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INCREASING STUDENT ENGAGEMENT OF
ENGLISH LEARNERS IN SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE SETTINGS

by
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A capstone project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of Masters of Arts in Teaching.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Overview

COVID-19 catapulted the United States into a national crisis in the spring of 2020 and hugely impacted education. To stop the spread of the coronavirus, the United States limited human exposure outside people's homes. This preventative measure forced nearly all schools around the nation to turn to emergency distance learning, learning that happened online without prepared or preplanned and careful instruction. Many teachers were unprepared for this unforeseen circumstance, and K-12 teachers had to adjust their instruction to complement an online setting within a short time frame before welcoming students to their online classroom (Abou-Khalil et al., 2021). Notably, this type of instruction used technology as a means and platform for teaching and learning, but many K-12 teachers were unfamiliar with using such technology effectively (Dindar et al., 2021).

Nonetheless, K-12 teachers had to learn and adapt instruction the following academic year, when various school districts decided to hold schools in-person, online, or to have students engage in hybrid learning. During this time, I began my student teaching experience, which was far from the norm of a typical student teaching experience. I started student teaching in the middle of the pandemic in the spring of 2021, where I fully distance taught English learners (ELs). As an inexperienced teacher teaching online, I felt challenged to use technology to facilitate meaningful learning, like many other teachers who faced this issue. My educational background did not prepare me for online instruction. I constantly reflected on my teaching as a student teacher and asked myself,

were my EL students interested in what I was teaching? Were they focused on their learning? What was absent from my EL lessons that created a lack of participation during class? How did I utilize my online resource to provide an engaging learning experience? What methods could I have used to encourage my ELs to be more involved in the learning process?

I wrote this capstone to better myself as an English language (EL) teacher. I felt inexperienced in encouraging student engagement online, especially when I needed to adopt unfamiliar teaching strategies. Therefore, this capstone is to educate teachers on effective teaching practices for ELs and has elicited the research question: *How can student engagement of English learners be increased in synchronous online settings?* While there is potential to develop EL engagement within asynchronous online formats further, this capstone focused on student engagement in synchronous online environments. Fischer (2021) stated

[s]ynchronous formats allow direct exchange between instructors and students in interactive learning phases, clarification of open questions and comprehension problems, and collaborative learning among students. They offer an alternative to parts of face-to-face teaching and can thus be a profitable supplement to previous face-to-face teaching methods (p. 1).

As this capstone project discusses further, interaction is an integral part of how teachers can promote engagement directly with students online. The advantage of centering the project on synchronous online learning is that synchronous online instruction has similar aspects to face-to-face learning where teachers and students can interact simultaneously. The benefit of asynchronous formats for learners is that it encourages self-directed

learning (Fischer, 2021), resulting in students learning at different paces. Therefore, for this purpose, focusing the capstone on synchronous online formats is more beneficial for increasing engagement compared to asynchronous online learning.

In Chapter One, I present my rationale for my decision to explore the topic of increasing EL engagement online. I introduce my educational background and experiences as a middle school student, continuing to graduate school. As I explain my experiences as a student, I also provide my teaching experiences associated with student engagement. The following section details my student-teaching experiences in my struggle to engage ELs and reflects the process of how I solved the challenges of teaching online. Lastly, I outline my capstone project, which is the creation of professional development (PD) workshop. The PD informs teachers on teaching strategies and approaches that support the engagement of ELs during synchronous online learning. The objective of this PD is to become a resource many teachers can reference and implement in their own online classrooms.

My Experiences as a Student

I did not enjoy going to school during middle school. Middle school was when many students became less engaged in class (Turner et al., 2014). For me, it was no different. School was a place of learning, but I never felt learning was enjoyable or even sought to self-learn more from school. It became an existence that was required and necessary in life, so any motivation I felt for education was self-motivation to finish school quickly and graduate. Most of my classes followed a teacher-centered approach where traditionally, my teachers would teach the course in the beginning with a lecture or

a presentation, and I would listen and take notes. The teachers neither encouraged students' input in their instruction nor asked us what we wanted to learn in class.

Furthermore, I vehemently disliked whole group classroom discussions during these teacher-centered classes. While the expectation was to participate in these discussions, the format lacked consideration for establishing a comfortable classroom environment that would allow me to express and demonstrate my thinking because I needed time to brainstorm my ideas. This type of interaction between teachers and students was formatted as initiation, response, and evaluation, where teachers would initiate a question to discuss, and students would respond with their answers. Teachers would then determine if that particular answer was correct or incorrect (McGlynn & Kelly, 2018). This format called initiation, response, evaluation (IRE) allowed some students to dominate the conversation while others stayed quiet. I remained silent because many of my peers had already given a good answer. Additionally, the flow of the conversation constantly changed at a rapid speed. I could not follow along because my learning process consisted of thinking first before answering; I felt pressured to find a perfect answer. As a result, the idea of having a response be “right” or “wrong” instilled a fear that I would respond incorrectly, so I did not participate in class discussions, and when I did have an idea, I could not express it before someone else did.

Moving into high school, I wanted to become a teacher. There was no apparent reason I wanted to be a teacher, but my mother, who had worked in the education field, influenced me. It was somewhat contradictory to want to be a teacher because I hated attending school back in middle school. As a high school student, I dreaded attending class because many of my classes were unpredictable, making me uneasy. After all, I

liked to plan everything and be prepared for learning. However, when I changed my perspective from a student to a teacher's perspective, the idea of becoming a teacher, someone who did not have to deal with what a student had to do all day, had me quite interested in the role of a teacher. Therefore, while I hated being a student, I thought being a teacher would be more enjoyable because I would create my own classroom.

I was pretty indecisive about the field of education in which I wanted to teach. While I considered myself a good student in my classes, I was not the best at any subject and had no particular interest in any subject. However, I turned to the field of English language learning because I was proficient in English, so I thought it would be easier for me to teach compared to core subjects like math or science. Additionally, I was quite interested in learning other languages, so I felt like I could relate to the challenges of learning a new language unfamiliar to one's own native language that ELs' faced in school.

My high school learning experiences were typically repetitive, fast-paced, and teacher-centered. In my math class, a typical routine started with reviewing the homework and asking questions. The teacher showed a new concept to the whole group, and the class listened and took notes on the examples. Then, the teacher assigned homework for the students to practice, with me primarily working independently. This type of instruction was not my preferred learning style because of the implicit expectation that I could comprehend and understand how to use the math concept within a fifty-minute class period. Although the teacher was present to help, I was never uncomfortable voicing my thoughts, even if I was stuck on a problem, because the teacher and I did not have a close relationship. I was not comfortable asking for help. As

a student from middle school to high school, the school was not engaging, not interesting, or motivating. Hence, as I reflected on my own learning experiences, these experiences shaped how I wanted to teach: teaching that is engaging, interesting and motivating.

Developing an Interest in School

College gave me more knowledge about becoming an effective teacher through the different courses I attended. I was able to choose courses that interested me, and in them, many instructors implemented a student-centered approach where my peers and I learned from each other. I could share my ideas and thoughts in a comfortable learning environment, and I realized how important it was to learn from my peers. Group collaboration and interaction support students' belief in learning because learners can relate to their peers. This strategy helps them feel more encouraged to share and engage in their learning (Turner et al., 2014).

Additionally, instead of listening to the professor's lecture, we interacted and collaborated on what we, the students, wanted to learn through the course. One class implemented whole group discussions of the assigned readings. We sat together in a circle and faced each other to create an inclusive environment. Instead of starting with whole-group discussions, I had time to share my thoughts with the people sitting around me first. Then, with my small group, we shared the ideas we collaboratively discussed earlier before. Although I dreaded this type of collaboration, partly due to my personality and because of my past learning experiences, I greatly benefited from this method. I got to hear several perspectives different from mine, and eventually, I developed a more concrete idea of the topics we discussed. The time discussing with my peers was enough time for me to brainstorm and situate my thoughts. Moreover, since students were leading

the discussion, and the professor acted as a facilitator, we controlled how our conversations went. This conversation flow was meaningful because we could address what was relevant to us without worrying about a ‘correct’ answer. We dominated the space, and we took control of our learning.

One significant student-led activity utilized in many of my graduate courses was having small groups teach about a topic or subject. I found this assignment powerful because it put me in the teacher role and allowed me to implement my teaching methods to instruct my peers. Further, I enjoyed learning from my peers. However, presenting new information to the class was always intimidating for me. After reflecting on my learning experiences, I recognized that I hated school because my teachers' instructions were not flexible enough to fit my learning style and needs. Even if some teaching styles were not my learning preference, my professors centered the classroom on the students and created interactive lessons, which led to the class being enjoyable and exciting. I realized how a teacher creates their classroom influences how a student behaves and engages in it. Therefore, I continue to aspire to be a teacher who can apply an approach that focuses on my students and their interests. I can thus create a learning environment, opposite my own experiences, in which my future students do not feel the same way I felt when I was learning.

Teaching Online During Student Teaching

My student teaching experience during the pandemic greatly impacted the focus of the research topic for my capstone project. I worked with EL students in grades one through five at an elementary school in a suburban school district in Minnesota. I taught English learners in small EL groups and synchronously met with the students in each

grade level for thirty minutes, back-to-back, using Zoom as the online platform. My overall objective for all grade levels was to teach alongside what they were learning in their grade-level classes. However, I focused on the language features my students would either struggle with, could improve on, or would be beneficial for them to apply to their assignments. This was how my cooperating teacher set up her instruction, so I adapted it to my teaching.

For my classes, I followed a GANAG-style lesson planning format. GANAG stands for goal, access, new, apply, goal. I introduced the goal of the lesson, accessed prior knowledge by asking questions using warm-ups, and then taught new information with teacher instruction. Then I transitioned to having the class do whole group activity to apply the information and review the goal as a closing. After a couple of weeks of fully taking over instruction, I began to notice an increase in the amount of time I spent teaching compared to the time students discussed and worked on the assignments or activities. Since each class was only half an hour, I had to consider whether I was sacrificing time for students to work on the task to fit in more instruction time. Many of my students joined late because they sometimes would have another Zoom meeting that lasted longer than usual. I officially began class about two to three minutes after waiting for the late students to join the synchronous session I was facilitating. The time sometimes extended into group time, so the following small group had to wait for my current group to finish. I felt rushed to cover everything I planned and defaulted to detailing their assignments step-by-step.

For example, my second graders had to create a fractured fairytale. Using a fairytale they read in their English class, I went over the checklist of the elements a

fairytale story contained and asked my students to recall if this specific fairytale had those elements. We discussed the story before telling my students what concepts they should add to their story using a story map. I walked them through an example, and by the time the students were to start on their graphic organizer, the class had ended. I covered essential factors to consider when writing a fractured fairytale, but I did not get a chance to hear my students' voices and thoughts on their writing.

Reflecting on my Teaching Instruction Online. Teaching on a live video conferencing platform provided many challenges, with the struggle of feeling that I never had enough time to implement fun activities. My students were not actively participating during the whole group discussion. There were times when I called on my students that they were not paying attention, so I would have to ask them again repeatedly. I remembered calling on one student to ask about her opinion, and I knew she was not paying attention because her first response was to ask me to repeat the question. I unconsciously started relying more on the students who participated more actively because it was easier to do so to move on to the next part of the lesson. Additionally, online teaching created variables contributing to students' disengagement from the task. For example, some of my students got distracted by their surroundings at home, or some were just not interested in what they were learning and wanted to do other things.

