

Development of Student Engagement in Higher Education

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Abstract

Background: Student engagement is a learning activity. It is performed in a classroom during a particular time. This time is arranged to learn a specific subject based on a detailed curriculum. Therefore, the development of student engagement in higher education is a must because it is an important context where both student and instructor come into contact to share information in their quest for knowledge.

Objective: This study attempted to find the development of student engagement in higher education; due to reshaping students back into the fold of learning. To analyze the students' learning needs, the present study strived to explore how the students are engaged in the learning process. The study attempted to arrange how the student engagement is done in English as foreign language classrooms.

Methods and materials: We conducted the qualitative approach to design this scientific article. This study pursued descriptive results and led to descriptive results. A systematic review of relevant articles was used before and throughout the study.

Result: This research has provided a particular outcome that presented the development of the student in higher education. The student should take part in all areas of engagement for successful learning.

Conclusion: Student engagement is a broad and complex phenomenon that deals with various areas such as a psychological, social, and cultural perspective. Consequently, it is stated that student engagement developed more effectively when both teachers and students participate in the process of learning actively and enthusiastically.

Keywords: Participation, Evaluation, Student Engagement, Student reflection, Social, Learning Process

Introduction

In higher education, student engagement belongs to the degree of attention, curiosity, interest, optimism, and passion that students are involved in while they are learning and being trained, which causes the level of motivation they have to learn and develop in their education. Generally discussed, the concept of “student engagement” is established on the belief that learning improves when students are inquisitive, interested, or inspired, and that learning tends to suffer when students are bored, dispassionate, disaffected, or otherwise “disengaged.” Stronger student engagement or improved student engagement are common instructional objectives expressed by educators.

In most context student engagement may also refer to the ways in which university leaders, educators, and other adults might “engage” students more fully in the governance and decision-making processes in universities, in the design of programs and learning opportunities, or in the civic life of their community. The concept of student engagement typically arises when educators discuss or prioritize educational strategies and teaching techniques that address the developmental, intellectual, emotional, behavioral, physical, and social factors that either enhance or undermine learning for students.

Student engagement in the English as foreign language classroom may be defined differently from place to place. For example, in one university observable behaviors such as attending class, listening attentively, participating in discussions, turning in work on time, and following rules and directions may be perceived as forms of “engagement,” while in another university the concept of “engagement” may be largely understood in terms of internal states such as enthusiasm, curiosity, optimism, motivation, or interest.

Specifically, the article will focus the area of student engagement seems to have grown in a number of ways – the greatest of which is the change from focusing upon disengaged students (who are not learning) to engaged learners (who are learning).

Student engagement has tested indicators such as student and family socio-economic condition, academic groundwork, major (subjects), type of institution, parameters of students’ perceptions concerning the quality of institutional environments and perceived learning gains in college. All these components were found to be positively related to the degree to which students devote their efforts toward educationally purposeful activities (Koljatic & Kuh, 2001). However, engagement is more than simply finding ways to enhance students’ participation in college life. Engagement is not just about an activity or doing, it is the processes of internalizing what the activity means and how it matters to the students.

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Engagement and motivation play an enormous role in students' enthusiasm and enjoyment of school (Martin, 2006). Consecutively, both also play large roles in academic achievement. Subsequently, those students who are motivated and engaged in learning tend to perform considerably higher academically and are better behaved than their unmotivated and unengaged peers (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004).

Objectives

- To find how student engagement development; reshaped students back into the fold of learning and current work is more willing.
- To fit the learning needs of students.
- To organize how the student engagement carries out in English as foreign language classrooms.

