you
175 know. Is this image offensive to someone? It's similar to like going into a bar wearing a
176 gang symbol. It's offensive to some people Yeah.
177 P1: So like you wanted to say like during any group like they were still conscious about
178 asking about what you want to do choosing whatever. And they would ask you, like, how
179 does this affect you like they would ask you about your culture at a personal level?
180 P2: Not to me only, but to each other, even among their peers.
181 P3: That's happened with me as well when I had a presentation in one of my classes. It
182 was like we were five girls, we were really flexible with whatever we wanted to talk
183 about. Chris chose a particular topic we were like, we're going to meet next time, we
184 were going to be prepared, we were going to have some information. Not all from
185 Google, but at least explore some books in the library or some scholarly articles or peer
186 reviewed articles. So I think even that was really helpful because when we met the next
187 time we knew a lot of information and then we were concluding to specific points which
188 really helped us to make our presentation more better.
189 P1: I really don't have anything to say about group projects because mine was like
190 business.
191 P3: And you told us that you didn't have a really cool experience with your projects.
192 P1: But every single semester I've group project, but it just goes like I just try to be open
193 minded.
194 P3: How's this semester's group project?
195 P1: I don't know. I just started. It's outside the classroom and it's really student-centered.
196 But resource-wise, our group is really diverse. Everyone is different. So when we try
197 before, like we did any teamwork, we talked about ourselves, like, do you have any rule
198 over like pet peeves, is there something you want to say before we group this team, like
199 gender pronouns werer something important. So there was this just one - they or they
200 didn't want to be called she, her, hers. So they so they told us that I'll prefer they, their,
201 them terms and then we would understand, like, why they would do not want that,
202 because they explained, why they had that kind of background and then that gradually
203 added on to our project which because it was related to gender violence and yeah. That's
204 kind of messy, but that was my group experience with them.
205 **M: What opportunities should students have in learner-centered classes?**
206 P3: What's that?
207 **M: What opportunities should students have in learner-centered classes?**
208 P2: From the professor?
209 **M: I mean, I'm not focusing on the professor or anything. What kind of chances or**
210 **what kind of opportunities should students have?**
211 P4: Freedom of speech

212   P1: Yah, be comfortable and like, anyone can speak in the classroom. If the professor
213   says like do you have anything you want to say, it's not easy, but in learner centered, i
214   think the most important thing I think is, voluntarily like they're engaged into talking, like
215   they want to talk. They want to say their opinion, but a lot of I don't know the opposite
216   word for learner- entered, but those kind of classes are mostly like the professor talks and
217   the professor says, "Does anyone have questions?" Nobody has questions, unless it's like
218   participation, points or something. Yeah, but learner-centered is like make the classroom
219   comfortable for everyone to like say their opinion, even if it takes like during the first
220   week it's mostly the syllabus. And there's a lot of time after that because like the syllabus
221   isn't really long for most of them. Most of the professors say like, I got even starting from
222   like icebreakers even though they might seem like cringing whatever. Icebreakers are like
223   doing games or like making the classroom atmosphere more open and more like used to.
224   So it's like a safe environment for anyone to say whatever they want.
225   P2: Taking from that, I remember in Academic Writing in College we used to form on
226   discussion days, like a big circle and everyone had like it was comfortable environment,
227   everyone had their freedom to speak give their opinions and if some people like didn't
228   wanted to speak or shared their opinion they could either say 'pass' and then it goes to the
229   next person. So we would like go in a circle. And then, if someone or if I didn't want to
230   say anything. I just say pass. And then the next person. That was really comfortable. I
231   wasn't forced to state my opinion.
232   P3: About opportunities, I don't know if it's related to learner centered, but if you would
233   get to know more about every student in the class, you probably make good connections.
234   **M: What is the word that you used?**
235   P3: I don't even remember what I said!
236   P4: Get to know more
237   P3: Get to know more about the students ... and probably it will help us to make good
238   connections
239   P4: And you'll be more comfortable.
240   P3: Yah, comfortable
241   P4: And will be more willing to be part of the discussion.
242   P3: Uhu
243   P1: It's just not like a one-way communication. It is like a two-way
244   P3: And that's really effective in learner-centered class.
245   P4: You can go first
246   P3: Probably the professor would give us, like if everyone would be like really
247   interactive, the professor will give us more extra, not exactly more extra points that
248   would help us to understand the topic better
249   P1: Oh what I was going to say is, like, it's not an experience. It's like a statistics I
250   remembered. It was my peer mentor class but like I know like when you speak, when
251   you're learning something, it's like 40-50% better in remembering what that material was,
252   better than just listening, which is like lower like 30% and then just seeing is the lowest
253   in learning it. So it's effective for the students to get to that. That's what I remember.
254   [P4 nodded in agreement]
255   **M: You're using some statistics about learning, right?**

256   P1: Yeah.

257   **M: How can you relate that to learner-centered opportunities?**

258   P1: I guess.

259   P3: I think when you write you retain more in your memory. Probably when we are

260   discussing if we write down notes while we're discussing or a particular topic that can

261   probably be more helpful rather than just listening and not noting down anything. By the

262   time when you come out of the class, there are so many other things happening in your

263   life that you forget what you talked in the class. Taking down notes will be really helpful.

264   [Others nodded in agreement]

265   P2: What is the percentage for listening?

266   P1: Just listening?

267   P3: 30

268   P1: Yeah, kind of 30-ish

269   P2: And writing is?

270   P1: I don't remember

271   P3: Writing is 50 and 10% is Seeing.

272   P2: Yeah, I was going to say make all the class, like, upload the lectures online. That's the

273   most convenient way!

274   P3: Don't come to class. Do it all from home!

275   P1: Oh, one thing. It's like, I think it will be more learner-centered when we think about

276   like students with disabilities. Because like some professors they have students who can't

277   hear. But when they have like a visual aid it doesn't have subtitles. So it's kind of hard for

278   them to follow along. So they're not having the opportunity to like have more resources

279   to learn because like, it's not like they can go home and like, well, they can go home, if

280   it's youtube and watch it, but like if it's like something not like that.

281   P4: I think if most of the class syllabus, saying,

282   P1: Yeah, if you have hearing problem come talk to me.

283   P3: Disability

284   P2: Yeah. Yeah. Right.

285   P1: But like big classroom, some professors like just kind of forget not intentionally and

286   then after class the student will go up and say, "Can I have the link for that or anything?"

287   P2: I;ve noticed that some people have some difficulty in reading like big words or

288   knowing what it means

289   P4: Dyslexic?

290   P2: Kind of, people who are fresh out of the IEC

291   P4 & P1: Oh Ok.

292   P2: They don't know what those specific word means and so they could have the option

293   of having the dictionary with them during the exam or something or some resource.

294   P1: Well, I think every student should have the opportunity to have the same quality or

295   understanding of it although it's hard in large classrooms like English classrooms are kind

296   of small. If there's language difficulty or just disabilities, should all be an opportunity to

297   have a middle check, like everything falling along, even if it has everyone understood the

298   link that kind of way.

299   [Others nod in agreement]

300 P4: Apps like I think kindle has the option of when you touch the word a definition
301 appears.
302 P2 & P1: Yeah
303 P4: If they allow such technology in the room for students like who have difficulty in
304 English, then that would be equal opportunity for every student.
305 [Everybody nodded in agreement]
306 **M: That's a different resource.**
307 P4: Yes.
308 P3: Technology comes in to play.
309 **M: How do you think technology can be used in learner-centered classes? For**
310 **learner centered education for that matter.**
311 P3: Kindle, as she said we can use Kindle. Dictionary, as everyone said.
312 P1: Yeah, I use it sometimes, the Google one. It's not the best, but it does help me
313 sometimes.
314 P2: Some people like to write in their own language. It helps them to understand the
315 content better.
316 P3: I don't know if that's possible.
317 P2: Translate it.
318 P3: I'm trying to think how that will be possible.
319 P1: Like for me, I try not to write in my language when I take notes because it's not going
320 to help me with my English
321 P3: You're going to have to get used to in your own language and then I'm pretty sure
322 good to have a hard time communicating. Your communication skills don't get better.
323 [P1 and P4 nodded in agreement]
324 P1: Yeah, they don't get better. Yeah. That's why I try to use more English language. But
325 if it's super hard word like Scientific words, I would just pop up Google translator, and
326 find the word in Korean. Yeah, technology helps but like we need to be aware how it
327 does not help.
328 [Everyone nodded in agreement]
329 P1: Because I know a lot of professors they don't allow laptops. That's technology, that's
330 easier to take notes, like it saves trees, but it distracts us a lot.
331 P4: Or you can turn off the notifications on the laptop, because that's what I do in my
332 neurobiology class. The professor says a lot in one sentence and I cannot write it down
333 fast enough and I cannot type fast enough. But the app that I use OneNote it has the
334 option of recording so I record.
335 P1: Oh!
336 P4: The good thing is when I go through the notes and when I put the pass or arrow,
337 whatever, on that line and then there's a play button next to it and it will play the exact
338 same thing that the professor is saying for that line. That is also one other resource that
339 should be allowed.
340 P3: Read more books to develop vocabulary.
341 [P4 & P2 nodded in agreement]
342 P1: I don't like reading textbooks. I think realistically like as a student, I haven't been
343 reading any leisure books for like ever since I came here even if I tried to because like

344   there's enough textbook chapters I need to read. Just saying like, it's not, I'm not
345   disagreeing with like reading books is really good, especially when you're learning new
346   vocabulary. It's better than doing flash cards because it looks like you're actually trying to
347   understand while you're reading the book. Because like it probably comes up often like
348   you know when to use this word like in that sentence.
349   P3: You said another resource is flashcards.
350   P1: Yeah
351   P3: Flashcards always helps they are really good.
352   P2: Can technology be learner-centered?
353   **M: It's a question for the others! Yeah, sure, go ahead!**
354   P4: What do you mean by that?
355   P2: Computer learning, how you write, browse stuff. Artificial Intelligence is a new thing
356   that's coming up now. So it might be replacing all the professors!
357   P1: You might have to send them to college to get a PhD.
358   P2: Even PhD won't be like the highest degree. There'll be a double *PhD* [emphasis] or
359   something.
360   P1: Going along with, well, I don't know it's not AI related but right now, in the Business
361   College, what they're doing is like they're making something different from *PhD*
362   [emphasis]. This isn't really English. But long story short, they just allow people who are
363   in their job, who want to continue learning, it's hard for them because if they want to
364   come back to college they have to give up their job, but they don't want to do that. So
365   what they do is they use technology to create like online curriculum. So they just earn all
366   their classes which is usually like with other students who are on their laptop and they
367   would just discuss about it and that will be like another like it's similar like it's the same
368   level of a PhD, but it's just online. You don't have to go to college, like the University.
369   P4: I've heard of the online classes as well like that set up. You just read and there's a
370   comment section where you have to post your responses and thoughts on that. And that's
371   what marks are based on.
372   P2: There's been like new online deals like Grammarly
373   P4: Uh-huh
374   P2: And also every week
375   P1: It sends like a report saying like how many words have you used compared to other
376   users like how much did you rate
377   P2: Yeah!
378   P4: I haven't used that App.
379   P2: If that report can be shared with the professor and then they could know like how
380   much like my student is using correct punctuation, grammar.
381   P3: Take a look at the learning of the topics that we are studying in the class. He can
382   probably get to know where the student is.
383   P2: Most of the time we are learning from like movies and TV shows and they sometimes
384   use slangs like 'wanna', 'gonna'. It's something like slang words, you know, and then we
385   we write those words in the essays and then the Professor circles them and you don't
386   know why was it wrong. It's like that.
387   P4: Does Grammarly give you the red flag if you use 'wanna', 'going to'?

388 P2: Yeah, it shows red underline.
389 P4: Since we're learning English and since Grammarly also gives report that's kind of
390 keeping your progress as well.
391 P1: Do you pay for Grammarly?
392 P2: No, it's a free edition.
393 P3: I haven't tried it.
394 P2: That's like an online offer. You can use it for free for one month. It's for the trial
395 version.
396 P1: I use the paid version.
397 P3: Why would you pay?
398 P1: I got it on that promotion, but it's a year only.
399 **M: This is something just to do some brainstorming, help you do some**
400 **brainstorming. So far you've been thinking about what kind of practices are**
401 **learner-centered. I want you to think in a different direction. I want you to think**
402 **about what's not learner centered practice. So if you want you can use these cards to**
403 **just jot down some things. I'll give you the question again so that you have it in your**
404 **mind. I want you to think about what's not learner-centered practice. And then you**
405 **can talk. You can make notes and then we can talk.**
406 **M: The floor is yours.**
407 P1: I wrote when the Professor only speaks during lectures.
408 [Everyone agreed]
409 P4: I also have that lecture-based course, when the Professor speaks all the time.
410 P3: I think we all have that all the time. For me it was what's not learner-centered would
411 be lectures and then if you're memorizing.
412 [Everyone expressed agreement]
413 P3: You're writing stuff, not interacting in class. If you're not interacting in class and just
414 listening to what the professor is saying, it won't do any good to us and it won't do any
415 good to the professor cuz he wouldn't know. He or she wouldn't know. If you have any
416 doubt, because if you want to speak in the class, then if you're not understanding the
417 concept that's just memorizing, just cramming everything and then you can understand or
418 you can have a better understanding if you would compare it with the outside world. And
419 if you're not doing that, you should at least compare it with reality then probably
420 understand. If you're not comparing to the reality of the world and probably it's kind of
421 not learner centric. If you've real life examples, you understand it more. Let's put it that
422 way. And if you are just reading from the book and it's like memorizing the formulas like
423 the statements, the theorem. I don't think it will do you any good.
424 P4: That's why I wrote down most math classes, those are not.
425 P1: Yeah.
426 P4: And I also wrote students don't know each other. It won't be helpful for them. So, and
427 then I'm Iffy on this one, but class sizes also matter.
428 [Everyone agreed.]
429 P4: Although I took one class with more than 60, I want to say around 70-80 students, the
430 professor handled well but not all students participated in it. It was still a discussion-
431 heavy class, but not that helpful. And no out of class activities.

432 P2: I wrote down individual projects, then group projects. Using a standard syllabus
433 structure and like a standard class where you just follow the syllabus, graduate, get a
434 grade and just, not making it tailored to students' needs. Then large group as P4
435 mentioned, large classroom and then online classroom. Like, I know that the
436 Communication department, one of the professors offer online classes where everything
437 is uploaded on e-learning and you just meet once a week with the professor. Everything's
438 online so that doesn't give much room to learn about people.
439 P1: Going along with what P3 said, memorization-based material I think it's not learner-
440 based because you forget it like after the exam like you don't use it anywhere. You can't
441 teach it to anyone else like after the classroom and then discussions. If the professors
442 don't know, if they're lecture-based and the students they want a good grade anyway. So,
443 they study anyways, either the professors like using an ineffective method. So not having
444 evaluations where feedback, the professor might not know that he or she is not using an
445 effective way. So, the professor doesn't learn anything, the student doesn't know
446 anything. I think that's not learner-entered way.
447 P4: Based on that getting response from the students, this might not be true, but I heard
448 that tenured professors, they do not require to get the evaluation every year or every
449 semester which is not good because my friends got really bad experience from one of the
450 professors, who's tenured and is about to retire. Their attitude is like I don't care anymore.
451 I'm not getting evaluation from us, so I don't care anymore.
452 **M: Let's stop at the comment that P2 made about individual projects. You have**
453 **talked a lot about group projects so what are your ideas about individual projects?**
454 P2: You want to know what individual projects are?
455 **M: How do you think that's learner-centered?**
456 P2: It's not centered because you know you're like doing it individually. You might be
457 seeing your professor. But in most cases the professor, they give you an outline of what
458 to do and all the steps that need to be taken. You're on your own.
459 **M: P3, do you agree with him? I think you want to say something.**
460 P3: I wouldn't say that it's not learner-centered. I would say it is. Because if you're putting
461 your ideas forward, discussing, and standing in front of the class, everyone is hearing
462 your point, and I think everyone has that ability to speak if they don't agree or disagree
463 with your point. I think that at some point of time that is learner-centered, because
464 everyone is putting their … forward. At the end when you only have a speech or a
465 project, at the end it's just a piece, it doesn't even have any questions they want to ask the
466 people are speaking in front. So, I think that is what happens in learner-centered classes
467 as well.
468 [P1 & P4 nodded in agreement]: Yeah,
469 P3: I don't completely agree.
470 P1: No offense!
471 **M**: **How about you two?** [P1 & P4]
472 P1: OK, so even if the professor gives you an outline, not he, but he or she, the professor
473 or instructor, they only give you the outline. The rest of it is for us who does the research,
474 who does writing who puts their perspective. Like every single student, even if it's on the
475 same topic, even if it's the same question every essay is different. It's not going to be the

476   same research perspective or whatever evidence they put in. So even though it's not a
477   collaborative thing it's I think it's still learner-centered because it's still what the learner
478   does. It's not that the Professor says you should write this sentence after this you should
479   use this after that. That's my thought. Yeah, no offense!
480   P2:
481   P4: I agree with both P3 and P1.
482   P2: They are putting me in the corner! Ok
483   P4: There can also be some individual projects that are not learner-centered just studying
484   on your own.
485   P1: Yeah.
486   P4: Like exams, homework
487   P1: We're not saying like all of them are.
488   P4: But for the projects that needs to be presented in class, that needs to be presented to
489   the professor that can be learner-centered.
490   P1: Yeah, it's like math problems… that is not learner-centered.
491   [Everyone agreed]
492   P1: But if it's like on a topic like what do you think about this, that will be learner-
493   centered. Like an open-ended question. Yeah, I guess.
494   **M: P2 also pointed that students' needs be addressed, right? You said something**
495   **about students' needs.**
496   P3: It's your point.
497   P2: I did? No, I don't have students' needs on it.
498   **M: When you were articulating, when we were expressing your opinion about what**
499   **kind of activities are not learner-centered you focused something on students' needs.**
500   P2: I don't remember.
501   **M: Classes that do not address students' needs.**
502   P1: I have it in my mind. I guess it will be stuff that like the students don't want to learn.
503   They feel like I'm not going to use this like short-term topics like I don't need to know x,
504   y, z, but the professor's giving us to much concentration on x, y, z. I guess maybe that's
505   what you wanted to say.
506   P2: Maybe.
507   P4: But then it's part of the curriculum.
508   P3: In the end he cannot just skip it. You have to watch it if you are taking both your …
509   and both your majors and I'm pretty sure most of the students don't like to do the LAs.
510   P4: We all share that. It's like two years.
511   P1: Not all of us.
512   P2: No, I like LA.
513   P4: Some we are learning.
514   P1: I like my major, I don't hate it, easy, easy, easy to get a good created that Elysees
515   depends not
516   P2: It's easy to get good grades at LAs
517   P3: It depends. Not in all LAs you can get an easy A.
518   P1: I guess LAs are really beneficial because it's really diverse in many ways, like
519   students, topics.

520   **M**: **One of that was the Academic Writing in College, right?**

521   [Everyone nodded]

522   P3: You either take Kernel, or you either take Academic Writing in College and Oral

523   Presentations together.

524   P1: Is Oral Presentation English class?

525   P2 & P3: Yeah

526   P3: It helps improve our communication skills. It's kind of an English class. You took

527   Kernel class? It was a six-credit class?

528   P4: Yeah. Six. Right.

529   **M: Finally, you all provided examples that came from your experiences of attending**

530   **classes and what you believe learner-centered is, right? Is there anything related to**

531   **learner-centered teaching that, you know, which you think that has not been**

532   **discussed in our meetings that you feel strongly about and would like to just add?**

533   P3: I laid out all my ideas.

534   P2: Can online classes be learner-centered like Oral Presentation? I know one Professor

535   she offers this online course. In Humanities, there's some professor.

536   P1: I guess it depends like, it's not an English class, but like my Psych class, she has like

537   a blog. And she'd ask us like write comments down and then students would see those

538   comments and like respond or like talk about it.

539   **M: So, for instance, if you had an English course that was online, to help P2, that's**

540   **what he wants to know. Do you think it could be learner-centered?**

541   P3: I don't think so. I think if you meet physically, like you're physically present in the

542   class and have at least seen each other's faces and you know where the other person is

543   from…

544   P4: And I'm not sure how you will learn English in an online class other than like writing

545   or reading.

546   P2: I mean all the quizzes or everything is on e-learning, even the writing assignment and

547   you just have to meet up with your group that's already pre-assigned by the professor and

548   then you make a presentation, you record it and then you upload it back to e-learning and

549   then professor just reviews that with you and she grades you.

550   P4: If it's English class, I think it should address all of your four skills reading, writing,

551   speaking, and listening. If it's an online class then you won't be speaking at least if the

552   professor uploads a video this listening part would be covered, but then you only listen to

553   one person. You won't be talking.

554   **M: Can there be speaking activities too?**

555   P2: And by the way, that recording is only accessible by the professor. So, none of the

556   other students can watch it.

