The British University in Dubai

TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVE ON ENGAGED TEACHING: STUDY FROM AN AMERICAN CURRICULUM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN DUBAI

التعليم التعاوني في المدارس الابتدائية الأمريكية في دبي - من منظور المعلمين

By

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Dissertation submitted in fulfilment

of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

at

The British University in Dubai

October 2018

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ABSTRACT

Researchers, instructors, and policymakers have focused more on student engagement as a solution to enhance achievement, reduce student boredom, and encourage motivation. To advance student engagement, educators and school leadership must start promoting it as low as in elementary learning. An engaged learning environment requires educators to motivate and encourage students to achieve their educational goals. Therefore, a student-centred approach is preferred to the teacher-centred one.

Problem statement: Collaborative learning is hectic for some learners, hence the need for a skilled teacher to ensure effective teaching outcomes. An area of focus for this study is understanding the assessment process, both for individual and group work, hence the need to understand teacher's view and American schools' curriculum in general on the most successful assessment plans. Through the study, the researcher used teachers' perspective to suggest some optimum strategies essential in maximizing benefits of engaged learning, particularly under the American curriculum.

Aim of the study: The study aimed towards identifying negative and positive implications of engaged learning under the American curriculum system. Special emphasis was placed on schools in UAE and specifically in Dubai, where there has been an increasing number of American curriculum schools. Using mixed methodology, the researcher obtained the teachers' perspective to help identify learner's difficulties when responding to class activities and the likely impact on their learning experiences.

Theories & Concepts: The theories that have been applied in the study include engagement theory, behavioural theory and the Vygotsky's Social learning theories of engaged learning. In addition, the study utilises the various concepts in learning including, constructivist, active, passive, cooperative, and engaged learning.

Methods: The study applied qualitative research approach in the exploring the teacher's perspective regarding engaged learning in the American Curriculum in Dubai where observations and interviews were done.

Key findings: The key finding of the study is that assessment during engaged learning represented meaningful performance elements and if they represent equitable learning standards applicable to all students. Another significant variable analysed included understanding instructional models and learning strategies employed in engaged learning.

Claim and conclusion of the study:

The current study has identified cooperative learning as vital in any form of engaged learning based on the analysis of the interviews and observations conducted in the study. Cooperative learning encourages teamwork and eliminates unnecessary competition in the classroom which can have negative effect on the learning process. Interaction and collaboration are the ultimate ingredients of the success in learning and can be applied as an educational strategy that promotes accountability in the schools.

التعليم التعاوني في المدارس الابتدائية الأمريكية في دبي - من منظور المعلمين

الملخص

ركز الباحثون والمعلمون وصناع القرار بشكل كبير على التعلم التعاوني كحل لتعزيز الإنجازات والحد من الملل لدى الطلاب وتحفيزهم. وللتشجيع على التعلم التعاوني، يجب على المعلمين والاداريين في المدارس البدء في تطبيقه في المستويات الأولى من التعليم الابتدائي. تتطلب بيئة التعلم التعاوني من المعلمين تحفيز الطلاب وتشجيعهم على تحقيق أهدافهم التعليمية. لذلك ، يفضل النهج الذي يركز على الطالب وليس الذي يركز على المعلم. هدفت الدراسة إلى التعرف على الآثار السلبية والإيجابية للتعلم التعاوني في نظام المناهج الأمريكية. وتم التركيز بشكل خاص على المدارس في الإمارات العربية المتحدة وتحديدًا في دبي ، حيث كان هناك عدد متزايد من المدارس التي تتبع المناهج الأمريكية. استخدم الباحث المنهجية المختلطة لاستخلاص منظور المعلمين للمساعدة في تحديد الصعوبات لدى الطلاب عند الاستجابة للأنشطة الصفية وتأثيرها المحتمل على خبراتهم التعليمية. ونظراً لصعوبة التعلم التعاوني لبعض الطلاب ، فإن وجود معلم ماهر ضروري لضمان نتائج تعليمية فعالة. وركزت الدراسة أيضاً على فهم عملية التقييم ، على الصعيدين الفردي و الجماعي ، ومن هنا جاءت الحاجة إلى فهم منظور المعلمين وفهم المناهج الدراسية للمدارس الأمريكية بشكل عام حول خطط التقييم الأكثر نجاحًا. في هذه الدراسة، استخدم الباحث منظور المعلمين لإيجاد بعض الاستراتيجيات المثلى الضرورية لتحقيق أقصى قدر من الاستفادة من التعلم التعاوني، وخاصة في إطار المناهج الأمريكية. ووضحت الدراسة إذا كان من الممكن اعتبار التقييم أثناء التعلم النشط كعنصر لتقييم الأداء وإذا كان يشكل معيار تعليمي منصف ينطبق على جميع الطلاب. ومن بين المتغيرات الهامة الأخرى التي تم تحليلها، هو فهم النماذج التعليمية وفهم استراتيجيات التعلم المستخدمة في التعلم التعاوني.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my beloved parents who inspire me to pursue my dream and believing in me.

