Student Engagement in English Language Classes: An Evaluative Study

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Abstract

This study aimed at exploring the extent to which EFL learners get engaged in the English language classroom activities. Student engagement was assessed using a mixed method research design; quantitatively during a survey done by the students, and qualitatively through structured interviews with the teachers. The two tools (the survey and the structured interviews) were both designed by the researcher. The study involved 60 second-year preparatory EFL students enrolled at Tareq Ben Zyad Prep. School in Sohag City, Egypt and 20 EFL teachers working at three governmental public schools. Results on students' engagement obtained from both the survey and the analysis of the interview data showed that students suffer from sever disengagement in English language classroom activities. Based on these results, a number of recommendations and suggestions are provided.

Key words: Student engagement, English language classes, evaluation study.

Introduction

One crucial factor associated with students' poor language performance is their disengagement in classroom activities. Engagement is viewed in the literature as very important for enhanced learning outcomes of all students (Schlechty, 2001; Woolfolk & Margetts, 2007).

Without engagement, there is no deep learning (Hargreaves, 2006), effective teaching, meaningful outcome, real attainment or quality progress (Carpenter, 2010). Steinbrenner and Watson (2015) note that engagement relates to the quality of education and predicts children's later skills; they conclude that "measuring and understanding engagement is a necessary step in determining how to provide high quality,

effective services for students" (P. 2393). Student engagement is also considered as a prerequisite for acquiring knowledge and skills and is also a mediator of achievement and important life outcomes (Nicolás, 2018).

Alongside with communicative competence, engagement is instrumental in foreign language learning settings. It includes students' psychological investment in their own learning and personal learning strategies (Fredricks, Blumenfeld & Paris, 2004). Seal (2009) asserted that engagement is not simply about good classroom behaviour or attendance, but a connection with learning. Hattie (2009) pointed out that engagement is associated with a number of positive learning and life outcomes. Students

who are not engaged with their learning are likely to learn at a slower pace, leading to lower achievement.

The connection between student engagement, student learning and student wellbeing is strongly supported in research. The Catholic Education Office Melbourne (2009: 2) states that Student Wellbeing Strategy's main aim is "to promote an optimal learning environment to support student engagement and learning outcomes". Bond, Glover, Godfrey, Butler and Patton (2001) believe student wellbeing is enhanced by a focus on student engagement and connectedness to school – it is a "way to promote both emotional wellbeing and learning outcomes" (P. 381). Student wellbeing, student engagement and student learning are 'inextricably linked' (DEECD, 2009, 5). Goss, Sonnemann and Griffiths (2017) illustrated that when students are engaged in class, they learn more. It is vital that teachers create the right classroom climate for learning, raising student expectations, developing a rapport with students, establishing routines, challenging students to participate and take risks. These all affect how much their students engage and learn.

Although in recent years more and more research has focused on student engagement worldwide (Erbaggio, Gopalakrishnan, Hobbs & Liu, 2016; O'Donnell, Wallace, Melano, Lawson & Leinonen, 2015; Parsons & Taylor, 2011), no focus has been given to the engagement of students studying in the Egyptian EFL context, as far as the researcher knows. Information on the engagement and outcomes of students studying at the Egyptian schools can be used to better understand the status quo of engagement in the Egyptian context of EFL instruction. They can also help identify areas where improvements can be made and to celebrate students' successes.

This problem, students' disengagement, is most likely due to improper teaching practices that do very little to improve students' engagement. These traditional practices rarely leave chances for teachers to support or help students experience positive feelings toward learning in general and engagement in particular.

Problem statement

Based on the literature review outlined above as well as the researcher's observations as a supervisor of English language teaching in the Egyptian context, it is clear that students suffer from high levels of disengagement in language classes. This lack of interaction in foreign language classrooms in Egypt has been of central concern for researchers and educators alike. The researcher of the current study conducted an evaluative investigation on the Egyptian context to see whether empirical evidence support these observations and the conclusions of the literature review.

Question

This study tried to answer the following question: To what extent do preparatory second year EFL learners get engaged in the English language classroom activities?

Significance

The significance of the study stemmed from the following considerations:

- The study draws attention to the importance ofdeveloping a broader understanding of engagement as a process with several dimensions.

- It was concerned with a problem that haunts language learning settings both globally and locally: students' disengagement. When students are disengaged, their language attainment will be undoubtedly negatively affected.

- The current study could be used as a powerful tool by the teachers and academic supervisors to design instructional materials and effective pedagogical techniques to maximize the learning experiences of the students.

- The preparatory cycle is a crucial one being the last cycle of the basic education stage. Enhancing students' engagement level at this stage will undoubtedly affect their language standard in the subsequent stages.

Literature Review

Student engagement of its very nature is an elusive and complex notion. Researchers and educators have exhibited a growing interest in the concept of engagement as a way to improve disaffection, to avert student boredom, to enhance students' motivation and involvement in school-related activities, to increase successful student achievement levels, and to understand students' positive development (Appleton, et al., 2008;

Carter, et al., 2012; Fredricks et al., 2004; Li & Lerner, 2011; National Research Council & Institute of Medicine, 2004; Upadyaya & Salmela-Aro, 2013).

Generally speaking, student engagement is considered one of the important constructs that is used to understand the behavior of the student towards the teaching-learning process. Understanding the behavior of students in the academic institutions will provide a glimpse of how the instructions and academic practices are going on in the university. As such, it could be used as a powerful tool by the teachers and academic supervisors to design an effective pedagogical technique to maximize the learning experiences of the students (Delfino, 2019). In a same vein, Aker and Ellis (2019) assert that a lack of engagement indicates a mismatch between a learner's needs and the classroom environment.

Defining engagement

Student engagement is a far-reaching construct that can be variously defined. Skinner, Kindermann, Furrer (2009) pointed out that student engagement is the quality of students' participation or connection with the schooling endeavour and hence with activities, values, people, goals, and place that comprise it. Jonathan and Torres (2017) offer a possible definition-meaningful student involvement throughout the learning environment. Teachers, students and administrators understand and define student engagement as the behaviours exhibited by students such as compliance, willingness and

motivation to participate in the learning process (Research and Policy Recommendation Unit National Commission for Further and Higher Education).

Skinner and Pitzer (2012) define engagement as energy in action which creates a space where engagement is studied within the context of academic engagement (Finn & Zimmer, 2012) and classroom engagement (Skinner & Pitzer, 2012). Harper and Quaye (2009) describe student engagement as "participation in educationally effective practices, both inside and outside the classroom, which leads to a range of measurable outcomes" (p. 2). Bond et al. (2020) stated that "Student engagement is the energy and effort that students employ within their learning community, observable via any number of behavioural, cognitive or affective indicators across a continuum. It is shaped by a range of structural and internal influences, including the complex interplay of relationships, learning activities and the learning environment. The more students are engaged and empowered within their learning community, the more likely they are to channel that energy back into their learning, leading to a range of short- and long-term outcomes, that can likewise further fuel engagement".

Also, student engagement is seen as the degree and quality, to which learners are engaged with their educational activities, which are positively linked to a host of desired outcomes, including high grades, student satisfaction, and perseverance (Kuh, et al., 2008). Kuh (2003) pointed out that student engagement is the energy

and time a student devotes to educational sound activities outside and inside classrooms, and practices and policies that educational institutions use to encourage the student to participate in these activities. Others view student engagement as students' investment in and commitment to learning, belonging and identification at school, and participation in the institution environment and initiation of activities to achieve an outcome (Christenson, et al., 2008).