557   P3: One thing can happen if you all go live.

558   P1: Yeah, I think there was a, it's not like face to face, but it was like chatting. Students

559   can chat.

560   **M: You can talk about it P3.**

561   P2: Facebook live.

562   P4: Or Skype in.

563 P3: Skype everyone, like everyone is face to face. And then everyone turns giving out
564 their points on the particular topic. Though it's online, it's student-centered in some way
565 because we are.
566 P1: Yeah, I think it just depends on, like, how will you use technology as a tool.
567 P3: I think it'll be really hard with 24 students all live.
568 P4: With the NU wifi?
569 P2: I know the first thing they'll say is, 'Can you hear me?'
570 P3: Yeah! 'Can you hear me?'
571 P1: And the willingness of the students
572 P3: To come online?
573 P1: I think for English class specifically it's hard for online classes to be learner-centered
574 but it's not impossible. It just depends on like the person, class atmosphere.
575 P3: If you really need to improve, if you really want to improve your English skills
576 because we being international students, we have come here to improve our English,
577 right? I don't think it'll be effective for us like taking online classes. It'll be good for
578 Americans, because they are English citizens, they were born. But for us, it would be
579 better if we take physical classes.
580 P4: One of the activities that I did in Kernel, I'm not sure if I mentioned it before, being a
581 part of conversation partner for IEC, I'm not sure if they were happy about having me as
582 a partner because, you know, they would rather have the student talk to the native speaker
583 than to international students who has learnt English two years ago. That would be one of
584 the options like if you speak to someone who is like level 1 IEC. I'm just using as an
585 example, not relating it to anyone. Then you will be explaining to them what one word
586 means. Then you'll be using English describing to them and that way you can improve
587 your English in a way. I also did that back in my country when I was tutoring. Some of
588 the peer tutoring, that's the word used, to the students and like level one, level two. We
589 can use our native language
590 **M**: **It's peer tutoring?**
591 **P4**: Yes, peer tutoring.
592 **M**: **P4 has another idea peer tutoring.**
593 P1: What's that again?
594 P4: It's just 'peers' 'tutoring'. I was in level 5 and then 6 and I helped the students in
595 level 1 and level 2.
596 P3: It's like a peer mentor? Kind of? Ok.
597 P4: Yes, peer mentor but we used the word tutor.
598 **M: Can that be learner-centered? Is that an example of learner-centered?**
599 P4: I'm using it as an example of out of the class activity.
600 P1: I'll definitely say it's like learner-matched. Like the level is matched but I don't know
601 if it will be learner-centered, depending on the willingness of the student.
602 [P4 nodded in agreement]
603 P1: I don't know if it's good to say names, but I'm not going to do it. There was this other
604 person who did the same IEC conversation thing, but he never had the chance to like
605 meet the student because the student never wanted to talk to him. So, even though it's the
606 same method, it's not learner-centered at all. I think the most important thing like if you

607   want it to be *learner-centered* [emphasis] the *learner* [emphasis] wants to learn. You

608   know, be engaged like *know* [emphasis] that thing. Yeah. That's all I want to say.

609   **M: Do you all agree with P1? She's focusing more on the learning part of the**

610   **learner-centered concept? To her that's more important.**

611   P1: Because, like, if you're engaged into the discussion, learning more about that person

612   is going to gradually come along. Because if so, if we're learning all this topic, and then I

613   say something that might not agree with the teacher or professor or whoever that is

614   they're going to ask, 'Why do you think like that?'

615   P3: Uh-huh.

616   P1: And that at that time. You're going to say I think about this because of this and this

617   and this and that. That will be like my experiences, my perspective, my culture and they

618   will gradually come along, like 'Yeah, that's what I think!'

619   P3: I think I agree with that.

620   **M: So are we good? Are we feeling good about having, I mean, I didn't say**

621   **anything. Do you all feel good about having said whatever you wanted to about this**

622   **topic.**

623   P3: We are happy! Are you happy with our answers? That's the main thing! We're just

624   talking! I'm like, I don't know some of the things I'm saying are right or wrong!!

625   **M: I told you at the beginning there's nothing right or wrong! Okay, so it was a**

626   **pleasure listening to you all and thank you very much for being part of this project**

627   **and I appreciate it.**

628   ALL: Thank you!

Focus Group 2, Meeting 1

1   M Okay, thank you everyone for being here today and I appreciate your giving me time,

2   it's a Friday. What we're going to talk about is, in fact, you're going to talk about your

3   experiences in English class that you took here at the NU. So **you'll be talking about**

4   **you know what you believe learner centered teaching practices are so it could be**

5   **inside or outside the class anywhere.**

6   P5: Do you want to know what learner centered learning center or English class?

7   **M: It's about learner-centered teaching practices, the student is the center. It's not**

8   **the teacher who is doing all the learning. In the TC-class it's the teacher who**

9   **dominates. In the learner-centered classroom, it's the learner.**

10   P5: Student-dominated classroom

11   **M: So it was your experience that you had actually shared through the survey. I**

12   **would like you to talk about that. And I would like you all to, you know, discuss in a**

13   **group. I'll give you questions from time to time, but I will not be, you know, a heart**

14   **of your discussion. I'll only, you know, give you a question.**

15   P6: Do you want us to come up with an answer as a group, or?

16   **M: Individually. So you can agree or disagree and you can have negative or positive**

17   **ideas. But you're going to be respectful to each other and at the same time, share**

18   **your ideas. Think for a moment about your English classes, what were your**

19   **experiences like in your English classes here at NU?**

20   P5: So my experience was really positive in English class. When I came to the USA my

21   English was really bad I'd say. I felt really bad.

22   P6: Still!
23   P5: Yeah, it's still is but it's still much better than when I came here. So I did the last
24   course which was about English writing and reading and the professor made it like
25   *writing, reading, listening* and *speaking* [emphasis]. He used to give us assignments and
26   we have to like we had, we had to read the article and then write a reflection paper on it,
27   then we have to read in the class. Like this we were having a listening through speaking,
28   writing and reading. It really helped me a lot improving my English language.
29   **M: How about the others?**
30   P7: I learned English from a very young age and studied in English medium school so the
31   system itself was not very different, but I'm sure it improved my English especially in the
32   writing sense of things because here, especially in America, you have that one on one
33   feedback session with your teacher that before after every assignment. I took Academic
34   Writing in College and my professor always wanted that one on one session with the
35   students before she said, okay, your paper's good to go. So that one on one feedback
36   really helps you with specific things. For me, one particular thing is the usage of the
37   Oxford Comma. I never knew why that was relevant or necessary. I just thought that was
38   one of those things that you know you were being like hardcore grammatically correct
39   but it's kind of like I go and meet land teacher and she's like, You should put the Oxford
40   Comma because of x, y, z and from my next essay onwards, I started doing that. So that
41   one-on-one feedback was really appealing.
42   P6: What's the Oxford comma?
43   P7: So when you've three or more words. You say X, Y, and Z, you need to put a comma
44   after Y too because it's "X" "Y" AND "Z." Do you mind if I say...
45   **M: Maybe we can explain that later! Did you have similar experiences like P7? He**
46   **was saying that he had one on one interaction with the teacher. Did you all have**
47   **similar experiences?**
48   P8: For me it was quite different, because essentially when I came in my Kernel class, it
49   was quite useless for me because I had been studying English all my life I've been
50   reading, writing, all my life. So Kernel was just a class where I was bored. That was the
51   only class which I did not like. But that's where the learner-centered part came and
52   because while I realize that there were things in Kernel that I have been doing on since
53   the past three years, there were people in the class who have never done that. So in order
54   to make the class interesting for me where there were people writing papers about
55   exercises, steroids, and health issues, I thought it would be better if I myself increase my
56   level and write something that could be interesting to me and could give me something
57   that I did not know at the end, so I wrote a paper on virtues instead. It took more time, but
58   I did learn something.
59   P7: On what?
60   P8: On virtues so I would say, it at least, because of the student-centered idea, I'm going
61   to do something that is going to give *me* [emphasis] something by the end of the class,
62   even if the holistic class experience is not up to the level I've been [Incomprehensible].
63   So that was my idea behind Kernel.
64   **M: Do you think that's learner-centered?**
65   [P6 and P7 agreed]
66   P6: Yeah, definitely. Because he actually took it on himself, because he wanted to learn
67   something out of it and so he chose a topic based on that. I took Kernel too. I felt like it
68   was a lot of extensive work because, Yes, I've learnt English, Yes, I've written essays, or
69   whatever. But then research papers are a lot of work and I hadn't done that before. And

70 my professor she guided us on every step and she made us do several drafts, she made us
71 do annotated bibliography and all of that. In general, helped me with college, not with
72 English. Because it helped me how to do research, or write a research paper, but not learn
73 the structure of English language or anything.
74 P7: I just have one comment on the learner-centered approach too is what I experienced
75 over here is, back home, the teacher has a set of expectations. And all students, regardless
76 of their ability, have to adhere to those set of expectations. But here in the first class, you
77 have these icebreaker sessions. Your teacher wants to know more about you, you know.
78 And after your first assignment or two, they will, they can gauge your ability with
79 English and then next time you meet them, they will grade you according to your ability,
80 instead of that one expectation that they have and that means that the student is never like
81 under pressure to adhere to someone else's standards. But they can be judged by their
82 own standards. So that is a kind of learner-centered because it puts the student in the
83 middle of that.
84 **M: Would you agree with P7?**
85 P8: Yeah, pretty much. And that's where when you get your syllabus. You see how there
86 is a specific section saying that there is a disability section. You are going to be analyzed
87 subjectively and it just depends on who you are as a person, not what standard
88 preconceived notions are there in the society.
89 **M: Did everybody express what experiences they had at the beginning? In the**
90 **English classes? P5, you did?**
91 P5: [Nodded]
92 **M: I'm going to show you a definition of learner-centeredness. And I would like you**
93 **to just look at it for a moment. And, think about to what extent do you think that**
94 **your beliefs are similar to this. Do you believe that this is learner centeredness?**
95 [Pause, students looked at the screen]
96 P8: Yeah, pretty much.
97 **M: From there you can start talking about it.**
98 P8: I mean, the idea is very much positive, perhaps because you see even College in
99 itself, as in back home. I'm talking about the sub-continent, we have this very idea that
100 you're going to college for a degree. And the degree represents what you are as a person.
101 But my idea of coming into college was that the degree perhaps does not matter. It's just a
102 page of you, perhaps even getting a C in class. But the idea behind it was that by the end
103 of the semester if you gain a skill, you do learn something. If you have not, that means
104 you did not learn something. And everyone has a different way of learning and everyone
105 can be good at something and bad at something. I'm good at reading and I'm bad at
106 playing sports. So, for me, playing sports would be much harder than what P7 or these
107 guys would think. So that's my point. It depends on person to person.
108 P7: And it's kind of, yeah, what I wanted to say to that definition kind of captures what I
109 wanted to say.
110 P6: I believe more or less people who come to study in US for undergrad come for *this*
111 [emphasis] [pointed to the scree] reason. Because our structure of college and high school
112 is definitely teacher focused or teacher-centered.
113 [P7 and P5 nodded and expressed agreement]
114 P5: Yeah. Even the professors here in NU, I don't know how, but they know, students
115 coming from countries like Pakistan, India, Nepal their lack of these skills and they try to
116 add to these skills in us. In my class, [Incomprehensible] in my first semester in the
117 English class, [Incomprehensible] give us like opinions on different topics and having a

118   group conversation in the class. It really increased our experience I'd say. It really help
119   me out improving my English, my skills in boosting up my confidence, in everything I'd
120   say. But the interaction between teacher and students was not too much in the class. It
121   was more of students and between students in class.
122   **M: Okay, maybe you have something to say?**
123   P8: I might add to this is that [looks at the screen], Learning leads to something that I
124   would define it as growth essentially. So learning is not just one aspect of it, perhaps,
125   adding another part of growth would be something that I personally would add to this
126   definition which would mean that learning is not academic, it can be mentally,
127   emotionally or everything because we as international students come from different
128   backgrounds and coming a long way from home. We have to face emotional stability as
129   well. You have to face academic stability as well because it's a different structure of
130   education. It's a different structure of living in a society. There are multiple aspects we
131   need to look forward to. So by the end of it, this also leads to an enhanced improvement
132   in our emotional growth as well. So growth is a word I would personally add if it's a
133   technical term when I'm/
134   **M: What kind of teaching practices did you encounter in your English classes where**
135   **your learning was addressed? Can you recall? Or can you say what kind of teaching**
136   **practices or learner-centered teaching practices actually nurture that kind of**
137   **learning?**
138   P8: Perhaps not in my Kernel class.
139   P7: Oh, I can talk about that! so it was teachers back home, I would say, tell you, this is
140   X, this is Y, this is Z, and you accepted. Here the teachers facilitate your learning so they
141   don't give you information they give you the environment so that the class discusses and
142   comes up with information rather than the teachers just telling you and you accepting
143   what they tell you at least in my class. That's how it works. For example, we spent a little
144   bit of time at the start of class. Started the semester talking about something as basic as
145   grammar. And the teacher didn't tell us, "Hey, this is a noun, this is an adjective. These
146   are the parts of speech." She circled a sentence or word in the sentence. Here's like, "what
147   do you think this word makes, like what part of speech is this?" So it's simple things like
148   that, that when *you* [emphasis] come up with the answer yourself, you're more likely to
149   retain that and internalize it and when the teachers' state is facilitating the learning, but
150   not at the *center* [emphasis] of learning. That's when the learners profit the most. And
151   that's kind of what I think learner-centered approach means.
152   **M: I think both P5 and P6 have something to say.**
153   P5: Yeah, like I was saying like back in my country in my life, in my 12 years of
154   education I had, I would say I had given presentations for two to three times
155   [Incomprehensible] when I came to USA in last three years I've been giving presentations
156   since my freshmen year I'd say. it's like almost seven to eight presentations in like 3, 3
157   years now. And for that we had to do research for it. That's how we get to know more and
158   more about anything you are doing presentation on. This is how you can also like I'd say
159   [Incomprehensible] the confidence in ourself. [looked at the slide] I remember myself, I
160   was like, Now I'm sitting here talking to you, like, I cannot do that. And that time I
161   cannot do that. I think I have lack of confidence, lack of everything I'd say. And I had to
162   build all the stuff in myself and I did it all only in three years and all this because of, all
163   this happened because of the professor, I would say the staff, faculty who all helped me
164   together in doing in building it up this all stuff. And in my class when I did the
165   presentation in the class I definitely had to do research about it, right? And whenever it

166 was research, I was increasing my own knowledge. This is a thing which was not
167 happening in Pakistan. Like over there we don't have a ritual of doing, I would say,
168 presentations and researching on something. Professor just give us some topic in a book
169 and all we do is remember that stuff and write down in the paper and we don't even know
170 what is going on, what is even written in that stuff.
171 **M: To some extent P5 was explaining how presentation is learner centered teaching**
172 **practice. How about you, do you agree that, that is LCT practice?**
173 P6: I agree to that. I have another example. One thing that I wasn't used to doing at all
174 back home was reading the chapter before it is discussed in class and taking a short quiz
175 on it. [P7 and P5 nodded in agreement] Cuz I was also used to the teacher presenting the
176 information, learning from that going back home and revising, reading the chapter.
177 [Everyone nodded in agreement] But I feel like I'm still not accustomed to reading the
178 chapter beforehand and taking a quiz. I just feel like that's new material. I'm supposed to
179 go and learn it in class. But the idea is to get familiar with the topic I guess first and go
180 and enhance on it in class, discuss on it. So that's definitely learner-focused too.
181 [Everybody nodded in agreement]
182 P7: And then there's also the aspect of your relying on other students to learn like the
183 professor is like, okay, I'm going to divide you guys into groups of you know, into four
184 groups and each group will read a chapter and focus on that chapter and give a
185 presentation. So that one group will focus on that chapter, and the remaining three
186 chapters is information they're getting from other groups other students. And the teacher
187 in that point is exactly, that's the example what I meant when I said facilitate. They just
188 say, "You do that!" and the students are at the center of deriving their own way. And
189 we're kind of relying on other students for that learning process and kind of adding on to
190 what they said with examples.
191 P8: That's a very good point because that's one thing I analyzed as well. It was the very
192 idea that when you're in group and you've people with similar nature, you probably have
193 similar questions when you're in a group. And when you ask each other those similar
194 questions, one might pop up with a different question that you might not have thought of
195 first and that can kind of enhance your experience of asking questions and exploration,
196 which is very important in my eyes because that is that can help you in other aspects of
197 life as well, not just curriculums and academically. You can ask questions in any other
198 part of your life and helps you reach conclusions or decisions.
199 P6: Currently, I'm taking a class which is purely discussion-based. It's called evolution
200 and ecology. All you do is read a couple of chapters, come to class, and discuss, and a
201 couple of students present on it. So you have rotations with presentation. There are no
202 exams and the professor barely speaks that I feel like I've learned the most in that class as
203 compared to taking exams.
204 **M: Going back to what P7 had commented on facilitating learning, right? He**
205 **commented that the teachers should be facilitating the learning process. And you**
206 **talked about the environment. Can you say a little bit more about what you mean**
207 **when you say that the environment is important in learner-centered teaching?**
208 P7: Well, the teacher first of all creates the environment where students are open to make
209 mistakes. I think that's very important because if you have the, especially all this again
210 goes back to back home like when teacher takes up the role of I'm right, you're wrong,
211 then students are very unlikely to venture out of their comfort zone and try new things,
212 trying new ideas. And that really stifles your critical thinking and learning process. So
213 teachers first of all, they create this environment where it's okay to make mistakes. They

214   don't scold you for making mistakes and then they don't make you feel inferior like they
215   don't make you feel okay I know everything your, you know, your head is empty, and I'm
216   going to fill your head with information. It's not like that. It's very much, Okay, maybe I
217   am more knowledgeable about some things, then you are. But if you have any comments,
218   please be free to share it with any kind of relationship that you have with your professor,
219   where you're allowed to challenge them you're allowed to, you know, say, hey, maybe I
220   don't agree with that and when you do that, you're forced to think about things instead of
221   being a recipient of information you're actively participating in your own learning and
222   those two things I feel are vital for that environment.
223   P6: I believe the idea also to be able to use the resources that you have available is also so
224   cool because at home, you cannot use a calculator, you cannot use a laptop, you cannot
225   use Google, why not, if you have it? Rather focus on retaining information of like
226   practical knowledge of problem-solving, then remembering the formula.
227   P5: In my construction was we had an exam and the whole class like did very bad in their
228   exam. The professor brought back the exam and gave all the exam to us and said, Okay,
229   whoever the students are like if I did three questions wrong he gave me just those three
230   questions. He took re-exam for only those not the whole exam. So, we ended up getting
231   good grades in class and also got to know about the stuff, which we did wrong at first.
232   So, it was the professor who had allowed us to give a re-exam. I have learned. I did not
233   know a lot of that stuff which I do know now.
234   **M: Is that the kind of challenge that P7 was talking about a little while ago that**
235   **teachers challenge the learning process?**
236   [P7, P6 & P5 nodded in agreement]
237   P8: It's not just challenging. It's more like they provide you to think in the atmosphere
238   that they create. [P7 and P5 nodded in agreement with P8] And if you want to be
239   challenged can perhaps get challenged, you think of it as that way. An example can be
240   one of my philosophy professors. He was one of my favorite. So something, as we come
241   from different backgrounds, it's like one thing that we in Pakistan really cherish is
242   intellectual humility. And then I thought that it is something that's very essential in
243   nature, but when I came here and during my philosophy discussion-based classes, I was
244   like, Okay, that makes sense, but that's pretty much not right whatever the other guy is
245   saying. But I was like okay, let's wait and let him think and come up with an answer and I
246   usually did come up with answers. I had this discussion with my professor he's like sure,
247   intellectual humility does exist, but perhaps not in the US. You need to reduce your level
248   of intellectual humility which kind of comes back to the question, how it is important for
249   professors, not to just be there in class, but also use their office hours to inculcate
250   knowledge or help their students in different things that they might be struggling with
251   these are those small things.
252   **M: Does anyone want to add to that? Let's go back to what P6 had commented on.**
253   **She had talked about resources. What additional thoughts do you have about that?**
254   P8: It's a very good thing.
255   P7: Yeah, it's a pretty good thing. Well, the teacher himself. They're available as a
256   resource which is really important like office hours that's when you use your professor as
257   a resource. And again, there's the library and/
258   P5: Academies Learning Center.
259   P7: Academic Learning Center, and again, like the ability just to use a calculator and use
260   Google really it's so, like, it's such a big thing for like when we come from that kind of
261   education, where they're like, okay, you're gonna have to memorize all your mathematical