I also dedicate my dissertation to my husband, Mahmoud, who supported me in many ways. I thank him for being there for me and for our lovely daughters Reina and Lynne specially when I am busy working on it. You have supported me in various ways and without you, I am not sure if I was able to do this.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION

UAE	-	United Arab Emirates
KHDA	-	Knowledge and Human Development Authority
CPD	-	Continuing Professional Development
NGA	-	National Governors Association
CCSSO	-	Council of Chief State School Officers
CCSSI	-	Common Core State Standards Initiative
DSIB	-	Dubai School Inspection Bureau

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

I.   Background and motivation of the Study

Bouslama, Lansari, Al-Rawi, and Abonamah (2003), assert that American curriculum involves inquiry-based learning techniques, 'hands-on' teaching methodologies and learning and teaching strategies that concentrate on individualised learning and instruction structure. According to Gaad, Arif, and Scott (2006), American curriculum provides a balanced K-12 program that starts with Kindergarten aged at 5 and concludes upon the award of American high school diploma at grade 12 and age 17. Additionally, the curriculum prepares students to pass the 'Scholastic Aptitude Test' (SAT) and 'Advanced Placement' (AP), with the American high school diploma acceptable for entrance in all US higher learning institutions, in addition to being recognised by global higher education centres (Bouslama et al., 2003). According to Darling-Hammond and Richardson (2009), the most significant issues the study intends to bring out includes understanding the progress that American curriculum elementary schools have made in Dubai, in relation to helping the schools implement Social Studies learning standards. With the focus being on the teacher's perspective, it is important to understand if the teachers have the required resources to enhance the American curriculum learning standards (Cook-Sather, Bovill, & Felten, 2014). It is clear that the system supports engaged learning, which is a relatively new and emerging trend in the United Arab Emirates (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009). Engagement in a learning process, depend upon a student's relationship with teachers. According to Bowen (2005), students learn better, when they are engaged in class, hence the need to learn from teachers, how through the American curriculum system they support engagement.

In Dubai, American curriculum schools must meet various state standards by 'Knowledge and Human Development Authority' (KHDA), representing private schools' regulations and inspections (Collie, Shapka, & Perry, 2012). The areas of great interest include curriculum, assessment, staffing, accreditation and graduation. KHDA requires schools to exceed or meet the common standards set in the US, hence dedication from teachers to promise continuous improvement and excellence pursuit to remain at par with American schools. According to Darling-Hammond and Richardson (2009), there is a need for parents to have the confidence that education their children receive is comparable to that found in American schools.

The connection between intellectual content being delivered by a teacher and learning ability of a student remains an important success factor of the American Curriculum. The curriculum requires creativity and innovation, hence the need to ensure students are engaged in the learning process (Collie, Shapka, & Perry, 2012). Teacher's perspective on how the American curriculum promotes engaged learning is important, including an infusion of the same to the UAE culture to support all round education and achievement.

II.   Statement of the Problem

In any learning system, teachers play an important role to effect changes and move towards inclusive systems. The role of a teacher reflects a broad pattern, which relates to workload and needs to support the entire school's involvement in the learning process. Every teacher must assert a leadership role in class to meet the needs of learners by coordinating and aligning school objectives with student's desires to arouse their motivation and engagement in class (Klem & Connell, 2004). Therefore, flexibility is important for the teachers to cater for the variations presented by students in a class because of their diverse cultures and educational needs. The study aims towards understanding the professional needs, duties and responsibilities of teachers in supporting classroom engagement of classes. According to Darling-Hammond and Richardson (2009), classroom engagement requires effective teaching styles, skills, commitment and professionalism from teachers. The educators must be able to adapt teaching and curriculum needs, learning tools and resources to the needs of elementary learners. Additionally, school leadership must act as change agents to develop a learning environment that motivates both the teacher and learner.