At first, I blamed my limited time in each class, but I began to reflect on my priority in class: to support my students in their core content work or language development. I shared my concerns with colleagues, and they provided terrific feedback. I was too focused on other factors I could not control, like time or students not responding, rather than my actual teaching. My instruction fell short because I was not

using effective online strategies to support my students' language development and fell into a pattern of teaching, practice, and repeating. I did not explore different methods and strategies besides those I was accustomed to, such as whole group discussion, scaffolding assignments, and oral practice. I felt constricted by the teaching style of online instruction because I felt in-person classrooms could implement collaborative learning, student choice, active learning, and inquiry-based learning more efficiently than synchronous online learning. Truthfully, I did not have the knowledge to incorporate that into my online classroom.

Adjusting My Online Teaching Style. I was not satisfied with my teaching situation and acknowledging how ineffective my instruction was allowed me to understand and accept that I could not control everything. Therefore, I shifted my focus from wondering why my students were not engaged and participating in the way I intended; to focus on what I really could control. I started creating instruction that intentionally focused on encouraging students to participate. I limited my teaching to only five to ten minutes at the beginning of class. I moved away from the whole-group discussion to facilitate small-group learning experiences utilizing one of Zoom's features, which was the use of breakout rooms. Breakout rooms in Zoom allowed me to pair or group students together, where students had private spaces to connect. With this method, they had time to practice the language together by talking and sharing their ideas and formulating their thoughts before coming back to the whole group to share their discussion.

Additionally, I experimented with other online platforms to encourage engagement. I stopped solely focusing on supporting them in completing their

assignments and used what they were learning as a basis for activities I adapted to make instruction more exciting and engaging for my students. For example, I used an interactive video platform called Edpuzzle. With Edpuzzle, I used a YouTube video and strategically paused it during specific sections to add comprehension questions such as true/false questions, multiple-choice, or open-ended questions. I purposefully chose an animation that was at the most six minutes long to have my students' attention without boring them with a long video. The lesson was about making predictions, so some questions would ask them to predict what they thought would come next. Each time the questions came up, I informally checked for understanding and engagement, while students would be eager to answer them to continue forward in the video. This method was highly effective in differentiating the levels of proficiency because I could arrange different types of questions for my learners. The higher leveled group would have open-ended questions to explain their thinking, and the lower leveled group would have multiple choice questions.

Another tactic I used was implementing games and competitions, such as hosting a Jeopardy-like game, creating board games, or playing bingo. I incorporated hands-on activities, like drawing on paper or using whiteboards to show their work. My first graders, in particular, liked to share their ideas. Having students write their answers on the whiteboard and having them all show their writing on the screen simultaneously was beneficial in giving everyone a chance to share out and hear each voice in the classroom. Drawing activities greatly supported students' oral and listening skills. The presenter shared their drawing through the screen and explained their thought process. The rest of the class would listen and ask questions or comment on the picture. Additionally, one

remarkable feature of Zoom I utilized was called Spotlight. When a student presented their work through the screen, I pinned their Zoom window to spotlight their screen so that everyone would see the presenter on a bigger window screen.

I quickly realized that hands-on activities were effective ways to have students partake in the activity, even when learning was online. I did not have to rely on online resources to interact with the students solely. These activities that had students use their physical surroundings to share ideas created a space that partially resembled a face-to-face classroom. Another method I used was screen sharing. Before, I only shared my screen. However, I allowed my students to share their screens during whole group and small group discussions, which many of the younger students loved because they could show their perspectives and online work to the class. Experimenting with and learning about different online strategies that could promote engagement remarkably was advantageous in enhancing engagement. When I compared the beginning and the end of my student teaching, I notably saw drastic positive changes in my students' engagement.

Increasing Student Engagement of ELs

As a teacher of English learners, it is essential for my students to acquire the target language, that being English. The purpose of increasing student engagement for English learners is to have ELs use and practice the target language by communicating and interacting. As students are exposed to language, they can partake in meaningful interaction (Vanpatten & Williams, 2014). By encouraging students to practice the target language in a classroom setting, whether in-person or online, negotiation of meaning occurs, a fundamental principle of Long's (1996) interactive approach to second language acquisition. Students must apply new information teachers give them (Zacarian, 2011).

To apply the newly acquired information, students need to use it in context, which means they need to interact with one another using the target language. Therefore, active and cooperative learning is crucial for students' success in learning effectively online.

Stressing the importance of learning the target language, English, was crucial during student teaching, but effectively applying meaningful interaction supported language development. Teaching online during live video conferencing was a challenge, and it was complex. Learning the best methods of improving engagement online by researching them and applying them through trial and error was one of the best ways I improved myself as a teacher. I observed which strategies were effective for teaching my EL students online and refined my instruction. Reflecting on my dissatisfaction as a teacher helped me to seek a better understanding of how to become more effective. Hence, my rationale for this capstone project stemmed from my own teaching experiences. I have created a professional development workshop for EL teachers, mainstream teachers who teach ELs, and co-teachers who synchronously teach online. However, teachers can apply much of the professional development created for my project to in-person and hybrid classrooms. Additionally, many schools have adopted distance learning days into their academic calendar, so even teachers who teach in-person can significantly benefit from this PD for those digital or e-learning days.

The intended outcome of my capstone project is to provide professional knowledge of engagement strategies commonly used in face-to-face classroom settings and adapt these strategies to an online classroom setting to engage ELs better online. Various engagement strategies utilized in the classroom are applicable in online environments, but they may need to be modified to fit the needs of an online classroom

setting (Meyer, 2014). While many teachers have distinct ways of instructing online, I strive to provide essential approaches for teachers to incorporate into their instruction that enables EL students to actively participate in their learning. Overall, creating professional development for this type of learning environment is essential because I assert that student engagement is a critical component of productive language acquisition and needs to be included online just as much as in an in-person learning environment.

Summary

In this chapter, I discussed my experiences as a student and my experiences as a student teacher, which led me to develop the question: *How can student engagement of English learners be increased in synchronous online settings?* While reflecting on my experiences as a student, I realized they significantly shaped my teaching belief. As a student, the lack of student choice and the lack of relevant topics affected my level of engagement and interest in class, but when I experienced active learning during college, my motivation to learn increased. However, experiencing it and actually stepping into the teaching role was a challenging first experience. During student teaching, I succumbed to the same routine. I adopted similar teaching instruction I disliked back in middle and high school because I lacked knowledge of effective online teaching strategies and limited myself to teaching practices I only knew. With support from others and my own personal reflection, I changed my practices by learning new methods to better suit my ELs. I learned what teaching strategies were best to implement for an online environment and focused more on active learning. This experience made me realize that to better improve myself as an EL teacher, I needed to constantly learn effective teaching practices to support my EL students in their learning.

In Chapter Two, I review the literature on the effects that engagement has on English learners. Additionally, I explore research on student engagement in online settings and review the literature on the three dimensions of engagement. I focus on the best approaches to student engagement for online learning and identify engagement strategies and techniques that have been proven effective in encouraging student participation. Chapter Three provides an overview of the capstone project. It describes the professional development (PD) workshop and explains the adult learning theory used to complete the PD. Additionally, it details the setting and participants of the project. Chapter Four summarizes my findings and reflects on the capstone project by making connections to new discoveries made during the project and discusses the limitations and implications of the project.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Introduction

The underlying question of this research is, *How can student engagement of English learners be increased in synchronous online settings?* The basis of answering this question lies with teacher instruction. To achieve effective instruction for ELs, an essential understanding of the components of engagement is crucial for educators. Then, teachers could better understand how to implement effective engagement strategies targeted at English learners. Student engagement in an online setting may vary from an in-person classroom environment, so knowledge of such differences can further enhance student engagement when implementing online engagement strategies. Additionally, understanding how English learners learn, who they are, and what methods and approaches work best for them is crucial when supporting them in their online engagement. Understanding this helps teachers in providing best practices for teaching synchronously online.

Chapter Two concentrates on three vital themes that are significant to the research question: student engagement, English learners (ELs), and online interaction. The first section discusses student engagement and its significance for learning. It examines best practices and approaches proven effective within the three dimensions of engagement: cognitive engagement, behavioral engagement, and affective-emotional engagement. The second section provides an understanding of English learners and the foundation of effective second language instruction for ELs. In particular, this section explores student-centered teaching and discusses how student-centered teaching affects the

learning of ELs. The third section examines what makes online learning engaging by focusing on online interaction. Finally, the last section summarizes the literature that connects all three topics.

Student Engagement

Engaging all students is challenging, and maintaining student engagement can be equally complicated (Neece, 2019; Smiley & Anderson, 2011). Student engagement is a learner's active participation and involvement in academic, school-related, or learning activities (Christenson et al., 2020). Various research has shown the importance of having an engaged classroom and the benefits of having one. Bartlett et al. (2018) asserted that engagement is crucial for students' academic, social, and personal development. Being an engaged learner has students acquire necessary skills for learning such as motivation, interaction, self-regulation, and active learning. These skills are essential for achieving better school success (Cannata et al., 2018). Moreover, student engagement can be an indicator for teachers in identifying students' dedication, or lack of, to their learning.

The literature review looked at teaching strategies to improve student engagement based on EL pedagogical theorems that support language development. The first step in enhancing EL engagement in online settings is to focus on what engagement exactly means and how it is elicited in students through teacher instruction and the lesson. When teachers and students partake in the learning task or activity, students are more likely to be engaged (Turner et al., 2014). However, the nature of the classroom varies depending on how teachers design their classroom practices and how they present productive learning experiences to their students (Cannata et al., 2018). Therefore, Turner et al.

(2014) claimed that instructional strategies highlighting belongingness, competence, autonomy, and meaningful learning could help initiate engagement.

When examining the construct of student engagement, teachers should consider that teachers and students could decipher the meaning of engagement differently. A teacher could think a student is engaged when students are focused, participating, or doing their work without distraction, but a student may believe otherwise (Bartlett et al., 2018). Students could deem engagement as being on task. Additionally, because a teacher's teaching practices and classroom design influence how engaged a student could be, their perception of engagement can vary from another teacher's definition of engagement in the classroom. Yet, the concept of engagement mostly and universally starts with a student being on task (Hiver et al., 2021). Hiver et al. (2021) stated that

[i]n the everyday sense, engagement has a generic meaning related to being occupied or busy doing something. However, in the realm of teaching and learning, engagement extends beyond this and refers to the amount (quantity) and type (quality) of learners' active participation and involvement in a language learning task or activity. (p. 2)

Bartlett et al. (2018) argued that researching this simple view of engagement is insufficient in amplifying more engaged learners. Not only must teachers delve deeper into what accounts for what engagement is, but they also need to examine the factors that influence and shape student engagement. The first step in understanding how to increase engagement in ELs is to break down the major components of what constitutes engagement because the nature of engagement is so intricate. Many studies have researched three primary dimensions of engagement: cognitive engagement, behavioral

engagement, and affective-emotional engagement (Arguedas et al., 2016; Turner et al., 2014; Fisher et al., 2021). These three domains contain certain aspects of a student's interest, performance, and relatedness toward their learning or the influences on their learning. Each dimension is interdependent on one another as learners express the dimensions of student engagement across a continuum (Bedenlier et al., 2020). The following sections provide how these three dimensions of engagement are critical in comprehending how a student shows engagement in each domain of learning.