Despite their variations, some similar themes have been noted among the above-mentioned definitions. For example, the definitions proposed by Skinner, Kindermann, and Furrer (2009), Harper and Quaye (2009) and Research and Policy Recommendation Unit National Commission for Further and Higher Education emphasised students' participation and identification with school and school-related activities. The definitions by Kuh (2003), Bond et al. (2020), Skinner and Pitzer, (2012) and Finn and Zimmer, (2012) emphasised the energy and effort that students employ within their learning community. Finally, while a myriad of terms and definitions have been proffered, engagement is broadly a positive and proactive term that captures students' quality of participation, investment, commitment, and identification with school and school-related activities to enhance students' performance (Alrashidi et al., 2016).

Overall, Schaufeli et al. (2002) cited in Bowden (2019) reported that the most commonly accepted definition of student engagement is: A multi-aspect construct that includes effort,

resiliency, and persistence while facing obstacles (vigor), passion, inspiration, and pride in academic learning (dedication), and involvement in learning activities and tasks (absorption) as the main facets of this construct.

Dimensions of engagement

Student engagement is a multifaceted and complex construct (Appleton et al., 2008; Ben-Eliyahu et al., 2018). The multidimensional nature of student engagement is actually reflected in the research literature (Fredricks et al., 2004). As a result, there is ongoing disagreement about whether there are three components e.g., (Eccles, 2016; Hipkins, 2012) - affective/emotional, cognitive and behavioural - or whether there are four, with the recent suggested addition of social engagement (Fredricks, et al., 2016). Students may exhibit the four dimensions of engagement, namely behavioural, affective, social and cognitive simultaneously or in isolation (Bowden et al., 2019). The researcher attempts to address each of the dimensions of engagement in turn as follows:

Cognitive engagement

Cognitive engagement is the extent to which students' are able to take on the learning task. This includes the amount of effort students are willing to invest in working on the task (Sesmiyanti, 2016). Similarly, Chapman (2003) defined cognitive engagement as the extent to which students are taking interest (Pentaraki& Burkholder (2017), paying attention and spending mental effort in learning tasks by using cognitive

strategy and knowledge to complete a task. Furthermore, Sharanand Than (2008: 41) describe that cognitive engagement is related to motivational goals and self-regulated learning. It means that, how the students arrange their strategy in learning to get a good mark in English learning. Christenson et al. (2012: 161) proposed that students' cognitive engagement is related to active self-regulation and learning strategies that students adopt and employ during the learning process (Walker, et al., 2006). This type can be seen with investment in learning, flexible problem solving, independent work styles and so on.

There are four forms of cognitive engagement (Clarke, 2002: 133), a) Self-regulated learning- where students cognitive processing is driven by higher-order or metacognitive component; b) Task focus- where students use task-specific planning and self-monitoring, for task where information rather than acquisition is required; c) Resource management- which students garner help from external sources; d) Recipience- in which student respond passively with little mental investment, often to instruction which has short circuited their self-regulatory cognitive process.

Emotional Engagement

Flint and Millard (2018) state that many authors follow Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris' (2004) identification of the emotional engagement that encompasses positive and negative reactions to teachers, classmates, academic, and school and is presumed to create ties to an institution and influence willingness to do the work.

Hipkins (2012) describes emotional engagement as students' emotional responses to teachers, peers Appleton et al. (2008: p. 372), learning, and school. According to (Willms, 2003) positive emotional reactions to tasks or people can lead to students having a sense of belonging- feeling accepted, included, respected, and/or valued by people at school- (Pentaraki& Burkholder, 2017). Kahu (2014) assert that emotional engagement with its two key elements (interest and belonging) increased behavioural engagement with greater time and effort expended, and improved cognitive engagement in terms of depth and breadth of learning. In addition, Lee (2014) proposed that emotional engagement indirectly influences academic performance through behavioral engagement. Students are likely to make an effort and persevere in learning when they feel they belong to their schools and that learning is a valued activity at school.

Behavioral Engagement

According to Pentaraki and Burkholder (2017) behavioural engagement refers to student attendance and involvement in a course and includes negative behaviours, such as classroom misbehaviour (e.g., a student is posting aggressive comments or is rude towards his/her classmates). Lee (2014) assure that the term behavioral engagement usually encompasses a broad range of behaviors at school, from merely showing up to actively participating in academic or non-academic activities Appleton et al. (2008: 372) describe behaviour engagement as "time on task,

credits earned toward graduation, and homework completion, while attendance, suspensions, voluntary classroom participation, and extracurricular participation".

Fredricks et al. (2004) have identified three forms of behavioral engagement: positive conduct, involvement in learning, and participation in school-related activities. Positive conduct includes attending class, avoiding disruptive behaviors, responding to directions, and following classroom rules. Involvement in learning includes concentrating, making an effort, being persistent, contributing to class discussion, asking questions, finishing homework, and spending extra time on class-related learning. Participation in school-related activities includes taking part in extracurricular activities such as sports teams or student organizations.

Social Engagement

All of the above-mentioned components (cognitive, affective and behaviour) have been examined mostly in the domain of academic engagement or the learning context. However, there is a need to examine engagement in other engagement domains (Fredricks, Blumenfeld& Paris, 2004). While not included in all models of engagement, Philp and Duchesne (2016) believe that in the context of instructed language learning, the social dimension to interaction should be foregrounded as a dimension of engagement. Also, Mouzakis (2017) tried to expand the examination of student engagement within the

academic domain and to better develop knowledge in the social domain.

The social dimension of engagement considers the bonds of identification and belongingness formed between students and their peers, academic staff, administrative staff and other pertinent figures in their tertiary experience (Pekrun and Linnenbrink-Garcia 2012; Wentzel 2012). It generates feelings of inclusivity, belonging, purpose, socialisation and connection to the tertiary provider (Eldegwy, et al., 2018; Vivek et al., 2014). Within the classroom, social engagement is characterised by the 'unwritten' rules of the learning environment, such as cooperation, listening to others, attending class on time, and maintaining a balanced teacher–student power structure (Pekrun and Linnenbrink-Garcia 2012; Wentzel 2012).

Outside the classroom, social engagement is displayed through students' participation in community groups, study groups and student societies, where bonds are formed with others based on shared values, interests or purpose (Wentzel 2012). Social engagement strengthens the sense of achievement students gain from their university experience (Finn and Zimmer 2012). Students who lack social engagement are more likely to experience loneliness, isolation (McIntyre et al., 2018) leading to reduced wellbeing (McIntyre et al., 2018). Generally speaking, Jones (2009) identified eight characteristics of students' engagement level: positive body language, consistent focus, fun and excitement, individual attention, clarity of

learning, meaningfulness of work, rigorous thinking, and performance orientation.

Engagement and motivation

Conceptualized as students' energy and drive to engage, learn, work effectively, and achieve their potential at school, motivation and engagement play a large role in students' interest and enjoyment of school (Martin, 2006). Understandably, both also play huge roles in academic achievement (Martin, 2001; Martin & Marsh, 2003). Consequently, those students who are motivated by and engaged in learning tend to perform considerably higher academically and are better behaved than unmotivated and un-engaged peers (Fredricks, et al., 2004). Motivation is an important prerequisite of student engagement in the learning process (Ryan & Deci, 2009). It is argued that students with better motivation usually perform better in school grades (Pintrich, 2003).Williams and Williams (2011) also stress that motivation is probably the most important factor that educators can target in order to improve learning. Moreover, based on the social-cognitive motivation theories, it is presumed that students' motivational beliefs mediate the relation between students' perceived classroom environment and their engagement (Li, 2013).

Students must be actively engaged and show interest in classes to achieve effective learning in school. Therefore, they must be highly motivated and interested in classes. During the teaching-learning process students are expected to have intrinsic motivation and authentic engagement in

classes. To achieve this, students' motivation levels must first be identified, and activities must be planned to promote their active engagement in classes. Therefore, teachers must be aware of their students' motivation levels and employ motivation strategies to ensure their authentic engagement in classes (Nayir, 2017).

