A Proposed Model for Student Engagement and Standards-based Education

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Abstract

Many researchers have addressed the importance of standards-based education; however, fewer studies have focused on the concept of student engagement as an essential component related to better education based on specific standards. To make education standards-based, we should engage our students to help them meet or exceed the standards or achieve the Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs). This article covers a brief review of student engagement, its common models in literature, and its different types (behavioral, emotional, and cognitive). It also discusses measurement of student engagement, its relationship to learning outcomes, and some strategies for improving it. We also proposed a model for standards-based education via integrating some strategies that improve student engagement types. It also gives some recommendations for students, teachers, and stakeholders on how to enhance student engagement based on the proposed model.

Keywords: standards-based education, student engagement, behavioral engagement, emotional engagement, cognitive engagement, learning outcomes.

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Introduction

Educational institutions have recently done their best to deliver standards-based education. In education, standards means what students should know and be able to do in each school subject. When education becomes standards-based, students show great mastery of the intended learning outcomes. However, how can education becomes standards-based without engaging students fully in the educational process? To ensure standards-based education, however, teachers, faculty, and stakeholders should work hard to engage students in the learning environment. In brief, student engagement supports meeting or exceeding the standards and consequently achieving standards-based education. In the context of the current article, student engagement is the focus via employing some strategies that help engage students and achieve standards-based education. In the next few sections, we addressed some definitions of student engagement, some common models, types and indicators, measurement, relationship to learning outcomes, some strategies for improvement, the proposed model of student engagement and

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standards-based education, and some recommendations based on the proposed model.

Definitions of Student Engagement

Finn and Zimmer (2012) stated, "student engagement was conceptualized in the 1980s as a way to understand and reduce student boredom, alienation, and dropping out" (p. 99). Thus, researchers have proposed many definitions for student engagement. It is "student's psychological investment in and effort directed toward learning, understanding, or mastering the knowledge, skills, or crafts that academic work is intended to promote" (Newmann, 1992, p.12). Appleton, Christenson, Kim, and Reschly (2006) defined it as the active participation of students in educational tasks that enhances learning outcomes. Jones (2009) also defined it as the extent to which students are motivated, committed to learning, initiative, and communicative with their peers. Harper and Quaye (2009) added that student engagement is the students' active participation in the educational practices whether inside or outside the classroom. These practices result in measurable learning outcomes. Axelson and Flick (2011) noted that student engagement is the effective behaviors of learners in implementing the academic tasks. According to Walker (2011), it refers to the effective use of the cognitive and metacognitive strategies required for learning. In addition, Zepke (2013) indicated that student engagement is the effective partnership between professors and students in higher education institutions. This partnership achieves quality of learning.

It can be noted from the previous definitions that student engagement involves important learning behaviors such as commitment, motivation, participation, partnership and so on. It also involves some affective components such as partnership that achieves better cooperation in learning situations. Finally, it involves some cognitive and metacognitive strategies such as planning and monitoring comprehension.

Models of Student Engagement

Since the 1980s, various researchers have proposed some models of student engagement. In the next section, we describe briefly some of the most common models as follows:

1.   The participation-identification model (Finn, 1989):

According to Voelkl (2012), Finn proposed one of the earliest models of student engagement in 1989 as shown in Figure 1:
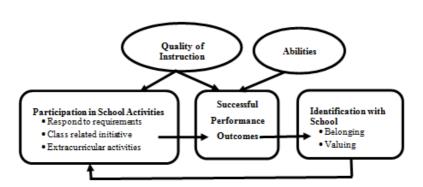
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Figure 1. Participation-identification model   adapted from Finn and Zimmer (2012, p. 101)

This model includes two components: participation and identification. Participation refers to behaviors that help students engage in learning activities and consequently completing the academic tasks. Identification refers to students' attitudes towards school especially belongingness and valuing. Thus, it includes the

behavioral (participation) and emotional (identification) components of student engagement. This model asserts the role of participation in supporting successful performance and positive attitudes towards school such as sense of belonging and valuing. These positive attitudes leads back to more participation in class and school activities.