Significances of the Study

Student engagement is significant in the learning process. Teachers are working hard to improve learning. Learning happens when the students are engaged and involved in the classroom retention of knowledge. Engagement “is a measure of how much we are attending to a purpose, task, or activity. When it comes to learning, engagement is influenced by a learner’s level of motivation, focus and cognitive ability as well as online course design and a teacher’s decisions regarding facilitation style”. EdSurge (2020)

Student engagement can be seen as the glue that holds together all aspects of student learning and growth. Not only does student engagement make teaching itself more fun, engaging, and rewarding, but it has been shown to have critical impacts on students. When students display high levels of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement, they are more likely to excel academically, form a stronger sense of connection with their university, and have a more positive sense of social-emotional well-being. On the other hand, low student engagement is associated with a host of negative outcomes, such as delinquency, violence, substance abuse, and school dropout. Although these troubling outcomes tend to appear in adolescence, having poor engagement in elementary and middle school can set students on a negative trajectory. Thus, it is critical to promote student engagement across all grade levels.

Research Questions

This investigation suggests answers to the research questions:

1. Should a student take part in all areas of engagement for successful learning?

2. What might the education system do to assist students in how to involve in the class successfully?
3. Is participation in extracurricular activities related to students' success in university?

Literature Review

The most widely accepted view of engagement in higher education literature emphasizes student behavior and teaching practice was a project which was set up to develop a new measurement tool. This project was about dissatisfaction with college ranking systems and the measurement of quality in higher education in the higher education in the late 1990s. Student engagement was seen as an evolving construct that captures a range of institutional practices and student behaviors related to student satisfaction and achievement including time on task, social and academic integration, and teaching practices (Kuh, 2009). The emphasis was on how institutions can affect student engagement, drawing principles of good practice in undergraduate education. Within this perspective, student engagement is defined as the ‘time and effort students devote to educationally purposeful activities (Doherty, Steel, & Parrish, 2012).

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and its successor the Australasian Survey of Student Engagement (AUSSE) are the survey tools used to measure student engagement within the behavioral perspective. The National Survey of Student Engagement (Lutz & Culver, 2010) has five engagement scales: academic challenge, active learning, interactions, enriching educational experiences, and supportive learning environment, while the Australasian Survey of Student Engagement has a sixth, work integrated learning (Coates, 2010). The items in the Australasian Survey of Student Engagement are also grouped into six educational outcome measures: higher order thinking, general learning outcomes, career readiness, grade, departure intention, and satisfaction. Increasingly, these surveys are becoming the definition of student engagement; for example, in one study it was argued that, ‘in order to better understand the concept of student engagement, it is important to review National Survey of Student Engagement’s benchmarks’ (Kezar & Kinzie, 2006). This assumes the measure has high validity, an area of considerable debate.

The value of the behavioral approach is explained as part of the complex and multidimensional picture of student engagement, in particular the relationships between teaching practice and student behavior. A particular strength is the inclusion of more distal consequences of engagement with questions about how their time as a student has contributed towards broader life skills such as understanding people of different ethnicities, developing personal values, and contributing to the welfare of the community. A second strength is the popularity of the approach allowing exploration of the impact of a wide range of variables on student engagement such as missions (Kezar & Kinzie, 2006), expenditure and learning communities (Zhao & Kuh, 2004).

New models of engagement are also being proposed such as four way typology of student engagement styles: intense, collaborative, independent, and passive, linked to the common distinction between social and academic engagement (Coates, 2010). However, the behavioral perspective's understanding of engagement is too narrow; a problem that the psychological perspective goes some way towards resolving.

The psychological perspective of engagement is particularly dominant in the school literature and views engagement as an internal psychosocial process that evolves over time and varies in intensity. A key strength of this approach, in comparison to the behavioral perspective, is the distinction between engagement and its antecedents. Various overlapping dimensions of engagement have been proposed including behavior, cognition, emotion, and conation, with earlier work often defining engagement as just one of these, and later theorists suggesting engagement is a combination.

The second dimension, cognition, is illustrated by (Newmann, 1992) definition of engagement as 'a student's psychological investment in and effort directed towards learning, understanding, or mastering the knowledge skills or crafts'. This cognitive dimension most commonly refers to students' self-regulation and effective use of deep learning strategies, as touched on in the behavioral perspective. However, within the psychological perspective, cognition also incorporates individual characteristics such as motivation, self-efficacy, and expectations (Jimerson, Campos, & Greif, 2003).