Schlechty (2002) points out that a student attributes a value to what he does and shows different levels of engagement based on this value during the process. These levels are examined in five dimensions, namely, authentic engagement, ritual engagement, passive compliance, retreatism, and rebellion. In authentic engagement, students find a personal meaning in their activities, have a high level of interest and do not retreat in the face of a challenge. In ritual engagement, students do what is required, but do not attach a personal meaning to the assignment. In passive compliance, students expend minimum effort merely to avoid negative consequences and pay little attention to the details. In retreatism, students reject class activities, learning objectives, and tools and methods to achieve these objectives, and emotionally disengage themselves. In rebellion, students reject class activities and objectives and substitute them with their own new objectives and tools (Schlechty, 2001).

Based on the self-determination theory, Ryan and Deci (2000) suggest that individuals feel the need to be autonomous, competent, and related. 'Autonomy' refers to an individual's choosing his own behaviors, 'competence' refers to his

adapting to the environment, and 'relatedness' means his being close to others. In other words, individuals perform actions to satisfy these three needs. Failure to satisfy them results in a lack of motivation. Therefore, an individual has different levels of motivation according to his level of need.

Motivation levels are examined under three headings: lack of motivation, extrinsic motivation, and intrinsic motivation. Lack of motivation is a condition in which no meaning is attributed to actions. In extrinsic motivation, individuals demonstrate a specific behavior due to an external influence, for reward expectations or to satisfy their own ego. In intrinsic motivation, on the other hand, individuals demonstrate a specific behavior due to enjoyment or interest in it, or to their instinct to succeed (Reeve, et al., 2004). At this point, what motivational factors influence students, how these factors should be used, and how motivational level influences student engagement are important. The research suggests that students with intrinsic motivation demonstrate authentic engagement; those with extrinsic motivation demonstrate ritual engagement, passive compliance, and retreatism; and students lacking motivation demonstrate engagement at the rebellion level (Saeed & Zyngier, 2012). The research also suggests that students with intrinsic motivation have a high level of academic success and a low level of concern and are engaged more than those with extrinsic motivation (Wigfield & Eccles, 2002; Wigfield & Waguer, 2005). In other words, the

self-determination theory suggested by Ryan and Deci (2000) is related to the student class engagement level suggested by Schlechty (2002).

Figure 1 below shows the relationship between student motivation and class engagement levels.
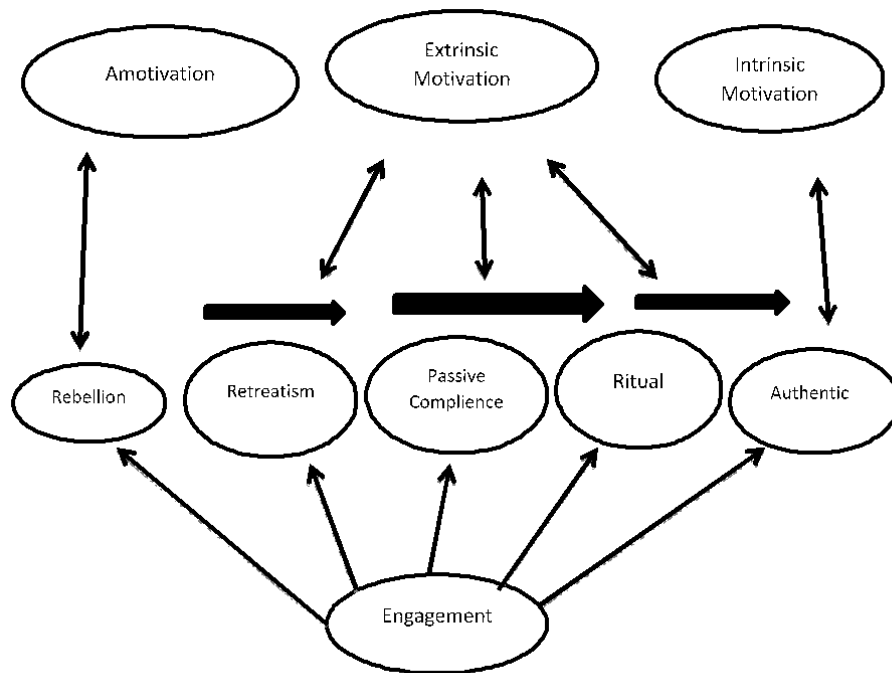

Figure1. Relationship between motivation and student engagement (Saeed & Zyngier, 2012, p. 256)

As seen in Figure 1, students' motivation levels are related to their class engagement levels. Students lacking motivation are engaged in classes at rebellion level; those with extrinsic motivation are engaged in classes at retreatism, passive compliance, and ritual engagement levels; and those with intrinsic motivation are engaged at an authentic engagement level. At this point, what is important is to promote intrinsic motivation among students.

Student engagement and foreign language learning

Loo et al (2018) stated that the study of engagement in language learning is crucial, as it provides us with "ways of explaining why some linguistic or language-related behaviors and attitudes seem to facilitate language learning and learning about language(s) more than others" (Svalberg, 2009: p. 243). Furthermore, engagement in language learning is a more encompassing construct compared to other notions such as attitude, involvement, commitment, or motivation (Svalberg, 2009, 2012). Sesmiyanti (2016) assert that student engagement is an important thing in learning process especially in learning English because it can improve the students' ability about the material.

Karabiyik (2019) studied the concept of student engagement in relation to achievement in English in the Turkish foreign language learning and

teaching context. The results revealed that student engagement is a significant element in foreign language learning contexts. Philp and Duchesne (2016) point out that task-based language researchers and teachers have intuitively recognized the importance of engagement to learning. Language learners' engagement in outside-the-classroom learning activities has many advantages and benefits in terms of academic performance (Öztürk, 2020). Oruç and Demirci's (2020) study asserts that student engagement mediated the relationship between foreign language anxiety and English language achievement. It was concluded that when engagement predicted English language achievement, the effect of foreign language anxiety on English language achievement partially disappeared.

It has been proposed that students who are more engaged and efficient in their classroom activities which are humanistic-oriented tend to have a solid academic knowledge, implement resourceful learning strategies, attain high academic outcomes, establish Reasonable interpersonal relationships, and enjoy satisfactory motivational status in classroom (Wentzel, 2003). Thus, Ghanizadeh et al., (2020) shed important lights on developing reliable and practical methods and strategies for student engagement in school and institutes .There is a wide interest in humanizing language teaching and great importance has been placed on its contribution to students' academic engagement (Soviyah, 2007).

Results of the study conducted by Dincer et al (2017) revealed that students having a higher course achievement, higher attendance and intrinsic motivation to learn English had a significantly higher classroom engagement than the learners with low means on these variables. Additionally, the results demonstrated that classroom engagement was not only crucial for students but also for teachers aiming to contribute to EFL achievement in the teaching context.

Assessing engagement in educational settings

Engagement is a multidimensional construct that consists of several distinct, yet highly inter-correlated, aspects of task or domain involvement. According to different engagement theorists, students' involvement ranges from effort, persistence, and prosocial classroom conduct (behavioral engagement) to high interest and enthusiasm with low anxiety and boredom (emotional engagement) to concentration, strategic thinking, sophisticated learning strategies and self-regulation (cognitive engagement) to intentional acts of agency to enrich one's experience with the learning activity, subject matter, or school experience (agentic engagement). Given its multidimensional character, careful attention needs to be paid to its assessment (Veiga, 2014).