2. *The four components model (Appleton et al. 2006):*

In 2006, Appleton et al. proposed the four components model of student engagement, namely, academic, behavioral, psychological, and cognitive components. This model confirms the role of contextual factors in student engagement such as family, peers, and schools. Families support learners academically and motivationally. Peers help one another through cooperation in school projects and shared values. Schools help learners via providing supportive learning environment, enrichment activities, and mental health programs. Thus, these contextual factors helps students engage actively in the learning environment and therefore achieve the academic, social, and affective learning outcomes.

3. *The basic model (M. A. Lawson & Lawson, 2013):*

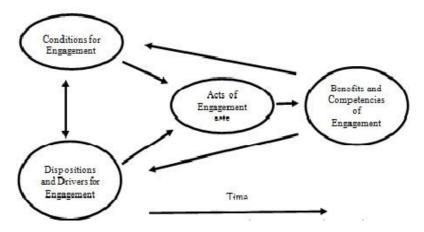In 2013, M. A. Lawson and Lawson proposed the basic model of student engagement as shown in Figure 2:

Figure 2. The basic model   adapted from M. A. Lawson and Lawson (2013, p. 443)

This model involves four main components, namely, conditions, dispositions, acts, and benefits of student engagement. Conditions and dispositions for engagement refer to the various factors such as school climate that affect students' actions for engagement. Acts of engagement refer to the various learning behaviors resulting from being engaged in the learning environment. Benefits of engagement refer to the effects of engagement on learning outcomes. To sum up, the three above models of student engagement share the same fact that is achieving better learning outcomes.

Types and Indicators of Student Engagement

Although researchers have proposed different definitions for student engagement, many of them agree that it is a multidimensional construct (Arballo, 2011; Darensbourg, 2011; Fischer, 2010; Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004; Mansour, 2015; Martin, 2012; Shernoff, 2013; Wolters & Taylor, 2012). The most common types of student engagement are the behavioral, emotional, and cognitive types.

According to Pannozzo (2005), behavioral engagement refers to students' active participation in academic and social activities. Mccormick and Plucker (2013) defined it as the observable activities of students such as attendance, participation, and punctual assignment completion. The indicators of behavioral engagement include all effective learning behaviors such as persistence, efforts in class activities, commitment, participation in class and school activities, assignment completion, and instructions following.

Emotional engagement is related to the affective aspects of the learning environment. Appleton et al. (2006) view emotional engagement as students' sense of belonging and good relationships with peers and professors. According to Videen (2009), it refers to students' sense of identification and mutual respect between students and professors. Uden, Ritzen, and Pieters (2013) noted that indicators of emotional engagement include sense of belonging, safety, enjoyment, and respect within the university context. In brief, emotional engagement focuses essentially on the relationships among students on the one hand, and between students and their teachers or professors on the other.

Walker, Greene, and Mansell (2006) defined cognitive engagement as

the information processing strategies employed by students in completing academic tasks. According to Barnett (2012), it is the cognitive and metacognitive strategies such as rehearsal, elaboration, note taking, and organization of information. Lovelace, Reschly, Appleton, and Lutz (2014) stated that indicators of cognitive engagement include doing more than what is required, doing challenging tasks, managing distractors, and questioning of content.

Measuring Student Engagement

As a multidimensional construct, some researchers have proposed various measurement efforts in the educational and psychological literature. Some of these efforts have focused on measuring specific types of student engagement (Appleton et al., 2006), while others have constructed instruments for the most three common types: behavioral, emotional, and cognitive (Carle, Jaffe, Vaughan, & Eder, 2009). Other studies have measured it in a specific school course (Handelsman, Briggswa, Sullivan, & Towler, 2005). In the age of modern technology and wide spread of online courses, some researchers have tried to construct measurement instruments for online course engagement (Coates, 2006). In addition, many foreign universities administer the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) every year. The results of this survey are regarded as indicators of student engagement in the learning environment and therefore the quality of learning outcomes. Generally speaking, measuring student engagement is one of the most necessary practices that should be done by educational institutions as an indicator for delivering the intended learning outcomes or standards-based education.