Drawing on older philosophical constructions of the human mind, a few theorists have suggested that conation, the will to succeed, is a separate dimension of engagement (Kahu, 2013). A much less researched and theorized concept, conation is considered to have six attributes: belief, courage, energy, commitment, conviction, and change. Most theorists however consider the three dimensions of behavior, cognition, and affect adequately capture the psychological state of engagement, with recent studies supporting the view that the dimensions are facets of a single meta construct (Wang & Fredricks, 2014).

The sociocultural perspective on student engagement focuses on the impact of the broader social context on student experience. In particular, theorists have explored explanations for the polar opposite to engagement, alienation, and 'a subjectively undesirable separation from something outside oneself' (Meredith, Geyer, & Wagner, 2018).

Rigby (2010) argued that institutional habitus results in an inherent social and cultural bias within educational institutions in favor of dominant social groups, leading to poor retention of non-traditional students. Similarly, (Clifton & Mann, 2011) stated that influential work identifies

contextual factors such as disciplinary power, academic culture, and an excessive focus on performativity that can all lead to the disconnection of students within higher education.

Christie, Tett, Cree, and McCune (2016) found that the experience of starting university is variously described for some students as a culture shock. Likewise, (Thomas, 2016), uttered that learning shock and akin to being ‘a fish out of water’ illustrating the powerful barrier this cultural difference represents to engagement for many students. This perspective on education is particularly common within feminist literatures examining women’s alienation within the university culture as well.

Oga-Baldwin and Nakata (2017) discussed that student engagement stands out as one of the important variables in foreign language classroom environment. Although different aspects of student engagement have been discussed in language teaching literature, it has been operationally defined in a small number of studies.

Rocconi and Gonyea (2015) defined engagement in the second language learning as learner responses to teacher feedback. Student responses to teacher feedback can be considered as a part of student engagement in a foreign language course.

Philp and Duchesne (2016) argued that student engagement should be conceptualized considering learning environment, tasks and students. Therefore, student engagement can be defined based on language learning processes.

Methods and Materials

Research Design: This scientific article study was conducted using a qualitative approach. It pursued descriptive results. A systematic review of relevant articles was conducted, before and during the study.

Data Collection Tools: This study concentrated on textual materials, and the reliable articles were collected from Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), Google Scholar, and Academic journals.org; Furthermore, the Health Management Information Center (HMIC); was consulted. We borrowed the relevant books from Kabul Education University libraries and the Education and Literature Faculties of Kabul University libraries.

Sampling Method: The study aimed to select the relevant articles, and the materials which led toward the purpose were assembled. First of all, the targeted articles were reviewed, and after reviewing the themes of the articles. The sub-themes emerged. Afterward, the articles were

analyzed thematically. Besides, careful notetaking, evaluation, and interpreting were conducted. Finally, the information was reported thematically without errors and bias, as far as possible.

Sample Size: This qualitative study focuses on secondary data which include research articles and related educational theory books. Throughout the study thirty articles were reviewed; they focused on the development of student engagement in higher education. The unrelated articles were excluded during screening.

Data Analysis: The related articles were reviewed according to the research questions. Marginalia were used to collect information. It paved the ground for data evaluation and synthesis. The information was analyzed thematically.

Study Setting: This scientific research was performed at Kabul University of Medical Sciences Abu Ali Ibn Sina, Afghanistan, and it helps medical students, and English for Specific Purposes teachers to realize the importance of student engagement in learning and extracurricular activities at the university and they recognize the factors which influence the development of student engagement in higher education.

