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EFL Teachers' Considerations in Developing Online Teaching Materials

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Abstract

The sudden necessity of studying from home forced teachers to immediately readjust their teaching materials into the online teaching materials form. However, online tools for language teaching that can be used by teachers as sources and learning media in their teaching materials vary widely. Therefore, the present study purposed at understanding experienced English as Foreign Language (EFL) teachers' considerations in developing online teaching materials amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The data collected through qualitative case study research design. The data gathered through document analysis and interview. The data analyzed by the form proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994). The result of the study reveals that there are 3 out of 8 principles of teaching materials that teachers take into account; giving the students fresh input, facilitating students learning style and attitudes, and contain audio-visual media. There is also found 2 others principle that does not really considered as a matter in developing online teaching materials; achieve impact by requiring and facilitating learner self-investment and provide opportunities to give feedback.

Keywords: online teaching materials, online teaching materials development, teachers' considerations, teaching materials, teaching materials development

1. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic suddenly broke out in the first three months of 2020. In Indonesia, the government requires people to stay at home and carry out all activities from home, including studying from home (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2020). This provision is made as soon as possible to protect the people from the dangers of this pandemic.

Departing from the above provisions, online learning has become a mainstay. However, in order to run classes that were previously physical and then turn online, teachers must readjust the facilities that support the teaching and learning process. One of the crucial elements to be readjust is teaching materials (Sung & Yeh, 2018; Richards, 2001; Lengkanawati, Setyarini, Sari, & Moecharam, 2015). Teachers from all over the country are required to reconsider their teaching materials and do an adjustment on it. For example, before the pandemic, when talking about digital teaching, teachers used PowerPoint a lot, but now teachers have to adjust it to an application, website, or platform that is easy to use comprehensively and independently by students at home (Pustaka, 2020). Before the pandemic, all students came to school during the study hours and went home after the study hours, but during a pandemic, teachers have to adjust their teaching materials to facilitate students who don't have gadgets so they have to use their parents' gadgets after parent's work hours (Putra, 2021). There are still many more adjustments that must be made for online learning to run during this pandemic which is clearly different from just technology-based teaching.

The adjustment teachers can do toward teaching material is by taking advantage of the various Online Tools for Language Teaching (OTLT). OTLT, in this online learning condition, should be utilized instead of physical classrooms. OTLT can be benefited as learning media or learning sources, according to the teacher considerations, and then stated in the online teaching materials. It can be in various categories. According to Son (2011), based on the main function and features, OTLT is classified into twelve categories as seen in the figures below.

Figure: 1 Categories of online tools for language teaching (Son, 2011)



However, due to the number and sophistication of accessible online tools, it is sometimes difficult to create materials that are suitable for a particular purpose in the teaching and learning process (Son, 2011). Coupled with the current conditions where teachers must also consider that online learning is full from home and in a state of health

crisis. Hockly & Dudeney (2017) explained that as online tools become more widespread, teachers are also must take this trend into account and incorporate them in order to be relevant to teachers' needs and learners' expectations. These things require teachers to be able to really consider which OTLT will be used and inputted into the teaching materials.

On the other hand, no one is prepared in advance to face this sudden mandatory study from a home condition due to the health crisis. Many teachers enhance their teaching skills and procedures, but they do not have ideal online teaching materials produced as expert concepts (Azimi, 2020). Unfortunately, they have to quickly answer this challenge because the learning process must continue to run optimally. As a result, many teachers find it challenging to consider and develop online teaching materials content according to what is suggested by experts. Additionally, many teachers claim to have received training on ICT-based teaching and online teaching (Lie, Tamah, Gozali, Triwidayati, Utami, & Jemadi, 2020). However, obstacles in teacher skills in ICT-based teaching and online teaching remain one of crucial obstacles in the current implementation of online learning from home (Lie, Tamah, Gozali, Triwidayati, Utami, & Jemadi, 2020).

