



Teachers' Perspectives on Engaged Teaching: Study from an American Curriculum School in Dubai

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Abstract: *An engaged learning environment requires educators to motivate and encourage students to achieve their educational goals. Therefore, a student-centred approach is preferred to the teacher-centred one. The study aimed towards identifying negative and positive implications of engaged learning under the American curriculum system. Special emphasis was placed on schools in UAE and specifically in Dubai, where there has been an increasing number of American curriculum schools. The theories that have been applied in the study include engagement theory, behavioural theory and the Vygotsky's Social learning theories of engaged learning. In addition, the study utilises the various concepts in learning including, constructivist, active, passive, cooperative, and engaged learning. The study applied qualitative research approach in the exploring the teacher's perspective regarding engaged learning in the American Curriculum in Dubai where observations and interviews were done. The key finding of the study is that assessment during engaged learning represented meaningful performance elements and if they represent equitable learning standards applicable to all students. The current study has identified cooperative learning as vital in any form of engaged learning based on the analysis of the interviews and observations conducted in the study. Cooperative learning encourages teamwork and eliminates unnecessary competition in the classroom which can have negative effect on the learning process as well as promotes accountability in the schools.*

Keywords: *Engaged Teaching, Teacher's Perspectives, American Curriculum, Dubai, UAE.*

INTRODUCTION

Bouslama, Lansari, Al-Rawi, and Abonamah (2003), assert that American curriculum involves inquiry-based learning techniques, 'hands-on' teaching methodologies and learning and teaching strategies that concentrate on individualised learning and instruction structure. According to Gaad, Arif, and Scott (2006), American curriculum provides a balanced K-12 program that starts with Kindergarten aged at 5 and concludes upon the award of American high school diploma at grade 12 and age 17. Additionally, the curriculum prepares students to pass the 'Scholastic Aptitude Test' (SAT) and 'Advanced Placement' (AP), with the American high school diploma acceptable for entrance in all US higher learning institutions, in addition to being recognised by global higher education centres (Bouslama et al., 2003). According to Darling-Hammond and Richardson (2009), the most significant issues the study intends to bring out includes understanding the progress that American curriculum elementary schools have made in Dubai, in relation to helping the schools implement Social Studies learning standards. With the focus being on the teacher's perspective, it is important to

understand if the teachers have the required resources to enhance the American curriculum learning standards (Cook-Sather, Bovill, & Felten, 2014).

In Dubai, American curriculum schools must meet various state standards by 'Knowledge and Human Development Authority' (KHDA), representing private schools' regulations and inspections (Collie, Shapka, & Perry, 2012). The areas of great interest include curriculum, assessment, staffing, accreditation and graduation. KHDA requires schools to exceed or meet the common standards set in the US, hence dedication from teachers to promise continuous improvement and excellence pursuit to remain at par with American schools. The curriculum requires creativity and innovation, hence the need to ensure students are engaged in the learning process (Collie, Shapka, & Perry, 2012). Teacher's perspective on how the American curriculum promotes engaged learning is important, including an infusion of the same to the UAE culture to support all round education and achievement.

Generally, an engaged learning environment requires teachers to motivate and encourage students to achieve, rather than forceful teaching that humiliates learners to feel like losers. According to Gaad, Arif, and Scott (2006), there have been cases, where teachers develop a negative learning environment by presenting negative body language and implementing destructive teaching methodologies such as asking hard questions and propose punitive measures for those that fail. It is important for the study top to identify the negative and positive implications of engaged learning under the American curriculum system. Special emphasis has been placed on schools in UAE and specifically in Dubai, where there has been an increasing number of American curriculum schools.

Teachers' perspective shall help identify learner's difficulties when responding to class activities and the likely impact on their learning experiences. According to Barkley, Cross, and Major (2014), collaborative learning is hectic for some learners, hence the need for a skilled teacher to ensure effective teaching outcomes. Another area of concentration includes assessment process, both for individual and group work, hence the need to understand teacher's view and American schools' curriculum in general, on the most successful assessment plans (Gaad, Arif, & Scott, 2006). Through the study, teachers suggested optimum strategies essential in maximising benefits of engaged learning, particularly under the American curriculum.