262 formulas. Here they give you a formula sheet because they don't want you to waste your
263 time memorizing the formulas. They want you to learn how to use those formulas and
264 that is really important. And again, it all comes back to retention versus application. Most
265 of our education at home is all about retention. Teacher gives you information you retain
266 it and you show how much you retain at the exam. Here teacher gives you information
267 you learn how to apply it and you show them how well you can apply it in the exam. So
268 again. Yeah, that's right. And you use all these resources.
269 P8: I mean, the answer is as P6 said, it's not about getting your answers right, it's about
270 getting the concept in your head, right? which is like theoretically, if you know
271 something, you can probably get on to further conclusions than just getting one answer
272 right by knowing the formula. It's better to know how the formula came into existence in
273 the first place, rather than knowing okay what is two plus two, like how it came, the
274 formula is nothing. It's how it came at the beginning that leads you to further conclusions
275 which is more important.
276 P6: I feel like at the end of the day, all of this helps us to cherish the time we're spending
277 learning here, because if you are not, we're just criticizing our educational system. Why,
278 because we just crammed everything. And we did not know why we were learning this.
279 [P7 and P5 nodded in agreement]
280 P6: Because it wasn't. It's not necessary to just learn everything and not understand it, but
281 now we're seeing the difference we're comparing and we're actually cherishing what
282 we're learning now because we understand why it's important.
283 P5: In my high school in my twelfth grade I had to remember 250 formulas for just the
284 Math class from that alone. Yeah, I remember them and
285 [P6 and P7 exclaimed in agreement]
286 P5: I remember them all. I came to USA I use the same formulas here but I was given a
287 formula sheet. But I had to remember all those in Pakistan.
288 **M: So that's how learner-centered teaching practice differs?**
289 P7: Yeah, it's retention versus application.
290 P5: Over there in Pakistan Education is so complicated, very complicated I would say.
291 P8: Hugely complicated!!
292 P5: Just remember stuff, just remember stuff, we don't know but we're reading, we just
293 know we have to do it.
294 P8: The ideas is that learning never ends all your life. But back in our country was like,
295 okay, I'm going to learn, go to school go to college, then have a job that's it. I'm not even
296 learning.
297 P7: Your learning is finished!
298 P8: Yeah! Your learning is finished!
299 P5: Even in learning there's no concern, just keep learning.
300 P8: Just keep learning! Here it's like it's just one part of your life. It's going to go further.
301 P7: More, you know, kind of more you know, how much you don't know the more you
302 want to know. I just know maybe the tip of vast iceberg of knowledge that's out there and
303 it's kind of a humbling experience!
304 P8: Yeah, yeah!
305 **M: Is that what learner-centered teaching is about or teaching practice is about,**
306 **that learning is/**
307 P7: Ongoing?
308 **M: You think it's ongoing? That's what the idea is behind learner-centered teaching**
309 **practice?**

310   P8: Where you find it grab it. You learn from every moment of your life.
311   P7: I feel like the reason why all of us here can come to that conclusion is because the
312   teachers here have given us that environment to think and because of the things we think
313   and, you know, critically think about things we come up with, no one told us that, no one
314   told me, hey, you know, I didn't go to class and my professor told me, hey, P7, remember
315   that how much ever you learn, the more you learn that you don't know much.
316   [Everyone laughed agreement, shaking their heads]
317   P7: No, I came to that conclusion by myself. Because, you know, they just taught me how
318   to think critically and I sit here and i think you know what? The more I learn about
319   things, the more I know that there's so much I don't know. So it's kind of like that like
320   they help you come to conclusions by yourself.
321   P6: Actually identifying the resources, it's, it's a good idea for the professors to provide
322   the presentations and notes. Because if you don't go to class, you still have something to
323   bank on so basically you're still learning but at home if you skip a class you have nothing.
324   P5: But students like me, who knows that I'm going to get everything even if I don't go to
325   class i would not go to class.
326   P6: But you still learn because you have the material
327   P5: Still I will never go to class
328   P8: The idea is to find the balance between these two concepts way you do something at
329   home and you do something in class. In class you have students to interact with which
330   gives you some part of learning; at home you have the book and the technical things that
331   come in to you and you get a part to it. It's always getting the middle ground. There are
332   some teachers who don't find it
333   P5: If I know if I know that I am going to get everything that is happening in the glass
334   even if I do not go to the class, then a student like me would never go to class
335   P6: A student like you?
336   P5: Yeah, there are students like me! There are!
337   P8: That's not how it works here, right? That's something that MIGHT happen
338   somewhere back home
339   P5: It definitely happens!
340   P8: Back home if you're giving 'O' Levels, 'A' Levels you really don't need any of this,
341   you just need your books!!
342   **M: Going back to student interaction and I can hear that in your conversation, the**
343   **importance of student interaction. What kind of LCT teaching practices actually**
344   **engage students and student interactions? Can you give me examples from your**
345   **English classes? Why do you think that is learner-centered?**
346   P5: I would say group study. Like we four are sitting here, we can put on our own
347   perspective, our own opinions. We would get to learn more and more instead of going to
348   the professor and getting to know about his experience or his knowledge. If you go to a
349   professor you're just gaining whatever he's saying based on his experience. But if four are
350   sitting here like we all are students and whatever he is saying it could be right or could be
351   wrong. Whatever I'm saying could be right or could be wrong. So we all get to know
352   more about knowledge this way.
353   P7: Yeah
354   P8: And perhaps something that I've noticed is that the professor's need to make sure that
355   they realize that there is a generation gap between them and us. While there is a
356   generation gap between them and us their jokes need to be good to get us!
357   [Everyone laughs]

358   P8: Because sometimes they are way too outdated for us!!
359   P7: Yeah, in English classes, I think like, P5 said discussions, group study are very
360   important kind of like what we're doing right now. You asked me what learner-centered
361   approach is. I give you what I think. And then P6, P8 and P5 said something and I'm like,
362   Oh yeah, that's true. And that just adds on to the knowledge and instead of you getting
363   one perspective from your professor. I now have four perspective from like four different
364   people. And instead of you getting one perspective from your professor. I now have four
365   perspective from like four different people.
366   P5: Even if the professor is saying something wrong to us they are gonna believe that he
367   is right.
368   P8: Another thing that I would say is that the professor would need to be really creative
369   in the ideas or approaches he come to this class even like group study can be creative in
370   nature. I had to make a film for Kernel, which is like a two-minute video, but it is
371   something that will provide probably I'll be more better friends with those people in my
372   class and get a better knowledge about subjects and so about how to use a camera. But it's
373   like the professor needs to be creative with the type of class he has and he has to analyze,
374   okay, what kind of children do I have in this class. I mean, if a philosophy professor
375   comes up and talks about weird math problems. He's going to be a terrible teacher. He
376   needs to come up with real life examples that issues in the world that do not make sense.
377   **M: So how about English classes?**
378   P8: Again, if I'm a teacher, I would first analyze every student before coming up with any
379   creative conclusion.
380   **M: What would be involved in that analysis?**
381   P8: Um okay. That's an interesting question.
382   P5: Judging through
383   P8: Judging their skills, their communication skills, how their idea of learning is what
384   their idea of learning is.
385   P6: As a teacher, would you be the right person to judge or assess?
386   P8: See, now that's something now that I have to make a best possible decision because
387   there is like you always have that part of studying where the students interact between
388   themselves and have the time to themselves. But now I as a teacher who has to make sure
389   everyone does that has to make a global decision, like a global variable where he has to
390   give certain values to each and every one so that they can have a push for a start to
391   something. The teacher has enough role in the class as well. Now it's up to him to decide
392   what role is better to start off as soon as he gets a push and there is no force stopping
393   them it would go continuously, that's my idea.
394   P7: So if you want a specific example with English classes, what my professor did was
395   first class she asked us questions. Tell me about yourself. So we write down something,
396   three things about ourselves on a piece of paper. Yeah, so there you go, first thing she
397   knows about us, but of course that's not enough. So on the first assignments she just
398   asked us to write about your most important experience and I wrote about the earthquake
399   at home, and then there was a one on one feedback session and she asked me about my
400   experience and just from that she learned a lot of things about me. Like I value my family
401   and you know, all of that stuff that you can know about a person based on their writing
402   based on one on one interaction. She asked me about my educational background:
403   "Where did you study? What kind of classes did you take and because of that, you know,
404   she can help me learn the way I learn best.

405 **M: Do you all agree that that is an example that the way P7 just described that**
406 **that's so important part, or that is learner-centered teaching practice?**
407 P8: For sure. [P5 shook his head in agreement]
408 P6: I think I will say that my teacher or professor, one of them mentioned the
409 environment, she made sure that we were comfortable with her. She would share her
410 personal experiences, talk about her family, and she didn't require us to raise our hands
411 like we used to do in school. [Others nodded in agreement] you can just speak up you're
412 more comfortable. You can eat in class and stuff like that. You just get more comfortable.
413 And I guess the discussion within groups to make you feel more comfortable with your
414 peers so you won't think that they're going to judge you anymore because you're now
415 more comfortable. So that'll make in general everything more learner-centered too.
416 P7: Yeah, she touched on a very important thing. What she said about feeling
417 comfortable, for example, you can see all of us are sitting differently, right now like
418 [everybody laughed and voiced in agreement] back home it'd be like okay, you sit up
419 straight. For example, when I study in class, I like to doodle a lot. I doodle on paper and
420 everything you. You need to take visual conceptions then! [Everyone laughed] What
421 teachers did back home was they told me not to doodle but teachers here they don't care
422 and while doodling I'm still listening. I'm just occupying my hands with something else.
423 I'm just a fidgety person. So here they take your individuality into account, "hey you
424 know what, if you want to doodle, you doodle. You can sit however you want. You can
425 sit on top of the table if you want as long as you're paying attention in class. And like P6
426 said that makes a student feel comfortable and that is so important if you want to get
427 feedback out of them or if you want them to participate in class.
428 P6: Yeah, now that I think about it sitting in the same uniform every day, in the same
429 posture [Everybody joined laughing in agreement], with the same partner,
430 P7: Where's your individuality?
431 P6: for six hours in the same room!
432 P8: And if you talk too much with your partner,
433 P7 & P8: they'll change your partner! [Everyone laughed]
434 P8: Or kick you out of the class! [Everyone laughed]
435 P5: Getting kicked out of the class was the best!
436 P8: And we liked getting kicked out!
437 **M: There are two things that I'd like you all to talk about. First, let's start off with**
438 **the point that P7 just said, he was talking about individuals, that concept of**
439 **individuals and individual differences. Can you all express what your opinion is**
440 **about the comment that P7 made?**
441 [silence]
442 **M: Paying attention to individual differences. Is that learner-centered teaching**
443 **practice?**
444 P5: What do you mean? like the professor has to pay attention to us?
445 **M: That's what he [pointing at P7] said, the instructor pays attention to individuals.**
446 **He said, saying more about individual characteristics. So is that part of learner-**
447 **centered teaching practice?**
448 P8: I think it is. Because everybody's DNA is different, every finger is different and every
449 individual in this world is different and assuming everyone is different, everyone learns
450 in a different way. [P7 nods in agreement] And that's why throughout the colleges in the
451 US, you have this very idea that there should be a really small class ratio [P7 and P5 said
452 yes in agreement] so that you can have individual time with your professor which is very

453   important because as much the same ideas repeating again as much as discussions are
454   important, you need a push which the Professor gives you. And he's also someone who
455   encourages like he encouraged P5. He helped him go further. He helped me talk about the
456   differences in cultures and things like that. They are necessary, so I think it's a very
457   important aspect in learner-based teaching.
458   P5: Last semester like during our finals week I was going through a really serious
459   problems and and I went to a professor and said, 'Professor, I cannot study, cannot focus.
460   We had the final exam, right? So I said I cannot study for that. Would you please allow
461   me to give a take home for that exam and the rest of the class....And for them, it was like
462   in-class exam, but just for me it was a take home exam. He substituted me for the whole
463   class and made another exam just for me, because he understood my problem like what I
464   was going through.
465   **M: Anybody else wants to talk about what P5 just talked about?**
466   P5: When one of my professor [Incomprehensible] I didn't even give the final exam!
467   P6: Oh I wish I had a professor like that!
468   **M: As you know a lot of the survey participants were not able to talk, but when they**
469   **took part in that survey, they said sometimes the assignments were changed if they**
470   **seem to be failing or the instructor taught them how to cope with stress or**
471   **encourage them to tell him how they wanted to learn. So what do you think? What...**
472   P5: Even when the professor looks that the class is getting failed [Incomprehensible] they
473   start doing the curving grade. So in the curving [Incomprehensible] the whole class really
474   pass.
475   P7: Yeah, and also when you talk about learner-centered approach it requires students to
476   be active, right? This is one thing where students need to take initiative if they're failing a
477   class, they need to go and talk to the professor and this is kind of, again, different from
478   education where we are spoon-fed everything by the professor. Here you need to take
479   initiative like if P5 hadn't gone and talked to his professor about his problems, he would
480   have never gotten that solution that he did get.
481   P6: And if the professor wasn't welcoming P5 would never go
482   P7: And P5 would never go in and talk to him. So it all kind of ties up nicely and, you
483   know, like all these qualities that make for learner centered approach.
484   **M: How else is learning active? You pointed out one example. All of you gave**
485   **examples how it's active. Are there other examples that you can cite?**
486   P5: Once I wasn't giving an exam and I did not know one of the questions in the exam
487   and Professor himself came to me and said, 'P5 you look upset, what happened? I said, I
488   don't know this. He said, Okay, meet me after the exam.' After the exam he took me to
489   his room and he talked to me about all the questions and how to solve that and he also
490   gave me number for that, he gave me points for that. Even though he helped me out it
491   was an exam.
492   P6: How do you take class with such professors?
493   P5: No, it was only one professor
494   P6: You said you had one before the final exam and the same one again?
495   P5: I'd definitely say he's the best professor in the [Incomprehensible] department He's
496   the best. I have never heard a single complaint from any student.
497   P6: I feel like in order to make learning active you kind of also need to know the learning
498   style of the student cuz active learning for me is writing for someone else might just
499   listening to someone else might just be talking, speaking.

500 P8: Yeah, that's an example I would give about my guitar professor. So I am really bad
501 with strum so what he does is that in order to make sure that I strum right he starts
502 singing bom bom bom bom bom bom. [Everyone started laughing] Okay that's working,
503 right? I'm doing good. This is like what approach he uses which is very successful for
504 me. I'm doing well now.
505 P6: And for the professor to be successful to -
506 P8: Analyze
507 P6: Yeah, yeah, they have to know their students' learning style.
508 P8: Exactly, so true.
509 P5: So the thing which we have to do the professor assessment at the end of every
510 semester is really good for us, I would say. Professor knows if they're not going to be
511 good with us we are going to give them very bad [Incomprehensible] to them.
512 P8: It's a perfect check and balance!
513 P6: One of the professors in my department got fired!
514 P5: We are nice to them!
515 P8: There is a perfect check and balance.
516 P7: Yeah, at least there is some sort of accountability for these professors, because many
517 of them here, maybe like [Incomprehensible] tenure, you know, they have job security for
518 the rest of their lives. But this evaluation can possibly make that change. So it's good for
519 students.
520 P6: Again learner-centered because we have [Incomprehensible] for the professor to stay
521 on.
522 P5: But in Pakistan, we've never even heard about it.
523 P7:[inaudible]
524 P5: You can even fire a professor! You can never do that!
525 P8: The maximum they'd do is just change your section.
526 P6: They move you, not the lecturer!
527 P8: Yah! Just you not the lecturer, you got to stay there!
528 **M: Moving on to more discussions about teaching practices**
529 P8: We are like ditching our education system and talking less about this education
530 system!
531 **M: At the beginning, one of you commented how all the four skills are involved in**
532 **the English class**
533 P5: I did that!
534 **M: that's learner centered, P5, right? Can you build on that? You said, listening,**
535 **speaking reading, writing, right? What examples can you give of learner-centered**
536 **teaching practices which involve all these skills?**
537 P6: When I talked about my research project to write a paper, my professor included all
538 four in one assignment. She does it for every assignment. So we had to write drafts at
539 first, and then we had to present them in class. So you're speaking, then you're listening
540 other people's drafts and then you're writing your own paper and then you reviewing
541 other peers' papers or their drafts, reading. I believe in English classes they try to
542 encompass all four in every assignment, rather than giving specific ones in each
543 assignment.
544 P7: Yeah!
545 P8: Then one example from my Kernel class would be, which I loved was that whenever
546 you give speeches out, you have everyone in the class write your strengths, your
547 weaknesses and what you can improve and then by the end of the speech, even though

548 the instructor is marking you and everything, they send you a video of your speech, and
549 then they send you those cards so that you can at the end write up a reflection on your
550 speech, which is very good. It's like a holistic process.
551 P6: Yeah, you're forced to listen!
552 P8: You're analyzing yourself, someone else's analyzing you, and you are analyzing
553 someone else. I think it's perfect.
554 [P5 nodded in agreement]
555 P7: Yeah, same. I'm taking Oral Presentation this semester, and even in oral
556 communication when you think okay yeah it's just listening and speaking but even there's
557 reading and writing and involved because you need to do research to talk about your
558 speech. You need to write an outline for your speech, and then you give your speech, and
559 then you listen to other people give their speech and then give them feedback on their
560 speech. So, I think, yeah, most English classes here want you to do all four skills in one
561 way or another. There might be more of one thing and less of the other, but there's always
562 all four involved.
563 P5: Can I ask a question?
564 **M: Yeah, sure!**
565 P5: Do you think online classes are learner-centered classes?
566 P7 and P6: I have never done an online
567 P8: I haven't taken one.
568 P6: And I would not like to.
569 P7: Yah, I would not like to do too
570 Yeah, I wouldn't like not to do.
571 P5: But in that class we have to...
572 P6: But do you learn anything at all, cuz you're literally just presenting yourself like
573 you're not getting anything, you're not learning anything you're just there
574 P5: We have to study from the book.
575 P6: [Incomprehensible] are you going to study from the book.
576 P8: No but by online classes you mean like online videos and stuff, right, because I did
577 take one of those courses. And the thing I used to do is that if I did not understand
578 something. I had to go and google that stuff and have some other videos present that idea.
579 The biggest problem we have, if we have a teacher you go directly to him, and it's going
580 to take you way less of your time. It's probably going to take you whole day if you just
581 google stuff.
582 P5: There are some classes that do have professors still I have to watch their videos. I
583 prefer watching videos instead of going to professors.
584 **M: Okay, I hate to say that we have to quit, but we're running out of time and we**
585 **have to end it today. Thank you for participating in this fabulous discussion.**

Focus Group 2, Meeting 2

1 **M: Once again, thank you for coming. We left on a very important point last week,**
2 **Friday. And I think a couple of points that I jotted down maybe I'd like you both to**
3 **talk about. So one was about one-on-one interaction that I think P7 mentioned with**
4 **the teacher. I would like you to tell me how is this learner-centered where you have**
5 **one-on-one interaction with the teacher?**

6   P7: Because the teacher is not focusing on the class as a whole, the teacher is focusing on
7   learners as a whole because she invited each one of us in the class, personally, so it was
8   one-on-one meetings that she wanted and what she did during that time more so than give
9   us feedback on what we wrote was pretty much just ask us questions about what we
10 wrote. It was trying to gauge what kind of individuals we were and then after she knew
11 that, then she would give us feedback based on that information. And that is learner-
12 centered because she is not using one criteria for all people she's using specific criteria
13 for a specific person. So it's better catered to their needs.
14 **M: Would you agree with that?**
15 P6: Agreed.
16 **M: P7? Do you want to expand on that?**
17 P6: I think he covered pretty well.
18 **M: You pointed out, P6, that your experience of doing Kernel, an English class,**
19 **required extensive work.**
20 P6: Yeah.
21 **M: And it helped with college as in, not specifically with the English, but you said**
22 **with the college overall. Can you tell me how it is or it is not learner-centered?**
23 P6: I think it is learner-centered centered because it's helping the learner or the student to
24 develop as a whole and be ready for college, it's not something so the professor is not just
25 doing or teaching something for the class, but also preparing each and every individual
26 for their college experience ahead. In that case, it's learner-centered and another thing that
27 I liked about that particular assignment was that you could pick any topic that you want.
28 So you're not given a certain topic, which, you know, you might not be interested
29 researching in so you pick any topic. One person picked 'rice'. I did on my religion. So
30 you would pick something that you're interested in. So you would want to spend more
31 time and you will learn more about how to research on that topic [P7 nodded in
32 agreement] and write better papers in undergrad or graduate studies later on.
33 **M: P7, P6 was just saying that it prepares the student for the college. When you say**
34 **prepare someone for the college, what does it involve? Other things? She has said**
35 **her part. What do you think?**
36 P7: I mean when you say that just involves a wide range of skills that you need for every
37 class like writing papers, having the ability to debate or even listen to other people talk,
38 you know, and then respond to that or study independently and a professor like, why
39 would it be it wouldn't be in their interest to teach students materials outside of their
40 course because they're not fit to do that. But the fact that they do it still shows that it is
41 learner-centered because they care about their learner outside of their class and how they
42 succeed in the university and some of the skills I would say like we're learning how to
43 write a paper that benefit you in every class, the proper way to take notes, how do you
44 prepare for an exam, when your professor's talking what do you focus on, what notes do
45 you want to take. So stuff like that that really helps you throughout.
46 **M: You focused on outside the class. What kind of learner-centered activities**
47 **involve the students outside the class rather than inside the class, that is, involves**
48 **the learer in the learning process. So can you suggest some activities, learner-**
49 **centered activities that involves the students going outside the class?**

50   P7: How it helps them outside the class?

51   **M: Not help them. What kind of learner-centered activities involve students outside**

52   **the classroom?**

53   P7: I'm sorry, I don't get the question.

54   **M: Are there activities outside the classroom that students can do that are learner-**

55   **centered?**

56   P7: Okay, okay I get it now. Alright, outside the classroom. [paused] Does this have to be

57   based on the skills they learn in the classroom? So

58   **M: What do you believe are activities that are learner-centered and these activities**

59   **students do outside the classroom.**

60   P7: Oh well, just the fact that like P6 said she could write on whatever she wanted. I'm

61   sure many international students that have the education, kind of like the authoritarian

62   education might at first struggle with that. Because we're more used to being like the

63   teacher saying okay you write on x, y, z, and you write on x, y, z. And now that the

64   teacher says you can write whatever you want opens up a world of possibilities, but at the

65   same time you learn how to be decisive, you know what you want, what you don't want.