Some study has been undertaken on online teaching materials. Li (2017) investigates the use of social media for English language teaching and learning in the context of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreak. This study looked into how teachers use social media to facilitate online teaching and learning. Furthermore, Sabelina and Tiarina (2021) analyzed students' perspectives of English learning material while participating in online learning in Indonesia. According to the findings of the study, students are apathetic toward the learning content provided by the teacher during online learning. They also stated that the teaching materials in online classrooms were more difficult to grasp than the teaching materials in a real class. Azimi (2020) observed that teaching materials are the most evolving aspect of the online teaching-learning process. Nonetheless, these alterations take place in a panicked manner. Lastly, Mahmoudi and Ozkan (2015) compared the relationship in producing instructional materials between experienced and novice teachers. The findings revealed that experienced teachers are more likely to engage in cross-subject conversations while preparing teaching materials. In contrast, novice teachers typically do minimal literature study and minimal discussion while preparing teaching materials.

There seems to be a little study on the factors that teachers consider when developing teaching materials for online classrooms. As a result, this research is extremely beneficial in determining the teacher's considerations while developing online teaching materials. The objective of this article is to discover what factors teachers consider while developing online teaching materials in a health crisis condition. The goal is that if in the future this situation happens, teachers will not despair since the outcomes of this study may be used as a fundamental framework for teachers to develop online teaching materials that can entice students. With the research question "In what extent considerations do the teachers take into when developing their teaching materials amid the COVID-19 pandemic?" the study conducted.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Teaching materials are technical and exercise elements that are systematically designed, have goals and objectives which have been decided in the lesson plan, and

successfully utilized as a facilitator in the teaching and learning process for language practices (Brown, 1995; Tomlinson, 1998; Richards, 2001; McGrath, 2002; Sundayana, 2016). Therewith, most language teaching and learning processes rely on teaching materials (Richards, 2001; Lengkanawati, Setyarini, Sari, & Moecharam, 2015), particularly in online learning, where teaching materials play an important role in encouraging students to understand the material (Azimi, 2020; Adyaman, 2002).

The principles of online teaching materials must be examined to assure that the teaching materials are in compliance with what experts propose. There are several principles in teaching materials according to Tomlinson (1998) and Crowford (2002). First, achieve impact by requiring and facilitating learner self-investment. The desired impact is a situation in which students are driven to study by themselves. Second, it is facilitating the *delay* and *silent-period* process of learning. It is because in the teaching and learning process, the above-mentioned good impacts are generally delayed, and even a silent interval must be allowed immediately after the lesson is provided. It is because language learning is a progressive process rather than an immediate one. As a result, as part of the teaching-learning process, educational materials should gradually improve these circumstances. The following concept argues that instructional materials must depict language in its natural context. Acquiring a language entails learning life skills. As a result, instructional materials must depict language in social contexts. Fourth, teaching materials must assist students in developing self-confidence and encouraging learning autonomy.

The stuff learned must then be I + 1 in terms of content (Krashen, 1985, in Tomlinson 1998). It is mentioned that the letter I symbolizes what students have learnt and the letter "1" denotes information that is accessible for study. Krashen adds that each learner will only learn from new input if they are ready to learn. Following that, both Tomlinson and Coward demonstrate that teaching materials must take into account students' differing learning styles and affective attitudes. Not all students learn in the same way or have the same emotional attitude. Seventh, audio-visual media must be included in instructional materials. Lastly, the concept of teaching materials is completed by the premise that teaching materials must allow for result feedback.

After understanding what teaching materials are, including definitions and concepts, now consider how teaching materials are created. Language teaching materials development, according to experts, refers to a practical method of creating, evaluating, adapting, and utilizing resources to provide sources of language input and facilitate language learning and growth (Brown, 1995; Tomlinson, 1998; Tomlinson, 2012).

In the process of teaching materials development, there are several steps adapted from Tomlinson (1998) and Richards (2001). First, determine what students' requirements are or what issues must be met using the teaching materials that will be created. Identifying needs is the same as deciding on a method. These two activities are related since recognizing needs is the same as identifying prejudices, assumptions, and theoretical underpinnings regarding what is going on in the classroom, and this will result in an approach. The approach is a method for determining what and how students must learn (Brown, 1995). Secondly, Exploration of issues pertaining to student needs/problems that must be handled based on the findings of the preceding process's identification. This exploratory process may be