The assessment of students' engagement is characterized by both its importance and its variability. Assessing engagement is important because the extent and quality of students'

engagement is a strong predictor of students' learning, achievement, and academic progress (Jang, et al., 2012; Ladd & Dinella, 2009). Assessing engagement is characterized by variability because several instruments fall under a variety of perspectives and serve a diversity of purposes (Lam et al., in press; Skinner, Kindermann, & Furrer, 2008; Wang, et al., 2011). Some educators and engagement theorists assess only a single aspect of engagement while others utilize a two-dimensional, three-dimensional, or four-dimensional assessment strategy.

The validation studies samples consist of students from elementary school to college and university population. Some countries (e.g., USA, UK) have adopted large-scale surveys, such as the High School Survey of Student Engagement (HSSSE) which is administered every year to middle and high school students, the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) or the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY) which was initiated in 1994-1995 and collects information about the way children develop every two years (Norris, Pignal, & Lipps, 2003). However, it has been suggested that these large-scale surveys present little evidence of their validity (NSSE, in particular), partly due to the dificulty in collecting external (criteria-related) data (Fredricks et al., 2011).

One necessity in clarifying and in advancing the assessment of students' engagement is to distinguish indicators of students' engagement from its causal factors and facilitating conditions (e.g., engagement-fostering aspects of the classroom environment, students' motivation) and from engagement-related outcomes such as learning, achievement, and class-speciic grades (Lam et al., in press; Tinio, 2009).

As one example, the 35-item Student Engagement Instrument (Appleton, Christenson, Kim, & Reschly, 2006) was designed more to capture factors that affect engagement rather than indicators of engagement per se. Other scales assess both indicators of engagement as well as engagement-caused outcomes. For instance, the College Student Course Engagement Questionnaire (SCEQ; Handelsman, Briggs, Sullivan, &Towler, 2005) is a 23-item questionnaire with four scales, two of which assess engagement indicators, including participation and emotionality, and two of which assess engagement outcomes, including skills and performance.

Most contemporary engagement theorists highlight behavioral engagement, emotional engagement, and cognitive engagement as central engagement indicators (Christenson, Reschly, & Wylie, 2012; Fredricks et al, 2004), though others add agentic engagement (Reeve, 2013; Reeve & Tseng, 2011), social engagement (Soane et al., 2012) or academic engagement (Reschly& Christenson, 2006) as a fourth important engagement indicator. Following is a review of several widely used engagement instruments, including questionnaires that assess only a single engagement indicator but also questionnaires that assess multiple engagement indicators (i.e., two, three, or four engagement indicators).

Instruments for assessment of engagement in school

The assessment of students' engagement in both short-term learning activities and in long-term schooling has been mostly based on the administration of self-report questionnaires for students. Researchers further assess student engagement by asking for teachers' ratings of students' engagement and by asking trained raters to observe and objectively score students' engagement during classroom visits.

Students' Self-report Measures

Measures Assessing One Engagement Indicator

A. Student Engagement Questionnaire (SEQ; Kember& Leung, 2009). The SEQ assesses the behavioral dimension of classroom engagement. It does so with 17 separate scales. The SEQ was designed to measure behavioral engagement among university students. It uses a response scale from 1 to 6. The 17 scale have been shown to be reliable (range of internal consistency: .74-.86), and Kember and Leung (2009) provide some evidence for construct and criterion-related validity.

B. Behavioral Engagement Questionnaire (BEQ; Miserandino,1996). Miserandino's BEQ is a 32-item instrument that is typically used with elementary grade students, though it has also been used with middle school and high school students (Jang, Reeve, Ryan, & Kim, 2009). It assesses 7 aspects of behavioral engagement: "involved"; "persisting"; "avoiding"; "ignoring"; "helpless"; "participating"; and "concentrating". The BEQ

uses a 4-point response scale (1 = not at all true; 4 = very true).

C. Cognitive Strategies is a subscale of the larger Approaches to Learning Instrument (Greene, Miller, Crowson, Duke, &Akey, 2004). The Cognitive Strategies subscale is a 12-item instrument to assess students' study strategies. The cognitive engagement scale uses a 4-point Likert response scale and is generally used with secondary school students. Wolters (2004) developed a 17-item instrument to assess two aspects of cognitive engagement. The first aspect is an 8-item Cognitive Strategies scale, while the second is a 9-item Meta-cognitive Strategies scale. The scales use a 7-point response scale and were designed for secondary students and college students.

E. Student Perceptions of Classroom Knowledge-Building Scale (SPOCK;Shell&Husman, 2008). The SPOCK is an 8-item measure of students' academic self-regulatory processes to assess extent of cognitive engagement. It includes items to assess planning, goal setting, monitoring, and self-evaluation. The scale uses a 5-point response scale (1 = almost never; 5 = almost always), and was designed for college students.

F. Cognitive Engagement scales from the Motivated Strategies forLearning Questionnaire (MSLQ; Pintrich, Smith, Garcia, &McKeachie, 1991). To assess cognitive engagement, the MSLQ offers the follow four scales: Elaboration (6-items); organization (4-items); critical thinking (5-items); and rehearsal (4-items). The very

widely used scale uses a 7-point response scale (1 = not at all true of me; 5 = very true of me).

G. Agentic Engagement Scale (AES; Reeve, 2013). The AES is a 5-item instrument designed to assess agentic engagement. The scale has been used with elementary and secondary school students as well as with university students. The AES uses a 7-point response scale that ranges from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

Measures Assessing Two Engagement Indicators

A. Engagement vs. Disaffection with Learning (EDL; Skinner, Furrer, Marchand, & Kindermann, 2008). The EDL is a 20-item instrument that measures both behavioral engagement and emotional engagement. The instrument assesses not only the presence of engaged learning (behavioral and emotional engagement) but also its absence (behavioral and emotional disaffection). The EDL typically uses a 4-point response scale and has been used successfully with samples ranging from late elementary school through college students.

B. The Classroom Engagement Scale (CES), developed by Barghaus, et. al (2017), is a research-based measure of observable and teachable engagement skills. The CES is used with all kindergarteners and appears on the kindergarten report card four times a year. It consists of 14 questions about students' academic and social engagement skills, which teachers rate as improvement needed, satisfactory, or outstanding.

Measures Assessing Three Engagement Indicators

A. Academic Engagement Scale for Grade School Students (AES-GS; Tinio, 2009). The AES-GS Is a 34-item instrument that features the three scales of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement. It was initially validated on a sample of compulsory and secondary school students.

B. High School Survey of Student Engagement (HSSSE; Center for Evaluation and Education Policy, Indiana University; Balfanz, 2009). The HSSSE is a 121-item instrument that features three dimensions of cognitive engagement (65 items), behavioral engagement (17 items), and emotional engagement (39 items). It was designed for use with compulsory and secondary school students.

C. Student Engagement in School Scale (SESS; Lam et al., in press). This new measure of student engagement has been developed by a team of researchers from 12 countries, in order to capture the cognitive (12 items), affective (9 items) and behavioral (12 items) dimensions of engagement in school among 5th to 12th grade students. It includes 33 items in which students are ask to indicate their agreement on a five-point scale, with 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree.

D. Student Engagement in Mathematics Classroom Scale (SEMCS;Kong, Wong, & Lam, 2003). The scale design is framed within problems with engagement among students which present a widerange of motivations and

more diverse interests. The scale is usedwith middle school students, features 57 items, and relies on aLikert-type scale with five points (from 1 – total disagreement to 5 – total agreement). Items measure three dimensions and ten narrower facets of engagement in mathematics: cognitive (supericial strategy, deep strategy, trust); affective (interest, success orientations, anxiety, frustration); and behavioral (attention, effort, time spent).

E. School Engagement Measure (SEM; Wang, Willet, &Eccles,2011). This instrument comprises 23 items that measure behavioral, emotional and cognitive engagement. The SEM uses a five-point Likert type scale.