Cognitive Engagement

Cognitive engagement refers to a student's engrossment in acquiring new knowledge, comprehension, and skills (Cannata et al., 2018). It examines to what degree students are investing and putting effort into what they are being taught and to what extent students are grasping and acquiring the information they are learning (Cannata et al., 2018). With cognitive engagement, learners scrutinize mastering the material teachers teach them. Furthermore, they strive to apply it to their experiences (Newmann, 1992). However, research showed that many "students invest much of their energy in performing rituals, procedures, and routines without developing substantive understanding" (Newmann, 1992, p. 12). It is not the act of simply completing a task or assignment or receiving grades or scores that determines whether students are cognitively engaged in their learning. Being invested in one's own education causes a student to considerably comprehend the content. Cognitive engagement develops competence and autonomy in students, two essential elements for students' learning development (Neece, 2019).

It is challenging to measure cognitive engagement in students because it is not overtly apparent in physically observing (Christenson et al., 2020). Cognitive

engagement is covert in that engagement usually happens within the mind. However, some visible indicators do exist, and teachers may be able to recognize them. For example, it can occur when students demonstrate self-efficacy, value learning, plan and invest time, and self-reflect on their learning performances (Christenson et al., 2020). Other indicators of cognitive engagement include problem-solving, creating objectives for oneself, and making plans for learning (Fisher et al., 2021). Duncan (2020) recommended game-based learning to enhance students' engagement as it develops four critical skills: collaboration, communication, creativity, and critical thinking.

Within game-based learning, each aspect interconnects with the other. Creativity produces essential skills of thinking as a student creates their own ideas. Thus, when learners collaborate and share their thoughts, critical thinking skills are heightened because they formulate their thinking together. During the collaboration, students use communication skills to discuss and engage in the task (Duncan, 2020). Therefore, all these notions enhance the learning experience and increase cognitive engagement for students. Neece (2019) recommended that students develop cognitive engagement behaviors that have students delve deep into their own learning. This can be done through the process of students interactively working together and building off of each other's thoughts and views, and managing their mistakes while teachers assist in their interaction.

Barber et al. (2016) researched the role of cognitive engagement of eight Spanish-Speaking middle schools English Learners during reading instructional activities. Barber et al. (2016) defined cognitive engagement as the tenacity in doing more than required. Data of student engagement were recorded based on teacher and students' self-observations and classroom video recordings. The researchers observed the

videos and assessed if students were cognitively engaged based on the factors of if students showed more effort than the minimal requirement of understanding the ideas. They explicitly looked at students' reactions to the reading activities: guided reading, class discussion, guided reading with the teacher, and teacher modeling. They used coding schemes, scoring their engagement from zero to four. A score of zero meant students were not engaged at all, while a score of four meant that students were highly engaged, and the numbers ranged in between meant that students were somewhat engaged.

The results in guided reading showed the score spanned from 2.04 to 2.73, meaning that most students were cognitively engaged and guided reading with the teacher had similar results. There were different measures in the class discussion activity, with one student being highly engaged while the others had a lower score for cognitive engagement. For teacher modeling, the students were more cognitively engaged compared to class discussion but less engaged than guided reading. The research concluded that guided reading engaged students more than the other activities because it allowed students to monitor their own learning. Additionally, they thought that making whole group discussions more engaging would be more helpful for all ELs.

Student interest is an essential factor for teachers to implement into their lessons. When students see that what they are learning is relatable to them, their interest heightens. Therefore, activities like guided readings and whole group discussions should be flexible and incorporate student choice to implement self-efficacy.

Behavioral Engagement

Behavioral engagement is a student's performance and actions in the classroom and school environment (Cannata et al., 2018). This engagement domain is often associated with students' behavior and participation in school, and this dimension of engagement is the most visible compared to the other two dimensions of engagement (Fisher et al., 2021). Davis et al. (2021) suggested that teachers should consider how students' behavioral patterns can impact their performance in school, motivation in learning, and comprehension of the content. Christenson et al. (2020) also discussed interventions for behavioral engagement problems based on general indicators of behavioral engagement such as attendance, behavior incidents, and classroom participation.

In retrospect to student engagement, the literature focused on the behavior side of classroom participation. Student participation examines whether students are prepared or are participating in the classroom or after-school activities. Studying a student's pattern of behavior using these broad behavioral indicators is informational in gathering data and evidence to figure out possible positive ways to support students in their behavioral engagement. This is important because behavioral engagement can significantly affect students being engaged in the classroom. Looking past the surface of a student's behavioral concern and focusing more on intervention efforts that encompass their strengths is substantially beneficial for students to get them to participate in their learning during class (Christenson et al., 2020).

Additionally, considerable research has determined that classroom instruction impacts student behavioral engagement (Cannata et al., 2018). Bagriacik Yilmaz and Banyard (2019) stated that online classroom design influences student engagement. In

correspondence to this, Rienties et al. (2018) found that how teachers create their content affects students' online behavior. Implementing numerous ways to learn along with interactive and productive activities can help to increase online behavioral engagement.

Another factor that influences behavioral engagement is teacher-student and peer status relationships. Engels et al. (2018) studied how social relationships in the classroom affected active participation of adolescent students during learning activities in Belgium by exploring transactional associations of these relationships. Positive and negative teacher-student relationships can affect behavioral engagement because teacher involvement and supportive relationships are advantageous for behavioral engagement (Engels et al., 2018). Peer status in adolescents is the social construct of hierarchy within a set of peers, with the study focusing on popularity and likeability. The study collected data about students' behavioral engagement from a questionnaire.

In the results, Engels et al. (2018) found that during secondary education, behavioral engagement decreased in teenagers. This research aligned with Turner et al. (2014) assertion that engagement declines during middle school. Additionally, the study revealed positive relationships between teachers and students showed more behavioral engagement than negative relationships over time. In reference to peer status, higher levels of popularity in adolescents created lower behavioral engagement. Therefore, understanding the social relationships and dynamics of teachers and peer status is essential to comprehend how these constructs can play a factor in influencing behavioral engagement. Thus, maintaining positive student-teacher relationships and being aware of the peer dynamics are significant for increasing behavioral engagement.

Affective-emotional engagement

Affective-emotional engagement looks at how connected students feel toward individuals and the influences contributing to their learning (Cannata et al., 2018). The relationships learners have with peers, teachers, learning, and the learning environment impacts their sense of belonging as an individual in school. Many learners connected and associated with these relationships are more feasibly able to advocate for themselves by asking questions or asking for help, taking part in discourse, and showing interest in the content (Fisher et al., 2021). Davis et al. (2012) suggested that to understand when students are emotionally fully engaged in their learning, teachers should consider how their students' emotional behavior shapes how they learn and perform in their classrooms. Lawson and Lawson (2013) proposed how students distinguish themselves from their peers, teachers, and school impacts how they respond to the learning context. Furthermore, affective-emotional engagement looks at students' emotional responses concerning their feelings of belonging. Gaining an insight into how emotions can affect students' learning enables teachers to implement methods that support students' participation effectively.

Positive and negative emotions can influence student participation. Zhu et al. (2019) explored the correlation of different emotions and how they participated in class. They discovered that the more students participated in activities, the more likely they manifested positive emotions. Additionally, negative and neutral feelings such as being surprised or challenged were also advantageous because students become curious when they want to understand the content. Students must be aware of their own emotions as well. Arguedas et al. (2016) stated that emotional awareness significantly affects a student's learning outcomes. Their study looked at the correspondence between

emotional awareness and academic success and discovered a positive correlation.

Students who were emotionally aware of their feelings were more likely to convert their negative behaviors than those who were unaware. They were consciously aware that their emotions affected their behaviors and thus adapted their feelings to perform better.

Student emotions affect how engaged a learner can be during learning. Therefore, teachers should maintain positive relationships with their students to prevent disengagement. Many students who face negative feelings, but have positive relationships with their teachers, are more likely to be open in their emotions to their teachers. Then, teachers implement strategies or methods for their students to change their feelings.

Student Engagement in Online Settings

Students experience student engagement differently in a face-to-face and online environment. While some indicators of student engagement in both settings are similar such as learners putting more effort beyond the standard, student engagement in online settings also has different indicators. Additionally, within these indicators, learners experience student engagement differently based on the positive or negative relationships and high or low experiences in learning (Bond et al., 2020). According to Khlaif et al. (2021), online student engagement is defined as partaking in the online classroom by being present during live (synchronous) and offline (asynchronous) classes. Students involve themselves in collaborative activities and become “a knowledge producer (recording a short video to explain an idea, designing a PowerPoint presentation)” (Khlaif et al., 2021, p. 7036).

Furthermore, Fisher et al. (2021) stated that engagement is a continuum from passive engagement to active engagement. When learners do the activity, they passively

engage and show their participation. However, when learners are invested in their learning and drive their own learning, they are actively engaged. Learners shift between these continuums, but student investment and student drive are essential for active engagement. A framework that supports students to be invested and driven in their learning comes from Chickering and Gamson (1989).

Chickering and Gamson (1989) provided a framework for student engagement that named seven principles for good practice in undergraduate education that is highly adoptable for K-12 education. Chickering and Gamson (1989) stated that good practice (1) promotes student-faculty contact, (2) supports collaboration between peers, (3) encourages active learning, (4) provides adequate and quick feedback, (5) stresses time on task, (6) presents high expectations, and (7) respects diverse talents and ways of learning. While these seven principles were designed for face-to-face instruction, many researchers assert that the seven principles are applicable for virtual classrooms and technology-based online learning (Bagriacik Yilmaz & Banyard, 2020). Teachers incorporating all elements of good practice can promote active engagement.

Educational technology plays a major role in improving student engagement as educational technology facilitates students' behavioral, cognitive, and emotional engagement (Bond & Bedenlier, 2019; Chiu et al., 2021). However, it is not because of technology that students become engaged (Bond et al., 2020). Deliberate design in instruction and effective methods and practices of using technology prepare learners for their learning and engagement (Fisher et al., 2021). As the medium for online learning, technology does not play a significant role in effective engagement. Instead, the function of engagement (finding information, using information, creating information, sharing

information) creates engagement opportunities to enhance learners (Fisher et al., 2021). Then, teachers can use technological tools as resources to support the function.

English Learners

The percentage of students coming from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds is increasing in the United States (de Oliveira, 2019). The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) stated that in 2000, the number of English learners enrolled in public schools was about 3.7 million. This number tripled in the fall of 2010 to 4.5 million EL students (9.2%) and has steadily increased to 5.1 million students (10.4%) in the fall of 2019 (NCES, 2021). This data shows that the number of ELs in public schools is growing. ELs are confronted with learning a new language while simultaneously learning core academic subjects, which can create a barrier to their academic achievement compared to their native English-speaking peers (Soland & Sandilos, 2021). This barrier can further impede educational achievement when English learners receive instruction online (Abou-Khalil et al., 2021). One of the reasons why learning online can be difficult is because, traditionally, schools in the United States are centered around face-to-face learning (Dindar et al., 2021). Many teachers are not accustomed to teaching online, which as a result, could cause ineffective teaching for ELs. While many EL teachers understand the importance of applying various teaching strategies for ELs like differentiation or scaffolding, it is not just the role of EL teachers to support ELs. All teachers must be knowledgeable about how to support their English learners effectively. Hence, there are many strategies and methods to do so; a starting point is engagement.