accomplished by examining what language, meaning, function, and abilities students require, as well as which issues must be handled. Third, convert the information in the teaching material into something contextual. Everything in the teaching material must be as precise as possible to what actually occurred in life. For example, the material utilized must be related to students' lives, and the activities that students must do must also be similar to students' lives. Fourth, integrate pedagogical aspects into teaching materials. It is possible to do this by determining the correct sequence of workouts and activities, beginning with the easiest and progressing to the most demanding. Furthermore, the pedagogical element that must be considered is the creation of appropriate instructions for usage. Fifth, pay close attention to the physical construction of teaching materials. Consideration must be given to layout, color, font type, font size, visual elements, reproduction, recording, and so on. Sixth, plan assessments that will lead to the achievement of the learning objectives. Finally, create teaching materials based on a predetermined lesson plan.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

This study used a qualitative case study with the help of interviews, with an emphasis on evaluating and interpreting recorded materials (Ary, Jacobs, & Sorensen, 2010, p.29). A qualitative case study is a more in-depth understanding and thorough examination of specific social phenomena in real life that allows the researcher to conduct a study with a limited number of respondents (Silverman, 2001, in Tavallaei & Talib, 2010, Kohlbacher, 2006, and Emilia, 2009). Amid the COVID-19, a qualitative case study was utilized to give a better understanding and thorough research on teachers' considerations in developing online teaching materials.

Three experienced senior high school English teachers who graduated from the English language education study program Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia and produced their own online teaching materials participated in this study. The qualifications for the term "experienced teacher" in this study are those who have been teaching for at least five years in the current school and have a teaching certificate from the ministry of education, culture, research, and higher education.

In this study, an interview method was employed to acquire data to answer the study question, "How do EFL teachers develop online teaching materials amid the COVID-19 pandemic?" The study's interview was conducted in the form of an individual and semi-structured interview. The data from the interviews were examined qualitatively in order to understand teachers' considerations in developing it. An Interactive Model by Miles, Hubberman, and Saldana (2014) utilized to analyze the data, which breaks the data analysis method into three phases: reducing data, presenting data, and drawing conclusions and interpreting.

The first step in data analysis is to minimize data after it has been collected. This refers to the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and changing data from notes or transcripts (Miles and Huberman, 1994). The data is then presented in the second phase. The phase of displaying data is defined by Miles and Huberman (1994) as "a collection of compressed information that enables drawing conclusions and actions." In this study, the outcomes of interviews were categorized and evaluated in order to get unambiguous data findings. The final phase in Miles and Huberman's (1994) interactive model is to make

conclusions. In this study, the results were drawn by correlating and matching findings to provide a description of how teachers develop online teaching materials and the factors they consider while doing so. After the interview was finished, then the interview report (coded and reduced) is shown in the table below to address the study question, namely, what aspects do teachers take into account while developing their teaching materials.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

After the data found was reduced and coded, then the data was displayed thru the table recap (see Appendix 1). The data described in this study is bases on the principle of teaching materials proposed by Tomlinson (1998) and Crowford (2002).

First, experts stated that teaching materials must achieve impact by requiring and facilitating learner self-investment. It means that teachers have to consider how to facilitate learner self-investment practically. From the interview gained that no participant takes this principle into account when developing teaching materials in the pandemic circumstance. The reason why they all do not try to do this in their teaching materials is also the same, which is because of the limited allocation of learning time. The time allocation given is enough to make the teacher focus more on achieving the learning objectives. So they do not take this point as a matter. Below is the excerpt of the three participants.

Excerpt 1. Participant 1

“In online learning, what I prioritize more is the harmony between the material achievement and the enjoyment of the students themselves when undergoing online learning. It is because, after more than 1 year of online learning, student enjoyment is a thing. They just stare at the screen, don't physically communicate with the teacher and their friends, but they are a human.”

Excerpt 2. Participant 2

“no.. the problem is, students rarely want to be on standby in whatsapp groups during school time. So I just focus on working on that. And if that happens, I will try to take advantage of the duration of the students' focus on how to achieve the learning objectives of the day.”

Excerpt 3. Participant 3

“It doesn't get there (by consciously developing students' personal abilities). More focus on finding ways so that students are motivated to follow learning with discipline even though they are learning from home. Because, especially, if the learning is via WhatsApp Group, many students like to get lost. So I just focus on taking care of the students.”