66   So it opens up this path of self-reflection that ability to make your choice or choose your

67   type of learning. So that really goes outside the classroom and even outside education. It

68   kind of applies to your whole life, those qualities, I'd say.

69   P6: I don't have an activity to explain but I have a general idea. When students are

70   working on something outside of class, they don't have the instructor, they don't have

71   someone to look up to, so they'll struggle, they'll make mistakes, but they'll be able to

72   figure out after making several mistakes. And if not, then they can go to the instructor,

73   but that productive struggle is important for one's experience and that is learner-centered

74   too. [P7 nodded in agreement]

75   **M: How does learner-centered classroom engage in critical thinking? I think you**

76   **mentioned something about critical thinking in your last discussion.**

77   P7: I'll just give you an example about today in class. So today in class, we go to my Oral

78   Presentation class and then the professor asks us what is a relationship? It's a word we

79   use more often than not, but when she asks you to actually define it, then you start to

80   think. You start to think about something you've never thought of before, in a way that

81   you've never thought of before and someone might give one definition of a relationship

82   and someone might give another definition of relationship. That is what makes you think,

83   'Oh is my way of thinking the only way of thinking?' And you start to question more

84   ways of thinking, which is really what critical thinking is asking why, how, what you

85   know. It's going deeper than the surface. That sort of thing is a good example of critical

86   thinking.

87   **M: P6, would you like to add to that?**

88   P6: I'm thinking of my Pre-Chem class for critical thinking that's the hardest class at my

89   department currently. The professor lectures, but then the homework that she gives

90   doesn't have an answer. You have to just do the process [pause] and the answer could be

91   as right as possible but it still could be wrong, because there is no wrong answer or right

92   answer. So that explores the critical thinking mindset because you don't know if there is

93   an answer even. There are so many possibilities. So you have to think in so many

94   different ways. You have to do group studies. One person will not be enough.

95   P7: Also two things about English courses that enhance your critical thinking. First is the

96   fact that, for example, in an English course you need to write an essay and it's very

97   subjective. There is no right or wrong and that is very individualistic in its nature. So, just

98   the fact that it's not generic it makes you think a lot about what you write. And that is

99   learned-centered. Another aspect I just thought about is when you're in a class in English

100   class, you need to do an annotated bibliography, like how she was talking about.

101   P6: We did that.

102   P7: For the most part, when we were growing up, we needed to do, like, you know, grade

103   five or six, you need to research something you just google Wikipedia or whatever comes

104   up copy paste. But in annotated bibliography, you need to evaluate. Why is Wikipedia

105   valid source? Why is Dr. X, Y, Z a valid source or why is a information from dot edu

106   more relevant or trustworthy than something [Incomprehensible]. These are things that

107   you kind of think about because of an English class, and because of that individualistic

108   thing that learner-centered approach encourages in a course.

109   **M: You also pointed out that a certain kind of relationship between teacher and**

110   **student is built. Tell me more about that relationship that you mentioned the last**

111   **time.**

112   P7: It's just the fact that the teacher wants to get to know you more, there's already a

113   relationship in there. When I go to my Oral Presentation class every day, the teacher asks

114   me, "Hey, what did you do over the weekend?" What's the point of that? In the context of

115   the class, in the context of me passing that classroom or his grading me that has no effect

116   at all. But the fact that this is learner-centered means he wants to know me more, wants to

117   connect to me more. He wants to relate to me more. And in the process, he's also

118   exchanging information to me. Like you know he's always telling stories in class about

119   his fiancé what she does or stuff like that that is really not relevant in the context of the

120   course, but it gives us an insight into what kind of teacher he is, and then we kind of do

121   our work in because of that information, you kind of modify our work. What would Matt

122   say if I did that, like right before this, I was writing my speech, I was making an outline

123   for my speech. Throughout that I was thinking, okay, how would Matt react, I said that,

124   what would he want me to do. So you can see like that individual relationship developing

125   between the teacher and the student where you're kind of catering to each other's needs

126   and what the other expects and stuff like that.

127   P6: Yeah!

128   **M: You agree with him?**

129   P6: Yep!

130   **M: Farhan also talked about real life experiences, the importance of real life**

131   **experiences in learner-centered teaching practice. What do you think he was**

132   **thinking about when he mentioned real life experiences in learner-centered teaching**

133   **practices?**

134   [Pause]

135   P6: I don't know, but being a scientist, I could say that if I performed experiment by

136   myself I would understand it more than just reading it. So I can relate that to life

137   experiences if you're just reading English you're trying to learn the different parts of
138   speech and stuff like that unless you start speaking it or you be around people who speak
139   English, you want be able to master it, because you're not having real life experience with
140   it yet.
141   **M: So having that practical experience?**
142   [P6 and P7 say yes in agreement]
143   **M: How can English classes be made more learner-centered? If you want, you can**
144   **scribble some points if you want. And then you can agree or disagree with each**
145   **other if you want.**
146   P7: More learner-centered than it already is?
147   **M: Some of you experienced English classes where it was not that learner-centered.**
148   **Think about or just imagine that if a English class is not learner-centered to how**
149   **can it be made more learner-centered.**
150   P7: Oh, Ok! Get to know your students, develop that relationship with your students, one-
151   on-one interaction, class discussions.
152   P6: Have a comfortable open environment so that students can also comment on
153   professors' points.
154   P7: Make them choose what they want to learn.
155   P6: Yeah.
156   **M: Can you build on that? Why do you think *that* [emphasis] is learner-centered,**
157   **make them *choose* [emphasis] what *they* [emphasis] think is important?**
158   P7: Because then the learner cares about what they are learning. If they want to learn
159   about something means they care about what they want to learn other than the Professor
160   telling them this is what you should learn means it's being forced down their throat which
161   no one likes. But if there's a choice and you consciously made a decision that you want to
162   do it, [P6 expresses agreement] then you're more likely to stand by it and be more
163   committed to it because you made a decision.
164   P6: Give group projects and give assignments that require you to go outside. One of my
165   assignment that was related to the paper was that I had to take my group somewhere that
166   would be an example somehow related to my paper. Since my paper was on my religion
167   Sikhism, I just took them to eat my kind of food. So I just took them to Masala and that
168   was a new experience to them. They learned something cultural outside because of an
169   English class. That's learner-centered, I believe. [P7 nodded in agreement]
170   **M: What about opportunities students should have you gave some examples, like the**
171   **activities students can do, group projects and stuffs like that. What opportunities**
172   **should students have in learner-centered classes?**
173   P6: They could have minor competitions may be like a debate competition in the class or
174   give some incentive that if there's an assignment for a paper, the best paper would get
175   three extra credit points. Maybe giving incentives or building a sense of competition will
176   also help the students involve more in the assignments and focus on their work more.
177   P7: There should be an opportunity for every student to participate in the class in their
178   own way. For example, in our English class last course we had to do presentations and
179   the professor had made it so that you could either come up and present to the class or you
180   could make a poster and display it on the wall. Now, the point of that is the professor

181	recognized that not all students are, you know, comfortable with talking in front of a class
182	or not all students are proficient enough to do that. So she gave them something else that
183	they maybe even if they weren't, you know, very comfortable with it, it's still easier and
184	they can get more help with it then like speaking in front of a class. So just the option for
185	students to learn in the way that is best for them.
186	P6: My professor allowed students to record themselves talking and play that recording
187	while you're flipping through the slides so that you kind of present it.
188	P7: Nice!
189	**M: How does that work can you tell me more about it?**
190	P6: The screen is usually behind you when you're talking in a presentation but if I'm
191	presenting and I don't to stand up and talk. I beforehand talk and record myself talking on
192	the topic. I just sat down and the audio is playing and I'm just flipping the images for the
193	presentation along with the audio going on.
194	P7: That is a good one.
195	P6: So I'm not nervous looking at the crowd, but my voice is still there, I'm still talking.
196	**M: How is *that* [emphasis] learner-centered?**
197	P7: Because it's keeping the needs of the learner first,
198	P6: Yeah
199	P7: Not the needs of the assignment. It's the need of the learner that's making the
200	assignment. The fact that there's the option to do that shows that the professor's paying
201	attention to the fact that there are different kind of learners and all of their needs should
202	be met.
203	**M: The word option that you used P6, what would you say to that? He's saying that,**
204	**you know, providing options.**
205	P7: But at the same time, it's not possible in all context to give that option. For example,
206	in Oral Presentation, you have to go up and give a speech. You can't say, I'm going to you
207	know record myself, giving a speech.
208	P6: Yeah, it's Oral Presentation.
209	P7: Yeah, so there are some situations where it's not applicable, but for the most part
210	exceptions can be made.
211	P6: So in that case an option could be that you can choose whatever you want to talk on,
212	whatever you feel more comfortable. So I could have talked on my favorite soccer team
213	and nobody else knew about soccer, but I can still talk on it because I have the option to
214	choose to talk on it.
215	**M: Okay. The last thing. I want you to think about what is NOT learner-centered**
216	**practice. You have been talking a lot about various activities, various aspects of**
217	**learner-centered teaching practices. So I want you to think about what is NOT**
218	**learner-centered. If you want, you can quickly jot down a few points.**
219	P6: I'm [paused]
220	P7: We have been comparing from the start!
221	P6: The professor comes in gives the lecture gives homework. There's certain answers to
222	the homework if you deviate point 1%, it's wrong.
223	P7: Yeah!

224 P6: That's not at all learner-centered because you literally have to work back and learn
225 what's in the textbook. You can't add anything, you can't use your own words.
226 P7: Every student is expected to give the same answer.
227 P6: Yeah
228 P7: So there goes your individuality. You don't want different students you want the same
229 student. You want that one ideal student image that you have in your head and you want
230 every student to fit into that mold. That is pretty much what is not learner-centered. Yeah,
231 like for example there's well in our schools they want us to sit up straight, all of us, wear
232 the same uniform. Sit up straight like that and do whatever teacher tells us, and what's the
233 difference between me and her? We are different people, but we're not allowed to be
234 different.
235 **M: So that aspect of individual difference is**
236 P6: Minimized
237 **M: Minimized?**
238 P7: Yeah. Freedom of choice is minimized. You can try it on whatever you want. You
239 have to write about why the First Amendment of the Constitution is important to all of us.
240 P6: You can't try it on rice anymore!
241 P7: Yeah. It doesn't matter if you agree with it or not. You have to do it because you have
242 to do it.
243 P6: There's no discussion what the professor says is right.
244 P7: Yeah, you can't say why do we have to write. Why can't I write on rice, you can't say
245 that.
246 P6: If the professor says the sun rises in the west, it rises there!
247 P7: Yeah, It rises in the west.
248 **M: So questioning**
249 P7: Yeah, critical thinking zero. You're just passive. You're not active learners you're
250 passive learners. You're listening but you're not hearing. I mean, you're hearing what
251 you're not listening. Information goes in, it comes out. You memorize stuff, regurgitated
252 during the exam. It never stays with you. So many examples.
253 **M: Anything more that you want to add?**
254 P7: [Incomprehensible] Hadn't thought about it. We'd probably come up with a lot more!
255 It's the gist.
256 P6: Well, actually I was thinking it's kind of out of the pocket. We don't have uniforms
257 here. But if you look around and think about it. Every other person does wear NU T-shirt.
258 That's kind of uniform.
259 P7: Yah
260 P6: So it's like when you even have so much freedom people again come down to the
261 mainstream.
262 P7: That is true. You have the need to feel included. That you're part of something big
263 and wearing that NU T-shirt gives you that sense of camaraderie.
264 P6: I'm not that type of person who asks a lot of questions in class and I speak a lot in
265 class because I learn the most in class. Sometimes my peers would ask me, 'Don't you
266 feel uncomfortable asking?' I was like 'No' but and then they're like, don't you feel like
267 fitting in with the classes. And I'm like, No, I want to be different. I don't want to fit in.

268 **M: What do they mean by this fitting in?**

269 P6: Whatever everybody else is doing I should be doing that to be able to go in the fog

270 and not shine out.

271 **M: Do you think that is not learner-centered?**

272 P6: Yeah.

273 P7: No, it's not. Because like the learners are modifying their needs to or expectations to

274 match that of the collective body not their own desire. Who knows one guy might have

275 wanted to ask questions, but he won't because the majority aren't asking.

276 P6: Yeah. That happens a lot in classrooms

277 P7: That happens a lot. So despite the professor's best efforts, it depends on the students

278 as well.

279 P6: I feel like it also kind of depends on the classes not only the students.

280 P7: Yeah, yeah!

281 P6: That's why you have to make the environment so comfortable that the students talk

282 thinking about being judged.

283 P7: Yeah, with some classes it's just not possible. But when you can, you should.

284 P6: What is an example of where it's not possible?

285 P7: Like it's just too big.

286 P6: No, no.

287 P7: Like 200 students.

288 P6: I've had a class of 180 students and I'd raise my hand and ask a question. People

289 would stare and I wouldn't care.

290 P7: No, no, no but that's you. The professor making an environment. How would he do

291 that when it's 300 students.

292 P6: He tried cuz when I or other people asked, he would encourage. He'd be like,

293 'Anybody else want to ask something?' But people wouldn't do it. And he would kind of

294 give a pause after explaining that, waiting, if somebody else raises a hand for that

295 question or something,

296 P7: I guess, yeah, that's about what they can do, you can't do more than that.

297 **M: P7, how is that example of P6 learner-centered, the way she explained how the**

298 **professor would invite.**

299 P7: Yeah, so I mean there he is giving a chance for someone who might be relatively shy

300 to come forward and speak. So, I mean, from his point he can't do more than that.

301 P6: Yeah, because he has to balance, he cannot waste the time of 180 students.

302 P7: That is the thing with big class. He can't have that one-on-one relationship because a

303 big class has high turnover. Like there's the last row for example might be different every

304 day. There's people that show up. There's people that don't show up.

305 P6: People only show up in exams.

306 P7: Yeah, so I mean after a certain point it's difficult for the professor.

307 P6: I've never heard of an English being big though.

308 P7: No. It could be detrimental.

309 **M: Okay, that's it. Thank you very much for expressing what you believe learner-**

310 **centered teaching practice is about.**

Focus Group 3

1   **M: Good evening and welcome! Thank you for making time to join this discussion.**
2   **It's going to be a discussion amongst yourselves. The discussion is on learner-**
3   **centered teaching practices. If you have taken part in the survey, you were required**
4   **to fill in some information about what your experiences were like in English classes**
5   **that you did. My name is Mahjabeen Hussain, in case some of you don't know me.**
6   **I'm a doctoral student here at the Department of Curriculum and Instruction,**
7   **College of Education. You're here today because of your involvement in the**
8   **research project and you all are international students who have competed at least**
9   **one English course. I think most of you did it, and I would like you to share your**
10 **experiences and your beliefs about learner-centered teaching practices in your**
11 **English classes. The discussion, as you can see, is being recorded. I'm doing it**
12 **because I don't want to miss your valued comments. There are no right or wrong**
13 **answers because it has to do with your experiences and beliefs, right? I'm interested**
14 **to know positive as well as negative things, so don't hesitate, okay? You can agree or**
15 **disagree amongst yourselves, which is fine. That's something that I want to be able**
16 **to see. Your identity will not be disclosed although this is being recorded. I have**
17 **access to it and my advisor, who is my Chair for my dissertation research project. If**
18 **he wants to see it, only he will be able to see it. It's not going to be disclosed. Here**
19 **are some consent forms. This is for the focus group for this group interview. This**
20 **primarily asks you to give consent whether you are willing to participate in this**
21 **interview. Because you'll be receiving a gift card, I need your first name, surname,**
22 **and university ID. I'll take it from you. Here are some sticky notes. You can use**
23 **these notes to write your names and stick it somewhere where it's visible. You can**
24 **just put it here. This will help me remember your name and help also each other.**
25 **For example, if you want to agree or disagree or provide an example to what one of**
26 **your group members have said the naming tag will help you. I'm interested to hear,**
27 **so I'll ask questions sometimes when it's necessary. I will listen, but I would like you**
28 **all to talk amongst yourselves, discuss. Give each other the chance to speak. Let's**
29 **first introduce ourselves. I have introduced myself. So maybe P9 you can just say**
30 **what department you are from.**
31 P9: My name is P9 and I'm from South Korea. I'm studying Computer Science here.
32 P10: My name is P10 and I'm from Pakistan, an international student. I'm a senior after
33 this semester. And I'm doing Bachelor of science in Chemistry.
34 P11: My name is P11 and I'm from Pakistan. This is my second semester and I'm doing
35 Computer Science.
36 P12: I'm P12. I'm a Junior. I'm from Pakistan. I'm in Computer Science.
37 P13: I'm P13. I'm a Junior. I'm studying Biochemistry. I'm from Pakistan.
38 **M: Thank you. To begin with, let's focus on learner-centered teaching practices in**
39 **English course in your university. What did the survey make you think about? If**
40 **you have had a look at the survey probably some of you took part in it a long time**
41 **ago, I can give you a copy. You can take a quick glance if you want to. What did it**
42 **make you think about?**

43 P10: I think it's more like how this course has helped think independently and what was
44 the learning environment of the class. Like specific questions asking that how was the
45 structure of the class or how often question were appreciated or whatever. All of those
46 questions were to get an insight of the class like what goes on in the class, how did the
47 tutor or the professor takes the class and you being international student how comfortable
48 you are learning a language which is not your first language, how much you struggle in
49 that course.
50 **M: P9?**
51 P9: I feel like I am the main one who can read my/
52 **M: Did you think the survey was more about you?**
53 P9: Yeah.
54 **M: Why do you think that? What made you feel that?**
55 P9: Because the subject is 'My' [Incomprehensible] about me.
56 **M: What kind of teaching practices did the survey make you think about? The kind**
57 **of teaching practices of the teacher like what kind of strategies the teacher use in the**
58 **class. What kind of teaching strategies did it make you think about?**
59 P13: I think this survey looks more like student evaluation that we get at the end of
60 semester for each class. So the survey kind of reflects over the entire class. That's what it
61 makes me think, reflects over the entire or duration of the semester. How did we do, how
62 often did we take help from instructor or how did they organize the course so that it
63 helped us with anything or helped me with anything. Utilizing that knowledge or skills in
64 the real world and all this stuff. That's just what it makes me think about it.
65 P12: Yeah, the survey is asking, how did you feel? How comfortable were you with this
66 professor or this teacher you're taking class and how were you appreciated as an
67 international student that's why I think about when you were asking about survey. I can
68 find out specific questions that you know that make me think like that. Question number
69 three, "My instructor helped me learn how to organize what I'm learning so I can
70 remember it more easily," that kind of stuff. I mean, some question asked me about,
71 "Were you encouraged to challenge yourself while learning" and stuff like that. So it just
72 kind of makes me think, like, it's, it's more like us and not the teacher. And how did you
73 feel when you were in the class.
74 **M: How about you P11?**
75 P11: I think there was something that I feel like that there is a value for my opinion and
76 that can impact on future development, maybe that can change the curriculum or course
77 in future or maybe that can make changes in future for the students. I mean, students'
78 future. I feel like that.
79 P10: I think this survey is kind of designed the way that it's being asked for a class where
80 there's not like hundreds of students in a course more like a medium-sized class, where
81 instructor is able to interact with individual student. Why such questions are designed, it's
82 not possible to answer such question when we're sitting in a class with huge population
83 where the instructor barely knows our names. It's more like here we are sitting and there
84 are just like four people. You are listening to each of us. It's more like so most of our
85 English and Kernel classes that I know is that do not mostly like 20 to 21 people where
86 instructor can work with each individual student for their projects, for their opinions, for

87   their research essays that we usually do in the class. And that's what the question even
88   asked, like how are you yourself [Incomprehensible] how was the whole class feeling it
89   was like how you feel. And how you felt with instructor on and off talking to them about
90   projects or something. So I think it's, it's more like the class where it's not a lot of people.
91   **M: You can put the surveys away and talk more about what you understand**
92   **learner-centered or student-centered teaching is, what does it mean to you.**
93   P13: To me it seems more about not just instructor talking and saying this is what it is. I
94   think it's more of like when all the students are involved in the discussion. It's not like
95   hardcore that do this, do that, this is what it is. It is everybody talks, everybody discusses.
96   That's what I understand.
97   P12: I understand that it's more like how professor just goes by a student. If one student is
98   struggling with something so he changes his course to make him understand something
99   else. And if I'm struggling with something else then he helps me in a different way and
100   then the other student. He focuses on one individual student, not just the whole class and
101   give a lecture and just go away.
102   **M: If you all can discuss the points that each one of you are raising.**
103   P10: Do you want us to address each other?
104   **M: Yeah, you could, that's what the whole idea is.**
105   P10: Yeah! I think learner-centered from its literal meaning like the word itself says like
106   centered around is more like when we get differentiate between democracy and
107   dictatorship. Dictator is just the leader who leads the country. It's just that I think learner-
108   centered is more like what the student actually wants. It's more like the whole focus with
109   the class or the purpose of the class is to know what a student's needs are, like individual
110   student needs are. So if I'm a teacher or if I'm a professor teaching a course which is
111   learner-centered so my focus should be like if I'm having 20 different student in my class,
112   each of them should be equally understanding the topic what I was teaching whether or
113   not English is their first language or not. Each of them should be equally understanding
114   the topic and equally being able to work on similar thing. Then the level of decision-
115   making power we have while in the class like the teacher doesn't come in and say, "Hey,
116   let's write an essay on your favorite food." It's more like we'll talk about something a
117   descriptive essay where each of you can decide your own topic and write about it. In my
118   Kernel in the whole semester we did one research essay, one presentation, and one
119   personal narrative. Each of the topics were never told by the tutor. It was more like you
120   decide what you need to write. We can help you to write whatever you need to write.
121   **M: P9, what do you think?**
122   P9: [Incomprehensible]
123   **M: How about your English classes? Any English class did you have here, think**
124   **about that class.**
125   P9: Usually when I need help, I go to the instructor and then the instructor knows I'm
126   from different country. So he or she try to explain until I get it. I feel very sorry about
127   that because it's a bother for him or her. They were sorry about that but they say, "you
128   deserve to learn something from me". That is so helpful.
129   **M: How did the instructor make you feel?**

130   P9: Sometimes I feel guilty asking something I should know. But my instructor say "it's

131   okay, nobody knows about that". I don't have to feel guilty or feel sorry about that. He

132   usually try to cheer me up. I think mostly my instructor try to give some credit for

133   myself, because at least I'm trying.