Encouraging student engagement is pivotal for English learners because engagement supports learners' language development. Opportunities for engagement come from and are fostered through teacher instruction. Turner et al. (2014) studied how teacher instruction increased engagement by having middle school teachers learn about motivation and engagement strategies through professional development. The upward group attempted new practices by providing more motivational support. They were encouraged but not pressured to apply instructional strategies based on the PD. Another group, the stable group, implemented a lower trajectory for motivational support. In their observations that lasted three years, they measured student-teacher interactions during instruction. The results were that the upward group refined their instruction and engagement each year, especially years two and three, showing higher engagement levels than the stable group. The research of Turner et al. (2014) reflected the notion that when teachers are willing to try and experiment with new motivational and engagement frameworks or strategies, there is a higher percentage of encouraging teacher-student interaction in their instruction. Hence, the role of teacher instruction is essential in creating an environment that encourages students to be engaged in their learning.

Newmann (1992) indicated that the social-cultural background of learners is one of the factors that influence engagement. How students perceive schooling or their motivation can also affect how they invest their time in learning and academic performance (Chiu et al., 2021). That being so, teachers must consider how their instruction and their English learners' beliefs, values, and views on schooling can affect English learners' learning development and performance. Consequently, pedagogical practices in English as a second language (ESL) in K-12 education is central to

understanding best practices for teaching English learners and supporting their language acquisition. The following section delves into these vital frameworks and strategies, particularly highlighting interaction as a focal point in teacher instruction for opportunities to increase engagement.

Second Language Acquisition

Early second language instruction, also known as L2, often focuses on acquiring explicit linguistic knowledge of the target language (Loewen, 2015). For example, teacher instruction included teachers teaching grammar for ELs to memorize, asserting control over what students would learn, or being highly structured (Taylor, 1983). However, research has shifted to another perspective: using the target language for interaction. L2 instruction centered its pedagogical practices on increasing learners' ability to use L2 in real-life contexts (Loewen, 2015). Taylor (1983) also asserted that language learning occurs when learners communicate purposefully with the target language in relevant and real-world contexts. Then, L2 learners could achieve communicative competence, the skill to constructively and competently exchange words with other speakers of that language in various contexts (Taylor, 1983). Therefore, educators who work with ELs need a fundamental understanding of second language acquisition. Second language acquisition theories drive the development of effective instruction for ELs. These theories can provide their learners with authentic learning experiences that offer opportunities for knowledge on implicit learning (knowing the language) and explicit learning (knowing *about* the language), meaningful communication, and application of their learning.

Krashen's Theory of Second Language Acquisition. Many researchers have discovered various theories for second language acquisition. One theory central to second language acquisition developed in the early 1980s is Stephen Krashen's second language acquisition theory, the Monitor Theory (Vanpatten & Williams, 2014). Krashen (2013) stated, "[w]e have two very different ways of developing ability in another language: We can acquire language, and we can learn language" (p. 1, emphasis in the original). The Monitor Theory then attempts to describe the phenomena of language learning and explains why learning is sometimes never acquired even though instructors teach the content. Within this theory, Krashen (2013) introduced five interrelated hypotheses: the acquisition-learning hypothesis, the monitor hypothesis, the natural order hypothesis, the input hypothesis, and the affective filter hypothesis.

In the acquisition-learning hypothesis, the construct of acquisition and learning is distinct from the other in that they are two independent processes of comprehending language. Acquisition is acquiring knowledge of the language through natural unconscious communicative interaction of the L2, while learning is the explicit, formal instruction of the target language. These two processes are not reciprocal. A learner can learn grammar rules and understand them but may never produce them in spontaneous conversations because they have not acquired that knowledge. However, with the monitor hypothesis, the teaching system acts as the monitor for learners to draw upon this conscious knowledge during tasks that provide time.

The natural order hypothesis indicates that learners learn grammatical structure in sequential order. Within the input hypothesis, the learner acquires the target language through comprehensible input, marginally above the learners' current level of language

competence through meaningful communication. Li (2016) stated comprehensible input is when learners understand the meaning of the message in the L2 regardless of not making sense of all the words or arrangement of words (Li, 2016). Krashen (2013) described comprehensible input as language acquisition occurring when learners comprehend the target language even when language has not been acquired yet through vocabulary and grammar. The last construct is the affective filter hypothesis which Krashen (2013) defined as a learner's behavior that influences their development of second language acquisition. High affective filter emotions in learners, such as motivation, confidence, high self-esteem, low anxiety, and other variables, allow learners to be more responsive to language acquisition (Li, 2016).

Krashen's theory imparts a deep perception of why L2 learners react to teaching the way they do (Hong, 2008). The Monitor Theory provides observations of the phenomena of second language acquisition, in which researchers attempt to give an underlying explanation for why such phenomena occur (Vanpatten & Williams, 2014). Knowing why a learner acquires or learns in a certain way helps teachers gain insight into creating effective teaching strategies beneficial for language acquisition and learning. Therefore, Hong (2008) suggested that classrooms should integrate theories such as this one into classroom practice and be an educational framework for promoting second language development.

Online Interaction

Over the years, educational learning opportunities have transformed into alternate classroom settings, such as online environments (Moore & Kearsley, 2011). Additionally, the pandemic pressured a prompt move from face-to-face learning to online learning,

relying on technology for the delivery of learning. The transformation in technology and new technology has reshaped teaching in distance learning. Distance learning is when teacher instruction and student learning occur in separate spaces. Technology becomes a tool to facilitate communication and interaction as teachers and students are physically distanced from each other in their instruction and learning (Moore & Kearsley, 2011). Therefore, online learning, e-learning, and online education can be regarded as a kind of instructional structure relating to distance education. Using these technologies has become a central aspect of distance learning, but McBrien et al. (2009) asserted that students face insufficient interaction in an online classroom. Teachers must be purposeful and conscious in guiding the interactions that occur online.

Interaction is crucial for promoting student engagement in the classroom, especially in online learning. Bond et al. (2020) stated student engagement is “shaped by a range of structural and internal influences, including the complex interplay of relationships, learning activities and the learning environment” (p. 3), and interaction is one indicator of engagement. Therefore, understanding how interaction influences engagement is crucial when trying to increase engagement. However, this type of learning becomes more challenging to engage students than in a typical in-person classroom setting because students are physically learning away from their peers, teachers, and school (Banyard & Yilmaz, 2020).

An online platform that connects each other with technology has both teachers and students facing difficulties with unpredictable variables. For example, teachers having a lack of online resources adequate for interaction, learners unaccustomed to learning, talking, or sharing ideas in an online environment, teachers who have an

insufficient amount of training in using technology in ways that impart significant possibilities for interaction, or teachers lacking the knowledge of how to model such interaction for learners (Altavilla, 2020). These variables could potentially prevent students from actively participating in a synchronous classroom. Yet, Lev Vygotsky (1978) declared that “learning is a social process” (as cited in Neece, 2019, p. 17). Students learn through others from the social interaction they deliver when speaking with one another. They continuously learn from these interactions as they associate with their peers through collaboration and communication within a social context.

English Learners and Interaction

Interaction is arguably vital in shaping the language learning of English learners. ELs learn from each other as they converse and participate in classroom activities. Their interaction encourages language development because they use language to aid their learning. They associate with and engage in the language in a manner that elicits collaboration and communication. Altavilla (2020) claimed

[i]t is by participating in everyday conversations *and* school-based discussions about rich, grade-level content that they improve both their comprehension of complex ideas in spoken English and their fluency in both academic and informal ways of using the language. And that holds true whether the discussion happens in a face-to-face setting or via technology (p. 20).

The setting where learning occurs does not necessarily affect how learners interact with each other, their teachers, and their learning. Swain and Lapkin (1998) perceived language as a mechanism for conveying words and as a device to process ideas, which both concurrently operate together. Tarone and Swierzbien (2009) explained that it is the

action of co-producing thoughts, ideas, and information in which learners perform collaboratively by exchanging language to support and accomplish what they cannot attain independently. ELs' various interactions with their peers, teachers, and the content create diverse learning opportunities and language use. That being so, they are more likely to desire to learn and be motivated while less likely to feel isolated from their online learning environment (Abou-Khalil et al., 2021). To create an engaging environment for EL students, teachers must comprehend the dimensions of online interaction and its approaches.

Moore's Model of Interaction

Various studies have established interaction is crucial in an online setting. Michael Moore's model of interaction is a framework that asserts three types of interaction in distance education. Students interact with their peers, teachers, and the content. Each of these interactions influences the way students are engaged in their learning. Research on students' interaction with their teacher, their interaction with their classmates, and their interaction with the content may determine effective strategies for supporting engagement in online contexts. Furthermore, understanding each type of interaction is essential in deciding which medium is appropriate to apply during instruction (Moore, 1989), so learning can be meaningful.

Student-student Interaction. Student-student interaction, also known as learner-to-learner interaction, is active learning and interaction with classroom peers in an online setting, with or without the absence of a teacher present with them (Moore, 1989). This type of interaction is significant for learning online because activities that highlight communication and involvement guide learners together in an online and distanced space

(Martin & Bolliger, 2018). Some activities include online discussions, group work activities, and activities that incorporate the use of social media (Martin & Bolliger, 2018; Meyer, 2014). Additionally, student-student interaction reflects working together and gives students opportunities to provide support and problem-solve together (Meyer, 2014). McBrien et al. (2009) suggested utilizing synchronous conferencing programs or programs with video communications for effective social communication. For example, Google Meets or Zoom has various functions incorporating user interaction, such as chat, video sharing, polls, reaction, and hand-raising that support communication and collaboration.

With technological considerations in online learning, Bedenlier et al. (2020) accessed and used literature about student engagement to create a framework of how educational technology can increase student engagement. They recommended online tools like website creation, mobile learning, and assessment tools. Their findings showed that using these resources behaviorally engaged learners to participate, interact, and contribute to the online learning activity. Students feel more comfortable interacting with their classmates online because they feel less stress communicating distance than in-person. Additionally, Zainuddin et al. (2018) studied the effectiveness of Moore's model of interaction in a flipped classroom. They discovered that the aspect of interacting with their peers after class online is beneficial for students to practice and review the content. Through this process, they inquired about new information with each other as they exchanged knowledge and ideas. However, teachers must recognize that social interaction using technology must be purposeful to the specific goals they set for their students to foster language development or content learning (Altavilla, 2020).

Student-teacher Interaction. An overarching purpose for teachers is to develop critical and deep thinkers. To do so, teachers support students by providing new knowledge, experiences, and opportunities for learning development (Meyer, 2014). Students and teachers collaborate and are involved in the learning task or activity during student-teacher interaction. Teachers design content to be motivating, present knowledge and new information, guide instruction, and provide effective feedback and response for students (Moore, 1989). Along with synchronous sessions, teachers usually use an online learning system, like Schoology, Seesaw, or Google Classroom, that acts as the online classroom for uploading content, assigning assignments, having discussion forums, or providing resources to students. Payne (2020) suggested bringing conversations from asynchronous discussion forums during live video conferencing is significant in promoting assurance in students to actively participate during synchronous class time. From a student's perspective, teachers acknowledging their comments in the discussion forums within the synchronous classroom displays the value of actually taking part in the discussions.