Results

Student should take part in all areas of engagement for successful learning. Student engagement is a broad and complex phenomenon that deals with various areas such as: psychological, social, and cultural perspective. Fredricks et al., (2004) described student engagement as a desired outcome that is reflective of a student's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors about learning. Like, Kahu (2013) identifies student engagement as an "individual psychological state" that includes a student's affect (emotion), cognition and behavior. On the other hand student engagement focus mainly on student behavior, suggesting that student engagement is the "extent to which students are engaging in activities that higher education research has shown to be linked with high-quality learning outcomes" or with the "quality of effort and involvement in productive learning activities" (Kuh, 2009).

Reschly and Christenson (2012) defined engagement as the energy and effort that students employ within their learning community, observable via any number of behavioral, cognitive or affective indicators across a continuum. Further, studies added that students are engaged with meta-construct that comprises of behavioral, social psychological or emotional and cognitive engagement:

Behavioral Engagement: It contains the idea of student participation and involvement in various academic activities. It is proposed that in order to be behaviorally engaged, a student must stick to the norms of the class and abstain from disrupting behavior.

Social or Emotional Engagement: It embraces the sense of identification and importance with the institution drawn by the student and emphasizes on positive and negative reactions of students with their teachers and classmates.

Cognitive or Cultural Engagement: Cognitive engagement of a student is reflected with the level of investment done in learning. Cultural engagement of a student is reflected the self-regulation and effective use of deep learning strategies. This engagement is a kind of investment refers to the exertion of efforts for solving complex academic problems and for the development of skills.

Student should be an active agent of the learning process, while student take active part in all area of learning process that is called agentic engagement. It is defined as the constructive contribution of students in terms of suggestion and question in the flow of information received by students in the learning process.

In order to assist student engagement successfully, the education system should consider the new method of student-centered learning. This method gives student the opportunity to decide two things: what material they learn and how they learn it. This method assists students to be engaged actively in the process of learning where the core of the learning is students. In contrast to teacher-centered approaches, student centered learning engages students as leaders and decision-makers in their own learning.

Christenson, Reschly, and Wylie (2012) defined student engagement as how actively involved a student in a learning activity. But student engagement extends beyond this expressive statement, because it has a purpose, and it occurs for a reason due to which it is considered to be a goal-directed and purpose-driven action. Engaged students are taking action to bring about one or more of the following three purposes which is helpful for education system:

- **Make academic progress:**
Engaged students become better professionals such as better writers, better musicians, and they develop new skills and improve existing skills (Cheon, Reeve, & Moon, 2012). Their gains in knowledge, skills and talent enable certain educational attainments such as doing well in school and achieving higher grades and standardized test scores.
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- **Fulfill their motivations:**

Engaged students satisfy their curiosity, pursue their interests, enhance their self-efficacy and satisfy their psychological needs such as, autonomy, relatedness and competence. By increasing their engagement level, students become architects of their own motivation (e.g., through effort and persistence, student can enhance their self-efficacy (Reeve & Lee, 2014).

- **Create motivationally supportive learning environments for themselves:**

Engaged students seek out for interesting and important activities, and they ask for high-quality teacher and peer support (Reeve & Lee, 2014).

Based on (Doherty et al., 2012) student engagement can positively impact authentic learning and personal development outcomes in certain ways such as, student who engaged in the classroom and students who spend additional time studying and practicing a subject will develop a tendency to learn more about it. Therefore, student engagement assists the learning process to occur in a very satisfied way in the classroom. To develop classroom engagement many methods of teaching should be performed by instructors inside the classroom. For better learning, instructors should pay their most attention for making the best learning environment where students feel free to learn, to ask and to share their ideas. Classroom is a place where learning occurs, so developing engagement inside the class is significantly vital, teachers are responsible to use teaching methods

Being engaged in the classroom also helps student in enhancing their skills, this issue is very necessary for students to have a productive and a satisfactory life after college graduation. For instance, the students who are extensively involved with educationally focused activities while in college classrooms develop habits and rituals that enlarge their capacity for continuous learning and personal development throughout their lifetime. Additional research has indicated that fully engaged students demonstrate higher graduation rates, better grade point averages, better retention and persistence and higher levels of educational satisfaction. Apart from these, team interventions and teachers' role are too of the most crucial measures that contribute towards increasing student engagement in the classroom.