According to these findings, a highlight can be drawn. In the pandemic of online schooling, taking into account ways to achieve impact by facilitating learner self-investment is no more considered important than making students enjoy and motivated to participate in the teaching-learning process, as well as the achievement of learning objectives. Amiruddin et al. (2020) agree that students' mindsets and motivation in learning are decreasing during the COVID-19 circumstance and this situation impacted difficulty to teachers in the teaching and learning process. Additionally, Amiruddin & Jannah (2021) make it clear that online learning creates some inspiring moments, some angry moments, some fun moments, and

some frustrating moments which swinging quickly. So, making students enjoy and motivated during the teaching-learning process is more important in this crisis.

The following concept of teaching materials is that the teaching and learning process needs a delay and silent period. This process happened immediately after the instruction was given. It is because language learning is a progressive process rather than an immediate one. As a result, as part of the teaching-learning process, teaching materials should gradually improve these circumstances. The data found in the study is that only participant 1 and participant 2 whose consider this matter when developing online teaching materials amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Their arguments are varying although in essence they always consider the delay and silent period when developing teaching materials in this online learning period.

Excerpt 4. Participant 1

“Practically, in online learning, not all students are ready to study like at the normal school hours before the pandemic. For example, someone who is sick, but still following the class. In this kind of condition, it's impossible for us, teachers, to push these students to follow our teaching pace at that time. So there must always be extra time for students to make sure they understand.”

Excerpt 5. Participant 2

“Definitely! The problem is that in online learning, the teacher doesn't always explain the material and give examples physically. So it's sure that students need a little longer time than in offline learning to understand the teacher's explanation via written text. What's more for students who really have to be taught physically and now just stare at the cellphone screen. Theoretically they need a longer silent period than students with other learning methods. So during this online learning, I always take a long pause between activities. That's why during this BDR the material provided can only be done little by little. It's different from learning directly at school like before Covid condition.”

This finding is also in accordance to Hermansyah & Aridah (2021) and Sugianto & Ulfah (2020) that one of the things that hinder the online teaching and learning process is the quality of internet access which is often limited in remote areas. This causes a longer silent-period than the silent-period in the face-to-face classroom.

In contrast to the two participants above, participant number 3 actually feels that the delay and silent-period is something that is disturbing and cannot be justified. According to participant 3, delay and silent-period are a response where students do not understand the material being taught so students must ask for a re-explanation from the teacher. The excerpt regarding this idea can be seen in the excerpt box number 6 below.

Excerpt 6. Participant 3

“Usually, I immediately called their names, so as not to be silent for long. If they are being silent because they don't quite understand the materials yet, they just need to say it or interrupt, so the teacher will help and re-explain the materials. It's also happened when we're using Zoom Meeting, they also respond like that; if being asked, they stay silent for a few seconds, don't answer right away. They are supposed to just say "Mam, I don't understand yet". Of course, the teacher feels responsible for repeating the explanation until the students understand.”

From these findings, it can be concluded that the majority of teachers consider delay and silent-period as important in their teaching materials used amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. After that, there is “teaching materials must utilize authentic language” principle. Experts explained that acquiring a language entail learning life skill. As a result, teaching materials must depict language in social contexts. Unfortunately, 2 out of 3 participants argue that this is not a matter in the pandemic schooling. Their two arguments are look alike, that they prefer to put much more vocabularies in the teaching materials whose purpose is to enrich students' vocabulary.

Next, there is another principle in developing teaching materials, which is teaching materials must help students to develop self-confidence and encourage learning autonomy. This time, 2 out of 3 participants (see excerpt 7 and 8) took this principle into account when developing their teaching materials in the midst of pandemic schooling. The point they raised about learner autonomy is that in this online schooling, students can be facilitated by the teaching materials to be studied anytime, anywhere, with or without the assistance of the teacher. This result is the same as the results of research conducted by Pustika (2020), that 75% of her respondents believe that by learning virtually; they can access the learning material from anywhere at any time. This flexibility is also in line with Sadeghi (2019), Cakrawati (2017), and Sukmawati, et al. (2020). According to those experts, e-learning is flexible since it offers students with information that may be accessed anywhere and at any time. This flexibility really supports students to become confident autonomous learners.