Abou-Khalil et al. (2021) indicated that in an online classroom, teacher presence is necessary for online discussions and online discussion forums to facilitate online learning. However, Vaughan et al. (2013) asserted that instructors should guide the discussion and avoid taking control over the conversation so students can share and partake in the exchange. Meyer (2014) indicated that teachers who dominate the discussion often inhibit student input as they feel the teacher's input is enough. Hence, teacher interaction should depend on the grade level, the objective in the online discourse, and the instructor's observation of if teacher input is necessary to support

student conversation. Martin and Bolliger (2018) also stressed timely student feedback and claimed that student-teacher rapport is pivotal for providing meaningful learning. Zuinudden et al. (2018) also stated that instructor feedback is needed to enrich students' knowledge and comprehension of the content.

Student-content Interaction. Student-content interaction is when a student engages in activities about the content using various forms of multimedia, videos, and technology. Martin and Bolliger (2018) stated that the best method of engaging students has content instruction that reflects various formats. Meyer (2014) also indicated that diverse ways of presenting content, such as visually or using real-world applications, make learners feel less disconnected from the content. Wolpert-Gawron (2018) also stated that teaching must be more visually appealing. In Wolpert-Gawron's (2018) student survey about student engagement, students responded that learning needs to be more visual, and utilizing technology is one way to deliver the visuals.

Visuals are an essential tool to use for all students, especially English learners (ELs). Wolpert-Gawron (2018) asserted that visuals "can be a universal part of our communication system that helps students express themselves. They can attract attention to the important elements of a concept. Visuals make abstract learning more concrete" (p. 42-43). Visuals not only support ELs in understanding abstract concepts but also assists ELs in language instruction because visuals show tangible and relatable ideas or images that help ELs understand the new concept or word if they know the word in their first language (Hur & Suh, 2012). When the use of visuals supports the content ELs are learning, not just supporting the language, ELs gain more understanding and can better

relate to the content because an image or picture enables ELs to connect their first language and English.

Using creative websites and online resources creates opportunities for content to transition from traditional teaching methods to presenting content more interactive, creative, and meaningful. Especially with the development of online resources, teachers can utilize resources intended for various topics, such as learning management systems websites, classroom presence (presentations, classroom management, ice breakers), and tools websites (Bitmoji, Piktochart, Canva). Flexibility, videos, and visuals are helpful for engaging students (Martin & Bolliger, 2018). Therefore, digital tools like digital storytelling, Bookcreator, or Edpuzzle are some websites that can enhance engagement.

Hur and Suh (2012) implemented a case study, asking the question, what are the effects of integrating three digital technologies (interactive whiteboard, digital storytelling, and podcasting) in an EL classroom of third and fourth-grade EL students in acquiring language proficiency? Data was collected in various ways, such as student surveys, teacher interviews, classroom observations, students' photo story projects, final grades, and through informal meetings. The impact of incorporating digital technologies into an EL classroom was highly positive. The EL students' language proficiency, such as their vocabulary skills and comprehension of the content, immensely improved as the data compared their pre-vocabulary test to their post-test and looked at their report cards. The project was helpful to students who needed more practice with their speaking skills. Additionally, many participants loved using these technologies, which gave them a positive experience using the digital technologies for their learning. Therefore, providing ample interactive opportunities delivered through digital technology such as digital

storytelling, interactive whiteboard, and podcasts allow ELs to actively participate in their learning and develop their language proficiency.

Zainuddin et al. (2018) also asserted the effective use of videos. Students interact with the content through the option of being able to stop, rewind, or pause video content accordingly. In synchronous classrooms, teachers can record lessons and post them on their learning management system website for students to rewatch or refer back to take notes or review the lesson. Zainuddin et al. (2018) stated that for videos to be engaging, students prefer short videos instead of long videos. Similarly, Abou-Khalil et al. (2021) determined helpful strategies such as applying various multimedia formats, allowing students to record or take pictures throughout the lesson, and giving out practice assessments to support students' comprehension.

Approaches and Strategies to Engagement for ELs

Research in effective practices may aid in discovering underlying methods and components that may increase or hinder EL engagement. Approaches in second language acquisition and engagement strategies are reciprocal as instructional strategies for ELs emphasize engagement as a crucial component of language development and acquisition. Teachers should determine which methods are helpful for their learners and modify teaching to meet their learners' needs (Hong, 2008).

Student-centered teaching is essential for teachers to incorporate into their instruction for effective language development for English learners. Hong (2008) specified that having a student-centered classroom, interchangeably referred to as learner-centered, is a pedagogical approach for supporting second language acquisition. In a student-centered classroom, teachers design instruction to match the needs of

learners and encourage them to be independent learners who take responsibility for their learning. Teachers model the target language, provide constructive feedback and implement effective classroom management strategies to facilitate learning (Taylor, 1983). Weimer (2013) also stressed facilitative teaching, where teachers guide learners to actively engage in the content by implementing tasks that can support their learning and having learners explore their learning rather than explicitly teaching them.

The concern of instruction is not what the teachers are doing but is centered on the learners' skills and if they are acquiring the knowledge. Observing their strengths and abilities they do and do not have is indicative data for teachers to utilize in accommodating instruction to be more effective. Student-centered approaches are about meaningful and relevant learning. Additionally, student-centered teaching is the opposite of teacher-centered teaching. Students are not jotting down notes their teacher provides for them, nor are they simply listening to the lesson. Students contribute to their learning by creating examples, problem-solving with others, asking questions, and explaining their thinking to engage in deep understanding (Weimer, 2013). Dincer et al. (2019) recommended that teachers encourage their students to ask for advice and contribute to the classroom and instruction. The following sections discuss teaching strategies adopted for a student-centered approach.

Project-based Learning

One pedagogical approach to student-centered teaching is when teachers allow students to explore and engage in their learning through real-world situations and challenges (Nagarajan & Overton, 2019). Learners direct their own learning while teachers facilitate and support their learning through an end project (Ahluwalia, 2008).

Project-based learning (PBL) is also an inquiry-based approach that allows students to problem solve in meaningful ways through higher-order thinking (Morrison et al., 2021). Learners involve themselves in learning through projects that are designed for problem-solving, exploring, and analyzing (Foulger & Jimenez-Silva, 2007). Research has shown that implementing authentic PBL is beneficial for English learners as it provides opportunities for collaboration, differentiation, scaffolding, and academic vocabulary (Foulger & Jimenez-Silva, 2007).

Group work. Group work is the underlying essence of student-student interaction. Project-based learning also highlights cooperation for group work in project work (Ahluwalia, 2008). Research has shown that including group work and pair work in an EL classroom is effective for second language acquisition (Long & Porter, 1985). Group work allows learners to use language in a relevant context, increases the amount of talk time students have in class, supports individualized learning, creates a supportive environment, and gives learners motivation. Loewen (2015) indicated that group size could affect interaction, so teachers should consider when they should put their students in whole groups, small groups, or in pairs relevant to the type of activity. Some learners may take up the dominant, passive, expert, and novice roles, so pairing expert and novice students together can be an ideal pairing for practical cooperation.

Collaboration. With collaboration, students interact and communicate with one another. Arguedas et al. (2016) suggested four components, emotional awareness, affective feedback, cognitive strategies, and collaborative learning strategies that can influence a learner's learning outcome, with one being collaborative learning strategies. When teachers incorporate collaborative learning strategies, learners can develop

motivation, engagement, and self-regulation. This type of strategy uses student-student interaction as a device for peer cooperation. Duncan (2020) found that students more engaged in the task viewed teamwork and collaboration as significant when using game-based learning. Especially for English learners, it is an essential part of language learning as collaborative work brings forth language use. Language use in joint learning activities also helps with language development.

Collaborative Reasoning. Zhang and Stahl (2011) stated that collaborative reasoning is necessary for meaningful communication. Collaborative reasoning is a method where students lead their own discussions about a reading text or topic in small groups. Students discuss a big question about that topic and encourage open participation. Teachers should guide the discussion using scaffolds such as think-aloud or providing examples. They indicate that collaborative reasoning promotes language development and thinking skills for ELs because, in this approach, students use the target language to produce responses in their small group.

Additionally, learners assess their peers' responses and the topic to think critically and participate. Permatasari and Bharati (2015) examined English as a foreign language students' opinions on how practical collaborative reasoning is in student participation. The study results showed that collaborative reasoning benefits students' involvement and encourages critical thinking by not only having students provide their opinions but they would reference the text for evidence to enhance their arguments. Additionally, collaborative reasoning increased student motivation and engagement because the teacher facilitated the discussion rather than leading the conversation, which created a positive experience.

Motivation. Project-based learning can highly lead to motivation. When a learner is interested in project-based learning activities, the higher degree they are engaged to do the task (Zhang et al., 2021). Additionally, engagement and motivation are closely associated with each other. This interrelationship influences one another and is influenced by each other as engagement produces motivation in students and creates student engagement. Duncan (2020) retorted that students become more motivated to learn as they engage in their learning tasks. They are more eager to engage in the classroom when motivated to learn. Afflerbach et al. (2017) mentioned that while engagement and motivation are interchangeable, the difference between the two is that motivation is the cause of why a student desires to be involved in the learning task.

The self-determination theory (SDT) highlights the construct of motivation. It accentuates the concept that people are determined to reach their goals based on internal factors, called intrinsic motivation, and external factors, called extrinsic motivation (Neece, 2019). SDT focuses on intrinsic motivation and aims to achieve intrinsic motivation, competence, autonomy, and relatedness, which are necessary for learners. Autonomy is the feeling of consistency with one's choices. Competence is the feeling of being able to do something effectively, while relatedness means the sense of attachment to someone (Luo et al., 2021). Cognition and autonomy make cognitive engagement, while relatedness is affective-emotional engagement. The framework of the self-efficacy cycle describes how interrelated motivation is with engagement in that higher competence, autonomy, and relatedness of students produce deep learning (intrinsic motivation), which results in higher academic outcomes, which creates positive academic learning for students (Neece, 2019).

The self-determination theory is immensely practiced in face-to-face environments. However, research on SDT in online settings is still lacking (Luo et al., 2021). Luo et al. (2021) did a study based on SDT to examine the relationship between students' psychological needs and intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Additionally, they studied students' continued intention of online self-regulated learning. Using a Likert scale, their study measured students' needs for perceived autonomy, perceived relatedness, and perceived competence. Twenty online undergraduate learners filled out a questionnaire on how strongly they agreed or disagreed with the questions about online self-regulated learning and online technology within the constructs of perceived autonomy, perceived related, perceived competence, perceived usefulness, perceived enjoyment, and intention to continue. Their results found that the need for autonomy, relatedness, and competence concerning intrinsic and extrinsic motivation supported students' use of online technology. As a result, there was a correlation between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation with students' continued intention to use online self-regulated learning.

Student Talk Time

Student talk brings forth language and content learning (Boyd, 2015). Moreover, Bartlett et al. (2018) declared that student voice is significant in supporting students to express their thoughts. It empowers learners to participate in an encouraging and engaging environment. Likewise, Shim and Shur (2018) indicated that appreciation of student voice in the classroom increases academic success. To promote student voice, the nature of the classroom should be inclusive and welcoming. Therefore, students must have abundant talk time during instruction to have opportunities for practicing the target

language. Taylor (1983) further indicated that teaching must expose and involve students in relevant, real-world conversations and activities. In supporting this type of teaching, instruction must be relatable to enhance their motivation. However, the lack of student voice is prevalent in many classrooms as Brooks and Thurston (2010) stated that instruction is mainly centered around teacher talk compared to EL's language production.