F. Utrecht Work Engagement Scale for Students (UWES-S; Schaufeli et al., 2002). The UWES-S is a 9-item instrument that features scales to assess vigor (3 items), dedication (3 items), and absorption (3 items). Vigor is said to assess the behavioral aspect of engagement, dedication is said to assess the emotional aspect of engagement, and absorption is said to assess the cognitive aspect of engagement. The brief scale was designed to assess short-term fluctuations in student day-to-day engagement, and it utilizes a 7-point response scale that ranges from 1 (totally disagree) to 7 (totally agree).

G. Motivation and Engagement Scale (MES; Martin, 2009). Thisinstrument comprises 11 scales, some of which assess indicatorsof engagement but others of which assess indicators of students' motivation: self-confidence, learning focus, school valorization, persistence, planning,

study management, disaffection, self sabotage, anxiety, failure avoidance, and uncertain control. The engagement scales assess various aspects of behavioral (persistence), emotional (disaffection, anxiety), and cognitive (planning, study management) engagement. Each scale includes four items.

Measures Assessing Four Engagement Indicators

Student Engagement in School-Four-Dimensional Scale (SES-4DS; Veiga, 2013). This new measure consists of 20 items and uses a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (total disagreement) to 6 (total agreement). Attached is the English version. The validation study sample included 685 students attending middle and high schools from various regions of Portugal. The four dimensions of engagement feature 5-items per scale and include: cognitive, affective, behavioral and agentic. In addition to the above-described measures, other instruments may be found in the work of Fredricks et al. (2011) which reviews 21 engagement measures (out of which several have been published prior to 2003) and provides information on their psychometric qualities.

Teachers' Ratings of Student Engagement

While self-report measures are most widely used to assess students' engagement, some researchers prefer a more objective measure of students' engagement. To collect more objective engagement measures, educators and researchers generally ask for ratings either from teachers or

trained classroom observers. Following is a review of five teachers' rating measures of students' engagement.

A. Rochester School Assessment Package (RSAP; Wellborn & Connell, 1987) has separate versions for students, parents and teachers to assess students' behavioral and emotional engagement as well as students' behavioral and emotional disaffection.

B. Teacher Ratings Scale Of School Adjustment (Birch & Ladd, 1997) provides perceptions that teachers have regarding the behavioral and emotional engagement of their preschool and 1st year students. The rating scale features four scales to assess students' school enjoyment, school avoidance, cooperative participation and self-directing.

C. Teacher Rating Scale (Lee & Reeve, 2012) provides four single items that ask teachers to assess students' behavioral, emotional, cognitive, and agentic engagement using a 7-point response scale(1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree). The scale uses only one comprehensive item for each teacher rating (instead of asking teachers to complete the same multi-item scales the students completed) to avoid overburdening teachers with an unreasonably long instrument.

D. The Teacher-Child Relationship and Children's Early School Adjustment (Betts & Rotenberg, 2007) allows the evaluation of perceptions that teachers have about children from 1st and 2nd grade.

E. The Effortful engagement scale is a 10-item teacher-report measure that uses 8 items from the

Conscientiousness scale of the Big Five Inventory and 2 items from the Social Competence Scale. While the items were originally designed to assess students' consciousness and social competence, the items nevertheless ask explicitly about students' attention, effort, persistence, and participation in learning activities.

Additionally, to instruments based on self-reports and inferences provided by teachers, there are observation grids grounded in a more qualitative type of research methodology.

Observers' Ratings of Students' Engagement

The Engagement Rating Sheet was developed explicitly for trained raters to visit classrooms to observe students' engagement during learning activities (Reeve, Jang, Carrell, Jeon, & Barch, 2004). It consists of single items to assess each of the four aspects of behavioral, emotional, cognitive, and agentic engagement. On the 5-item Engagement Rating Sheet), teachers use a 7-point response scale (1 = unengaged; 7 = engaged) to rate each student's behavioral (effort), emotional (enjoyment), cognitive (extent of learning), agentic (verbal participation), and overall (passive vs. active) engagement.

Pertinent studies on student engagement

Student engagement has been linked to an array of traditional success factors such as increased retention (KhademiAshkzari, Piryaei, and Kamelifar 2018); high impact and lifelong learning (Artess, Mellors-Bourne, and

Hooley 2017); curricular relevance (Trowler 2010); enhanced institutional reputation (Kuhet al. 2006); increased citizenship behaviours (Zepke, Leach, and Butler 2014); student perseverance (KhademiAshkzari, Piryaei, and Kamelifar 2018); and work-readiness (Krause and Coates 2008). It has also been linked to more subjective and holistic outcomes for students themselves including; social and personal growth and development (Zwart 2009); transformative learning (Kahu 2013); enhanced pride, inclusiveness and belonging (Wentzel 2012); student wellbeing (Field 2009).

With regard to the relationship between student engagement and academic achievement, many studies have been conducted to explore this area. Baranova et al (2019) showed that learners' engagement played an influential role and highly impacted students' learning results. Celik, Toraman and Celik (2018) reported that cognitive engagement and engagement in class activities positively affect academic achievement. A study conducted by Konold et al (2018) reported that student engagement was directly associated with academic achievement and operated as an intervening factor. Delfino (2019) found out that behavioral, emotional and cognitive engagements were positively correlated to the academic performance of the students. (Here are some examples: Ozkal (2019) refers to the study conducted by using PISA 2000 data that demonstrated that behavioural engagement and affective engagement significantly predicted reading performance. Kahraman (2014)

determined that behavioural engagement in Science classes had positive impact on achievement, that enjoying Science classes positively affected academic achievement. Ozkal (2019) determine that there is a positive and significant relationship between behavioural and affective engagement in Math classes and Math achievement). Moreover, school engagement plays a partial mediating role in the relationship between attitude toward learning and academic achievement. The results revealed the importance of school engagement in improving students' attitude toward learning and academic achievement (Erdoğdu, 2019).

Engagement is also a valuable construct for capturing the gradual process by which students drop out from school (Appleton et al., 2008; Appleton, Christenson, Kim, & Reschly, 2006; Finn, 1989). Given that students' dropping out from school is not an instantaneous event, but rather a gradual process that happens over time, researchers and educators alike view engagement as the main theoretical model for intervening with and understanding potential dropouts to enhance positive performance and encourage school completion (Appleton et al., 2008; Appleton et al., 2006). – cited in Alrashidi et al. (2016)

On the other hand, the major factors that can affect students engagement are also discussed here, for example: a. classroom technology (educational technology (Bond & Bedenlier (2019); asynchronous video and the development of instructor social presence (Collins, 2017); classroom technology (Bulger et al., 2008);

technology (Wallace-Spurgin, 2019) b. teachers characteristics and support (emotional, organizational, and instructional math teachers support (Alrajeh & Shindel,2020) c. teachers' methodology and type of teaching (flipped classroom environment (Talan&Gulsecen 2019); in-class practice in an electrical circuits course (Russell et al., 2017); integrated learning model in a blended environment (Baranova et al., 2019); humanistic teaching as manifested in teachers' error correction (Ghanizadeh & Jahedizadeh 2020); autonomous outside-the-classroom learning activities (Öztürk, 2020); instructional intervention using reform mathematics principles (Irvine,2020); high-impact instructional practices (Rodriguez & Koubek, 2019); evidence-based strategies (Abla & Fraumeni, 2019); Chickering and Gamson's Seven Principles of Good Practice - in distance education , media properties, student characteristics, teaching method, course/content design, innovative techniques, and instructor competencies (Bagriacik Yilmaz & Banyard, 2020); high touch strategies (Gay & Betts2020); "I notice" method (Slaby & Benedict, 2019); "endowment effect"- students were given (endowed with) extra credit points at the beginning of the semester, and those points were taken away if they failed to attend a specified set of activities (Faulk, 2019); outdoor education methods and strategies (Rudolf, 2012).