Participation in extracurricular activities is related to students' success in university. Research has focused on the influence of extracurricular activities on academic performance. McCarthy highlights that “Those students who participate in extracurricular activities have significantly higher-Grade Point Average and significantly lower absenteeism. Although these results are consistent across genders, ethnicities, and socio-economic levels, the results show that differences do exist” (Soodak & McCarthy, 2013). The GPA of a student refers to their average grade, which is indicated to increase when participating in extracurricular activities. In addition to the higher grades, those students who participate in regular, organized activities, are found to be absent from university less frequently than those students who do not participate. Naturally, those

students who attend university more frequently are likely to attain higher grades, which would result in a higher GPA. Attendance and grades are evidently positively influenced by participation in extracurricular activities.

Reeve (2012) defined student engagement as a concept in which the learner acts as a subject. The language acts as an object or means of communication. Furthermore, studies described student engagement as a learning theory. Student engagement in foreign language classroom includes certain cognitive situations, affective tendencies, and social attitudes as well as actions and behaviors in the language teaching process. Cognitive engagement requires learners to be alert, focus his attention, and construct knowledge. Autonomy is also considered as part of cognitive participation. An affectively engaged learner should have positive attitude and willingness towards language learning as well as purposeful tendency for learning language. Social participation requires interaction and entrepreneurship. (Svalberg, 2009) states that engagement is a cyclical process that enables learners to develop new awareness by taking advantage of foreign language awareness. Cognitive, affective and social dimensions are also affected by this cycle. Students' fatigue levels, general health levels, emotional states, and classroom task design may affect their cognitive engagement. In addition, affective engagement can be influenced by subject matter, personality traits, and cognitive and social factors such as self-perception and group dynamics. Finally, social engagement can be influenced by friendship, power dynamics and values in classroom (Oruç & Demirci, 2020). Therefore, cognitive, affective, and social factors are interrelated, and in order to understand language engagement, it is necessary to understand how these dimensions interact with each other.

Discussion

The current study attempted to find development of student engagement in higher education, due to reshape students back into the fold of learning. In order to fit the learning needs of students the present study endeavored to explore how the students are involved in the process learning. The study made an effort to organize how the student engagement carry out in English as foreign language classrooms.

Fredricks et al, 2004 defined that student engagement is a broad and complex phenomenon, deals with three areas such as: psychological, social, and cultural perspective. They described that the student engagement is a desired outcome that reflects student's thoughts, feelings and behaviors about learning while the National Survey of Student Engagement (2010) has five engagement scales: academic challenge, active learning, interactions, enriching educational experiences, and supportive learning environment. On the other hand, the Australasian Survey of Student Engagement grouped the student engagement into six educational outcome measures: higher order thinking, general learning outcomes, career readiness, grade, departure intention, and

satisfaction. The mention three definition all talks about student engagement areas. The Australasian survey of student engagement is more complete definition among the three above.

Kezar and Kinzie (2006) explained the value of the behavioral approach in student engagement theory. They argued that behavioral approach is a complex and multidimensional picture of student engagement, in a clearer and more brilliant example, student engagement is the relationship between teaching practice and student behavior. A particular strength is the inclusion of more distal consequences of engagement with questions about how their time as a student has contributed towards broader life skills such as understanding people of different ethnicities, developing personal values, and contributing to the welfare of the community.

Kezar and Kinzie (2006) believed that student engagement is a very popular approach allowing exploration of the impact of a wide range of variables on student engagement such as missions, expenditure, and learning communities. New models of engagement are also being proposed such as four-way typology of student engagement styles: intense, collaborative, independent, and passive, linked to the common distinction between social and academic engagement. However, the behavioral perspective's understanding of engagement is too narrow; a problem that the psychological perspective goes some way towards resolving.