Arreaga-Mayer et al. (2003) studied teacher behavior and student engagement of ELs at risk for developmental disabilities in mainstream and bilingual special education classrooms. Their study discovered that students participated 5% of the time in academic talk while 2% was in social interaction. Additionally, students were passive in starting discussions and responding to language more than 70% of the day, informing that language production opportunities during school were minimal. In contrast, Boyd (2015) researched the relationship between teacher questioning and student talk time in an ELL pull-out classroom. They concluded that teacher questioning seeks to support and facilitate conversation in student talk. Teacher talk is beneficial for ELs because teacher talk can aid in scaffolding for students in acquiring knowledge about the topic or content in their thinking, creating rich discussions. However, teachers should be aware of how much teacher talk is needed for specific tasks.

Academic Talk. An abundance of time for student voice in the classroom is crucial for developing language. However, getting learners involved in every classroom conversation can still challenge teachers, even providing student talk time. Therefore, accountable talk is one strategy for engaging all learners. Accountable talk is a conversation that uses “sophisticated, complex, and authentic messages [...] Responses are complex when students’ thoughts are constructed using two or more sentences and

include academic vocabulary [...] Conversations are authentic when students demonstrate original thinking instead of repeating what someone else in the class has said” (Mcglynn & Kelly, 2018, p. 28). Transitioning classroom conversations to accountable talk supports learners in engaging in conversation in meaningful ways and keeps students responsible for paying attention to the discussion.

Achieving academic talk begins with modeling from the teacher the expected responses. For example, responses included “As I reflect on my learning process, I conclude...” or “I argue against this point you brought up, but I also agree with ...”. With English learners, scaffolds are necessary when diving into accountable talk. Sentence starters and sentence frames may be required depending on the levels of the students. It is challenging within an online space to post sentence frames around the classroom compared to a face-to-face classroom. However, teachers can have one or two sentence starters posted on their presentation slides or provide students with a digital copy to which they can refer. Teachers may need to model how to present their Zoom or Google Meets window with their digital copy of sentence frames, so learners can put it into practice and automatically pull out their digital copy during these academic conversations.

Relationship Building. Building student relationships is crucial to creating a safe and engaging learning environment (Neece, 2019). Moreover, it is an essential component teachers can control in their instruction. McGlynn and Kelly (2018) asserted that teachers should generate a classroom conducive to a welcoming learning environment to initiate accountable talk in classroom conversations. When an environment is safe and comfortable for learners, the classroom becomes a place where

students can speak their minds without having to bear in mind if their conversations are correct or incorrect. One way of encouraging a welcoming space is by building relationships with one another.

Establishing a connection and relating with students through real-world examples and contexts, culture, and language are fundamental factors that complement the three dimensions of engagement. A student invested in learning, who connects and associates with their teacher and peers, reflects their behavioral engagement through cooperation, listening, or showing interest in the task. These behavioral responses are not signs of being an engaged learner but rather cause engagement (Neece, 2019). Research shows that relationships between students and teachers are crucial for learning in the classroom environment.

Engagement, Second Language Acquisition, & Online Interaction

English learners benefit from student engagement in the classroom. Research has shown that enhancing student engagement can support students' language acquisition and learning development. For ELs, student engagement is a meaningful and authentic way to interact with the target language, English. During the interaction, learners collaborate with their peers, teachers, and the content to engage in the learning. Understanding how engagement and interaction influence one another can bring effective instruction for teachers. Teachers must consider how the three dimensions of engagement, cognitive engagement, behavioral engagement, and affective-emotional engagement, and the three domains of online interaction, student-student, student-teacher, and student-content, influence instruction. The domains of interaction and the dimensions of engagement are functions of engagement that create engagement opportunities for instruction. When

looking at synchronous online settings, educational technology plays a pivotal role as the medium to promote such instruction. Teachers can use the technological tools to enhance student engagement and the teaching strategies that support both online learning and second language development for English learners.

Summary

After examining the concepts, engagement, second language learning, and online interaction, there are common themes that weave mutually to answer the research question, *How can student engagement of English learners be increased in synchronous online settings?* As research delves into each section, the literature becomes a foundation for my comprehension of how engagement, L2 learning, and online interaction can be braided and intertwined together to create good engagement strategies for ELs in online environments. Additionally, it reinforces the importance of how critical engagement is within an online setting and for English learners. Research supports the notion that for English learners to acquire the target language successfully, they must engage in their learning. Students' interaction with their peers, teachers, and content influences how they engage in the learning process. As an EL teacher, I strive to improve my teaching practices to better fit my ELs' needs. Thus, I agree with the research that engagement plays a pivotal role in learning, so discovering shared methods between online interaction, engagement, and second language acquisition approaches determines how to increase engagement for ELs online.

Recognizing what makes for good student engagement in a classroom, good student engagement for English learners, and good online student engagement is the fundamental step in perceiving how to braid together an approach for increasing EL

student engagement in online settings. This project intends to create professional development for teachers and educators by highlighting the importance of engagement in online settings while providing strategies and methods useful in the online classroom and for English learners. Thus, this project instructs teachers and educators on how to enhance the student engagement of their English learners within an online synchronous environment.

In Chapter Three, I present an overview of my project to answer my research question: *How can student engagement of English learners be increased in synchronous online settings?* The importance of this chapter details the rationale of why I chose to create professional development for teachers and educators who work with ELs and want to improve their teaching practice for their learners. Additionally, I discuss the setting, intended audience, and the timeline of when the project takes place. I describe the methods and framework that complete this project and explain the professional development design. This aids readers in a better comprehension of how and why I designed my PD. Through this process, I can seek an answer to my research question.

CHAPTER THREE

Project Description

Introduction

The critical question that drove this research paper was: *How can student engagement of English learners be increased in synchronous online settings?* This project created a professional development workshop intending to help teachers and educators improve their professional knowledge of online instructions. The aim of the professional development was to give teachers the skills necessary for enhancing student engagement of English learners. Professional development would create opportunities for teachers and educators to adjust and improve their teaching practices to engage students in their learning better.

This chapter begins with the rationale for this capstone project and describes the aim of the professional development workshop. Furthermore, it delves into the purpose of creating professional development. Additionally, this chapter provides a basic overview of the project. The presentation was designed using principles from Darling-Hammond et al.'s (2017) approaches to effective PD and was used as a framework for professional development. Following that, it introduces the intended participants and setting for the PD while also laying out the timeline of when and how this PD will be carried out.

Rationale for Project

The project's overall purpose was to provide teachers with professional learning opportunities by discussing student engagement in synchronous online settings for English learners. The goal was to present knowledge, strategies, and tools effective for increasing student engagement that can easily be incorporated into online instruction. The

rationale for this project came from my personal challenge as a student-teacher in an unfamiliar role as a distance teacher. I was not prepared to teach synchronously online because I did not learn or have prior knowledge of doing so. Additionally, it stemmed from the inclination to serve learners in the best and most effective way possible. Many teachers strive to become better teachers, so to become an effective EL teacher, professional development was a necessary basis for providing that knowledge.

As technology use is increasing in the classroom and as many schools are adopting various forms of instruction, it is evident that teachers must improve their teaching practices alongside it to support their learners (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Preparation and support for this were prevalent and professional knowledge of online learning became the first initiative. The long-term goal of this project is to execute additional professional workshops that center specifically around online instruction based on EL program models such as co-teaching or sheltered instruction.

Project Overview

My presentation drew upon the professional development approaches for adult learners introduced by Darling-Hammond, Hyler, and Gardner (2017). They identified seven practical elements in providing good professional learning for adult learners. My design considered these elements of professional development identified across various PD studies (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). According to Darling-Hammond, Hyler, and Gardner (2017), effective PD is content-focused, incorporates active learning, implements collaboration, models and provides modeling, gives coaching and expert support, provides feedback and reflection, and is well-planned.

This professional development was content-focused because it centered around specific content that teachers were teaching (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). For active learning, the professional development should engage participants with teaching practices they are learning in the PD. That is, the resources my PD provided were what educators were doing themselves within the professional development. Active learning has educators experience interactive activities that allow them to “analyze, try out, and reflect on the new strategies” (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017, p. 8). Active learning combines other elements such as collaboration, feedback, reflection, and coaching.

Collaboration creates an environment where educators can communicate and interact in small or whole groups. Then, educators can share ideas and work together collaboratively in their learning. Modeling instruction or using models can consist of lesson plans, unit plans, examples of student work, and videos for educators to explore. This element gives teachers examples of what best practices resemble. My professional development contained various examples to which educators could refer.

One method of coaching and expert support was providing one-on-one coaching based on the teacher’s individual needs. For the element, feedback and reflection, when PDs provide time for feedback and reflection, educators have the opportunity to ponder and reflect on their practices. Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) stated that planning a PD well or within a sustained duration gave ample chances for educators to “engage in learning around a single set of concepts or practices” (p. 15). Therefore, many recurring PD sessions or coaching sessions are necessary to sustain PD over time.

In alignment with the seven elements of effective PD, the framework of Chickering and Gamson’s (1989) seven principles of good practice also outlined and laid

down the foundation for the PD. These principles contained similar aspects to Darling-Hammond (2017)'s elements, such as active learning, feedback, and collaboration. It further extended to diverse ways of learning, which the PD contained through various learning styles. Good practice included high expectations for learners. The expectation that this PD has was that everyone attending should have the motivation to discover new findings and learn about topics relevant to their teaching career. In order to do so, they are expected to collaborate to think critically about the PD rather than being told about it. Additionally, Chickering and Gamson (1989) asserted that feedback and suggestions were essential factors for improvement. Therefore, participants are supported through observations and reflections.

One significant purpose of initiating PD was to provide knowledge for teachers to learn and refine instruction to support students. Therefore, implementing these elements was substantial to provide effective PD that gives opportunities for teachers to transform their practices and student learning. Additionally, these elements resonated with strategies effective for engaging English language learners online. The PD modeled effective engagement strategies by incorporating them into the instructional design. Hence, this PD applied student engagement techniques, combining both frameworks of Darling et al. (2017) and Chickering and Gamson (1989).

PD Session One: ELs and Engagement

The professional development workshop contains two PD sessions. The first session discusses English learners and engagement, while the second focuses on online interaction. Both sessions will be held synchronously online, with the first session occurring during opening week, a week before school begins, and the second session

being held during MEA weekend in October. The purpose of having session two during MEA weekend is to provide time for all participants to apply their learning from the first session and then come up with a reflection before the next session. Additionally, since each session takes at least two hours, meetings during school would be insufficient time to complete the session.

Since the session is held online, I will email teachers detailing the professional development and add the Zoom link they can use to join the presentation before the first session. As teachers log into Zoom, they will see a slide called instructions that contains a website, Menti, and code and a QR code. Teachers can use whichever method they prefer to access their participant slides. These slides allow them to follow along with the presentation. The presentation is on Mentimeter, the teacher-accessed website, and the student-access site participants will use, Menti. The presentation and learning materials will be delivered utilizing this platform and reflect the findings from Chapter Two's literature review of how using a multimedia format as a device for interaction can greatly assist online engagement. The platform supports synchronous online learning, with the presenter sharing the screen while teachers can access the presentation slides through their laptops or iPads. Teachers will be urged to split their screens to see the Zoom call and their presentation to see both screens simultaneously.

Mentimeter is an interactive online website that is beneficial for professional development. Teachers will use technology to interactively engage in Mentimeter's features of real-time quizzes, responses, and competition while viewing the presentation. Implementing Mentimeter into professional development reflects not only the element of active learning. Still, it gives teachers and educators examples of ways to incorporate

motivation and engagement through its interactive functions and game-like presentation. The code to access the presentation slides is always linked within the slides so that latecomers will have access to the PD slides.