To understand and analyse ways teachers think concerning engaged learning as an instructional practice, there is a need to listen to their views and perspectives.

The study seeks to increase awareness of teachers on strategies that reinforce engaged learning. In order to meet the main of the study, the study will focus on three objectives listed below;

- *To improve the learning relationship between teachers and students in a classroom environment*
- *To identify major deficiencies of American curriculum system in relation to engaged learning*
- *To identify instructional strategies employed by teachers in an engaged classroom learning environment.*

The study will seek to answer the broad research question on strategies that can be implemented to increase teacher's awareness on reinforcing engaged learning.

- *How can teachers' awareness on strategies that reinforce engaged learning be increased?*

The following research questions will seek to elaborate and answer the main research question of the study;

- *How can the learning relationship between teachers and students in a classroom environment be improved?*
- *What are the major limitations of American curriculum system in relation to engaged learning?*
- *What are the instructional strategies employed by teachers in an engaged classroom learning environment?*

Engaged learning acts as a compass to implement reform instruction and help educators develop an effective instructional course maintaining orientation-based learning. The study's significance includes encouraging engaged learning among schools in Dubai implementing American curriculum to ensure they become responsible. Self-engaged students are self-regulated and have the ability to define individual learning objectives, as well as evaluate their performance.

Engaged learning is important because it energises learning, creating a lifelong passion to become a problem solver, critical thinker and comprehension of class lessons. With the study understanding methods used by teachers to ensure learners are strategic, the study plays an important role in transferring knowledge and solving learning matters in a creative manner (Blair, 2017). It is also significant to understand collaborative mechanisms that include valuing and possessing team skills to work with others in a class setting. The research concentrated on tasks associated with engaged learning that must be challenging, precise, authentic as well as multidisciplinary. The tasks remain complex and take up the sustainable amount of time and authenticity requires classroom tasks to correspond with home as well as the future workplace.

The study intended to establish if assessment during engaged learning represented meaningful performance elements and if they represent equitable learning standards applicable to all students. Another significant variable in the study include instructional models and learning strategised employed in engaged learning. Cook-Sather, Bovill, and Felten (2014) assert that powerful strategic instructional models remain interactive and educator instruction must engage the learner actively and the learning lessons must be generative. Learning instructions permit a learner to develop and create knowledge meaningfully (Cipolle, 2010). Additionally, students must teach their peers in an interactive way, allowing co-construction of knowledge that encourages engaged learning that is a problem and goal-oriented.

Literature Review

Engaged teaching involves the learners in various forms of active learning on psychomotor, affective, and cognitive skill development. The teacher empowers the learners to take part in the learning process. Some of the concepts in engaged teaching are as discussed below: Constructivism theory is a learning theory that is based on psychology. The theory explains how people acquire knowledge, learn and thus is crucial in understanding teacher perspective in learning. In learning, teachers transmit knowledge to student, but the students have the responsibility of actively constructing the learned knowledge in their own minds (Dagar & Yadav, 2016). The constructive theory views the learner as an active agent in the process of knowledge acquisitions (Dagar & Yadav, 2016). Learning as perceived in this theory opposes the perception that learning is a stimulus-response phenomenon but it is a process that is a constituent of self-regulation and development of conceptual structures through abstraction and reflection (Dagar & Yadav, 2016).

Passive learning occurs when the teacher is at the centre of the learning process and the learners listen and take notes during a teaching session without actively making their contributions. Passive learning is considered as a cognitive process where there is limited comprehension in a concept referred as "mind wandering" (Pachai, Acai, LoGiudice, and Kim, 2016). Learners may fail to glean vital pieces of information in passive learning and create appropriate connections to the reality. However, the learner is able to obtain some new information but it is unlikely to integrate with the existing information in the learner's memory since the learner will have a scattering of new unconnected pieces of information. Active learning implies engaging the learners in an active exchange in where the learners are not passively listening as well as taking notes during the class lectures but actively contribute their ideas and thoughts to a relevant collaborative activity or discussions usually facilitated by the teacher. Active learning leads to students escape the traditional of being passive receptors and practice how to apprehend skills and knowledge and apply them appropriately (Kudryashova, Gorbatova, Rybushkina, and Ivanova, 2015). The teacher remains at the centre of the student learning, but they no longer act as the source of knowledge. The function of the teacher in the active learning is to create an environment where the student is engaged in learning in close partnership with the teachers.