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

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

III.   Study Purpose and Objectives

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

The researcher selected American curriculum as a reference for successful or failed engaged learning. More so, UAE was selected for the study, because the country has experienced a complete overhaul of its learning, with schools adapting other curriculums used globally, integrating them into their diverse culture and Islamic education (Cook-Sather, Bovill, & Felten, 2014). Dubai has experienced an increased number of American curriculum-based schools, hence offering the best-case study for the research.

The learning process is continuous, where identity represents the pupils' self-belief and confidence that learners develop during the learning process. The study, therefore, analysed the role teachers' play in developing pupils' self-confidence, self-belief and motivation in a class environment (Clayton, Blumberg, & Auld, 2010). The teachers determine what the pupils become during class interactions with colleagues, their unique experiences of learning activities, as well as engagement with the varied social representations within a diverse culture. It is, therefore, significant to learn the strategies teachers implement to ensure engagement form a learner.

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

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

- *To identify instructional strategies employed by teachers in an engaged classroom learning environment.*

IV. Research Questions

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

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

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

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

V. Study Rationale

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

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

The study intended to establish if assessment during engaged learning represented meaningful performance elements and if they represent equitable learning standards applicable to all students.

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

Through literature review and responses from teachers, the study intends to establish common strategies implemented in engaged learning frameworks, both for individuals and groups. Additional study significance includes the exploration of multiple perspectives and technicalities to build upon knowledge, problem-solving mechanisms, team-learning, Socratic dialogue as well as brainstorming elements (Fernandes et al., 2014). Despite the study focusing on the teacher's perspective, learners' context also plays a significant role. Engaged learning success in a classroom environment must build a knowledge-learning community (Barkley, Cross, & Major, 2014). The study analysed how such communities developed shared understandings in a collaborative manner through the creation of an empathetic learning environment that concentrates on diversity as well as multiple perspectives. The communities identify strategies that build their members in a collaborative classroom, encouraging students to ask and solve difficult questions, define existing problems and lead important classroom discussions.

VI. Structure of Dissertation

Chapter one shall start by introducing the topic, followed by background information about the study, statement of the problem and then the purpose and study objective. Additionally, the same chapter shall provide the research questions, and finish by analysing study significance. Chapter two shall analyse literature related to the set objectives, study purpose and research questions. The same chapter shall conduct a conceptual analysis under two subsections of passive and active learning and then perform the theoretical analysis. The theoretical framework shall concentrate on various theories that include engagement theory, Vygotsky's Social Learning Theories in Engaged Learning, behavioural learning theories. The researcher shall then review the literature on the role of teachers in a behavioural approach to the learning process. It is also important to understand the role of teachers in a classroom, opposition towards engaged learning, and a particular role performed by the teacher during the engaged learning process. The literature review further

analysed cooperative Learning Strategies that include freedom of choice and collaboration. Lastly, the chapter current gaps identified in engaged learning and ended with a conclusion.

The methodology chapter shall focus on research philosophy selected by the researcher, the research approach, research strategy, research instruments selected and analysis of the population and the sample size. Chapter four shall then analyse collect and analyse the study findings and results, followed by data analysis, discussion and conclusion of the research.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