Commentary

The status quo of students' engagement in EFL classroom activities is not that much. There is a growing body of research indicating that poor academic performance, readiness to learn and behavioral outcomes are associated with problems of student engagement. Moreover, the research literature has established clear links between student engagement and educational well-being.

Research work shows that the majority of students aren't engaged in their day-to-day learning. Depending on research findings, anywhere from 50 to almost 70% of grade 10 to 12 students are not engaged in their learning. Moreover, research shows that the longer students are in school, the less academically competent the feel. Even students who are considered "successful" in the current system experience this problem. Studies show that most "top" students aren't engaged in their learning. Successful students often describe their learning experience as "boring, hectic, stressful and disconnected from the real world" (Dunleavy & Milton, 2009, p. 11). This variable didn't receive due care and most of the research about it aimed only at measuring its dimensions. Yet, few applied research were conducted to enhance students' engagement in the learning activities.

Method

Participants

The sample of the study comprised 60 second-year preparatory school students of Sohag city in the academic year 2019-2020. The ages ranged from 12 to 14. On average, the selected

participants had undergone seven years of English language learning experience from primary to preparatory level. They have learned English from the kindergarten stage onward as a school subject. They all live in Sohag City with homogenous socio-cultural backgrounds. Also, 20 EFL teachers, working at three preparatory governmental public schools, were included.

Study design

The study employed a mixed-methods design. The learners" responsesto the engagement scale were analyzed using the quantitative methods, as well as the qualitative analysis of the teachers' interviews.

Instruments

Engagement Scale

Scale Objective

The student engagement scale was developed to investigate the effect of a suggested successful intelligence- based strategy on second-year preparatory EFL students' engagement. More specifically, it was developed to find out the degree to which the suggested successful intelligence- based strategy impacted each aspect of engagement in EFL activities.

Scale description

After reviewing the previous studies and related literature (e.g., Lam et al., 2012) the researcher developed a student engagement scale consisting of four subscales and 42 items: cognitive engagement (11 items), affective engagement (9 items), behavioral engagement (12 items), and

social engagement (10 items). Some adaptations were performed on the scale to fit the English language setting. For example, a statement like "I try hard to do well in the school." becomes "I try to do hard in the English language classroom". Additionally, the fourth sub-scale (social engagement) was added (See Appendix C). Students completed their survey in classrooms under the researcher and school EFL staff supervision, and both groups followed a standard set of instructions.

Scale validity

To ensure the validity, preliminary form of the modified scale was submitted to a jury of TEFL specialists to decide on:

- Statement scale items.
- Relevance of items to respective components/factors.
- Clarity of scale instructions.
- Appropriateness of the rating scheme used
- Overall suitability of the scale for use in evaluating students' engagement in foreign language settings.

The jury members found the instructions clear. However, they claimed that some words like "concepts/ extra-curricular activities/ attitude/ responsibilities" needed to be translated in Arabic, so those students feel comfort when performing the survey.

Scale reliability

The scale was piloted on a group (N= 25) of second-year preparatory students, who were not included in either the experimental or control

group. The data of the survey was analyzed with SPSS 23 statistical software program. The mean and the standard deviation of each item was calculated and reported. For this study, the Cronbach's alpha value of the scale was recalculated, and the obtained reliability value was found to be.902. Cronbach Alpha Reliability Coefficients for the sub scales are: 0.808, 0.970, 0.843 and 0.726 for cognitive engagement, affective engagement, behavioural engagement and social engagement, respectively. These values indicate that the scale was highly reliable to be used in measuring second-year preparatory EFL students' engagement.

Scoring technique

The student Engagement Scale used in the study is a 3-point Likert-type measurement tool. The Likert scale for the cognitive, behavioural and social engagement subscales is the followings: 1(never), 2 (sometimes), and 3 (always). The Likert scale for the affective engagement subscale is the followings: 1 (disagree), 2 (neutral), and 3 (agree). The (R) indicates reversed item.

Structured interviews

Through detailed analysis of structured interviews, the aim was to capture EFL teachers' perspectives on students' engagement. Twenty EFL teachers were interviewed individually. The interviews, which each lasted 25 – 30 minutes, were audiotaped. The following interview questions were developed:

- Do you notice that learners have a desire to seek and acquire new information (epistemic curiosity)?

- Are learners able to demonstrate deeper learning competencies (e.g., evaluation, synthesis, analysis, application, and communication skills) (Higher order thinking?

- Do learners get engaged in activities beyond reading, listening, or writing to deepen their learning and connection with the material (Active learning)?

- How well learners communicate with one another and with their teachers in class (Interaction)?

- Do learners show initiative (e.g., getting themselves involved in classroom discussions and asking and answering posed questions) (Initiation)?

- Have they got the willingness to continue to try in the face of academic difficulty, opposition, or failure? (Persistence)

The validity of the questions was checked by three subject-field experts. Moreover, the interview questions were piloted with four teachers whose answers were excluded in the main interview.

Data analysis

The data analysis was carried out in two phases. First, the quantitative analysis was carried out using descriptive statistics in the form of mean and standard deviation. Second, a content analysis was carried out on the EFL teachers' interview

data to further investigate the level of students' engagement.

Results and discussion

Results of Chi-square test of student cognitive engagement (Table1) revealed that there is statistically significant differences at (0.000) among students' responses in all the cognitive engagement indicators in favor of the largest frequency which is "never". This indicates that students greatly having negative attitudes and practices towards the English language activities. All this domain indicators received low ratings with means ranged from 1.63 to 1.45.

Among its indicators, three were rated low with a mean of 1.6: trying to understand the material better by relating it to things I already know, trying to see how they fit together with other things I already know and trying to see the similarities and differences between things I am learning in English classes and things I know already. While the eight lowest rated indicators were: figuring out how the information might be useful in the real world, trying to put the ideas in my own words, making up my own examples to help me understand the important concepts learn in English classes, trying to associate them with what I learnt in other classes about the same or similar things, trying to understand how the things I learn in English classes fit together with each other, trying to match what I already know with things I am trying to learn in English classes, trying to think through the English topics and decide what I'm supposed to learn from them,

rather than studying topics by just reading them over and trying to combine different pieces of information from course material in new ways with a mean of 1.5.

As seen in table 2 the affective engagement of the students was low with a mean of 1.5. Being happy in the English class was rated very low with a mean of 1.4. It was followed by thinking that learning English in school is interesting, being proud to be in the English class and looking forward to going to the English class with a mean of 1.5. Being interested in learning English and to like what you are learning in the school were rated low with a mean of 1.6, and to like the English class with a mean of 1.7. The indicator that received low rating was enjoying the English class with a mean of 1.8.

Table 3 shows that the behavioral engagement of students was very low (1.5). Among its indicators, pretending to work in the English class and volunteering to help with English language activities such as the English Day were the lowest with a mean of 1.4. It was followed by trying hard to do well in the English class, paying attention, doing just enough to get by, wandering in the class, working hard to solve homework problems, being active participant in the English language activities such as school English magazine and school broadcast and taking an active role in the English extra-curricular activities in my school as English Speech Contest with a mean of 1.5.On the other hand, the three indicators that received relatively higher rating were working as hard as I can in the English class, participating in class

activities and when having trouble understanding an English language problem, I go over it again

until I understand it with a mean of 1.6.