Engaged learning has been viewed as a learning process for assisting underprepared students where the students' actions and thoughts are incorporated in the learning process (Krause, 2005). Engaged learning has been attributed to the improvement of students learning and academic achievement than the traditional learning model. Students are known to learn more effectively when they are actively engaged in the learning process. The active participation of students in learning contributes to an array of positive outcomes that include achievement, persistence and academic success (Brüssow and Wilkinson, 2011). It is a two-way process, where learning enhances the experience and experience gained enhances the learning process (Brüssow and Wilkinson, 2011). In the contemporary teaching, engaging students is one of the major challenges in the education sector.

Cooperative learning plays a significant role during engaged learning because when teachers work together with their students, it builds the team spirit instead of competition allowing interaction. In this essence, the primary objective of cooperative learning is positive interdependence (Godwin, 2006). Therefore, the ultimate success of any given group is largely determined by the levels of interaction and collaboration. This educational strategy gives students a good opportunity of ensuring high accountability levels. They are poised to step into various roles based on their hobbies and talents rather than being forced by their teachers to participate or compete (Goldenberg, 2014). Such opportunities for monitoring each other are participation and work quality enhances motivation and interest amongst the students (Clayton, Blumberg, & Auld, 2010). Cooperative learning is a teaching method where learners work together to benefit from group activity. In cooperative learning, students work together to maximise their own and each other's learning (Alexander and van Wyk, 2014).

The three major theories that will be used to address the idea of engaged teaching practice from the teacher perspective in Dubai are as follow: According to Moody, Kostohryzand, and Vereen (2014), the learners are engaged when they spend a lot of time and effort on a specific task or when they become deeply concerned with the quality of their work. Thus, learners become committed to what they do because they see more significance in their work beyond its personal instrumental value. Akey (2006) argued that the learners that are engaged seek out activities both within and out of the classroom making the learning process a success. Vygotsky's social learning theory has been widely applied to explain the dynamics of the learners in the learning process. Vygotsky explained that people learn through their interactions as well as their communication with others. According to Vygotsky, learning occurs when the learners interact with their teachers, peers, and other experts (Cipolle, 2010). Thus, the teachers can come up with a learning environment that makes the most of the ability of the learners to cooperate with each other through active participation in class discussion and collaboration as well as feedback. Culture plays a pivotal role in knowledge construction. Vygotsky's theory is also closely related to Piaget's theory of cognitive development which explains that people are not able to automatically understand as well as use the information given to them since they always need to construct their knowledge prior to the practical experiences for them to create accurate mental images. Thus, Rummel (2008) explained that the essential role of teachers is to motivate the children or the learners to create personal knowledge before real experiences. Psychology became more popular during the last part of the nineteenth century where it was plainly defined as the science of consciousness. Behaviourism became the only field that rejected the definition of psychology as the science of consciousness instead replacing consciousness with behaviour. Since its inception in the late nineteenth century, behaviourism has evolved over a long time and continues to be studied by different scholars (Schunk, 2012). However, most theorists have exhibited significant divergent views especially when it comes to settling on one universal definition of behaviourism and rightly acknowledging the true behavioural theorists.

Teachers play a significant role in aiding the learning process in a behaviourist-oriented learning process. First, the teacher is tasked with designing and presenting the desired behaviour to the learners and providing reinforcement to the learners' behaviours. The teacher is then required to reward the learners when they respond to the desired behaviour in the correct way. However, the teacher should not be concerned about the

feelings or thoughts of the learners but just observe and focus on their responses and the learning outcomes (Harward, 2007). The roles of teachers in the classroom have shifted from that of the giver of information to that of a guide, facilitator, and learner. Thus, the teacher ensures that the learning environment is conducive and that the learners have the correct learning experiences required for collaborative study (Bethell & Morgan, 2011; Tillmann, 2013). As a facilitator, the teacher provides the rich environments that provide learning experiences needed for collaborative studies. On the other hand, the learners play a significant role as explorers who interact with the physical world as well as other individuals to discover the concepts and skills and apply them. Thus, interactive learning environment encourages the learners to reflect upon their discoveries and gain more insight in the process.