134   **M: You talked about the instructor giving you the credit.**

135   P9: Yeah!

136   **M: So what kind of credit did the instructor give you?**

137   P9: It's not grade or credit. Sometimes it's really hard to explain what I don't know

138   because it's English. How to say it in English, but it's really why I don't know. Then I say

139   I'm really struggling with English, but he says, "your English is pretty well don't worry

140   about that!" They try to praise me.

141   **M: I'm going to show you a definition of learner-centered teaching. Just look at it**

142   **for a moment. I broke down the definition. I want you to just think about this**

143   **definition and think about your own beliefs. How much do you agree or you might**

144   **have something different and talk a little more about that.**

145   P10: Can I go?

146   **M: Yeah, sure.**

147   P10: I think it's very short but then if we see each of the words it's more like your

148   experience, your opinion. Opinion itself is a very strong term for individualism rather

149   than like this is the whole class. Interest, talents, capacities, needs, these are all terms that

150   refer to an individual person's experience. Heredity and background too, each of the

151   things reflects that none of the two people even can have the same things. Background,

152   heredity, experiences, everything is different for each of the person so all of these terms

153   refer to individual ideas individual creativity in individual beings. I think that's the best

154   definition for learner-based class.

155   P13: I will agree with you, saying that looking at it makes me think that yes, everybody's

156   learning experience is different because of different backgrounds, heredity or even the

157   opinions. When we discuss something in the class people have different opinions. They

158   perceive things differently. learner-centered is I think maybe focusing on every individual

159   and what they think about how do they care and what their perspective is on stuff. Then

160   how they proceed in the class and [Incomprehensible].

161   **M: Would you agree or disagree?**

162   P11: I will agree with that. That's the point that everyone has. Learner-centered is like

163   you have to focus on each student those points. You have to understand all of that of each

164   student and then focus on them. [Incomprehensible] it's very hard to do that. But

165   somehow, you can just take some of them which mostly professor do. I think that's the

166   point.

167   **M: If you have to define learner-centered teaching or learner-centeredness what**

168   **would be one brief way of summing up the whole thing? P13?**

169   P13: Teaching focused on or mode of instruction focused on student learning rather than

170   just convey information.

171   **M: Can you please repeat the last part? I'm sorry I didn't hear you.**

172   P13: Sorry, rather than just conveying information like lecturing.

173   P10: I'd say one-on-one interaction where you value the feedback coming from the
174   students.
175   P11: [nods in agreement] I'd agree with that I mean if the teacher gives value to your
176   opinions and to your [Incomprehensible] it's something like that. So it's just something
177   that every [Incomprehensible] should feel. I mean, they would feel proud of the fact that
178   someone is caring about his or her thoughts, opinions, backgrounds they care about so
179   that's the point.
180   P12: I would add to it. One of the things that happens in computer science happens is, I'm
181   really curious about something else like other than class material. So I would just go to
182   the professor and ask him, how do you do this kind of stuff? And which is like they
183   would help me. It's learner-focused because it's not course material but it's like something
184   outside of class and I want to learn it. So they helped me and it's like more learner-
185   centered. I want to learn something else other than class material that would help me.
186   They will not say, "Okay, no, don't. I can't help you!" because it's not class material or
187   something like that.
188   P10: I would put specific example from my Kernel class. I remember last year, the same
189   semester I was in Kernel year 2 [Incomprehensible] and then at the starting of the
190   semester, the first assignment was an online assessment, which is a psychology test. It
191   wasn't meant to be a proper psychology test, but there was kind of 40 to 50 different
192   question which we were supposed to answer like our favorite color, favorite movie, or
193   something like that. Afterwards, the professor when he went into the class like it was
194   even before the actual class started [Incomprehensible] and then we went to the class of
195   the professor handed over a couple of sheets like this to us and the [Incomprehensible]
196   replies that each student gave. I don't know how the software works, but there was a
197   calculated personality data for each student. So she handed over and for the whole
198   semester, she focused on the same evaluation that each student had. Certain students were
199   artistic. Even the groups that she made over the period of semester she evenly distributed
200   different categories of student. I was really impressed with that because a tutor knows the
201   psychology or the way individual student thinks even before coming to the class it's very
202   easy to interact, it's very easy to organize the whole course, making sure that every
203   student of every type is learning in that course. So yeah, there were 40 to 45 questions
204   that evaluate everything about us. How a person with that specific psychology wants to
205   learn, how as a person with that specific psychology or way of thinking likes to interact
206   with which people. So it gave all the details of every individual student and she had that
207   on an Excel and everything, and she used to use that data to design all the projects for
208   each individual student. I was really amazed with that. I don't know if you can take
209   names of that Professor but her name was Richard Morgan and she was really great and I
210   still miss her.
211   **M: P9, what would be your definition of learner-centered teaching? You can say it**
212   **in a word, you can say it in a sentence.**
213   P9: When I was in Korea most of the lecture, I mean, I've never been in college in Korea.
214   It was Junior High and High School. Most of it was lecture-based and only textbook. If I
215   had some related question, but it is not from the textbook, so my question is rejected by
216   my teacher. Here, I feel like instructors wants to take interest in my interest in something

217   to learn more. Then sometimes I feel like he or she wants to give me more opportunity to
218   learn something rather than textbook. Like my instructor gave me another YouTube
219   lecture video if I am interested or I want to learn something or I need some help in
220   something particular. They try to give me some link too.
221   **M: I'll pick on something important that P9 has said. She has talked about**
222   **opportunities of learning. She said how Professor has actually given her the options**
223   **of facilitating her learning process through opportunities for learning. What can**
224   **you think about when you think about opportunities for learning in learner-**
225   **centered classes? What opportunities for learning are there in learner-centered**
226   **classes?**
227   P13: I'm not just talking about English class but I'm also talking about English class too.
228   When I think about learner-centered class and opportunity, I think about, we learn things
229   differently by doing some group work, some projects together, maybe doing research
230   papers in many classes. For example, I'm taking Biochemistry. For science classes we
231   have different classes as lectures and classes of labs, so that is individually applying that
232   knowledge you learn in the lecture in interpreting stuff in the lab. I think in a way it is
233   learner-centered because it's not only lecture being delivered. It's now you're doing the
234   stuff and it's totally on you, how you learn. Projects that would let class things or other
235   group activities, for example other research papers that you write in different classes to
236   reflect on stuff you learned in the class.
237   **M: What more opportunities can there be?**
238   P11: I'd think about something where I feel comfortable. What I mean by feel
239   comfortable is that he mentioned about the group thing which is really necessary. I
240   remember when the first time I went to the English class and there was no international
241   because we as international feels easy with a person who's also international because
242   there's some kind of chemistry. You can talk with them and discuss because they have the
243   same experience as I do. So all of them were citizens of America. None of the class
244   members was international. I was feeling uncomfortable the first time. Then the professor
245   actually said to us to be in group and discuss things. I started feeling comfortable. I mean
246   that's what I think is learning actually where I learn. That's the opportunity that the
247   professor gave me.
248   P10: I'm going to go with both P13 and P11's opinion because the best thing about these
249   classes it's not always your professor grading. We have peer mentors in our class who
250   were also students. I had two peer mentors in a class of 20. So out of 20, 18 were students
251   who were peer-mentored. Then we had mostly all of our assignment were like one day
252   was just thinking about that assignment. The next day it was your peers, like a group of
253   four. So your peers will create your assignment [Incomprehensible]. Let's say we want to
254   do a speech. We wrote kind of a rough speech and that was graded by our peers and it
255   was the last stage when we were actually done with the whole thing that the professor
256   was doing the grading. So I think the opportunities for student-centered class is like when
257   all of your classmates whom you see as kind of your partners grades you or give their
258   opinions on your word and the professor is the very last person who actually sees your
259   final version of whatever project you have, rather than just you do it and hand it over and
260   then get pathetic grade or whatever. I mean, there are different opportunities, but to me,

261   the peers and the group work I value the most. I think that was the most important

262   opportunity for me to learn.

263   P11: I would add one more thing to that is I'm taking English class this semester. Today

264   was the last class. One thing I like in that when we complete the essay, the assignment

265   that she gave us, she said that bring a draft on this day. So the draft is being checked by

266   every student in your group. But if you have written an essay I would check it and give

267   you a [Incomprehensible]. That's the opportunity how as a teacher, how they look at your

268   paper [Incomprehensible] how you should be aware of those things in future, not make

269   the same mistakes over and over again. So that's the best thing I think. Time and critical

270   thinking.

271   **M: P9, you want to add something?**

272   P9: Not a fan of group projects.

273   [Everyone laughed]

274   **M: Do you think it's not learner-centered?**

275   P9: It depends on the group. Not my story but one of my friends she's taking one of

276   marketing class and then she was grouped with other Chinese people because of [race?].

277   She was grouped with I think four people and she was only one person from other Asian

278   country. Four of them were from China. So in the group project they speak in Chinese not

279   English. So she can't understand and then they didn't do anything. She's really good at

280   studying and doing some research and can Powerpoint and other things. The four Chinese

281   students gave the project to her. So she spent almost every night. Other groups they work

282   together. So compared to the group which worked together her group project is more

283   lower. So even though she worked hard, she got lower grade. I think this is another bad

284   side of group project. It depends on people who are in the group.

285   **M: P9 has talked about the group projects, how it steers away from learner-**

286   **centered teaching practice. Would you agree with her or would you like to add**

287   **something to that?**

288   P13: I think group projects are designed for the intention of for the most part team

289   building because when you are in the real world outside the university, you're not going

290   to choose people you're going to work with. You'll just be assigned some people and then

291   you have to get along with them, whether you like them or not. In a way it's building your

292   skills and abilities to get along with different kinds of people talking in different

293   language, you could say that they want to participate too. I would still say even though

294   you might not always get the people you like, it is still student-centered because whether

295   the group is good, you like it, you'll learn a lot and all that stuff you enjoy. But if the

296   group is not the same. People are not people you like but you still have to get things done

297   because most of the time your grade depends on it. So you just have to deal with it. That's

298   one important learning skill.

299   **M: Would you all agree with P13?**

300   [P9 and P11 nodded in agreement]

301   P10: I think no. If it's a learner-centered then the professor should know that the works

302   are not being done the way she or he intended it because I remember there was one group

303   in our class who had the same issue that one of the students she was from Thailand and

304   she had the same issues was like she couldn't get along with the group because it was a

305   group of four people, three were like together and one was not. When they were giving

306   the presentation, the professor figured out that there is a lack of unity among them. And

307   she said, she was going to take points off from individual people because it wasn't created

308   on the individual group-based. It was a group work but still getting the individual grades

309   for whatever she did. She asked for giving a feedback like if we are four people doing a

310   group project after the end of the project I need to assign these three people a grade that I

311   would want them to get. And similarly, all of them wanted to that everything and then the

312   presentation itself reflected that there was not a coordination between the group and she

313   took points off. I mean, I agree with P13 to the point that, yes, we don't get to choose the

314   right people in our life, but at this point, the purpose is to learn that how we can deal with

315   it. At the very beginning of our experiences it's very hard to actually cooperate because

316   we don't even know how to cooperate. It's like we will do 1, 2, 3 to 10 different projects,

317   after which will develop the skill to deal with people whom we don't even like, but we

318   still need to stay. But at the very beginning of your learning experience it's very hard and

319   even being international you are already unlucky.

320   P11: I would both agree and disagree. The point is that I had a really bad experience in

321   the past. This semester I like group discussion. Group discussion is something that was

322   like in the class, we had opportunity to discuss each other's papers with four five people.

323   The professor would just give us the opportunity like after every assignment to discuss

324   that with each other. While discussing with each other you start understanding the other

325   people who is in your group. When you start understanding them, then she started giving

326   this group projects. After two or three assignments she gave us a group project and I

327   think it was a very good experience for me because I understand the next person who was

328   in my group. I know how he thinks how he do the work like a lot of the things that I need

329   to think about. That's the most important thing. First, you need to know each other and

330   then start working on something. If you don't know each other the teacher will say, just

331   work with that person. Working with that person is very hard. Sometime you are unlucky.

332   **M: What P11 said, what do you all have to say about that aspect of group work?**

333   P10: I think that's the major base of doing a successful group project is like, first you

334   understand each other you align your on the same platform. If we four need to work on

335   one thing and I'm like I don't even know these people how they work, or what kind of

336   nature they have I don't even know what to do. Because, like, see I really agree with the

337   point that every person should have equal contributions in the group, but every person

338   has a special specialty that they can work on. So it's like if you have to make a

339   presentation, maybe somebody has really good research skills, but if we don't even know

340   what is the specialty of each of the member of the group, how are we going to work? We

341   will be like okay let's do 50% of the research, 25% you, you, you and then 25% of the art.

342   Then we are going to screw up because one person is good at art work, but then he is not

343   good at [Incomprehensible]. At the same time one is good at representing or organizing

344   the PowerPoint or something. So first of all, when we have understanding, we know okay

345   this person is good in this you'll do this. So it's more like, you know, understanding is

346   more like knowing the strength of each person individually that way we can bring out the

347   best combination of work together compete to have a successful project time.

348   **M: P12?**

349 P12: I would agree and disagree with this kind of statement because if you have a good
350 leader, then he can assign and he can just, you know, think about other people, and it's
351 like assign just like think about countries. In every country there are other kinds of people
352 and there are decisions in the assembly. So, if their leader is good and the country will to
353 succeed. This is why I think when it comes to group, it's, also important for other group
354 members to understand each other. But if there's a good leader then that group will be
355 successful no matter what.
356 P10: Can I say something? I don't think it's the best scenario to have a good leader, but I
357 don't think it's your failure if you don't really try. I don't think necessarily any group
358 needs to have a leader because it's more like if you all can be leaders at the same time,
359 that can still work because all of the group projects I did in my Kernel or any other I
360 never did actually group project in my Kernel class, but yes. In none of my Kernel class
361 and then one of the other course I did, Possibilities of Economic Success, we did a group
362 project but none of them included a leader, saying that you do this. It was more like we
363 sit together and we were like, wait, this is my capability, I can do it. Do you all agree
364 with ideas? Okay. Done. I worked both ways. There was one project where I did
365 whatever I was confident about what I can do. But then at the same time there was one
366 time when my group members didn't think it's unfair to just because some people thought
367 research is the hardest why would one person do the research. Let's everyone do research,
368 everyone do each of the thing, and then we'll see which is the better thing. That way none
369 of the group member's doing less and more. So, I did both ways, but still we didn't have
370 any kind of, you know, leader who was telling you, you. It was more like at the same
371 time we agreed.
372 P11: I would add one more thing. Americans are not a big fan of international students!
373 [Everyone laughed]
374 P12: That's true, that's true! I've faced this. I was in a big competition if you remember
375 the CDC. They don't like internationals, they just wanted to do things on their own.
376 [others laughed]
377 P12: By this I mean it's like no one's going to take initiative to send emails or anything.
378 'Okay, here's the meeting. So, we're supposed to meet here. The leader who's taking
379 initiatives and was taking responsibility of the group and if someone is not working he
380 should report this to the professor. That's what I mean.
381 **M: So are you suggesting that among learner-centered teaching practices, one of**
382 **them is group work that also helps you to promote that sense of responsibility?**
383 P12: Yes, sense of responsibility and appreciate other person's perspective.
384 **M: On that point?**
385 P10: I would agree on that because I am a big fan of saying that every person is not the
386 same. It's [Incomprehensible] treating everyone equally. It's more like you need to treat
387 every person, the way they are designed rather than just saying equally because then it's
388 no more learner-centered. I mentioned that even at the beginning of the class like every
389 person is different. And you need to deal with every person in a different way. So yes, it's
390 like one person can be very good at responsibility, whereas the other group member can
391 be good at a different thing. But he or she might not be a very learner-centered person,
392 but that doesn't mean that he or she cannot contribute in her best way. If we four or we

393   five people are working, may be P12 can be the best person who is very concerned about
394   the time [Incomprehensible] but if I'm not responsible, I'm kind of lazy person but I am
395   very good at research, I still have that strength of contributing, but in a different way.
396   Self-centered means every person is different. Oh, it's not self-centered, sorry it's learner-
397   centered means every person is different. We need to see what is the strength in that
398   person.
399   **M: P9, what have you been thinking?**
400   P9: I think, of course, group project is learner-centered because there is less opinion of
401   the instructor. I also think instructor's role is also important, even though like my brother
402   who has studied in Korea and then he took English class and then the instructor gave
403   some English writing project with groups. Then he was with a group of students who had
404   been in the same High School. Then they knew his sister (me) is studying in the US they
405   said, "Oh your sister is great in English so you can do yourself!" He was so angry and he
406   came to his instructor and said why should I [Incomprehensible] I want to be in the group
407   with them. The instructor said, it's one of the social part, so you should figure out
408   yourself. It was for me really nonsense. But when I was taking Social English class here I
409   also have [Incomprehensible] what the instructor wants mostly is [Incomprehensible]
410   something [Incomprehensible] who did this, who did this and he grades based on who did
411   what.
412   **M: P9 has been talking about her experiences back home, how is learner-centered**
413   **teaching practice different from teacher-dominated teaching practices?**
414   P13: They are dramatically different because/
415   P12: That's what I think
416   P13: When it's teacher-centered teaching, it used to be a lot back in the days, I think. It's
417   the instructor coming, just speaking saying or whatever they want to do and then just
418   walks away. So that's about it and then you are tested on it and then you learn it or not it's
419   up to you. But then learner-centered is what we've been talking about. It's a lot more
420   interacting.
421   P10: I think learning is done when, it's an opinion but I don't know, I really strongly
422   believe that is, yes, the way P13 said. It's very different and then learning is actually zero.
423   For me, I can never be in a class where the person is trying to just impose but he or she
424   believes. They are like you do it because I had that background I believe this. Even I
425   don't think we can write a research (paper) and say in a teacher-centered class, because if
426   somehow the professor is against whatever we concluded, we are going to get 'F' grade
427   because there's no value for the personal opinion. I don't think there's a lot of learning.
428   When you are in a teacher-centered class or kind of that situation where you need to just
429   make sure that whatever you write, whatever you think, even should align with your
430   teacher then the creativity is zero. It's obvious because it's more like just trying to get a
431   way with that person rather than just bringing the best skills out of you. I really am
432   scared of that type of class.
433   P12: Yeah, one of the thing is that the teacher doesn't care about student's opinion. She
434   just comes to the class or just goes over the course [Incomprehensible]. If you go back to
435   the professor if you say, I have this question and he's offended, stuff like that. I have one