Table (1): Descriptive statistics on students' level of cognitive engagement

No.	Items	never		sometimes		always		Mean	St. D	Chi-Square	sig	Arrangement
		frequency	%	frequency	%	frequency	%					
1	When I study English, I try to understand the material better by relating it to things I already know.	38	63.3	18	30.0	4	6.7	1.633	0.610	29.20	.000	1
2	When I study English, I figure out how the information might be useful in the real world.	34	56.7	23	38.3	3	5.0	1.483	0.596	24.700	.000	8
3	When learning English, I try to put the ideas in my own words.	31	51.7	25	41.7	4	6.7	1.550	0.622	20.100	.000	5
4	I make up my own examples to help me understand the important concepts (مفاهيم) I learn in English classes.	36	60.0	20	33.3	4	6.7	1.467	0.623	25.600	.000	10
5	When learning English lessons, I try to see how they fit together with other things I already know.	28	46.7	28	46.7	4	6.7	1.600	0.616	19.200	.000	3
6	When learning English lessons, I often try to associate (يربط) them with what I learnt in other classes about the same or similar things.	35	58.3	22	36.7	3	5.0	1.467	0.596	25.900	.000	9
7	I try to see the similarities and differences (اوجه التشابه و الاختلاف) between things I am learning in English classes and things I know already	26	43.3	30	50.0	4	6.7	1.633	0.610	19.600	.000	1
8	I try to understand how the things I learn in English classes fit together with each other.	32	53.3	26	43.3	2	3.3	1.500	0.567	25.200	.000	6
9	I try to match what I already know with things I am trying to learn in English classes.	33	55.0	24	40.0	3	5.0	1.500	0.597	23.700	.000	7
10	I try to think through the English topics and decide what I'm supposed to learn from them, rather than studying topics by just reading them over.	30	50.0	26	43.3	4	6.7	1.567	0.621	19.600	.000	4
11	When studying English, I try to combine (يدمج) different pieces of information from course material in new ways.	34	56.7	25	41.7	1	1.7	1.450	0.534	29.100	.000	11
Total		**357**	**54.9**	**267**	**40.46**	**36**	**5.46**	**16.650**	**4.364**	**24.933**	**.015**	

Cognitive Engagement

Table (2): Descriptive statistics on students' level of affective engagement

	Affective Engagement	disagree		Neutral		Agree		Mean	St. D	Chi-Square	sig	Arrangement
		frequency	%	frequency	%	frequency	%					
12	I am very interested in learning English.	31	51.7	25	41.7	4	6.7	1.550	.62232	20.10	.00	5
13	I think learning English in school is interesting.	34	56.7	24	40.0	2	3.3	1.4667	.56648	26.80	.00	8
14	I like what I am learning in school.	29	48.3	25	41.7	6	10.0	1.6167	.66617	15.10	.00	3
15	I enjoy my English class.	24	40.0	27	45.0	9	15.0	1.7500	.70410	9.30	.01	1
16	I think learning English is boring. (R)	6	10.0	32	53.3	22	36.7	1.5667	.67313	17.20	.00	4
17	I like my English class.	25	41.7	31	51.7	4	6.7	1.6500	.60576	20.10	.00	2
18	I am proud to be in the English class.	33	55.0	25	41.7	2	3.3	1.4833	.56723	25.90	.00	7
19	Most mornings, I look forward to going to the English class.	35	58.3	21	35.0	4	6.7	1.4833	.62414	24.10	.00	6
20	I am happy to be in the English class.	36	60.0	22	36.7	2	3.3	1.4333	.56348	29.20	.00	9
	Total	**253**	**46.85**	**232**	**42.96**	**55**	**10.19**	**14.00**	**3.37488**	**37.53b**	**.00**	

Table (3): Descriptive statistics on students' level of behavior engagement

	Behavioral Engagement	Never		Sometimes		Always		Mean	St. D	Chi-Square	sig	Arrangement
		frequency	%	frequency	%	frequency	%					
21	I try hard to do well in the English class.	31	51.7	26	43.3	3	5.0	1.533	0.596	22.3	.00	4
22	In the English class, I work as hard as I can.	28	46.7	29	48.3	3	5.0	1.583	0.591	21.7	.00	2
23	When I'm in the English class, I participate in class activities.	28	46.7	28	46.7	4	6.7	1.600	0.616	19.2	.00	1
24	I pay attention in the English class.	35	58.3	20	33.3	5	8.3	1.500	0.651	22.5	.00	8
25	When I'm in the English class, I just act like I'm working. **(R)**	1	1.7	24	40.0	35	58.3	1.433	0.533	30.1	.00	11
26	In the English class, I do just enough to get by. (R)	5	8.3	20	33.3	35	58.3	1.500	0.651	22.5	.00	9
27	When I'm in the English class, my mind wanders (يسرح).**(R)**	2	3.3	28	46.7	30	50.0	1.533	0.566	24.4	.00	5
28	If I have trouble understanding an English language problem, I go over it again until I understand it.	28	46.7	31	51.7	1	1.7	1.550	0.534	27.3	.00	3
29	When I run into a difficult English homework problem, I keep working at it until I think I've solved it.	31	51.7	27	45.0	2	3.3	1.516	.567	24.7	.00	7
30	I am an active participant in the English language activities such as school English magazine and School broadcast.	34	56.7	24	40.0	2	3.3	1.467	.567	26.8	.00	10
31	I volunteer (يتطوع) to help with English language activities such as the English Day.	38	63.3	20	33.3	2	3.3	1.400	.558	32.4	.00	12
32	I take an active role in the English extra-curricular activities (مناهج لا صفية)in my school as English Speech Contest.	32	53.3	25	41.7	3	5.0	1.517	.596	22.9	.00	6
	Total	**293**	**40.69**	**303**	**41.94**	**125**	**17.36**	**17.983**	**4.482**	**45.93**	**.00**	

Table (4): Descriptive statistics on students' level of social engagement

	Social Engagement	Never		Sometimes		Always		Mean	St. D	Chi-Square	sig	Arrangement
		frequency	%	Frequency	%	frequency	%					
33	In the English class, I share the same work values as my classmates.	34	56.7	24	40.0	2	3.3	1.467	0.566	26.8	.00	6
34	In the English class, I share the same work goals as my classmates.	35	58.3	23	38.3	2	3.3	1.450	0.565	27.9	.00	7
35	In the English class, I share the same work attitudes (الاتجاهات)as my classmates.	25	41.7	32	53.3	3	5.0	1.633	0.581	22.9	.00	1
36	In the English class, I listen and follow directions (التعليمات).	31	51.7	27	45.0	2	3.3	1.517	0.567	24.7	.00	5
37	In the English class, I respect environment and materials.	36	60.0	21	35.0	3	5.0	1.450	0.594	27.3	.00	8
38	In the English class, I move between the activities appropriately (بسلاسة).	30	50.0	25	41.7	5	8.3	1.583	0.646	17.5	.00	2
39	In the English class, I accept responsibilities (المسؤليات).	36	60.0	22	36.7	2	3.3	1.433	0.563	29.2	.00	9
40	In the English class, I respect my classmates and teachers.	29	48.3	27	45.0	4	6.7	1.583	0.619	19.3	.00	3
41	In the English class, I handle conflicts (الخلافات) appropriately.	29	48.3	29	48.3	2	3.3	1.550	0.565	24.3	.00	4
42	In the English class, I work cooperatively with my classmates.	36	60.0	23	38.3	1	1.7	1.417	0.530	31.3	.00	10
Total		321	53.5	253	43.17	26	4.33	14.85	3.593	33.1	.00	

Table (5): Summary of level of student engagement

Dimensions of student engagement	Mean	St. D	Arrangement
1. Cognitive Engagement	16.65	4.364	2
2 Affective Engagement	14.00	3.375	4
3. Behavioral Engagement	17.98	4.482	1
4. Social Engagement	14.85	3.593	3
Total	**63.48**	**14.754**	

Similarly, table 4 revealed that social engagement of the students was very low (1.5). Accepting responsibilities and working cooperatively with my classmates received the lowest ratings with a mean of 1.4. They were followed by sharing the same work values as my classmates, sharing the same work goals as my classmates, listening and following directions and respecting environment and materials with a mean of 1.5. The four indicators that received 1.6 were sharing the same work attitudes as my classmates, moving between the activities appropriately, respecting my classmates and teachers and handling conflicts appropriately.