According to Lumpkin (2007), action-based learning that characterises engaged learning helps the learners to identify the relevance of what they are expected to learn and also apply the knowledge learned. Therefore, experimental learning is more successful than teacher-centred learning process often done through class lectures in helping students see the relevance of what they are expected to learn as well as in helping them remember and apply what they are learning. However, the traditional method of teaching which involves a teacher-centred model of instruction has been widely criticised as passive and in opposition to engaged learning. The learners are made to listen as the teacher delivers a well thought out lesson in a classroom. Thus, the teacher is the centre of focus. This method of teaching allows the teacher to cover a significant volume of work within a short duration since learning is a one-way communication process. Finally, the teacher administers a test to assess the understanding of the learners. Since the teacher delivers everything to the learners, all the preparation for the learning process is centred on the teacher rather than the learners. Also, the assessments administered only tests the level of understanding of what the teacher taught the learners rather than testing the ability of the learners to modify what they learned.

Teachers play key roles in ensuring the success of engaged learning within the classroom. However, the role of teachers in the engaged learning process is different with the role that teachers play in the teacher-centred classroom. Under the engaged learning process, the teacher is responsible for creating the culture of achievement in class, creating relevant interactive lessons, and encouraging the learners to do more study on their own. According to Janes et al. (2000), the teacher facilitates the learners to create learning opportunities for themselves and solve problems by constructing their own meaning to the problems. Also, Janes et al. (2000) argued that the learners should be allowed to formulate problems and explore concepts that excite during the learning process. Providing the learners with the choices to explore various concepts while learning enhances the learning process. While there is the need for the learners to have the autonomy during the learning process, such autonomy must be structured by the teacher to ensure that the learners remain on the right track while learning. Engaged learning strategy provides students with the opportunity of working cooperatively and purposely. The formation of learning groups is often done in accordance with the objective of instruction, common interests, and the common needs. Cooperative working enables the students to adopt an appropriate problem solving and social skills. Learning is primarily enhanced the moment traditional despotic control is relinquished. This allows the students cooperate interactively together with their colleague with the aim of achieving common goals and objectives. In this case, cooperative learning may only transpire the moment teachers take a bold step of adopting open and interactive teaching skills that embrace mutual consensus between the students and teachers. These are the kind of teachers who do not partake the roles of being the sole sources of knowledge and information, while at the same time playing a role of setting guidelines for enhancing student interactions and behavioural conducts. It depicts an environment in which the students work in small groups that enable them to discuss challenging concepts and to learn how to take control of their learning processes.

Methodology

This work leveraged empirical can be visualized to be located on the top right-hand side of the outermost ring of the Research Onion Diagram. There is need to develop primary data in addressing the research purpose, a data collection mechanism involving the qualitative method approach, premised on the empirical contexts, was adapted to the research exercise. Beyond the generation of empirical data, the thesis required rational interpretation of the qualitative data. The study site was an elementary school in Dubai that had an American Curriculum. The total population of the school was 1480 students and 93 teachers. This population could provide an adequate sample for conducting a qualitative research through interviews and observation. The findings on teacher' perspective can be generalised to the rest of the population on engaged learning. The researcher started by first observing the sampled 100 students, with class observation tool used to measure and enhances teacher effectiveness. The factors the researcher considered included class overview and research using observation as a measure to enhance teaching scales such as class development process.