436 professor here, at NU, that does it. It's not that they don't focus on students and that
437 there's no learning. You just learn yourself or there's no point. You just fail the class.
438 P10: And that one more thing is that I think that the role of the teacher is never challenge
439 him even if it's a learner-centered class because you're still the teacher, you still have the
440 power. The only thing valuing someone else's opinion does not mean that you are losing
441 your role being a teacher, being a professor. You're still the leader obviously. Every
442 person is gonna be like every person's grade is still in your hands. It doesn't mean that if
443 you are going to value someone else's opinion when you're, like there is a concept still in
444 some areas in the world where teachers think that if they are going to listen a lot to the
445 student they're gonna lose their status being a teacher whatever. You're still a teacher
446 even in a learner-centered class. All you're doing is listening to your students and valuing
447 their/ that way you have a healthy relationship, rather than just the other person is just
448 trying to make you happy. You're still a teacher. You still need to grade their papers and
449 you still have that power [Incomprehensible]
450 **M: I will come back to P10's point of relationship. But going back to what P11 had**
451 **said about critical thinking so he mentioned that his experiences in English classes**
452 **within the group-focused activities he felt that it pushed him into critical thinking.**
453 **What do you have to say about that critical thinking component in learner-centered**
454 **teaching classes.**
455 P13: I can compare both type of classes and talk about how what P11 said was how I
456 agree with him. What I believe is in teacher-centered classes the instructor will walk in
457 and then say whatever they have to say then students have to take it. That makes them
458 lose the ability to critically think about stuff. But in learner-centered students are
459 encouraged to engage and talk and question so that anything being discussed in the class
460 students can either agree or disagree they must be critically thinking and saying, Okay,
461 whatever you are saying it's fine I respect your opinion but I don't agree with you and
462 everybody is fine with that. I'll give you one example, again, and it was not an English
463 class. But I think it relates a lot to those things. I took this one class Thinking about
464 Evolution. As you can see it's a contradictory topic. Some people believe in it and some
465 people don't. So the class was mostly discussion-based and at the end we were assigned
466 to read this one paper and everybody had to talk about it. We read about it and then we
467 came to talk about it on the final day. There was supposed to be a final presentation and I
468 realized that whatever these people, even though it was a peer- reviewed journal, I do not
469 agree with many of the things. That's what I talked about in the class so that most of other
470 people that whatever they're saying is it doesn't make sense. Usually, if it wasn't a
471 learner-based class, we would just believe it because it's published in the literature. But
472 because it's a learner-centered class we read it, we thought about it and we said, 'Oh, I
473 don't agree with this but some people would'. It's okay, but you just have to tell, why you
474 disagree or agree.
475 **M: Have you had somewhat similar experiences in your English classes where you**
476 **were challenged to think critically?**
477 P11: Yes
478 **M: What kind of activities were they?**

479   P11: One of the activities was we were supposed to discuss about these books and there
480   were some different books. We had covered like four or five books. There was one book
481   about war and feminism and stuff like that. We were supposed to talk about our feelings
482   and how we feel about wars and how we feel about everything like that. It's more like
483   critically analyzing your points and accepting others. It was kind of like a debate. Other
484   person was just [Incomprehensible] points and stuff. It was just like learning through
485   other people's opinion and critically analyze why this thing is bad and why his thing is
486   good or stuff like that. In my English class [Incomprehensible] project was like you had
487   to get like a [company?] that you know your audience, purpose and context. These were
488   the three things that we needed to focus.
489   **M: Can you go back to what you said? What did you have to come up with? A**
490   **company?**
491   P11: A company kind of project
492   **M: Okay,**
493   P11: You need to understand what's your audience, purpose and context to create a kind
494   of like project. You have to make a video for that, ads for that. A complete structure of
495   that in my English class. That was something that really made me think about okay, It's a
496   normal thing that you have to think about that. What should I add in my paper, videos,
497   that can influence the audience of what I'm thinking about. That's the most important
498   thing that I think so. And one of the major thing I learned in my English class is that
499   Professor was totally focused on critical thinking instead of like looking for grammar
500   errors and things like that. She said that the critical thinking is more important than
501   grammar. If you're taking class next semester, the professor expect you to be thinking out
502   of the box. That's the main point.
503   P9: When I was in Korea. Disagreement with my instructor is very [Incomprehensible].
504   So it's really hard to say own opinion. When I was in IEC, the English learning program,
505   they want to get my own opinion and then the reason, especially in the writing class they
506   need supporting ideas. I was in listening and speaking class. There's discussion about
507   testing animal testing and then there was more disagreement with that. I think that it
508   helped me to increase my critical thinking.
509   **M: P12 earlier had made a comment on learning beyond the classroom. In your**
510   **English classes did you have opportunities to go beyond the classroom? What did**
511   **you mean by saying that the learning in learner-centered classes is going beyond the**
512   **classroom.**
513   P12: So what I mean is that when are not sure about some things and it's not in your
514   course, let's take the example of English. If I'm not really comfortable with Past and
515   Present tense and it's not in our course to learn about past, present tense. It's just basic
516   grammar that you just [Incomprehensible]. If I go to my professor now and I want to
517   learn this kind of stuff, he would help me. This is something like beyond the class kind of
518   scope.
519   **M: Can anyone add more to that - learning beyond the classroom?**
520   P11: I think I'd say the same thing. I learn how to look at and analyze it. There was
521   something that I mean I don't think someone will be able to think about that learning that
522   from English class. And I did that for my professor because she was like that should

523 make you think in a way that tomorrow when you write something you know your
524 audience for whom I writing that. When you know that you will be like a bridge. When
525 you know your audience and purpose that's the point of that. That's how to analyze the
526 text, how to analyze the ads. She focused on movies, trailers. Movies and trailers in
527 English class is something that no one thinks about. But there's something that's related to
528 English. There's something related to how we should write and how we should push our
529 message in the way that someone can understand and can change his or her mind and
530 maybe in a way that can impact the society. So that's what I'd say is beyond the class.
531 **M: P9?**
532 P9: I'm not sure if this is good example. When I was in CIEP one of my instructors loved
533 to show movie [Incomprehensible] introduce to singers [Incomprehensible] so I became
534 interested to know more other related topics.
535 P10: In my first semester of the Kernel we were supposed to do eight different fun
536 activities of our own choice and then write about it. And then the next semester we were
537 supposed to do volunteer work. For both, the nature of the activity that we were supposed
538 to do so writing a reflection paper is really relevant to the course, but then just going to
539 volunteer an hour or going to a party attending any ethnic festival. In my first semester I
540 attended one of the Indian festivals, but I couldn't include that in my Kernel class, which
541 was surprising to me because it was not an American festival. It was not a very
542 [Incomprehensible] festival that I attended. It was like how you describe an event where
543 you have been how can you effectively and descriptively describe a situation where you
544 have been. I was really surprised that hundred of the points, in a class where the total
545 points are 600 a lot of the points is not even a part of the course. I don't think back home
546 any of the English course would require us to do like a fun activity for our own choice
547 and then write about it. Do whatever you want to do of your choice, but then write about
548 it and then they will evaluate it. It was the only example I can think of beyond the class.
549 **M: Going back to relationship that P10 had earlier mentioned, can you say a little**
550 **bit about what you meant by relationship.**
551 P10: When we talk about your learner-based class, for me learner-based class is more like
552 one-on-one interaction of the student and the professor, which is very important because
553 the instructor should know that if 20 students are there in his or her class, what is the
554 capacity and what is the learning capability of each of the students. So if the relationship
555 is not healthy and from healthy I mean if you don't even know your student, if you don't
556 even know your professor, you don't know what to do. The first thing in the group or the
557 first thing with the teacher, student relationship should be to know each other. Okay, so
558 you are from Pakistan, how was your background? How was your high school? What did
559 you learn in school? All those simple questions told my professor that how capable I am
560 with whatever she's going to teaching in the class or whatever or why I had the specific
561 grade in the past or assignments that I did. So I mean it's not necessary to know where
562 your students are coming from, what's their hometown, or what's their favorite color. But
563 there's something called comfortable zone. First of all, both of you are in that comfortable
564 zone where you can, you know, discuss your opinions, so it breaks that stranger thing.
565 You know each other. Furthermore, you know you know your students' capabilities and
566 that way you can be more effectively carrying the learner-centered class.

567   **M: What about assignments? Referring to the survey, a lot of survey participants**
568   **said that "sometimes" the assignments were changed if they seemed to be failing or**
569   **the instructor taught them how to cope with stress or encourage them to tell him**
570   **how they wanted to learn. So, what do you think?**
571   P10: In my specific example, we were supposed to give a presentation in front of the
572   class and I didn't have that public talking fear but I don't know I had some personal
573   problem. But when I went, it was my final exam day, I went I turned on the screen. I was
574   like, sorry I can't do it. I went. She was like, this is the final day and you can fail this. I
575   was like, I can't even speak. I said, my name is P10. I couldn't because something that
576   was going on like a personal problem kind of thing. But then she said okay, you email me
577   later. I emailed her and she was like I know how you have been throughout the semester,
578   and that's not what you would have done. She said, she was not even interested in
579   whatever was going on. But I really don't want you to fail. Here's an alternative
580   assignment for you, would you please do it and I did it. I went to her during her office
581   hours during the finals week and gave her a presentation on a different thing. I got A. I
582   don't think somebody can think that a final exam can be changed just for one student
583   because I was the only one who did that. There was not even a second student who said
584   sorry I can't do it. I was the only one. But she's still based on whatever I was doing the
585   whole semester. So that was really surprising for me.
586   **M: What about the others? A number of you said that sometimes the assignments**
587   **were changed if they seemed to be failing.**
588   P9: In one of my classes, there was reading assignment and it was affecting 30% of the
589   grade. So if I don't do every assignment I lose every percent of my grade. Maximum will
590   be C. [Incomprehensible] Other example is one of my class there's reading assignment
591   before class and then my instructor wants student know at least some of the
592   [Incomprehensible] Class material. He wants to understand everything after the class.
593   Sometime when I did an assignment before the class, it's really hard to get information
594   during the class.
595   P11: I never had this experience, but
596   **M: In English classes?**
597   P11: In English class [Incomprehensible] The way she gave us the assignment, there were
598   four essays. Four essays, in the whole semester. One was a research [Incomprehensible],
599   one of them was a song related to your personal life and the impact of that in your life. I
600   never experienced that's why I can't talk about something that I had never experienced.
601   That's the point. But something I like in that is like when sometimes students would say
602   change the date for the final project. So she would change it from Monday to Tuesday or
603   Thursday or Wednesday or any other day.
604   P10: Yah, I think extension of the deadline was one of the common thing that usually
605   Professor do for students usually in our labs. They do it because [Incomprehensible] on
606   time for class. They do it based on like they know that you are actually struggling with it
607   rather than just procrastinating.
608   P12: Yah
609   **M: Is there anything related to learner-centered teaching method which has not**
610   **been discussed that you feel strongly about.**

611 P11: When teacher call you by your name. That's the most important thing. I mean you
612 feel special that maybe this teacher should know about you and care about you.
613 P10: I think one important thing is like what I really appreciate is not showing your grade
614 in front of your classrooms, because that is not a kind of discouragement for everyone,
615 but some of the students really get discouraged if you call out, Hey you 9 out of ten, you
616 5 out of it's kind of embarrassment for some people. For some people they can really deal
617 with it. But for somebody they can't. So the privacy of individual student is one of the
618 most important thing that we somehow we didn't discuss it. But yeah, whatever else we
619 discussed I think they are all so important like very, very important, very important. But
620 then this is a minor thing but still plays a major role.
621 **M: in Learner-centered teaching practice?**
622 P10: Yah, because like if see one of the student who really want to do something, just get
623 discouraged because he or she was called out by name and figuring like you five out of
624 ten or you F grade. That's an embarrassment and maybe that person just completely gets
625 demotivated.
626 **M: Would you all agree with him?**
627 [Everybody either nodded in agreement or said yes]
628 **M: Finally, can you tell me what is not learner-centered teaching practice for each**
629 **one of you?**
630 P13: You're not encouraged to talk and only let the students listen. It is not learner-
631 centered.
632 P11: Something the Professor would consider like say do that your own way but when
633 you do it, he or she act according to his or her own thoughts. I mean your thoughts are
634 not necessary, but Professor says think about it what you want to do and when you do
635 that he or she does not like.
636 P12: Yeah. for me, Professor doesn't care about students' learning. He just cares about
637 material he has to cover.
638 P9: In Korea most of the instructions wants students just follow what he is doing. If I do
639 differently even though it is related to class material it is not accepted because it is not
640 related according to text. Study the material based on what instructor wants and based on
641 the test.
642 P10: I think not appreciating questions in class is one of the early things that leads to
643 teacher-centered class. When somebody raises hand and teacher says, No, no, no you
644 stop. I don't need questions [Incomprehensible]. I think that's the first step towards
645 teacher-centered class.
646 **M: Thank you very much for having this discussion. It was very, very invigorating.**
647 **There was a lot of rich information. I appreciate it.**
648 P11: Thank you so much for valuing our opinion.
649 **M: Of course, your opinions are valuable!**

Focus Group 4

1 **M: Thank you for making time to join this discussion. I know it's the end of the**
2 **semester. You're all done with your coursework, everything.**

3   P14: Yes.

4   **M: Some of you graduated, right?**

5   All: No, none of us graduated.

6   **M: My name is Mahjabeen Hussain. I'm a doctoral student. This is a research**

7   **project that I'm working on. This is my dissertation research project. I would like**

8   **you to share your experience of attending English classes here, that's what my focus**

9   **is, trying to find out what international students experience in English classes.**

10   **Probably you remember having taken part in the survey, it had to do with the**

11   **learner-centered survey. A couple of things that I just want to share. And I want**

12   **you to remember while you're discussing. I would like you to interact amongst**

13   **yourselves as you are talking about your individual experiences. This discussion is**

14   **being recorded. Because it's part of a research project. It's confidential. As a**

15   **researcher, only I will have access to it and my advisor my Chair, so it's not going to**

16   **be shared. I would like you to share both your positive and negative experiences so**

17   **that I get to understand more about your experiences. There's no right or wrong**

18   **answers. Your identities will not be disclosed. Just the way you took part in the**

19   **survey your identities will be secure. Here too it'll be done the same. Here are some**

20   **consent forms I'd like you to sign. This is you giving me permission, I mean, if you**

21   **want to give me permission you can just tick on 'I consent' and sign. If you do not,**

22   **you can tick on 'I do not consent'.**

23   P15: Do we have to fill up this part too?

24   **M: Yes, for your gift card I'll need that information. You'll need to give your full**

25   **name and last name. You need a pen?**

26   P16: Ya, thank you.

27   **M: I'd like you to introduce yourselves. May be you [looking at P15] can start, your**

28   **name, what is your major and which year you are in.**

29   P15: My name is P15 Nayar. I'm from Malaysia. I'm a senior. My major is financial

30   management.

31   P17: I'm P17, I'm from Pakistan. My major is Political Science and I also have a minor in

32   Digital Media and Journalism.

33   P14: My name is P14 and I'm from Pakistan and I'm double majoring in Business

34   Economics and Political Science. I'll be sophomore next semester.

35   P16: I'm P16. I'm from Pakistan. My major is Computer Science and minor is Financial

36   Economics. This is my sophomore year.

37   **M: Since I'm interested to hear, I'll not be a part of your discussion. Sometimes I'll**

38   **ask you questions, but I would like you to all engage in discussion. I will listen to**

39   **you. So give each other the chance to speak. You've introduced yourself, so let's**

40   **begin by me asking you - what did the survey make you think about? So recently,**

41   **some of you took part in it and probably it's been a while for some of you**

42   P15: Yeah

43   P17: I think they were actually trying to see that how much the teacher has actually

44   engaged with the student during her tenure when she took classes with the student. I also

45   think that how a student has felt about it. How much she engaged student with it. Did she

46   actually, did the student actually feel promoted to do an assignment for English. If things

47   got hard did he just pass time with the assignment, just give it right away or did he

48   actually put some kind of effort into it to actually submit the assignment.

49   P14: I think it was basically about whether the teacher was able to get through to the

50   student and convey her knowledge and understanding of a particular topic to the student

51   in the way that she thinks that she can [...] to the student. I think it was more about that,

52   and whether the student adopts the method prescribed by the teacher and whether the

53   student addresses the topic in that particular sense as the teacher explained it to the whole

54   class. I think it was more about that. Furthermore, the attitude of the student of whether

55   how he takes it, whether he takes it very seriously. And if he does take it seriously, then

56   how does he address it. Does he find difficulty in the topic and what if he finds difficulty,

57   what does he do at that time. So it was more about that.

58   P15: For me, I sat with a group of friends and all of us was doing it together. We were

59   discussing about, then he was telling this that that and that time I realized that different

60   teacher had different way of, different professors have different way of teaching and that

61   was like, wow, I'm thankful with my teacher, my professor.

62   P16: So for me it has a importance for international students because international

63   students have problem with English language. And so the purpose it serve for me, like,

64   what are the information that we can make like international student understand English

65   more. So what, like the best thing they get as a positive and what was the negative and

66   which part they did enjoy and which worked. I think this is the.

67   **M: Do you agree with each other or your opinions about how you think the survey**

68   **made you think. You all just said something about your experience in taking the**

69   **survey. P14 said something, do you think P14 agreed with P17?**

70   P17: Yeah, I think he agreed.

71   P14: What he said was basically [...] whatever all of them said.

72   **M: Do you all feel the same way?**

73   P17: I think he just presented elaborate version of what I said.

74   **M: Explain more about what learner-centered teaching means to you.**

75   P17: I think education is not just confined to four walls or it should not be just confined

76   to four walls. It is much more than that. Our English professor, Miss Kim Galehurst, she

77   took us out to have a game of football or a game of basketball. She somehow related it to

78   English and that way it made us, I mean, in the morning you don't always want to sit in a

79   class which is sometimes it feels spooky with all those lights in there. Sometimes you just

80   want to go out in the sunlight and have a game of basketball and if a professor actually

81   [...] a creativity into the class, it actually helps a lot. So I really enjoyed that 8am class

82   when we had to play ball outside and she somehow related it to English. She asked us to

83   close our eyes and think of basketball as someone who was special to us and more

84   exactly would change when we were throwing the ball around and how if we knew

85   already that this was that special person in that basketball, how would we change our way

86   of throwing it. Then we had to write a journal about it. So I think that involving creativity

87   into a class is really important.

88   P14: Expanding on this concept of creativity, what my English professor, Sirus, would do

89   is he would also take us out and he would make us sit down in a circle while we're facing

90   each other and he would want us to create truth or dare. [...] In a particular class scenario,

91   if you say that your whole class is playing Truth or Dare, it kind of really sounds stupid.
92   That way students would get to express themselves and that particular way of expressing
93   themselves in return I think that helped them when they would write papers or write
94   articles about everything or write their expression about things. That particular expression
95   of when they were talking to people in person, I think that further turned into their
96   writing and it really affected how we approached our articles and books.
97   P15: I had the same professor as he had like what he said. Four semesters ago he did the
98   same thing. He brought us out as many times as he could because it was mostly, all
99   international students in the class and some students were falling asleep. He was feeling
100   very demotivated, he was like how can we make the class more interesting because
101   people were literally falling asleep the whole hour. He brought us out and he said asking
102   us sit in a circle start sharing our thoughts. He used the last 20 minutes to forty minutes to
103   teach English. I really liked that way of creativity, his creativeness.
104   P16: What my professor, Elvis, like always give some topic from the book he
105   recommended book for us. Before class he told us that, "you have to read this topic but
106   the next time you have to discuss this." In the next class we students discussed the topic
107   between each other. We were asking question, what your thought are about the topic.
108   What're you thinking about this topic, what do you think about this story. I think that was
109   a very good experience for me. Everybody has a different set of mind. The thing which I
110   didn't like about that like we had to write a reflection every time. That was, you know,
111   we, very/
112   P17: Tiring
113   P16: Yeah, tiring! We didn't focus much on reading instead we just like to, you have to
114   read it, like, just to get a grade. As internationals grade is very important so you don't get
115   an idea what I'm getting but you just focus on that assignment. Okay, I have to submit
116   this assignment which was a burden.
117   P14: Exactly also elaborating on this point of his where he said that he had to submit
118   reflections. We were assigned books and assigning articles that we had to read and then
119   we had to submit reflections of those articles and chapters from books and poems and
120   short stories. What was that that during the very start, we were not familiar with that
121   particular concept and thus we found it very hard to express our proper thoughts and
122   convey them to the professor. Thus our initial reflections did not actually show what we
123   actually wanted to write and thus they were not up to that level. But at the end we got
124   really better. One thing is that it shouldn't have been monotonous; it shouldn't have been
125   the same all along. Initially, I think the initial grade of those reflections should not be
126   counted as much as a final grade because it takes time for us to get the concept inside in
127   his head and express himself very clearly.
128   **M: Anything more you would like to say?**
129   P15: Adding on to what he said, I feel like the initial grade that we all international
130   students, we came from various backgrounds so English is something where like some
131   people, they are very good in English, some people they are not. If we're going to take the
132   initial grade as something very heavy is going to carry a very heavy weight towards our
133   final grade. I think it will affect literally half of the international students on campus. So I

134   think by giving them chances professors here are nice if you go and talk to them and tell

135   them that I think I can do better, you can give me another try.