Student Engagement and Learning Outcomes

Researchers and educators have emphasized the effective contribution of student engagement in achieving better learning outcomes and therefore standards-based education. For instance, Carini, Kuh, and Klein (2004, April) surveyed 1058 university students and confirmed the linkage between their engagement and learning outcomes. Similarly, Coates (2005) indicated that student engagement is essentially related to the quality of learning outcomes. In addition, Furlong and Christenson (2008) illustrated that the importance of student engagement lies in its contributions in the educational reform initiatives. Additionally, Sbrocco (2009) noted that

increasing student engagement resulted in increasing learning outcomes. It also resulted in helping students be productive members in their communities. Metzger (2011) emphasized the role of student engagement in the academic achievement of adolescents. Additionally, Hu and Wolniak (2013) noted that student engagement is an integral part in standards-based education. It also affects the intended learning outcomes. In his study in the United States, Lee (2014) surveyed 3268 middle school students and found that student engagement and learning outcomes were highly correlated, especially in reading. Hospel and Galand (2016) indicated the importance of student engagement in achieving better learning.

We can note from the above-mentioned results of studies conducted to investigate the linkage between student engagement and learning outcomes that engaged students do their best via exerting much effort to better complete the assigned academic tasks. They try to participate actively in all school activities and be involved in the cognitive strategies required for learning. Generally speaking, student engagement is indispensable for achieving better learning outcomes and consequently achieving standards-based education.

Strategies for Improving Student Engagement

Student engagement, as noted, is an important component for delivering better learning outcomes and standards-based education. Thus, researchers have proposed various strategies for improving it. Zepke and Leach (2010) proposed 10 strategies for improving student engagement as follows:

1.   Enhance students' self-belief
When students have high self-beliefs on their abilities, they adopt learning goals, see challenges as opportunities for learning, and therefore try hard to engage themselves in the learning task.

2.   Enable students to work autonomously and enjoy learning relationships with others
Helping students learn independently makes them be self-confident and consequently highly engaged in learning activities. Similarly, when students enjoy learning relationships with one another, they become emotionally engaged and therefore do their best for better understanding and learning.

3. Recognize that teaching and teachers are central to student engagement

Teachers have an effective role in engaging their students so they should adopt teaching strategies that engage students such as supporting challenging learning tasks, activating office hours for effective discussions with students, and demanding high standards for learning. Weaver and Wilding (2013) added that teachers play an effective role in engaging students via reducing their stress, building a positive emotional environment, and providing learning tasks that employ higher levels of cognition.

4. Create learning that is active, collaborative and fosters learning relationships

During lesson or lecture planning, teachers should make the learning atmosphere warm. It should call for active learning and positive relationships among peers. This makes students love the learning environment that in turn helps them be emotionally engaged learners.

5. Create educational experiences for students that are challenging, enriching, and extend their academic abilities

Similarly, teachers should create enriching educational experiences, challenging learning tasks, activities, and workshops that improve students' academic abilities. If students feel that their academic abilities are improved, they will be more engaged in the learning environment.

6. Ensure institutional cultures are welcoming to students from diverse backgrounds

Students enroll in schools or college from diverse backgrounds. The successful educational institution should provide a welcoming atmosphere for all students regardless of their backgrounds whether rural or urban.

7. Invest in a variety of support services

Educational institution should have supportive learning environments or provide various services required for better learning. Some of these services include academic, counselling, and healthy support.

8. Adapt to change student expectations

Educational institutions should regularly revise their policy and regulations to make sure they meet students' expectations.

Stakeholders should consider students' feedbacks and change educational polices accordingly simply because students are main partners in the learning environment. When students feel that the school or college meet their expectations, they do their best to meet or exceed the standards.

9.   *Enable students to become active citizens*
One of the most important objectives of education is to prepare an active citizen who helps in the progress of society. This happens if courses are related to or focus on the needs of these societies. When students study courses related to requirements of societies, they help solve the problem encountered and consequently be active citizens.

10.   *Enable students to develop their social and cultural capital*
One of the major objectives of schools or colleges is to help students develop their social and cultural capital required for engagement such as communication skills and.