Excerpt 7. Participant 2

“Yes, but it focuses more on learning autonomy. The problem is that not all students are on standby during class hours. There are network problems, they have to help their parents, and so on. So in this teaching material I complete my explanations and slots for them to do the task. So whenever they want to do it or redo the work, they would access the online module.”

Excerpt 8. Participant 3

“Yes (considering increasing self-confidence through learner autonomy). So in every learning, students can independently do the tasks in this teaching material.”

Meanwhile, participant number 1 felt that online teaching materials were not being a trigger for learning autonomy. However, according to participant number 1, teaching materials can be an encouragement for students to enjoy online learning. If enjoyment is felt continuously, learning autonomy will occur by itself. Below is the full quote.

Excerpt 9. Participant 1

“Regarding learning autonomy, I actually not consider this to be impacted by my materials. However, what I consider is that I really want my students to enjoy learning. One of the things that make students enjoy participating in online learning is a flexible learning media. That's why I chose padlets. So wherever students are, even though they have a poor internet connection, students can still follow the activities well and can be real-time. Then in this padlet, it can be a kind of field note as well as for students. So whenever they need the note, they just need to export it. So we really just need to give instructions, then students can do their activities there, even in real-time. Related to this real time, all students have the same opportunity to uplift their self-confidence by doing assignments and exercises facilitated in the padlet. So all students have the same opportunity there.”

The core result of research on this principle is that the majority of participants think about how to develop students' self-confidence and trigger students to become autonomous learners.

Afterward, there is a principle regarding the freshness of the input in the teaching materials. The content learned must then be I + 1 (Krashen, 1985, in Tomlinson 1998). It is mentioned that the letter I symbolizes what students have learnt and the letter "1" denotes information that is accessible for study. Krashen adds that each learner will only learn from new input if they are ready to learn. Regarding this principle, the study found that all of the participants considering it when developing teaching materials at this time. Here are the agree-statements of the participants.

Excerpt 10. Participant 1

“As for the material, it's not that great. Back again because the syllabus and lesson plans have been made and implemented for almost 1 year, so it can't suddenly deviate. At the very least, if there is information that can be related to the current pandemic condition, I will definitely link it as much as possible. That is to increase student awareness regarding this pandemic condition which is new and fresh for everyone.”

“Give any feedback via voice-note whatsapp group or comment on the padlet.”

Excerpt 11. Participant 2

“Yes. So for example in the report text material, I always include unique facts or things that are new to students.”

Excerpt 12. Participant 3

“Yes, the goal is to broaden students' knowledge. For example, now that online learning is like this because of the COVID-19 pandemic, I'm more likely to include content about health, clean living, etc. into my teaching materials.”

The point of these findings is that considering to add fresh/new input to the teaching materials used in the pandemic schooling is really matters.

Following that, both Tomlinson and Coward demonstrate that teaching materials must take into account students' differing learning styles and affective attitudes. Not all students learn in the same way or have the same emotional attitude. Again, all participants think this is important. So, that, they all consider this when they develop teaching materials in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Boxes below contained the participants' statements.

Excerpt 13. Participant 1

“In this online learning, the provision of material is rather minimal. Because it is more sensitive to obstacles, the most common one is connection trouble. Additionally, for students whose learning method is lectured, it must be a little difficult to follow the online learning materials. So I use padlet and are assisted by the Voice-note menu in the WhatsApp group, students are still triggered to work on assignments in real-time, but students who need to repeat the material several times can be given additional time after being given comments through the WhatsApp group voice-note or commenting on the padlet itself.”

“I often attach related pictures and videos in my teaching materials to help different kinds of student learning styles to learn.”

Excerpt 14. Participant 2

“for students who really have to be taught physically, and now just stare at the cellphone screen. Theoretically they need a longer silent period than students with other learning methods. So during this online learning, I always take a long pause between activities.”

Excerpt 15. Participant 3

“Of course. As teachers, we must be aware that students are different, as well as their styles and ways of learning. So as teachers we must try as much as we can to facilitate it. Coupled with the online learning system as it is today. Many students are a bit slow in receiving the material because they find it difficult if they are only given reading material. That's why I made this teaching material, also included video material, often gave explanations via Voice Note too. So the hope is that all student learning styles and ways are well facilitated even though online learning is like this.”