136   P17: Yeah, she has actually raised a very nice point

137   P14: Yes

138   P17: Because the initial assignments should be easy, and they should be made tough as

139   you go forward during the class. So the initial assignment, let's say the first assignment

140   that we are asked for an English class should be like, on a difficulty level of scale of 10,

141   say 5. After that we can take it to six, seven and so on.

142   P14: Yeah, it should be a progressive learning system.

143   P17: Yeah

144   P14: That's what I think but I'm not saying that it is not a progressive learning system.

145   I'm saying that it should be more of an integrated system where the difficulty of the paper

146   and everything is on a progression. Where is in some classes, the difficulty of the test in

147   the first week is actually the same as the final exam. There is no particular difference. So

148   that kind of hampers the growth and the obviously the intellectual growth of a student.

149   P17: One more thing that I would like to add is when I first came to the US, I've been a

150   Pakistani citizen. someone who's always been ruled by the British. We used to follow

151   what the British people require of us and giving Cambridge International Examinations,

152   IGCSEs our English was supposed to be full of vocabulary, full of expressions and full of

153   words that are very difficult to understand for a person who was [CT]

154   P17: Basically IGCSE is marked on how heavy our vocabulary was, using words like

155   different kinds of words. When I came to the US I kind of tried to reproduce what had I

156   learned back in O' levels and A' levels. I got an A in English in O levels, but when I

157   turned in the very same essay because the topic was very same, so I just kind of

158   reproduced it and I submitted that paper and I ended up getting a C grade. I was like I got

159   an A plus in the same paper. So I went to the professor in office hours, and she said, "I

160   couldn't even read your paper! You don't have to make your audience, you put me in

161   difficulty well I had to read it all I had to look for words in the dictionary. Why did you

162   use such kind of words?" Like all my life I've been brought up like that, that the better the

163   words I use the better grade I'll get. I think that we come from diverse backgrounds and

164   we have different ways to look at things. Maybe we were considered good back home.

165   Maybe it's not [Incomprehensible]. So once we get used to or immune to what they

166   require of us here, I think we'll be able to perform better.

167   P16: I just want to explain his point. Our Professor he never graded me on the basis of

168   like what were my mistakes, the positive points. Like this is wrong, this is right. He

169   always graded me how much I put my [Incomprehensible]. From the very start he

170   checked like this is your level. If you improve it with time, then you'll not get a grade like

171   this. But if you don't, then you will not. I think that was a positive point, because some of

172   the students are very much familiar with English they have very good English

173   vocabulary, English grammar. He always puts the students in the same level so that

174   everybody gets a good chance to get a good grade.

175   **M: I'm sorry about this. I meant to display this on the screen. Because of the setting**

176   **of this room I had to improvise. Since we're talking about learner-centered teaching**

177   **or learner-centered instruction you have talked a little bit about your experiences of**

178 **back home and you're comparing it. This is one definition of learner-centered**
179 **teaching practice what it means. I would like to know whether you agree or disagree**
180 **with it or whether you have a different definition. Feel free to share that. Just have a**
181 **look at it.**
182 P17: I think the most important think should be what they lack.
183 P14: Yeah, that's missing.
184 P17: What they lack actually is what their weakness is, is very important for the professor
185 to know because that is actually the part which needs to be focused on the most. I've had
186 experiences, I've had capacities/
187 P14: [Pointing at the printed definition] I think these portions, I think it covers.[CT]
188 P17: I think that these portions
189 P15: Even capacities [incomprehensible] [CT]
190 P17: I think that covers it.
191 P14: Yeah.
192 **M: Anything more that you'd like to add?**
193 P16: Accent matters. [P14 nodded in agreement] I was taking another class of
194 Microeconomics. The professional was going very fast, fast. At the last of the class I just
195 went to him and like Professor you are sometimes going at a speed. He said, "I have notes
196 online so you can go there and can study it." So sometime you can't understand like their
197 accent and I sometime they go very fast. I think so, accents matter. Because they don't
198 care about, like, they say 'they're' to 'they are', so you can't get it. There are some other
199 words like, for example, he was also teaching me like about the John Deere. I was, what
200 is John deers? (displaying his hands like antlers) I was thinking of deers!
201 [Everyone joined in the laughter]
202 **M: Going back to learner-centered or student-centered teaching practices, how**
203 **would *you* [emphasis] define learner-centered teaching practices? This is one**
204 **definition. So would you like to add more or disagree with this. What does learner-**
205 **centered teaching practice mean to you?**
206 P16: For me like P17, background matters, experience matter, and capacity which is very
207 important and I think so for me
208 **M: You're saying, experiences and**
209 P16: Like background matter
210 **M: Whose background or whose experiences are we talking about?**
211 P16: Like we Pakistani right? We have background from the very start we are familiar
212 with the British, grammar each and everything. Like Kg, kilogram, gram. When we got
213 here we say pounds, what is pounds? If you see pounds, it's something like 'L' 'B' 'S'.
214 Something like that.
215 P17: I think there are a lot of examples that are American-centered. They refer to some
216 companies which are specifically American, or not that famous. Just like I wouldn't know
217 that racquetball is a sport before coming to the US.
218 **M: Let's focus more on what it means for a class to be learner-centered. [CT]**
219 P14: I would like to emphasize on one particular point that learner-centered class should
220 mainly focus on how you would think if you were a student sitting in that particular seat.
221 That should be a learner-centered class for a teacher. That's what I think. Every teacher

222 should kind of imagine the fact that if she or he was a student sitting in that place and
223 someone else was delivering that same lecture [incomprehensible], how would she take
224 it, how would she go through about it. That is when you kind of realize properly that,
225 okay, that is a learner-centered class where a student who is a learner is being put into
226 perspective, his every [incomprehensible], his every opinion, his every feedback is taken
227 into consideration and is being responded to with equal intensity. So that would actually
228 be a proper learner-centered class.
229 P17: I think caring about the students should also be involved.
230 **M: That is learner-centered?**
231 P16: For me why they are taking class of English. If somebody is taking class of English
232 then they should learn English, right? I think for me it is, that means you should get the
233 goal, like what it is. If it is English, then you should learn English, right?
234 **M: Going back to your discussion prior to me displaying this thing, I'll just quickly**
235 **mention some of the points that all of you mentioned like P17 mentioned creativity,**
236 **out of class experiences. P14 talked about addressing individual students. P15 talked**
237 **about out of class experiences like P17 and P16 talked about between students,**
238 **exchanging of information, reflection.**
239 P16: Yeah!
240 **M: P14 talked about also variety and providing opportunities of learning. You also**
241 **mentioned group. How are all these thoughts that made you think as you were**
242 **talking, related to learner-centered or non learner-centered?**
243 P14: Like I said that getting the feedback of a student and acting on that particular
244 feedback really helps with the growth of an intellect of a student. In a learner-centered
245 atmosphere where the learning is centered around a student or the learner, the teacher or
246 the instructor would be vigilant of the fact or vigilant of the needs of the student and his
247 requirements and particularly his talents he can display which is exactly mentioned in this
248 (pointing to the printed definition of Learner-centered). When that thing happens the
249 students' growth, mental growth, obviously, and his intellect reaches a level. Whereas if
250 the environment is not learner-centered and the teacher mostly delivers lecture and wants
251 to get through his message some of the students should particularly get idea what's going
252 on while others would certainly lack in that experience. The teacher would not
253 completely convey the concept to every single person in the class because everyone does
254 not take one thing in the exact same way and that would *not* [emphasis] be learner-
255 centered. That would be more oriented around the instructor or the teacher.
256 **M: P15?**
257 P15: I totally agree to what he said. The instructor, I think, should really, really
258 understand because not everyone is going to learn the same way, for example, that he can
259 learn through slides, I cannot. I need someone to write on the board and show me what
260 are they really talking about. So I think it's the teacher's duty to make sure that every
261 student get it, and not assuming that this is college and this is how you're going to do
262 things. You get it or you don't get it. I think after this phase, like college phase besides
263 taking classes on yourself, I don't think you're going to learn English anywhere else.
264 Daily communication that is something else but living in the classroom, the environment
265 where you are going to see people studying, I think college is going to be the last place

266   where you totally gain experience learning English with international students like us. So
267   I feel it should be like the professors has to really, really know. Even if they don't want to
268   know I think it is the students' point to go and say, "I think you're going too fast on this
269   slide" what he (pointing to P16) said before he mentioned. I felt like you have to
270   communicate in order to get something. If you're just going to sit and expect the
271   Professor to understand you. It's never going to happen.
272   P16: I will talk about the interest. I observed in my class that we had a lot of Chinese
273   students in our class. But the professor have to understand, like, in which topic they are
274   more interested in. Some of the topic more related to the technology. Student got
275   interested in those and they did a very good discussion about those topics and someone
276   enjoy topics like something you know which you can never imagine [incomprehensible]
277   into those topics. I think those topics also have very great importance in discussion in
278   English classes.
279   P15: Even in my class during our sessions we had to sit in a circle and share our thoughts
280   [Incomprehensible] about the story we read about what we wrote down. My professor
281   never forced us to really speak. He's like if you're comfortable sharing you can share, if
282   not, I'm definitely going to read your paper, so I will know it from there. I think during
283   that point he would understand who can really speak up, speak out and who really just
284   want to listen and observe. There are always [Incomprehensible] to how professors learn
285   their students and deliver better.
286   P14: One more aspect of the learner-centered which I mentioned is that when I was
287   reading over the list the particular point of interests, it really triggered something in my
288   mind. Also in a learner-centered atmosphere the instructor or the teacher is apprised of
289   the interests of one particular student and he tries to get through the student by using that
290   particular interest. And in that particular scenario, it gets really easy for the student to
291   understand the concept. For example, once we were talking about in my statistics class
292   Professor had to [incomprehensible] a problem. Since American people they love their
293   football game, American football, not the actual football which they call soccer. Our
294   professor, he conveyed all those statistical problems in the class through that American
295   football game. Now it is not something related to English, but what he kept into
296   consideration was interest of most of the students present in that class and most of the
297   students were interested in football. When he talked about football and how it was going
298   on, they were getting the hang of the topic and through that as you can see through that
299   medium he conveyed the statistical problem with them. And most of them did really
300   understand it. Keeping the interest of a student is very important in a learner-centered
301   environment.
302   P17: This can actually be a problem for us international students as I mentioned earlier
303   that professors here in classes give American-centered examples. That is what I exactly
304   meant by when I said that that I don't have no-how about American football. I don't know
305   much about the Chicago Cubs or other teams which are in the National Football League.
306   You can talk to me about cricket, I'll I know that. You can talk to me about another sport,
307   maybe I know about it. But I believe that examples should be more universal. Let's talk
308   about the sun or the moon or something that every person knows belonging from any part

309 of the world for an example that is too American-centered maybe it is not a very easy for
310 us to relate to it.
311 P14: Yeah. Since we are focusing on the topic of International students' English learning,
312 he raised a valid point that for an international student you have to give some universal
313 example because we wouldn't really get what's going on.
314 **M: P16, would you like to add something to that?**
315 P16: I just talked about the interest aspect.
316 **M: Do you disagree at any point amongst yourselves?**
317 P15: After being here for about two years, I realized that it is going to be American-
318 centered learning. They are not going to change because we came to their country.
319 They're not coming so as what I understood I started counting in pounds instead of kgs
320 now. Because I work in a place where I had to count and stuff so I realized they're not
321 gonna change if they are, they're just going to give you one or two examples. It's only
322 going to be for one or two weeks. Other than that they couldn't be like you have to learn
323 it. I feel like we choose this country we have to like amend our self too.
324 P14: Exactly, but this totally goes against the concept of a learner-centered environment
325 that why do you want the student to change. Why should they? The instructor is not
326 changing himself.
327 **M: Do you agree with him?**
328 P17: I think that I partly agree here (indicating P15) and I partly agree with him. I think
329 she's right too. We have chosen this country and they have all the right to keep it as they
330 want to, but when they are charging hefty amount of money
331 P14: Exactly!
332 [Others voiced in agreement]
333 P17: From international students, I believe that there is no [Incomprehensible] of
334 international students. There are limitations on international students.
335 [Incomprehensible], especially for people who are coming from Saudi Arabia and other
336 countries. They need to learn a little bit about the Hi hello in their own type of language.
337 For a person who calls Pepsi, 'Bebsi', and Panther Village 'Banther village' you have to
338 alter it to some extent so that international students, actually, know these are real
339 problems. People are actually laughing on that I don't mean to come down on anyone.
340 But these are actually real problems. Since P16 is from Pathan descent he has a different
341 kind of [incomprehensible 0:35:11:3]
342 P16: I don't speak Urdu.
343 P17: and he doesn't really get that. So I believe that there should be if not all, let's say,
344 they want to keep 70% of their example, American example, I think it should be on the
345 universal side.
346 P16: I think in life it doesn't matter. If the concept of example that you understand to
347 make it more easy for the student. If you give the example that is more of a wall for the
348 students, then what is the purpose of the example. Example is just to make students get it
349 to relate the topic with that thing. If you put the example like it's a wall for the student so
350 that they cannot climb that wall, then what is the purpose of examples?
351 P14: That's right.
352 P17: So, I think we should start counting in pounds now!

353   P16: You can understand all those things outside of the classes. But in classes it's more
354   related to your study. I think it's more universal. United States is not the only place and if
355   you say other than America, which is the rest of the world. So, if you keep America in
356   one place and this is the rest of the world. There's much difference. So, you can't just go
357   with one place and then go oh yeah. You should go with the universe, I think so.
358   P14: You would also have to cut the instructor some slack too because I think that what
359   the instructor [incomprehensible] opportunity cost. So, on one hand, there are 25
360   American students on the other hand there are two international students. Although him
361   giving a universal example would not hamper the ability of American students to grasp
362   the concept but still, I think why the instructor states local example is because they want
363   the larger part of the class to get the proper idea what's happening.
364   P16: Yeah!
365   P14: So, you can't really blame the instructor in this particular scenario.
366   **M: I'll go back to a couple of concepts that I think that emerged from your**
367   **discussions then let's link it to what you've been saying so far. You have been**
368   **talking about learning environment P14 pointed out. P15 picked up on the teaching**
369   **tools of the instructors and you cited an example of group work and it was in a**
370   **circle that you said. How are these learner-centered? Why or how would you say**
371   **these ARE [emphasis] or they are NOT [emphasis] learner-centered?**
372   P14: Because we had the same English professor me and P15 what he would do I would
373   like to repeat that. What he would do is, he would make us sit in a circle. Now in that
374   when we sat in a circle and the second would be as if all of us were facing each other. No
375   one had their back to each other. That circle thing also happened in the class too. We
376   would bring our seats close to the wall, then we would sit at the edges so that we could
377   see each other. In that particular scenario, one student was expressing their opinion or
378   something, the other particular person was getting what they're saying. While going
379   through that since everyone was sitting in a circle, it would be like a turn voice,
380   [incomprehensible]. Even if anyone is hesitant or if anyone does not want to talk I think
381   that sitting in a circle and watching each other say things makes it easier for you to
382   express your opinions. That particular trick employed by the instructor is an example of a
383   learner-centered environment where he makes the student feel comfortable. Comfortable
384   for him to express their opinion and their thoughts and that is learner-centered and rather
385   than him trying to convey whatever he is saying by using his slides and by using his
386   notes, he is making the student comfortable. He is not looking at his own ease that is
387   learner-centered. That's what I think.
388   **M: Would you like to add or would you like to say something?**
389   P16: I agree with him.
390   P15: I think communicating with students is better because our levels are almost the same
391   rather than sharing with a professor and he giving his output. Because when we share
392   something his level is going to be there because he's been teaching the class for like
393   almost 10/15 years. He might hear from a lot more than hundred students on the same
394   topic, and he might already like he might have his own theory about that particular thing.
395   So, when we share we see, okay, for example, like when I share something and he agrees
396   to it, I'm like, okay, so we think alike for this kind of thing. [P14 nodded in agreement]

397   Our discussion might relate to the topic so you won't feel like whatever I wrote is going
398   to be different from someone. It's just going to stand out because it's going to be so bad
399   because what I think is not going to be the way he thinks and everything. So, I think by
400   sharing among students we know exactly, not exactly, but we know how what other
401   people think about it too.
402   **M: Is that the kind of learning environment that *is* (emphasis) learner-centered as**
403   **P15 described. Is that the kind of learning environment that's typical of learner-**
404   **centered classes?**
405   P17: I haven't done a BA in learner-centered!
406   **M: That's what I would like to know through your experiences. What beliefs do you**
407   **have?**
408   P14: What environment are you specifically talking about?
409   **M: She just described her experience of learner-centered classes. Do you think *that***
410   **[emphasis] is learner-centered?**
411   P14: Yes, the particular point she mentioned that when you're describing your opinion
412   and the other person shakes his head to agree with you and that would happen when
413   you're sitting in a circle because you can look at other people. While someone is saying
414   and you're agreeing with them that I think gives you more confidence to display your
415   opinion. Even if you have something inside you that you are not very well aware of and
416   you would not like to represent it, I think, that's kind of a stimulant for you to express
417   more of your thoughts.
418   P17: Yeah, I would like to add some fuel to what he said. Basically, when you are
419   recognized for something that you're doing if it is in the form of a chocolate or maybe a
420   trophy or a pat on the back, I think it really gives a student to do more; it gives him the
421   drive and the energy to do more. Last semester, one of my professor actually, one of our
422   professors gave us, every time he used to add to the class, he used to give us a pat on the
423   back or something like that, say something that, 'Oh, you guys are knowledgeable. I
424   appreciate you guys adding to the class' and he ended up also giving us one third of a
425   grade. I think it was one third of a grade? (looks at P14 inquiring)
426   P14: One half of a grade.
427   P17: One half of a grade. He gave us a plus one grade. So, I think when you get
428   recognition, you actually get the drive and the energy do more something related to what
429   he said.
430   P14: Yeah!
431   P17: That's pretty much learner-centered to me. I for one think that it is learner-centered
432   to get recognized for what you are doing in class.
433   **M: P16, would you like to add to what P17 said?**
434   P16: I'll just give one example. Learning in learner-centered is also to encourage the
435   student. One of my professor what he did, Elvis, whenever I submitted a reflection paper
436   when I got the graded one he would put smile on my sentences [incomprehensible]. I had
437   a friend like from Bangladesh. He was doing Mathematics [incomprehensible]. Because
438   of just putting smile there and like he actually want to change the major from
439   Engineering to the English. I think to motivate the students is also one of the best
440   experiences.