Overall, table 5 painted a consistent picture of widespread low-level passive disengagement in EFL classroom activities with a mean of (63.48). Among its four dimensions, behavioral engagement received the highest mean of (17.98). It was followed by cognitive engagement with a mean of (16.65), and then the social engagement with a mean of (14.85).The affective engagement received the lowest rating with a mean of (14.00).

Qualitative Analysis of the teachers' perspectives on students' engagement

A qualitative study was conducted to support the quantitative study detailed above. Six themes (**epistemic curiosity, higher order thinking, active learning, interaction, initiation and persistence**) were discussed, using excerpts from the interview material to illustrate EFL teachers' reflections. The results are discussed as separate themes; the researcher remarked, however, that the richness of the qualitative data implies that some themes may partially overlap with each other.

A. Epistemic curiosity

Epistemic curiosity implies that students have the desire to obtain new knowledge (e.g., concepts, ideas, and facts) expected to stimulate intellectual interest or eliminate conditions of informational deprivation. In the current study, many teachers reported students' lack of curiosity. This is **Mr. Ashraf Saber**, reflecting upon his students' epistemic curiosity:

"………in my class, I see that many students are not filled with wonder or excitement. Moreover, they don't feel uncomfortable when there is a gap in their knowledge, and they don't exert much effort to fill that gap"

"Many students don't have a desire to know more or ask questions and search for answers" (**Mr. Mahmoud Yousif**)

"My students lack motivation to explore, learn new things, acquire new knowledge, or seek relationships" (**Mr. MohammedSalah**)

"I always notice that my students are not able to see new worlds and possibilities that are normally not visible." (**Mr. Ibra'm Talat**)

B. Higher order thinking

Mastering higher order thinking skills has been one of the modern issues in 21st century of education around the world. They involve a complex judgmental thinking and other skills which are beyond the common thinking that require students to analyze, evaluate, and create. The majority of the participants in the current study remarked that this feature is something their students miss:

"……most of my class feel comfortable when asked questions that can be answered by simply regurgitating information they have committed to memory(e.g., what's the capital of Egypt?). Yet, if they are asked questions that require them to engage creatively, respond innovatively, or to evaluate (e.g., why do you think X is a good character?), they face great difficulties" (**Ms. Eman Jalal**)

C. Active learning

It is emphasized that learning in groups is important to students' learning experience. It supports their learning and engagement, mainly because of the possibilities to ask questions, discuss and collaborate with peers. In this study, evidence for such feelings of group commitment was not found.

"Many students prefer to work individually. Some of them believe that working in pairs and groups is a kind of time-wasting." (**Ms. Huda Salah**)

Students' avoidance of getting involved in active learning was also highlighted by another teacher. "I have tried to apply active learning technique in the class but there was a lot of resistance to the idea of pair/group work from the parents and the students alike." (**Ms. Rasha Kamel**)

D. Interaction

Like all social systems, the classroom is made up of a network of interpersonal relationships structured to facilitate the achievement of educational goals. The primary educational relationships are between teachers and students and among students themselves. In the current study, many teachers reported negative student interaction with their peers and teachers alike.

"I notice that students have a lack of interest in school and stated intention to leave. They produce behavioural issues including aggression, violence, or social withdrawal." (**Ms. Hala Ahmed**)

"……….They tend not to interact with their peers or with us as teachers. Only 'compulsory discipline' that made them participate in the group work. Additionally, the fear that they will be negatively evaluated in the daily assessment is the reason behind their participation in whole class discussions." (**Mr. Khaled Talat**)

E. Initiation

A sense of initiative and entrepreneurship is the ability to turn ideas into action through creativity, innovation, and risk-taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects. Initiative is the link between thought and action. It connects thinking about something to actually doing something.

Taking initiative makes school a better experience for everyone. When analyzing the data collected from the interviews, the researcher did not find evidence for such feelings of initiative and entrepreneurship when participants talked about their students.

"Many students are not interested in showing initiative. They don't start or join classroom discussions unless they are asked to." (**Ms. Walaa Saber**)

"To my surprise, some clever students, who love to listen, observe during discussions and absorb information, prefer setting in the corners to taking part in classroom discussions." (**Mr. Emad Bakr**)

"When we make announcements about extra-curricular activities (e.g., school broadcast, English magazine, theatre, reading projects), few number of students agree to join." (**Ms. Al Shaimaa Khaled**)

"Many students don't speak up in classes, meetings, or public events because they are afraid of saying something foolish and being made fun of by people who are there." (**Ms. Asmaa Abu-Elfadl**)

F. Persistence

Persistence is the ability to stick with something, to continue working, to try harder, to not give up. Itis seen as an incredibly important trait for students to develop in approaching their work. Several teachers in this study reflected upon their students' persistence.

"I can confidently say that many of my students are unwilling to exert time or effort to face the

academic challenges they face. They easily quit when they encounter any obstacles." (**Mr. Khaled Talat**)

This perspective was supported by other participants:

"Students, nowadays, don't believe in their abilities and relay mainly on their tutor. Additionally, they do the assigned tasks with little emotion and energy. They don't have a goal or vision in mind that motivates and drives them." (**Mr. Ashraf Saber**)

"My students usually stop working when things are going wrong. Moreover, they don't try any alternatives to keep going, especially when they have major setbacks and a lack of evidence that they are moving closer toward their goals." (**Mr. Medhat Attya**)

Conclusions

It's clear from the results of this study that EFL learners suffer from different aspects of disengagement, namely, cognitive, affective, behavioral and social. They tend to opt out, do the bare minimum required and can be difficult to teach. They are unwilling to participate in class discussions, frequently look bored, tune out, distract others, give up easily on tasks, talk out of turn, arrive late to class, disrupt the flow of classes and have poor attendance. As they get older they are more likely to skip classes, engage in challenging anti-social behaviours, and are more at risk of dropping out of school. Additionally, student disengagement creates stress for teachers. The interviewed teachers expressed their worry and revealed that they find low-level disruptive and disengaged student behaviours difficult to manage.

Recommendations

Most educational interventions aimed at increasing achievement without taking into account the importance of students' engagement. However, effective interventions should attend to this important variable, focusing on its antecedents. If teachers and family can help students improve their engagement, it will be easier to increase academic performance. On the other hand, data on what drives passive disengagement in the Egyptian classrooms is still limited. Thus, the reasons behind this dilemma should be investigated. They could be consequences of students being uninterested in the curriculum, students being unhappy at home, the unattractive school environment, or poor quality teaching.

Teachers are calling for more support. Many feel they are not well prepared to respond to students not engaging or misbehaving in class. New teachers say this is their number one 'professional learning need'. More experienced teachers also report being stressed. As a result, further professional development on this issue is highly recommended. Also, stakeholders should design a training/seminar on effective student-centered teaching strategies for teachers to maximize their abilities of engaging students.

Suggestions

- It would be better if a longitude study conducted to trace the problem in different educational stages of language instruction.
- Further studies should be carried out to investigate student engagement in other subject areas such as: math, science, social studies.
- Highlighting factors that influence student engagement positively or negatively in language setting is required.
- Student perspectives on learning experiences are valuable for the further planning and implementation of new learning and teaching methods. Thus, it is suggested that practitioners and policy makers take students' voice into account.
- The impact of technology on student engagement needs to be investigated.

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