Amiruddin & Jannah (2021) in their research result also supports this finding. They explain that online learning is not yet ready to facilitate dialogue and interaction in the same way that a face-to-face class does. To accommodate the various types and attitudes, academics should provide simple, clear, and relevant instructions on what to accomplish, how to do it, and where students should submit their work.

Seventh, experts mentioned that teaching materials must contain audio-visual media. Then it is realized by society. All three of the participants really consider and put any audio-visual media in the teaching materials. Their goals are also broadly the same, namely to increase student motivation. Here is they are.

Excerpt 16. Participant 1

“Obviously! One of the reasons is to attract students' interest and motivation to keep focus to study in this online learning. For example, in this teaching material, even though there is a reading skill, I still include a picture to make it easier for students to understand the content. I also often send related videos to WhatsApp groups to help different kinds of student learning styles to learn.”

Excerpt 17. Participant 2

“That's on purpose (colorful). So even though the shapes are mostly just boxes, at least they have different colors so they don't get boring in the eyes. Also, it is to sign that each box has different content.”

Excerpt 18. Participant 3

“Oh yes. But it's not much like for elementary and middle school children. The goal is to help make it easier for students to understand the material better, so pictures are also the most illustrative of the text.”

This result is in accordance with Sugianto and Ulfah's (2020) research result which showed that the enthusiasm of the students increased with the use of YouTube media and WhatsApp voice notes during online learning. These media succeeded in increasing students'

enthusiasm for online learning because they met the audio and visual needs of students for learning media.

Going to the last principle, reads that there must be chances for the students to result feedback in the teaching materials. On this principle, in fact, all participants stated that none of them felt this principle was an important input in their teaching materials. Here is their statement.

Excerpt 19. Participant 1

“Nope. For feedback from students, I usually ask for it at the end of every semester. So it's kind of for learning evaluation.”

Excerpt 20. Participant 2

“during BDR, no.. have no enough time hahaha. At least if I have time left, I just gave a youtube video. But it's very rare to have time left in BDR. More often than not, the assignments submission finish late that night.”

Excerpt 21. Participant 3

“No, because even if students have been asked to provide input/suggestions, they are rarely give feedback.”

All data found through interviews have been displayed and discussed as written above.

5. CONCLUSION

The pandemic that is present in Indonesia has changed many things in various aspects. One of which is a change in the place and system for the implementation of 'schools'. After the government issued a regulation for students to study from home, teachers started looking here and there to facilitate online learning amid this health crisis. There are so many online tools for language teaching (OTLT) that can be benefited. However, due to the sudden state of crisis, none of the teachers had prepared for this transformation of the 'school'. What's more to be able to develop teaching materials in accordance with expert directions. However, amid the flood of OTLT that can be used, a question arises, what are the teacher's considerations in developing teaching materials amid this schooling pandemic?

Based on the results and explanations of the research, it can be concluded that there are 3 of the 8 principles of teaching materials that have turned out to be a consideration for teachers in developing teaching materials, especially amid the current COVID-19 pandemic. The three considerations are incorporating fresh information into teaching materials, facilitating student learning styles and attitudes, and incorporating audio-visual media into teaching materials. On the other hand, of the eight existing principles, 2 principles are really not being considered for teachers in developing teaching materials. the two principles are achieved impact by requiring and facilitating learner self-investment and also providing opportunities to students, and relatives to give feedback regarding the teaching materials.

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APPENDIX

Indicator of principles of teaching materials adopted from Tomlinson (1998) and Crowford (2002)

No	Principle of teaching materials	P1	P2	P3
1.	Achieve impact by requiring and facilitating learner self-investment.	-	-	-
2.	Facilitating the <i>delay</i> and <i>silent-period</i> process of learning.	V	V	-
3.	Present language in authentic use.	-	V	-
4.	Help students to develop self-confidence and encourage learning autonomy.	-	V	V
5.	Giving the students <i>fresh</i> input.	V	V	V
6.	Facilitating students learning style and attitudes.	V	V	V
7.	Contain audio-visual media.	V	V	V
8.	Provide opportunities to give feedback.	-	-	-