441   P14: He changed his major?
442   P16: He want to. He talked to the Professor, the English professor that I want to change
443   major because I like English very much. He said, no don't change it. You already took so
444   many classes of Engineering so don't change.
445   P17: Recognition and appreciation they really motivate student a lot. There's reason.
446   There's comments part in the E- learning page whenever our assignments are graded.
447   Every time I see a comment there professor saying Oh you did good. I feel good.
448   Everyone does.
449   **M: Do you agree?**
450   [Participants either nodded or said yes]
451   P17: It's a famous expression [CT]
452   P14: I think it's one of the major concepts of learner-centered.
453   P16: Feeling encouraged.
454   P17: I mean, wouldn't you feel good if you are looking good and your husband says that
455   your looks are good?
456   **M: That is learner-centered??**
457   P17: I think that's romance-centered!
458   P17: All a man craves for is appreciation.
459   **M: You also talked about opportunities for learning and growth.**
460   P17: Opportunities for learning and growth?
461   **M: Yeah, two things that I think P14 highlighted and some of you also added.**
462   P17: I'm sorry I misheard that as girls!
463   **M: I mean, that's what I understood**
464   P14: Opportunities for learning exactly. I would also give an example of that
465   opportunities of learning class. In our English class one day the professor he brought a
466   toy. I don't know it was a duck or something. He was like, Okay, what I am going to do
467   is, you're all sitting in groups. I'm gonna throw the duck and whoever catches the duck
468   will have to talk about something and whoever doesn't catch the duck will stand up for
469   like one minute. So what we did was that he used to throw back turned around and people
470   would actually catch it. When they catch it they had to give their feedback on the topic or
471   that particular article. You're giving the student a very good opportunity to learn by not
472   particularly pointing them out and making them stand in front of the whole class, you're
473   actually making it a fun way where they can express their opinion and not be humiliated
474   at the same time if they're not very good at it. So that is really a very good concept that I
475   really liked in my English class.
476   P17: I would not completely side with that. I think that we are not in kindergarten
477   anymore.
478   P16: Yeah.
479   P17: Now we're college students I think by now we should have some kind of confidence
480   to actually stand up and say
481   P14: Exactly! That is the reason why the professor did that because they were some
482   students in class who would just not express their opinion, who would just not get up at
483   all. after that he explained us why he was doing that because he was like I talked to some
484   of you, I've talked to some of you after class that you guys never get up, you guys never

485   express it. Your papers are great. Your reflections or whatever you submit me on E
486   learning they are excellent. You just can't say it out loud. What's wrong with you? That is
487   what he wanted to do. He threw the duck in that particular directions of those people who
488   would not get up. So that was extremely wise of him. I think that whether you're being in
489   college or whatever class that was a really nice move
490   P16: I have a question. A person like P17, he don't want to catch it right? He doesn't want
491   to act as a kid. [incomprehensible 0:47:19:6] so why should he stand? [incomprehensible]
492   [CT]
493   P14: No, the one who dropped the duck won't stand. [CT]
494   P17: I think I will agree with him now. After considering that there were two people or
495   three people who weren't able to speak. For a person who is very confident with more to
496   speak, I think that he can also afford to stand for one minute. For a person who is
497   confident enough I wouldn't mind standing up for one minute. But the person who's shy
498   [CT]
499   P16: Everyone don't want to stand like they are so confident they can speak but they don't
500   want to act as a kid.
501   P14: The thing the Professor did was that he presented the opportunity to student, an
502   opportunity to learn and opportunity to express himself without feeling bad for himself
503   without being humiliated. That was it.
504   P17: P14 actually stole that duck! It's now in his bath tub!
505   **M: You have had different experiences in your English classes, right? How is**
506   **learner-centered teaching practices different from teacher-dominated teaching**
507   **practices?**
508   P14: So are you talking about experiences back home compared with the States or just
509   here?
510   **M: What you believe teacher-dominated class is.**
511   P17: I think teacher domination has a lot to do with how the teacher wants to walk a
512   class. It cares less about how a student is looking toward it. I mean, I had two Pakistan
513   Studies teachers back home. One teacher used to just come into the class. She didn't
514   engage with anyone, pretty much she had a poker face. She didn't ask us how your day
515   went by, or how you're going. She straight out opened the book and she literally read
516   what was written in the book. Obviously, when someone is reading what is written in the
517   book, no one would listen to it. There was this other teacher, which our school hired. He
518   actually used to engage with us. He actually gave us proper examples and he actually
519   related it somehow to what we were doing at that point in time. He actually related it to
520   recess or how people are wasting food during the recess and how it is not in our religion
521   or whatsoever not to do something. You get my point that he somehow related it with us.
522   P16: Teacher-dominated for me is like, they don't take things as a person. If I do
523   something wrong, they don't take this as personal. OK, I will say you P16, in the test I
524   will give you a C or F. Back in Pakistan, my experience with my teacher so some of the
525   teacher they take it as a person. For example, if I do something [incomprehensible] they
526   will tell me, Okay let me see in exam I'll grade your paper. Here it's totally different.
527   They don't take his personal. They will grade you on basis what you did in the papers.
528   For me this teacher-dominated.

529 P14: I think the main difference between a teacher-centered or a student-centered
530 learning teaching practice is that in a teacher-centered practice the teacher never puts
531 himself or herself in the position of a student or barely does that. When she does not do
532 that she cannot identify the needs and the qualities of a student and when she cannot
533 identify the needs and qualities of a student then the lecture actually revolves around the
534 teacher, what the teacher wants to say and what the teacher wants to convey and whatever
535 whoever understands and whoever does not, does not understand. But, like I said earlier
536 too learner-centered teaching practice the teacher puts himself or herself in the position of
537 a student and tries to envision that if I present it this way, will the students get it? If I
538 present it the other way, how would the students rate it? Will this student understand it
539 better than the other student. A certain part of class is very eloquent in that particular
540 topic, I would just skim through it for them. But whereas another part of the class would
541 not be as fluent, would not be as knowledgeable in that particular thing so I would
542 explain to them in detail, and that is learner-centered. Whereas in a teacher-centered, the
543 teacher would give the same type and same quality lecture and same type of lecture to the
544 whole class. [Incomprehensible] The monotony of lecture is proof of that practice being
545 teacher-centered practice.
546 P15: I agree to all of it.
547 **M: So he covered everything? Two things, going back to two things that P17 said**
548 **about. Creativity and out of class experiences. How do you think these two ARE**
549 **[emphasis] learner centered or they are NOT [emphasis] centered?**
550 **M: I want you to tell me when you talked about creativity, do you think that is part**
551 **of learner-centered teaching practice or whether it is not.**
552 P14: Creative methods of it. How a teacher teaches students. Are they learner-centered or
553 they are not learner-centered?
554 P15: I think it is.
555 P17: I think it is learner-centered, obviously.
556 P15: because if it's not creative then it would be like the previous teacher-dominated.
557 Because they come they share whatever they know without knowing whether the student
558 is going to get it or not. If you're not going to do anything creative to get the attention of a
559 student, we are all human beings, whatever is exciting whatever is creative that is what
560 we get attracted to.
561 **M: Whose creativity are you talking about?**
562 P14: The creativity of the teacher, the creative methods employed by the teacher in order
563 to teach the students.
564 P17: Let me give you sort of a weird example. I hope no one laughs. Basically we human
565 beings tend to not talk to each other in a way that is, you know, not very easy for example
566 if approaching someone is hard, we won't actually do it. But apps like Tinder usually
567 makes greeting very easy because it kind of employs such a way where the girl's ego is
568 saved and the male's ego is saved. When they kind of match with each other, they end up
569 going on a date. This same is the case for even on Facebook. Maybe if two people aren't
570 really very comfortable talking to each other on a dinner party and they will
571 automatically not consider themselves friends. But even if they had a small talk there is
572 option of sending a friend request to someone. I think that it is particularly easy to look

573   up someone on Facebook see their interest, see whether or not they will be a good friend
574   or not. The same is what goes on in class actually. It actually promotes two people to talk
575   to each other. It actually promotes an environment where it is made easy for two people
576   to talk to each other, relate to the teacher. Let's say a group of four people without having
577   any common thing between them they won't really get together. But when the teacher
578   gives them a common thing to come forward and solve as a group, then I think it
579   becomes easy for them. This is what the creative element is and if the creative element is
580   there, people would come together and it would be learner-centered obviously.
581   P14: Talking about creativity, creativity can be learner-centered and can also be teacher-
582   centered at the same time. That is a very weird concept but in learner-centered
583   environment like I said earlier the teacher has to progress through the lecture by how the
584   student could understand it. So if the teacher has employed creative method, the teacher
585   is thinking Oh yah, if I do this method then it'd be very great. But if the teacher does not
586   think of the student that if I do this method, the student would understand it, then that
587   creative method would be learner-centered. Whatever creative methods you're using,
588   you're bringing in slides, you are being a Joker into the class but if the student does not
589   get the concept, then that creative method was not learner-centered. That creative method
590   was actually teacher-centered and that example revolved around the teacher himself. We
591   can take it both ways that what I'm saying.
592   P16: Student-centered means like teacher is not always like to be he is the only, like he is
593   the right one. But somehow students don't agree with the teacher and they can do
594   argument with teacher and I think so this is the main point that is student-centered
595   teaching.
596   **M: When you said about allowing the students to argue, are you talking about**
597   **students' voice being heard?**
598   P14: Yah.
599   **M: Can you elaborate on that?**
600   P17: You can actually give the example of [incomprehensible] class when we were trying
601   to prove the point about changing visa and he had to say that if a refugee needs a special
602   kind of visa. It was sort of an argument. I think that arguments between a professor and a
603   student should be constructive. Neither the student nor the professor should take it as a
604   blow towards their ego or perceive them as a blow towards their ego. I think the main
605   problem lies between argument is that [incomprehensible 0:57:54:3] to take them as
606   blows to our egos. I think if there is constructive argument, some points you can take
607   from your opponents some points you can give to your opponent. You can sort of have
608   somewhere between the lines.
609   P14: In a learner centered environment the teacher should, for example, if the student
610   says something and the student turns out to be right at that particular time the teacher
611   should not consider it as him transgressing his boundaries of being a student. Whereas
612   actually the teacher should take a really positive. [P17 agrees] If the teacher takes it
613   positively that is a learner-centered environment, because in that environment the teacher
614   is actually appreciating the student for what he has done. Whereas in a teacher-centered
615   environment if a student says something and the teacher turns out to be wrong the student
616   turns out to be right, the teacher sometimes they shut him up. [incomprehensible 0:58:

617 50:3] That has happened to me and a lot of students at times not here though but back
618 home. This has happened a lot of times. In that atmosphere a student cannot express
619 himself better in a clear way and [incomprehensible 0:59:08:4] That's when you
620 dominating the student. That is a teacher-dominated environment.
621 **M: P15, what do you think?**
622 P15: Yes, we are seeing a lot of things.
623 **M: How about you sharing a little bit more? Would you say your instructor**
624 **supported your learning process in different ways.**
625 P15: Yeah.
626 **M: In the English classes? You gave one example of group, sitting in a circle right?**
627 **Can you can give me more examples?**
628 P15: I was never comfortable sitting in group learning. Because back home I never used
629 to sit in a group and learn things. I used to sit alone and learn anything or even in class,
630 we didn't have group works or anything. So coming here. I feel like I like that more doing
631 things with group compared to sitting and doing it by myself.
632 **M: Other than that circle, creating that circle, how else did your instructor, English**
633 **Instructor, support your learning process? Other than that circle, creating that**
634 **circle, do you remember any other activities, learning activities? I think You also**
635 **shared the same thing with P17 when he talked about out of class experiences. Right**
636 **at the beginning, you talked about that you gave an example. How is out of class**
637 **experience learner-centered or NOT [emphasis] learner-centered?**
638 P17: I think we just elaborated that a few minutes ago.
639 **M: Out of class experience?**
640 P17: Yeah, I think so.
641 **M: Would you all agree to what he said?**
642 P14: Yeah, I would definitely.
643 **M: Would you say that out of class experiences are learner-centered?**
644 P14: Yeah, they are.
645 P15: Everything like anything which is happening around us we are all learning
646 something out of it, directly or indirectly. You don't have to be in a classroom to gain
647 something to learn something. When you relate something to the outside world, or when
648 you sit in an environment where you can live better, it helps you to progress in yourself in
649 learning and absorbing.
650 P14: I agree with what they are saying.
651 P16: I even.
652 **M: Finally, is there anything related to learner-centered teaching methods which**
653 **has not [emphasis] been discussed that you feel strongly [emphasis] about and**
654 **would like to share?**
655 P14: Yah, one-on-one feedback to the student. That is a very important aspect of a
656 learning-centered environment. We are talking about creative methods, out-of-class going
657 activities, but those are basically group activities where students are interacting with
658 everyone else and the teacher. But the one-on-one feedback that a teacher gives a student
659 is a very important aspect of a learning-centered environment.

660 **M: How is giving that feedback important? Can you build on that? What happens**
661 **when you have that kind of situation where you are given that feedback?**
662 P17: Have you seen students who actually wait at the end of class and then they go
663 individually for the professor to ask some questions that they have? I think it has a lot to
664 do with human nature actually. People tend not to ask their questions publicly because
665 they always have a fear of being humiliated in front of the class, maybe some of them are
666 [incomprehensible]. In the same way some students would not like to share what they are
667 going through, why their assignments were late or why they were not able to follow the
668 correct style of writing, it'll make them stupid or something like that. So they actually
669 want to talk one-on-one with the professor. I also think that too much of a learning-
670 centered environment would actually make the students, you know, they'll give them a
671 habit of being spoon-fed. Excess of everything is bad.
672 P14: Exactly!
673 P15: I agree
674 P17: I think we should end the conversation on something like we should have a medium
675 note, between teacher-dominated and learner-centered teaching.
676 **M: That is something interesting. I don't know what that is. Do you all agree? Tell**
677 **me more about that.**
678 P15: Teachers, professors has to be there. It is whether it learner-center or teacher-
679 dominated way of teaching, students how to do their work. We all need the degree. So no
680 matter what, everything is like I say everything, even by the teacher-dominating, it's that
681 you are learning something out of it. It's not like you're not learning. If you know you're
682 not going to get what the professor's going teach, you are going to learn the materials
683 yourself, indirectly you are learning that thing.
684 P17: Yeah, I think the balance should be there between teacher-dominant and learner-
685 centered environment because if a teacher becomes to lenient towards the student,
686 keeping in their mind about the learner-centered or what they are saying student-centered
687 teaching if he's not strict about his deadlines, if he's too lenient about the deadlines, I
688 think the student will become lazy. He will not follow his deadlines and he won't be able
689 to learn what is required of him at a particular point in time. He will just start to delay it
690 and when it all piles up at the end of the day, he still has to submit it before the finals. I
691 think that will be, the student will be in trouble. I think there should be a balance between
692 teacher-dominance and student-centered teaching. I for one think that that is the best
693 thing, which would be very beneficial for college student, both for the professor and the
694 student.
695 P14: I invariably, I think that as you all agree that environment would be a learner-
696 centered environment, but like P17 said we cannot disregard the importance of a teacher-
697 dominant class because the purpose of the teacher in the class is to moderate the flow of
698 knowledge through particular mind present in the class. If the teacher cannot do that
699 effectively than there is no point of making the class learner-centered because there will
700 be rubbish coming out from this side and rubbish coming from that side. The point of the
701 teacher is to moderate that rubbish in such a way where students actually get what he's
702 trying to convey. And for that, the class should at least be partially teacher-centered.

703 P17: I don't think that as a person ages he gains a lot by his experiences. When I was
704 young, some of my parents' advice would actually really bother me. I was like, Okay,
705 come on, just cut it out, but as time goes by, I realized that what they used to say is
706 actually true. And I believe that teachers and professors at a certain age and I think that
707 they have learnt from their experiences also, what life has taught them. I think that not all
708 knowledge comes from books. It has to be more than that. It has to be about your life
709 experiences, what you have learnt in your relationships or whatsoever life has to offer,
710 different types of crisis, be it financial or whatsoever! I think that teachers should have
711 that kind of at least some kind of dominance.
712 **M: P16, P17 had pointed out earlier, right at the beginning about assignments. If**
713 **you remember, he had talked about assignments that are given to students that you**
714 **know they should progress.**
715 P14: Yeah.
716 P16: I was thinking about the assignments. He usually give us like three to four
717 assignment which was, you know, very hard for me. But some how he has told that you
718 have to give the best, not too much and not too low, right?
719 **M: Is that learner-centered where assignments are assigned considering a student's**
720 **ability?**
721 P16: Assignments learner-centered, but if it is up to level, not too much and not too low.
722 Don't make it too lenient for the student and not to make it, you know, more hard for the
723 student. I think it is between.
724 P14: Yah.
725 **M: I remember you saying how the assignments should progressively be made**
726 **difficult. I think that's what you mentioned.**
727 P16: Yeah.
728 **M: Is that learner-centered, where you make the assignment progressively difficult?**
729 P14: Yeah, I think so.
730 P16: Yeah, I think so.
731 P17: I think the student is being made used to going through. I think if he isn't able to
732 cope up with difficulty levels, I think it is as [incomprehensible 1:08:18:6]. It is both
733 learner-centered and teacher-centered.
734 **M: Thank you very much for sharing all your wonderful experiences and sharing**
735 **that experience has been very rewarding for me because your beliefs are important**
736 **in shaping the curriculum.**
737 P17: It was wonderful being here, thank you so much for having us.
738 P15: Thank you.

APPENDIX P

CODES TO CATEGORIES TO THEMES

The following table displays the emergence of themes for Research Question 1.

A sample table

Codes		Categories	Themes
Reflection, group-work, discussion, oral presentation, one-on-one interaction, peer-feedback, challenge, interaction, understand, help, opportunities, learner needs, interests, background, comfortable	In-class & out of class activities, Active learning, authentic learning, Relationship-building Facilitating, Student knowledge, Trustworthy,	Learning-oriented learner focus Role of Instructor Learning opportunities & learning environment	LCT practices are L-focused & Learning-Focused
Reflection, opportunities, help, activities, challenge, interactions, learner-focused, perspective-taking, student voice, needs, interests, background, skill, curious, comfortable, boring, difficult, interpersonal, choice	Active learning, learner choice, individual differences, background, confidence, communication skill, interpersonal skills, learning-how-to learn, academic skills	Internal variables in learning activity Motivation & affective influences Learner independence Learner's prior & current experiences Diversity in learning & class size	LCT practices set challenges
Reflection, perspective-taking, student voice, group-work, discussion, oral presentation, peer-feedback, interaction, growth	Whole-person, Active learning, critical thinking, shared responsibility, communication skill, interpersonal skills, learning-how-to learn, academic skills, cultural adjustment	Ongoing learning Skill-building Construction of knowledge Alternative perspectives & acculturation	LCT practices lead to academic & non-academic outcomes

APPENDIX Q

SAMPLE ANALYTIC MEMO

In today's focus group (2.1), focus group participants talked about their past learning experiences to contrast it with their learning experiences here. They were asked to think about their English classes. The discussion generated what is NOT learner-centered practice. What they had experienced earlier (they all have similar educational background being Asian) was non-learner-centered (NLC). One participant when describing his experience here, used the word "holistic" to describe how the instructor's teaching involved the learner as a whole. He identified "holistic" aspect of LCT practice! Another participant added to that too. He explained the kind of learning that they all had experienced back home. It was not productive in the sense that as students their learning experiences meant that learning ended with acquiring a degree. A student did not need to engage in learning from there on. That is NLC to him. Everyone agreed. For this person learning was lifelong learning, expressed in the phrase: "Learning never ends"! These beliefs emerged as a result of the contrast they made between traditional learning and learner-centered learning. While these two participants were appreciative of the learning experience here, a third one had a concluding thought having contrasted their educational experiences. In an appreciative tone she exclaimed that they should "cherish" their learning experience here instead of engaging in talking about what was not good about their past experience. This particular part of the discussion indicated that the participants could see qualitative differences in their prior and current learning experiences.

APPENDIX R

INTER-ITEM CORRELATION MATRIX

Inter-correlation among items under the four different factors are reported.

Table R1. Inter-correlations among Items: PosRel

Items	1	5	9	13	17	21
1. My instructor shows me that he or she appreciates me as an individual.	__					
5. My instructor provides support and encouragement when I'm worried I won't perform well.	.35	__				
9. My instructor makes me feel that he or she cares about me.	.41	.60	__			
13. My instructor makes me feel that he or she appreciates me for I am, not just for how well I do.	.57	.54	.62	__		
17. My instructor helps me feel good about my abilities.	.30	.34	.43	.50	__	
21. My instructor helps me feel like I belong in the course.	.39	.48	.42	.53	.42	__
24. My instructor treats me with respect.	.29	.46	.50	.41	.20	.43

Table R2. Inter-correlations among items: StuVoic

Items	2	6	10	14	18	22
2. My instructor lets me express my own thoughts and beliefs.	__					
6. My instructor provides opportunities for me to learn how to take someone else's perspective.	.41	__				
10. My instructor encourages me to challenge myself while learning.	.45	.52	__			
14. My instructor helps me understand different points of view.	.35	.44	.56	__		
18. My instructor encourages me to think things out for myself while learning.	.30	.43	.59	.44	__	
22. My instructor asks me to listen to and think about my classmates opinions, even when I don't agree with them.	.34	.41	.32	.46	.41	__
25. My instructor lets me work on activities that are challenging.	.39	.31	.61	.38	.38	.30

Table R3. Inter-correlations among items: HOTS

Items	3	7	11	15	19	23
3. My instructor helps me learn how to organize what I'm learning so I can remember it more easily.	__					
7. My instructor helps me think through what I'm interested in learning.	.44	__				
11. My instructor helps me put information together with what I already know so that it makes sense to me.	.47	.52	__			
15. My instructor helps me see how I can reflect on my thinking and learning.	.34	.38	.54	__		
19. My instructor helps me learn how well I understand what I am learning.	.46	.51	.60	.44	__	
23. My instructor helps me by explaining and teaching in different ways when I am having trouble understanding.	.49	.53	.61	.40	.63	__

Table R4. Inter-correlations among items: AIDD

Items	4	8	12	16	20
4. My instructor changes learning assignments when I seem to be failing.	__				
8. My instructor encourages me to work with other students when I have trouble with an assignment.	.15	__			
12. My instructor encourages me to tell him or her the way I would like to learn.	.47	.49	__		
16. My instructor teaches me how to deal with stress that affects my learning.	.35	.50	.48	__	
20. My instructor makes an effort to get to know me and my background.	.35	.43	.44	.54	__