   Tanner (2013) added some strategies that help engage students in learning. Some of these strategies include allowing students to write reflectively, monitoring their participation, using active learning strategies, collecting assessment evidences, and giving feedbacks. These practices are essential for creating engaging learning environment.

The Proposed Model of Student Engagement and Standards-based Education

   One of the main aims of this article is to provide a greater insight in terms of the relationship between student engagement and standards-based education via a proposed model based on the importance of student engagement and the strategies discussed earlier. The proposed model includes three strategies for improving each type of student engagement. Improving the types of student engagement results in increasing students' academic efforts for meeting or exceeding the standards and therefore achieving standards-based education.
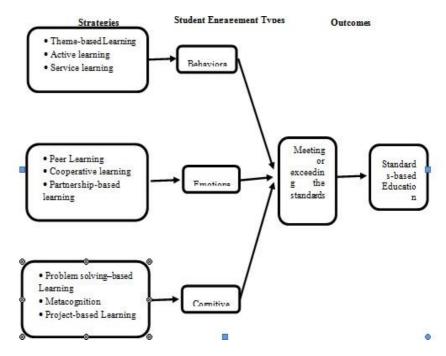
The proposed model is shown in Figure 3:

Figure 3. The proposed model of student engagement and standards-based education

As shown in Figure 3, these strategies include:

1. Theme-based Learning
In theme-based learning communities, students have opportunities to choose among available academic tasks based on their vocational preference. This strategy integrates the academic content with the vocational implications available (National Research Council, 2003). This strategy improves students' ability to attend and follow instructions and hence improving their behavioral engagement.

2. Active Learning
Active learning is exerting much effort in learning situations or activities. It depends essentially on learners' active roles in learning. Barkley (2010) indicted that active learning is not only dividing students into small groups but also participating actively to finish the

learning task and achieve better learning outcomes. Thus, it contributes much in improving behavioral engagement of students.

3. Service Learning

Service learning develop students' experiences as well as their academic and social competencies. It focuses on linking the academic programs with students' interests in their societies (National Research Council, 2003). This makes students feel that what they study is related to their real life. Thus, they try to involve themselves much in service learning programs and be more engaged in the learning environment

4. Peer Learning

Peer learning involves sharing knowledge and skills among peers. Peer tutoring is a special case of peer learning where senior students help juniors in their learning tasks and assignments. Peer learning makes students respect and appreciate the efforts of one another, which in turn makes them feel belongingness and consequently improving their emotional engagement.

5. Cooperative Learning

Like peer learning, cooperative learning supports effective communication among students, which helps students feel belongingness and mutual respect and increases their emotional engagement. Based on the results of his study among ninth graders, Young (2011) indicated that cooperative learning improves emotional engagement of students.

6. Partnership-based Learning

In partnership-based learning, teachers activate students' role in learning and make them real partners in the educational process as a whole. Students participate in setting learning objectives, selecting the target content, and determining the assessment methods. This makes them feel more confident and appreciated. They also feel that their interests are taken into consideration and their expectations are met. This increases students' attitudes towards the learning environment and improves their emotional engagement accordingly.

7. Problem Solving-based Learning

In problem-based learning, teachers make the learning situation as a problem that requires solution based on logical and scientific steps. Teachers serve as facilitators and guide students towards the solution

of the problem. On the other hand, students think and reflect in the learning situation, which improves their cognitive engagement.

8. *Metacognition*

In recent years, researchers have addressed metacognition in many educational contexts. Metacognition means knowledge about knowledge. It includes two main components: knowledge about cognition and regulation of cognition. In learning situations, students should employ their metacognitive awareness in order to fully understand the assigned academic task. If students efficiently employ their metacognitive awareness, they monitor their academic progress, which results in increasing their cognitive engagement.

9. *Project-based Learning*

In project-based learning, teachers try to make the learning situation as an academic challenge or a project that should be accomplished based on the learners' critical thinking and decision-making skills. Students try hard to understand the basic elements of the academic challenge or the project. These skills improve cognitive engagement of students.

The proposed model included some strategies that improves each types of student engagement. After students become behaviorally, emotionally, and cognitively engaged, they do their best to meet or exceed the standards, which in turn results in achieving standards-based education.