A study sample simply represents the study participants. In the current study, the researcher selected four teachers for the interview and 100 students were selected for observation. This was sampled from a target population of 1480 students and 93 teachers from the Dubai school. The observations were conducted for the different age groups from grade 5 aged 11 years and grade 2 aged 7 years. In each of the age group to observations were done. The 4 teachers and 100 students served as a convenient and representative sample for the target population and its sampling frame. The sample is a ubiquitous in research and it should not be so small such that it yields scant information or very large to impose ethical, economic and other constraints to the research. Thus, a sample of 100 students against a population of 1480 students was found to be convenient for the researcher to interview and observe considering there were no assistance in data collection (conducting interviews). In addition, the study was qualitative in nature and thus a sample of 100 provided qualitative data that was not too large to render data analysis tedious. For the teachers, a sample of 4 teachers against a target population of 93 teachers was found to be convenient for the research and would provide adequate information regarding teachers' perspective in engaged learning.

Pilot testing includes a process of establishing if the major informant interview guide, as well as observation shall work in the real study by testing it on few individuals. The researcher used various methods to establish how the study participants understood the data collection instrument. The first procedure involved retrospective interview, where the researcher administered interview questions in a similar manner, as well as similar conditions, she planned to conduct actual data collection. During the interview, the researcher recorded the start and end time of the interview, as well as observation. To identify how teachers can encourage active participation and critical thinking inside the classroom. Conduct CPD pilot study with 2 teachers on how to encourage active participation of students. Observe before and after then account the difference. After establishing research questions and objectives, the researcher chose a study design, in this case, observational, by observing what was happening in a particular context, in this case class environment when class sessions were on-going. Observational study draws inferences on impact of exposure as well as intervention on participants in a group, which is observed, with little chance of manipulation (Mann, 2003). The researcher conducted direct observation of persons in natural setting, meaning intervention is determined through individual preferences, and effectiveness of the study.

Delimitations and limitations of a study worked towards clarifying the boundaries, researcher reservations, as well as study exceptions. The researcher delimited the study by narrowing the study scope by focusing on limited variables, participants and sites and narrowing the study design to observational and explanatory study. On the other hand, study limitations included identifying potential study weaknesses (Mann, 2003). The weaknesses were associated with limitations linked to qualitative study that included possible biases from the researcher. More so, since the study was observational, it was likely that the students and teachers could change their normal learning practices, hence reducing the reliability and validity of the study. Ethical

consideration represents most significant aspect in a study. Mirhosseini (2017) explain that every researcher must consider many factors and principles when handling participants. The researcher ensured that during the interviews and observation, none of the participants were subjected to harm in any way. Accordingly, the respect and dignity of all participants was highly valued. The researcher also obtained consent from all participants. The teachers and principal of the school also signed the consent form confirming participation. The researcher also clarified that participants had the authority to withdraw from the study at any time without any restrictions. Additionally, the researcher did not use real names when analysing data, hence maintaining privacy and confidentiality of participants. The researcher used codes to refer to participants (Gajjar, 2013). The purpose of using codes included maintaining anonymity of research participants (Rani and Sharma, 2012). While analysing the collected data, the researcher avoided exaggerations on aim, and study objectives to avoid deception and ensure reliability. To increase trustworthiness, the researcher propagated credibility by prolonging the interview engagement, maintained persistent observation and practised referential adequacy (Goodman et al. 1998). Furthermore, triangulation helped in boosting credibility where the researcher employed varied research questions and used two study participants (students and teachers), where students came from different grade levels, while teachers taught different subjects that included Mathematics, English, and science. The researcher also emphasised on member checks, by asking participants to review their answers that the interpretation of the data by the researcher.

Data Analysis and Discussion

The interviews, as well as observations, showed the significance of engaged learning where a teacher and learner share responsibilities. The interviews demonstrated that teachers had a significant role in facilitating the learning process in a behaviourist-oriented learning process. The interviews revealed that teachers started to design and present the desired behaviour to the learners and providing reinforcement to the learners' behaviours. Some teachers rewarded learners when they responded to the desired behaviour in a correct way. However, some teachers were concerned about the feelings or thoughts of the learners, while others observed student responses and learning outcomes. The interviews presented critical issues regarding learning tasks that promote engaged learning. It was apparent that the tasks must be challenging and multidisciplinary, hence the complexities and amount of time required. The authenticity is reflected in tasks in the class corresponding to those at home, reinforced by collaboration alongside peers and mentors in school and at home. Observation of 100 elementary learners showed that instructional models used by teachers in an engaged class are interactive. However, as much as a teacher would have preferred the students to get engaged in the learning process for the entire lessons, it is not possible. With the learners being young, distractions were common from the observations. However, teachers must encourage learners to construct and develop knowledge in varied meaningful ways as learners interact and continue to teach one another. Observing students and teachers demonstrated that learners conceived the class as a learning community and enjoyed engaged learning, as compared to those that preferred passive learning.