Presentation Opening

The presentation begins with introductions, where teachers will write in chat and introduce themselves by answering the statements: what subject(s) do they teach, how long they taught, and one thing they like or dislike about being a teacher. Additionally, they will be asked how they were feeling that day. This short introduction activity is the start of building a sense of community. Then, the presentation will detail the agenda: the outcome, norms, and icebreaker, English learners and second language acquisition, engagement, importance, exploring activity, and closure.

The PD discusses norms many teachers are familiar with knowing, as these norms are adapted from the district and school-initiated PDs. The norms adopted Glen Singleton's (2015) protocol on Courageous Conversations. Courageous Conversations is "utilizing the four agreements, six conditions, and compass to engage, sustain, deepen the interracial dialogue about race" ("Pacific Educational Group," n.d.). The four agreements include staying engaged, experiencing discomfort, speaking your truth, and expecting and accepting non-closure. After that, the presentation discusses the reason why teachers are here in this PD.

The next activity is an icebreaker called Find Someone Who. This activity is adapted from a face-to-face icebreaker to match the needs of an online environment. Teachers will make a copy of a Google document with a four-by-four table containing various descriptions and questions. They will find people that match the description and

ask the questions provided in each box to get to know each other better. For example, one box had a description that said “has traveled to another country,” and the questions asked, “what country did you go to?” and “what did you do there?” The goal of this activity is to get to know one another better. Additionally, since this is an online activity, I will up more than seven breakout rooms to allow teachers to move freely between rooms so they can choose where to go. Each room will have a minimum of two people, so no one will not be alone. During this process, I will facilitate the rooms and jump into different rooms when necessary.

Engagement Activity

The presentation provides information about the English learners within the district and school and discusses second language acquisition (SLA) to give background knowledge on SLA instruction. Then, I will discuss engagement and have each person define what they think engagement means in the chat. To gain background knowledge of teachers’ experiences with instruction in online environments, this section asks two questions about the engagement styles or strategies teachers uses and how they feel about their engagement styles. With Mentimeter, using the quiz-like function enables a leaderboard. The faster someone answers, the more points they receive. While this is not about competing against one another, the PD includes this to show an aspect of Mentimeter that can be interesting for teachers to apply for their students.

The presentation will move from whole group to small group where teachers will do a Jamboard activity, with the intention that teachers will collaborate in a smaller space. This method allows educators to share ideas by watching videos and looking at examples. During this activity, teachers explore the three dimensions of engagement. The first

activity includes watching a video on Edpuzzle. Edpuzzle is an interactive video platform where teachers can add comprehension questions (multiple choice, open-ended questions, notes) at specific times in YouTube videos. They will designate one person to share their screens and type for the group and discuss the questions provided together. Next, teachers will define the three dimensions of engagement in their own words, and if they need more information, there is a Google Slide presentation that lists descriptions of the three dimensions. The last activity within the Jamboard contains scenarios. There are different scenarios where teachers will brainstorm ideas on what teaching strategies they can implement to increase engagement based on each scenario.

Presentation Closure

After a ten-minute break, the presentation will discuss engagement in online settings, and teachers will investigate online engagement tools in small groups. They will discuss questions such as which device they would use and not use or how they could incorporate them into their instruction. After exploring the online tools, teachers will return to the whole group for closure. I present a question-type slide in Mentimeter and ask teachers to write how they feel after finishing the PD. The intention is to see if their feelings and emotions changed or not after the completion. Then, teachers reflect on the PD and answer what one goal they would try to achieve before the next session.

PD Session Two: Online Interaction

The second professional development session is structured similarly to session one, which is held on Zoom. By the end of the PD, teachers will understand three types of online interaction and have the knowledge, strategies, and tools effective for increasing student engagement that can be incorporated into online instruction. After that, the

presentation discusses the same norms from session one, *Courageous Conversations*, before starting the icebreaker. The icebreaker is another quick get-to-know-you activity where, in the Zoom chat, educators will type three things they like to do outside of school, name two go-to places they like to go to and type one thing they looked forward to learning in the PD. Then, I present the purpose of the PD and will review the first session of the PD by summarizing and reflecting.

The following section focuses on online interaction. I explain how the interaction is necessary for engagement and ask the participants who have used technology as a student interaction. This slide uses Mentimeter's quiz function, where they can click on the options (yes, no, maybe) on the participant's screen for their answers to the question. Then, the PD transitions to talking about online interaction and its importance. It discusses Moore's framework of interaction—student-student interaction, student-teacher interaction, and student-content interaction.

The following section implements more of the approaches outlined by Darling-Hammond et al. (2017): content-focused, active learning, collaboration, modeling, coaching, and expert support. Teachers move into exploring the three types of interaction using another interactive website called Miro. People can create and collaborate on a blank canvas or suggested templates on this visual collaborative platform. Teachers will be split into three groups in their breakout room and will learn about different types of interaction.

Delving into Small Groups

In small groups, educators will do a jigsaw activity where each group learns and explores different topics, then become experts at their topic to share their findings with a

new group. Each group will have a time limit of thirty minutes to explore the activity I prepared. All groups start with an icebreaker, where they must write their name on a place they want to travel to. This short activity is a way to introduce themselves, share common interests, or delve into different perspectives as they explain why they chose that particular place. Then, all groups will define whichever type of interaction they are learning meant to them. This question supports collaboration and is content-focused. After brainstorming together in their group, they move to their own specific individual activity exploring the interaction. During that time, I will facilitate conversations using scaffolds such as providing examples or think-aloud.

Each topic contains different examples of activities I used in my own classroom that promoted the different types of interaction. The group with the topic, student-student interaction, will look at two game activities, a card game for vocabulary and family feud, used at the end of the school. The Google Slides had descriptions and videos on how to play the activities. Teachers will explore a board game I created in the student-teacher interaction group. The board game reviewed the concepts, author's purpose, and inferencing. They will watch a video explaining how I implemented this into my synchronous class. This activity aims to show teachers examples of student-teacher interaction and have them actively think about how this activity promoted this interaction. The last group, student-content interaction, focused on a Jeopardy-like activity. This activity was created on a website, so this group will explore it by playing and interacting with it.

All groups at the end of exploring these examples have the same reflection questions: (1) Did you like the activity? What are your thoughts on it? (2) How does this

activity engage or disengage students? In what ways is this activity effective or ineffective? (3) Is this an example of student-content/student-teacher/student-student interaction? What aspect makes it a certain domain of interaction? After each group answers the questions, they will rewrite a new definition for their topic. They are asked to rewrite their definition to see if their perception of the topic changes or not after exploring examples of activities that promote such interaction.

Jigsaw Activity

The breakout sessions will last thirty minutes, and to welcome teachers back and to get attention, I will use another of Mentimeter's fun features, drum roll, where the slide plays a drum roll sound. The next section of the PD is a jigsaw activity, where the teachers will split again into three groups, each with different people who learned about the different types of interaction. I will note who worked in which group to create new groups and split those people up. This section will focus on coaching and expert support using a jigsaw as the method. Every teacher is an expert at the specific type of interaction they will learn. They will guide their group into understanding the other two types and take turns sharing. To encourage the conversation, I prepare questions for them to answer. In this activity, teachers will have fifteen minutes to synthesize their ideas. Once the fifteen minutes pass, teachers will share their answers to the questions.

Teachers will have a ten-minute break, followed by an activity on teaching strategies using student-centered approaches. After summarizing the first part of the PD, I will ask how teachers can put this into practice. I discuss various teaching strategies from the literature review. After that, the next activity will be brainstorming a lesson plan that includes one they were interested in. With groupings for this activity, teachers will freely

choose which teaching strategy they are interested in using. I use one of Zoom's features, whiteboard, to have teachers write which topic they want to explore. The interactive whiteboard is helpful for me as a presenter to easily see where I will place people in their breakout rooms.

Teachers will create a lesson plan focusing on one area of interaction that contains the following aspects of Zaretta Hammond's (2015) culturally responsive teaching of instructional framework: objective, ignite, chunk, chew, and review. Based on the instructional framework, the objective is the content goal or the language target. Ignite starts the class with an activity that gets the brain working. Chunk, usually teacher-directed, is an activity that digests information to students. Chew is an activity where students practice the new information. Review is the closure of the lesson (Hammond, 2015). Teachers can use this instructional framework for their lesson plan because the school enforces this specific lesson plan structure. Teachers have forty-five minutes to create a simple lesson plan and identify the grade and subject. The PD provides an example as well if teachers need support getting started. When teachers are regrouped back into the whole group, each group will share their lesson plan. I use another exciting feature of Mentimeter, spin the wheel, to choose who will share their lesson plan first.

Summary and Closure

During the closure of the professional development, I will ask teachers what they noticed about the PD about what they were learning. They will type their answers, and we will discuss how the PD is centered on being another example of how to engage learners using interaction. This reflection aligns with another element of effective

professional development, active learning. By engaging teachers in practices they would implement into their own practices, the PD exposes educators to examples that will help deepen their understanding of the concepts. Next, teachers reflect on the PD with the same reflection statements from the first session, and the presentation ends with time for teachers to ask questions and discuss their thoughts on the topic. Having time for teachers to reflect on the PD supports the elements of coaching and expert support and feedback and reflection.

Participants and Setting

My intended audience is EL teachers and mainstream teachers who teach EL students from an urban high school I currently teach at. This PD is inclusive to mainstream teachers who co-teach with EL teachers as this school follows a co-teaching model and mainstream teachers who may have had EL students in their classrooms. Additionally, the PD invites any teacher or educator interested in professional learning on student engagement, online instruction, and EL instruction. Within our school, we serve 1,812 ninth-grade to twelfth-grade students, with the demographic predominantly Asian (53.5%). The second-highest population is Black/African American students (18.5%). In total, 618 EL students attended this school, making up 34.1% of the school population, as stated in 2022 (Minnesota Report Card, 2022). Currently, there are 15 EL teachers and three bilingual EAs who serve EL students.

Timeline

The timeframe of this professional development follows the academic school calendar, with the PD occurring during opening week, the week before school starts. Additionally, the PD will be held online synchronously, during work hours, with the

session's aim being two hours and thirty minutes long. To have PD that can be sustained over time, initiating PD at the beginning of the year allows teachers to learn new teaching methods and experiment with them to finetune them throughout the year while also having ample time to reach out for observations and reflections throughout the academic year.

The second session is scheduled in October, during MEA week, to provide ample time for educators to complete the PD. The second session is similar to the first session in that it contains coaching, feedback, reflection, and sharing of their experiences. At the end of the first PD workshop, teachers will define a goal they want to implement that they took away from the PD. They will identify and commit to something they want to implement in their instruction. Teachers will be required at least once to be observed in their classroom, and if needed, they can request additional coaching.

Assessment

The last section of the presentation asks teachers and educators to reflect on professional development by answering reflection questions. This allows me to collect data on the effectiveness of the project. One of Mentimeter's functions, called scales, will collect the data. Scales allow participants to rate my reflection statements, with zero strongly disagreeing and five strongly agreeing. The statements were: (1) I was engaged during the PD. (2) I learned new skills, information, and an understanding of how to increase engagement of ELs online. (3) The PD furthers my understanding in this area of teaching and learning. (4) I will implement what I learned today into my instruction. (4) The PD inspired new questions and reflections about my teaching.