On the other hand, social or emotional approach of student engagement focuses on the impact of the broader social context on student experience. In specific, theorists have discovered explanations for the polar opposite to engagement, alienation, and 'a subjectively undesirable separation from something outside oneself' (Meredith et al., 2018).

Mann's (2001) influential work identified contextual factors such as power formality, academic culture, and an extreme focus on executive that can all lead to the disconnection of students within higher education. Similarly, Thomas (2002) argued that institutional habitus results in an inherent social and cultural bias within educational institutions in favor of dominant social groups, leading to poor retention of non-traditional students.

Christie et al. (2008), described the experience of starting university as a culture shock or learning shock for some students. Meanwhile, researchers agreed with Christie that culture shock or learning shock is like being 'a fish out of water'. As a result, cultural difference represents to engagement for many students. This perspective on education is particularly common within feminist literatures examining women's alienation within the university culture. The purpose of feminist pedagogy is to develop a new standard in the classroom or possibly even take away the standards classrooms hold for male only. For example, feminist try to develop a classroom that is liberating and without any sort of binary. Feminist Pedagogy naturally creates a new method of

teaching, where its skills and knowledge is not just limited to a classroom but rather society as a whole. Classrooms that employ feminist pedagogy use the various and diverse experiences located within the space as opportunities to cultivate learning by using; life experiences as lessons, breaking down knowledge, and looking at gender, race, and class as one.

Feminist pedagogy points out the power imbalances present in many westernized educational institutions. It works toward de-centering that power. Within most traditional educational settings, the dominant power structure situates instructors as superior to students. Feminist pedagogy rejects this normative classroom dynamic, seeking to foster more democratic spaces functioning with the understanding that both teachers and students are engaged, not objects. Development of student engagement in the classroom in higher education specially helps students to reject normative positions of passivity and motivate them to instead take control of their own learning.

By taking action in their learning, students are encouraged to develop critical thinking and analytical skills. These abilities are then used to deconstruct and challenge the issues in our society such as, oppressive characteristics of a society that has traditionally served the politically offensive and economic privileged.

Raby et al. (2021) stated that engagement is a repeated process that enables learners to develop new awareness by taking advantage of foreign language awareness. In order to engage student with learning activities cognitive theory of learning engagement should be considered. Cognitive engagement requires learners to be alert, focus his attention, and construct knowledge. Autonomy is also recognized as part of cognitive participation. An affectively engaged learner should have positive attitude and willingness towards learning as well as purposeful tendency for learning language.

Conclusion

When students take an active part in learning that is engagement. Student engagement performs a vital role in higher education and it assists the students, the institution, and education partners. As institutions and their teachers are putting better strategies into action, the scope of student engagement is more likely to expand in the future. It strengthens students with the capability to acquire and practice the necessary skills to build a successful future. Educationists agree that student engagement enhances knowledge of the actual values, self-confidence and it develops a greater sense of responsibility. Furthermore, student engagement developing student communication skills and it increases their professional skills. Additionally, Student engagement constructs the best relationships with other students, staff, and faculty members and it helps the students to recognize governance within the institution's education system. Beside that in women pedagogy, feminist's scholars and researchers endeavor to develop the female classes regarding to the society based not based on the dominant western union society. As a result, student engagement improves student personality and enhances their skills of critical thinking. Learning critical

thinking skills are necessary for their real life. The teachers must understand that every opportunity to engage students is unique and should tailor accordingly. For example, Behavioral engagement contains the idea of student participation and involvement in various academic activities. Social or emotional engagement holds the sense of identification and importance with the institution drawn by the student. Cognitive engagement is reflected in a student's level of investment that is done in learning. The cultural engagement of a student is reflected in the self-regulation and effective use of deep learning strategies. Therefore, students should be active agents of the learning process. Student engagement is defined as the constructive contribution of students in terms of suggestions and questions in the flow of information received by students in the learning process. Student engagement developed more effectively when both teachers and students participate in the process of learning actively and enthusiastically.

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