Theme 1: American Curriculum Design: American curriculum was developed from US standards set by 'National Governors Association' (NGA), as well as 'Council of Chief State School Officers' (CCSSO), as well as educators, with the team announcing 'Common Core State Standards Initiative' CCSSI (Kliebard, 2004). CCSSI represents an educational initiative developed by the US detailing learning requirements in English language, arts, history literacy, social studies, sciences, technical subjects and mathematics upon finishing every grade. The initiatives strived towards establishing consistent and apparent education standards in US states and ensure graduating students in high school can comfortably join credit-related courses in college and at the workplace.

Theme 2: American Curriculum in Dubai of inspections: In Dubai, the performance of American curriculum schools has remained unchanged for about ten years. According to Kliebard (2004), over five inspection

periods, American curriculum schools improved performance by 15%, while the outstanding schools performed similarly during that period. DSIB assessed the effectiveness of the curriculum scoring 60%, which was an acceptable quality pass. Interviewed teachers indicated that students achieved better in English and poorly in Arabic. Arabic writing skills have been weak, and there is much need to improve English communication.

Theme 3: Understanding Engaged Learning: The interviewed teacher demonstrated that engaging elementary learners during lessons increase their attention in addition to motivating them to enhance their critical-thinking skills and improves learning experiences. According to Gajjar (2013), instructors that adopt a student-centred approach in class advance student engagement chances and ensure every participant attain set learning objectives. Accordingly, the teacher emphasised that despite having different types of students, active learning entails student participation in class and not just sitting and listening to the teacher. The most employed structure includes having brief question-and-answer sessions, integrating class discussion in a lecture, impromptu writing class assignments, hands-on class activities and practical learning incidences (Gajjar, 2013). A similar view was shared by the interviewed English teacher that insisted there is need to integrate active learning strategies in a course, by first having clear expectations, develop working evaluation strategies and consider feedback from your students.

Theme 4: Strategies Used in Engaged Learning: While teaching elementary learners, it is likely that most could become easily disengaged and daydream, making it challenging for the teachers. Successful competition with other forces affects the consciousness of the young learners. However, teachers must have much influence on learners to encourage developmental procedures. Teachers must show passion, sensitivity, innovative as well as persistence to help students pay attention in class and develop into engaged learners. According to Godwin (2006), through the interviews, it was apparent that teachers implemented pedagogies learning strategies such as the audio teaching versions that compelled students' active learning. Others included frequent feedback by asking short questions, researching on the curriculum, cooperative learning as well as enhancement of learning communities. Some teachers were convinced that when a student paid attention in class, it was termed as engaged learning because it allowed students to acquire knowledge as well as skills. However, there was another crop of teachers that prefer liberal learning, hence wanting more from their students more than just paying attention. Such types of teachers prefer transformative learning, where students must respond to what they have learnt. Transformative learning encourages intensive and personal engagement, with students making attempts to reconcile what they learn with their beliefs and demonstrate growth in their general understanding (Blair, 2017). Students that enjoy engaged learning are likely to hold on to the school values and culture, in addition to acquiring mature cognitive development. According to Barkley, Cross, and Major (2014), when students show intense engagement during a lesson, then they develop values that lead to cultural coherency.