Applying a quick reflection at the end helps me to gain instant results about the PD. Additionally, I can duplicate the same presentation while also being able to export the results, so I will be able to collect all data from the different sessions to assess if the PD is effective. Furthermore, the last presentation is a question-and-answer slide where the participants input questions or comments on professional development, which helps hear the participants' input on the PD.

Summary

Chapter Three has overviewed the basic outline for the project I designed for this capstone. It detailed the PD presentation outline and presented my project's rationale. It provided the framework that warranted such an approach to the PD that supported my project. In the overview of the project, I expressed the aim of the PD: to support teachers and educators in enhancing EL student engagement online by presenting necessary skills, methods, and approaches that can be implemented easily into their teaching practice. This chapter also described the setting and participants while addressing the project's timeline.

In Chapter Four, I reflect on my capstone project and discuss my learnings as a researcher and learner as I discuss the chapters. I revisited the literature review and determined which literature review was most important in my capstone project. Additionally, I address new connections I have with the literature review. Through this process, I conclude future initiatives that should be taken to support educators and teachers in their effort to increase EL student engagement in online settings and identify potential implications and limitations of the project.

CHAPTER FOUR

Conclusion

Introduction

As an educator, I am constantly challenged with finding practical and best teaching practices for my English learners. My students do not learn the same way, nor do they have similar background experiences. Each student is unique, and because of that, I am aware that my teaching practices will most likely change to fit the needs of my students. As I sought to be an effective teacher, I was interested in how I could engage EL learners more effectively in an online synchronous class. My lack of knowledge and unpreparedness to teach online urged an investigation of the question, *How can student engagement of English learners be increased in synchronous online settings?* As a result, I wanted to create a professional development workshop to bring new and relevant findings to my fellow teacher who strives to improve their teaching practices on student engagement.

Throughout this capstone project, I stressed the importance of student engagement for English learners. ELs develop language skills when they are engaged. Therefore, the focus of the project was how teachers employ engagement strategies for ELs. I developed a fundamental understanding that led me to conclude that teacher instruction is essential for enhancing student engagement in a synchronous online setting. Now, I conclude my capstone process with the completion of my project: a professional development workshop that includes two sessions for educators to understand more about engagement in online settings.

Chapter One examined how my learning experiences in middle school up to graduate school influenced how I wanted to teach. Additionally, I summarized how my student teaching experience became an opportunity for me to reflect on my teaching practice and improve myself as a teacher instructing in an online setting. This chapter was momentous as Chapter One provided the structure to the rest of the capstone project by underlying the reason of how the research came to be. Chapter Two delved deeper into the literature review about engagement, online interaction, and second language acquisition to find effective instructional practices catered to English learners during an online synchronous classroom. Chapter Two contributed to establishing familiarity with current research in the field of education to support my investigation. Chapter Three detailed the capstone project, the participants, and the setting.

Chapter Four discusses the significant findings of the project and delves into what I learned throughout the process as a researcher, writer, and learner. Additionally, I explore unexpected results that I found in my capstone project. Next, I visited significant parts of the literature review and examined the implications and limitations of this capstone project. The following section also includes future research in related areas and explores how the project benefits the teaching profession. The last section provides a conclusion and a summary of the capstone project.

Major Findings

After completing my student teaching in the spring, I started my capstone project in the summer of 2020. The journey to complete my Master's degree took a considerable amount of time, and to my disbelief, I completed it after one year. I have never spent so

many hours a day working persistently and diligently on something before, but my capstone project is a learning experience I can proudly say I accomplished.

I acquired much knowledge throughout this process as a learner, writer, and researcher. This capstone project unquestionably challenged my capabilities as a writer to present the best research and product my fellow teachers could read and learn from. Before writing my capstone, I had very few opportunities to write a major paper academically besides in undergraduate school. Therefore, I felt unprepared to tackle the capstone writing. Formulating my thoughts into writing was a surprisingly difficult task, and having to consciously be attentive to specific word choices to convey my intentions was exasperating. Additionally, I constantly had to rewrite and revise each chapter. However, while the writing process was immensely time-consuming and exhausting, I was able to improve my writing skills each time to create better writing.

Additionally, this process pushed my limits as a researcher to examine and analyze more in-depth current research that supported my investigation. I observed several abstracts and introductions of research studies to discover significant findings for my project. I synthesized ideas from various research to construct the foundation for my argument. This project has initiated new insights into pedagogical strategies and practices involving online engagement of ELs and has sparked new inquiry as a learner. From this capstone process, I have come across new discoveries and questions about related topics of my own.

Furthermore, throughout this entire process, I gained much knowledge and understanding about student engagement and teaching strategies that benefit online teaching. As I reflected on the process, I realized that teaching is challenging, and

learning does not occur in a vacuum. Various interchangeable factors exist for teachers to consider in their teaching instruction to enhance student engagement of English learners in online synchronous settings.

Another significant finding I had when creating my project was the difficulty of developing a professional development (PD) intended for adult learning as a learner. Most of the numerous PD sessions I attended during my first year of teaching were very information-heavy. The presenters gave illuminating information about relevant and significant topics for a teacher. However, many times, the PD in itself was not enjoyable to attend. Therefore, I wanted to focus on creating a PD that was not lecture-heavy and instead, had it focus on the participants learning new ideas by exploring the activities. Following the framework of Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) allowed me to create a PD centered on active learning, with participants actively engaged through interactive activities. However, creating such activities was challenging because I had to construct activities from scratch that matched what I wanted to present to the adult learners. Creating professional development was a long process, full of trial and error and constant revising and recreating. However, with the finalized creation of the PD, I am proud to try and implement it in my school.

Literature Review

My literature review mainly consisted of research studies that discussed engagement, online instruction, and engagement strategies. The first section of the literature review examined research studies on engagement. I wanted to answer the question of how to increase student engagement of ELs, so delving deeper into the three dimensions of engagement was crucially important for my capstone because it explored

different ways students could be engaged. Relying on Turner et al. (2014) supported how engagement was influenced by various factors such as motivation, interaction, and instructional strategies.

Moore's (1989) work alongside Martin and Bolliger's (2018) research has made a valuable contribution to my research. Moore (1989) helped my research by providing a framework for online interaction during distance learning that discussed three types of interaction. This framework is integrated into my professional development as a critical component teachers must be aware of when planning a lesson. Martin and Bolliger (2018) highlighted Moore's model of interaction and suggested various strategies for each domain to implement during instruction, which the second session of my professional development directly addresses.

I made a new connection to the literature review: adult learners and students benefit from similar teaching. The elements of effective professional development based on Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) and the seven principles for good practices in undergraduate education from Chickering and Gamson (1989) that can be adapted to K-12 education are significantly related to each other. Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) greatly impacted how I structured and laid out my professional development. In addition, the good practices from Chickering and Gamson (1989) significantly contributed to my professional development by outlining the effective practices of instruction. Both elements and principles highlighted and stressed the importance of active learning. Therefore, active learning became a crucial drive for professional development as the PD centered around interactive learning activities that educators would implement in their instruction from learning them.

Limitations

Increasing student engagement of English learners is possible in an online synchronous setting. However, one limitation of this project could be that the project does not focus on specific EL program models for English learners. Professional development is beneficial for EL teachers who teach in a classroom specializing in EL programs models such as the pull-out model or the sheltered instruction because their students are mainly EL students. Therefore, implementing EL strategies from the PD is much easier than in a co-taught model, where both the mainstream teacher and the EL co-teacher have to adjust their teaching methods to fit the needs of teaching content and language. The hope is that both co-teachers attend the professional development together and collaboratively discuss ways they can apply for effective co-teaching instruction.

The limitation of not focusing on different EL program models leads to another limitation: time. Possible policy implication arises when teachers do not have time to invest in professional development to collaborate and discuss their teaching, especially with other factors that surround it. This professional development could not improve teaching and learning for EL teachers who work with various co-teachers. There is not enough time in the school day to collaborate effectively with co-teachers about teaching instruction.

Another possible limitation is my lack of knowledge as a first-year teacher. As I started my teaching career before creating the capstone project, I lacked foundational knowledge of other teaching methods that can be crucial to address within my PD. Student teaching was the only time I was exposed to online synchronous learning as I returned to face-to-face learning for my first year as a teacher. Therefore, making

connections between my teaching experience and research was limited when creating the PD. The last possible limitation was the challenge of finding current research on my topic, specifically for online instruction. While research exists about online instruction, I was limited in finding recent studies that happened during the pandemic or after the surge of COVID-19.

Communicating Results and Benefits to the Profession

This capstone project is a great benefit to the profession. While many schools had gone back into in-person teaching from when I started my journey in researching, education is still changing and applying online learning. Specifically, in my school district, e-learning days have become part of the academic calendar, and the district has distance learning days for unforeseen circumstances with the weather. While many teachers are not teaching online, many strategies can be adapted to an in-person classroom. Fischer (2021) stated that synchronous online learning is an alternative to face-to-face teaching, and I believe it works the other way around. Face-to-face learning is an alternative to online learning. These teaching methods are adapted for direct interaction between teachers and students. Therefore, employing the learnings from the PD in a face-to-face setting is plausible and is still just as effective.

As a result of my professional development workshop, I desire to distribute the PD to various schools and implement it into the school year. For schools to implement the PD, an educator who understands the basis of the PD will need to facilitate the PD. While training is not necessary to facilitate, teachers, preferably EL teachers, who attended the professional development workshop, would be the best candidate to guide other teachers. Since this PD is carried out online, gathering EL teachers from different schools to attend

the professional development can be easily scheduled. The hope would be for these teachers to understand the PD and then initiate the PD with their colleagues. If this occurs, I would like to collect data from these schools to see how effective the PD is and either improve it or implement it throughout different school districts. Using these results aids an ever-evolving endeavor toward more sessions applicable to related topics.

Moreover, enhancing engagement does not only cease with discussing instructional practices and teaching strategies. I recommend future research projects on EL-related topics or instruction that influence engagement or instruction. The capstone project asserts that teacher instruction plays a crucial role in enhancing the student engagement of ELs. Therefore, further research on instruction may be necessary to research. The related topic that I or others could research is EL program models and how they directly affect how teachers instruct their classrooms. These program models include co-teaching, dual-language programs, sheltered instruction, and push-in or pull-out models. Investigating the EL program models will be relevant for teachers who follow a specific model at their school.

Summary

This capstone project attempted to answer the question, *How can student engagement of English learners be increased in synchronous online settings?* With the closure of the project, I discovered an answer to this question through the development of my professional development workshop. Chapter Four reflected on the capstone project as a learner, researcher, and writer. Additionally, in this chapter, I reviewed possible limitations and implications the project could have. Finally, I shared potential

professional development benefits and recommended other related research based on my capstone project.

I started this project without a specific end goal in mind for my capstone project. I chose to research student engagement because this topic was relevant to me as a teacher, but without even realizing it, the process of finding out the answer to, *How can student engagement of English learners be increased in synchronous online setting*, led me to a journey filled with so much knowledge, understanding, and questioning on valuable approaches, methods, and research. Moreover, when I started my capstone project, I was not a teacher who had a classroom or students. Therefore, my lack of teaching experience could not contribute to my capstone project. Still, after teaching for a year and gaining the opportunity to apply research into practice, I adopted some of the practices I used in professional development. This basis of the project started from my personal interest in engaging learners, but now, as I continue my teaching career, it has expanded to seeking out new learning opportunities to better my teaching for my students.

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