Recommendations for Students, Teachers, and Stakeholders

Based on the proposed model of student engagement and standards-based education, there are some recommendations for students, teachers, and stakeholders as follows:

1. Students should do their best to actively engage themselves in the learning environment.

2. Students should provide teachers and stakeholders with their objective feedback on how much they are engaged learners.

3. Teachers should help students participate effectively in learning tasks and activities via adopting theme-based learning, active learning, and service learning strategies.

4. Teachers should help students respect one another and exchange opinions for mutual benefit. This improves students' emotional engagement.

5. Teachers should make the learning atmosphere warm and lovely to help students enjoy the learning environment and consequently be emotionally engaged. This can happen via adopting peer learning, cooperative learning, and partnership-based learning strategies.

6. Teachers should help students be deeper and reflective thinkers in the learning environment to improve their cognitive engagement. This can happen via adopting problem-based learning, metacognition, and reflection strategies. They should make their teaching engaging or adopt Engagement-based Learning and Teaching (EBLT) approach.

7. Stakeholders should regularly measure student engagement since it is a key factor in achieving standards-based education.

8. Based on the results of this measurement, they change the educational and institutional policies to provide more opportunities for engaging students behaviorally, emotionally, and cognitively.

9. Stakeholders should provide students and teachers with all support services that increase their engagement.

10. Stakeholders should help students and teachers be more engaged for achieving standards-based education.

Conclusion

In the scope of this article, we addressed an important educational concept that is student engagement. In details, we discussed definitions of student engagement as well as its models, types, relationship to learning outcomes, improvement strategies. We also proposed a model that linked student engagement and standards-based education. The proposed model was illustrated graphically to facilitate its understanding and interpretation. The proposed model will enrich the educational and psychological literature in the areas of student engagement and standards-based education especially in the Arab Community. For instance, quality assurance units can make use of the model in increasing student engagement. In addition, measurement centers can employ this model to conduct research on measuring standards-based education. Based on the proposed model, we presented some recommendations for teachers and faculty for improving student engagement and therefore delivering standards-based education. It will open new doors for research via conducting empirical research that focuses on achieving standards-based education. To sum up, teachers and stakeholders should work hard to improve student engagement to guarantee standards-based education.

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نموذج مقترح لاندماج الطلاب والتعليم المبنى على المعايير

د/ محمد عبدالهادى عبدالسميع	أ. د/ وليم م. بارت
مدرس علم النفس التربوى	أستاذ علم النفس التربوى
كلية التربية بقنا	كلية التربية والتنمية البشرية
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جمهورية مصر العربية	الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية

مستخلص

تناول عديد من الباحثين أهمية التعليم المبنى على المعايير، ومع ذلك ركزت دراسات قليلة على مفهوم اندماج الطلاب كمكوّن أساسى يرتبط بتعليم أفضل في ضوء معايير محددة، ولكى يصبح التعليم مبنياً على المعايير فيجب العمل على تحقيق اندماج الطلاب حتى يسهم ذلك في استيفاء المعايير الموضوعة أو التوصل إلى نواتج التعلم المستهدفة، ومن هذا المنطلق تعرض هذه الدراسة النظرية مراجعة مختصرة لمفهوم اندماج الطلاب ونماذجه الشائعة في الأدبيات البحثية، وكذلك أنماطه (السلوكى، الوجدانى، المعرفى). وتتناول أيضاً قياس اندماج الطلاب وعلاقته بنواتج التعلم وبعض استراتيجيات التدريس التي تسهم في تنميته. وتعرض أيضاً نموذجاً مقترحاً لاندماج الطلاب والتعليم المبنى على المعايير من خلال التكامل بين بعض الاستراتيجيات التي تسهم في تنمية أنماط اندماج الطلاب وبالتالي يتحقق التعليم المبنى على المعايير. كما تعرض في النهاية بعض التوصيات للطلاب والمعلمين ومتخذى القرار في السياسات التعليمية عن كيفية دعم اندماج الطلاب في ضوء النموذج المقترح.