Theme 5: Types of Strategies: The object of Study Engagement: During observation and interviews, teachers that implemented object of study ask students to examine, evaluate and determine the object of study to allow them to build knowledge as a response. The approach is significant specifically in science classes, to allow direct engagement with the study object using empiricism methods. In other subjects, the adopted features include a close examination of students, close reading, as well as rigorous analysis (Blair, 2017). The affected subjects include history, English literature, and anthropology. Engaging a study object always assumes a learning process, even in cases where the teacher does not engage in transformational leadership. The teachers' main concentrations as observed among the learners include teachers giving them priority to provide opportunities as well as student motivation permitting engagement of study objects. Contexts Engagement: Contexts engagement adds other dimensions in learning, including breath, where complementary disciplinary perspective on a particular subject leads to a holistic as well as realistic examination. According to the English Language Arts teacher (*interview 1*), "*When teaching students about on population dynamics of a fish population in freshwater lakes, then there is need to implement practices such as visiting one lake to ensure the students understand the real discussion. By moving students to the*

lake, they will grasp pollution effects as well as weather cycles of the fish population, including the impact on local economy and fishing culture in Dubai".

Theme 6: Challenges of Engaged Learning: Through observation and interviews, the researcher identified numerous challenges that included: The teachers emphasized that every student is unique, with some having abilities in sciences, others in languages, while others perform better in mathematics. Accordingly, other students learn better by reading a book, while another group prefers listening to a lecture and the last group prefers solving school work on their own (Blair, 2017). Every teacher must learn the principle of differentiation, which includes involving many different learning ways to cater for every unique student. Teachers must ensure that every student in the class is engaged and learning. However, the engagement must be linked to school objectives. The learning lessons provided must help the learner advance to other grades, enter and blend in the workforce, as well as help them make better choices. However, there are many incidents that the teacher must consider, such as school assessment programs set by the school management, appraisals, available training for the teachers, assemblies, the relationship the school has with the government and club activities the school engages in. Every teacher must be flexible to rearrange plans and have enough backups for all school-related activities. Lesson and event planning is significant to ensure every teacher understands the resources and tools that students require (Blair, 2017). Accordingly, good planning must be accompanied with good communication to ensure learners obtain educational, psychological, emotional and social school experiences. Since engaged learning encourages discussions among learners, it is likely that arguments will erupt. One student may make an inflammatory statement, hence the need for a teacher to maintain a peaceful learning environment. First responsibility includes maintaining a safe environment for the students, hence prohibiting debates that could turn into personal attacks on others. Even the teacher must keep cool and remain respectful when a student challenges you, to ensure his/her trust in you does not disappear. Another aspect includes looking for a learning opportunity in every argument experiences. One teacher narrated "There is much value when students listen to other people's opposing views, as well as challenging held stereotypes". According to Richardson (2017), the decision includes using the argument content to work as teaching objectives, or if the student learnt better by defusing tension and swiftly turning concentration back to class activities. Some students are very talkative and disruptive, hence derailing the class. When a single student dominates a class discussion, the teacher has a responsibility to request other students to provide their contributions and propose their alternative perspectives. Accordingly, participative strategies remain significant, because a teacher has an opportunity to engage all students (Godwin, 2006). It is important for the teacher to understand that enthusiastic and disruptive students believe, it is the only way to learn and show that they are motivated, hence the need to show appreciation for their commitment and advice ways they can channel the motivation. When a teacher is faced with a class, where the majority of students prefer to remain silent, and the teacher must introduce an opinion and engage in a demonstration to start that important conversation. During observation, the researcher observed such behaviour and since the class was new, the teacher started the conversation by asking every student to introduce himself or herself, mention where they come from, their hobbies and dislikes and future endeavours.

Theme 7: The Effective role of a Teacher: The interviews showed that teachers have a significant role in aiding the learning process in a behaviourist-oriented learning process. The interviews and observations revealed that teachers started to design and present the desired behaviour to the learners and providing reinforcement to the learners' behaviours. Some teachers rewarded learners when they responded to the desired behaviour in a correct way. However, some teachers were concerned about the feelings or thoughts of the learners, while others observed student responses and learning outcomes.

Conclusion

Teachers must develop long-term relationships with both parents and students, which makes it easier to seek help when in need. Schools operate as communities, requiring teachers to understand the culture where the students come from. Including parents in the learning process, builds student's confidence as they move up to higher education learning. When students receive such motivation from home when they come in class, they have the desire to learn and the teacher's role is only to guide, ensuring that the child achieves desires instilled in him/her by a parent or guardian. The research demonstrated the significance of involving teachers in the implementation of blended learning processes. It allows students to accomplish much because teachers challenge them to do much and commit more to their learning process. While past studies on student engagement and self-determination theories suggested student having the sole-responsibility of showing commitment, teachers' role cannot be undermined. The study show that engaged learning success is attainable only when students become responsible for own learning, remain self-regulated, and can define own learning, objectives, as well as evaluate performance. The interviewed teachers believed that engaged learners showed energy and joy when in class, having a passion to solve challenges, inquire from colleagues and teachers, showing analytical and critical thinking skills. The study presented reasons why teachers must maintain open communication, with both parents and learners. Teaching is a challenging profession, but as long as a teacher cares about his/her students, then they go an extra mile to help them succeed. The study ensured teachers understand their professional needs, duties and responsibilities in supporting classroom engagement of classes. Classroom engagement requires effective teaching styles, skills, commitment and professionalism from teachers.

The research process included developing emerging questions as well as procedures and collecting data from the participants' setting. More so, the researcher used the qualitative approach to analyse data inductively starting from specific themes to general ones, followed by data interpretation. The approach was essential because it supported inductive style, concentrated on individual meaning through observation and personal insights (interviews), hence considering the significance of understanding the complexity of participative learning. Observation of 100 elementary learners showed that instructional models used by teachers in an engaged class are interactive. However, as much as a teacher would love for the student to get engaged in the learning process for the entire lessons, it is not possible. With the learners being young, distractions were common as observed by the researcher. The following are the recommendations:

- In cases where there is massive disruptive learning, teachers could place the affected learners near their reach, to ensure close monitoring. According to Goldenberg (2014), a teacher understands the weaknesses and strengths of his/her teacher, hence the need to set student expectations, to ensure they accomplish tasks that are likely to motivate them. However, teachers must not fear giving learners challenging tasks, because failure is the best way of learning no matter how difficult it is to a student. Every teacher must empathize with a learner, even when handling rude students because it is likely that there are underlying issues that must be addressed.
- The learning lessons provided must help the learner advance to other grades, enter and blend in the workforce, as well as help them make better choices. Every teacher must be flexible to rearrange plans and have enough backups for all school-related activities.
- Engagement learning could fail because teachers are not ready or prepared to support it. It is a common feature among novice teachers that are experiencing a difficult transition. Teacher mentoring could help to unblock impediments, by helping teachers enhance their self-confidence, as well as self-esteem. According to Fletcher (2012), mentoring improves teacher's ability to direct, manage and instruct students improving engaged learning. Despite variation in the definition of mentoring, many relate it to coaching.

- Despite teacher mentoring having numerous benefits, the main one includes assisting novice teachers being successful in their teaching profession. The success promotes retention of the teacher in the long-term, helping them build strong relationships with students and improved interaction in class. Mentoring is essential to improve teaching quality for both novice and experienced teachers (Zhang, 2009).

The study may have been limited by the qualitative research approach used. Qualitative approach is limited in the size of the data due to the content analysis and the resources that can be committed in interviews. The observations may also be subjective and thus biased based on the researcher's knowledge, views and experiences. There was high possibility of the role of the researcher affecting the validity of the research findings especially in the observations done by the researcher. However, on the positive side, observational research provided strong validity and in-depth insight on the perspective of teachers regarding engaged learning. The following are the recommendations for future studies.

- With the research being an investigative undertaking, the research yielded various interest points. According to Meyer and Turner (2002), future research could establish new frameworks that explore interpersonal relationships between teachers and students in a class setting. This would make future research findings relevant to teachers and students and even look for a way to integrate school leadership and parents.
- As the study focused on understanding teacher perspective in relation to engaged learning, for elementary students, the researcher became interested in understanding the view of teachers for middle-class students. Same interest grew for high school and university students, with comprehension of how a teacher can take a different approach to build effective student relationships.
- Teachers must move away from normal mentoring and implement educative mentoring that helps teachers use their teaching practice as a learning location, as they collaborate with experienced teachers to enhance co-thinking relationships.

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