I.   Overview of the Chapter

Teachers find it difficult to choose the correct teaching methods in their classrooms. Most have devised various ways of identifying the learners' needs before tailoring the best teaching methods. For instance, some teachers start from the end of the lesson and work backward to assess whether the learners responded well in the classroom (Lightner, Bober, & Willi, 2007). Moreover, teachers can mould the mission of the lesson by establishing what the learners can take from the lesson and the best way of assessing the outcomes of the lessons (Loughran, 2002). However, school teachers can further reinforce their teaching skills by creating plans for various hands-on activities and collaborative learning (Watters & Diezmann, 2016). Most educators around the world are shifting from the old teaching approaches that were teacher-centred and passive to the new learner-centred active learning approaches (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Cipolle, 2010). As a result, there is the need for all the teachers in elementary schools in Dubai to understand the fundamental principles of learner-centred approaches and the dynamics associated with this method of teaching to enable them to become effective teachers in guiding the learners. The Knowledge and Human Development Authority KHDA conducts annual visits to all schools of Dubai to gauge teaching and learning engagement that is happening in classrooms. Based on this visit, each school is ranked in an annual report that KHDA issues on a yearly basis. According to UAE School Inspection Framework (Moe.gov.ae, 2018) the first standard of inspecting schools is "Students' engagement in, and responsibility for, their own learning" which is clearly a major aspect inspectors look for here in Dubai. Latest KHDA report revealed that out of 29 American curriculum schools in Dubai only one school scored outstanding, one school scored very good, 14 schools scored good the remaining are acceptable with 1 school scored weak (Khda.gov.ae, 2018). The percentage is low comparing to other schools in Dubai with different curriculum.

II.   Conceptual Analysis

Engaged teaching involves the learners in various forms of active learning on psychomotor, affective, and cognitive skill development. The teacher empowers the learners to take part in the learning process. Some of the concepts in engaged teaching are as discussed below:

I.   Constructivist Learning

Constructivism theory is a learning theory that is based on psychology. The theory explains how people acquire knowledge and learn and thus is crucial in understanding teacher perspective in learning. In learning, teachers transmit knowledge to student, but the students have the

responsibility of actively constructing the learned knowledge in their own minds (Dagar & Yadav, 2016). The constructive theory views the learner as an active agent in the process of knowledge acquisitions (Dagar & Yadav, 2016). Learning as perceived in this theory opposes the perception that learning is a stimulus-response phenomenon but it is a process that is a constituent of self-regulation and development of conceptual structures through abstraction and reflection (Dagar & Yadav, 2016). The constructive approach in learning is fundamentally based on the premise of cognitive learning that is as a result of mental construction (Dagar & Yadav, 2016). Students learn through the process of fitting new information together with what they already know. Therefore, in the constructive learning approach, learning is shaped by the context in which learning occurs as well as the attitudes and beliefs of the students (Dagar & Yadav, 2016). The theory brings the aspect of the learner which helps the learner to derive their own mental model of the real world from their own personal world view. One of the advantages of the constructive perspective in learning is that it can enhance the learner's understanding when they are encountering new knowledge and ideas (Dagar & Yadav, 2016). It makes the learners to be engaged throughout the learning process and make the new knowledge to be consistent with the learned ideas. In learning, constructive theory proposes that the learning environment should be conducive so that it can promote the student learning (Dagar & Yadav, 2016).

II. Passive learning

Passive learning occurs when the teacher is at the centre of the learning process and the learners listen and take notes during a teaching session without actively making their contributions. Passive learning is considered as a cognitive process where there is limited comprehension in a concept referred as "mind wandering" (Pachai, Acai, LoGiudice, and Kim, 2016). Learners may fail to glean vital pieces of information in passive learning and create appropriate connections to the reality. However, the learner is able to obtain some new information but it is unlikely to integrate with the existing information in the learner's memory since the learner will have a scattering of new unconnected pieces of information.

III. Active learning

Active learning implies engaging the learners in an active exchange in where the learners are not passively listening as well as taking notes during the class lectures but actively contribute their ideas and thoughts to a relevant collaborative activity or discussions usually facilitated by the teacher. Active learning leads to students escape the traditional of being passive receptors and

practice how to apprehend skills and knowledge and apply them appropriately (Kudryashova, Gorbatova, Rybushkina, and Ivanova, 2015). The teacher remains at the centre of the student learning, but they no longer act as the source of knowledge. The function of the teacher in the active learning is to create an environment where the student is engaged in learning in close partnership with the teachers.

IV. Engaged Learning

Engaged learning has been viewed as a learning process for assisting underprepared students where the students' actions and thoughts are incorporated in the learning process (Krause, 2005). Engaged learning has been attributed to the improvement of students learning and academic achievement than the traditional learning model. Students are known to learn more effectively when they are actively engaged in the learning process. The active participation of students in learning contributes to an array of positive outcomes that include achievement, persistence and academic success (Brüssow and Wilkinson, 2011). It is a two-way process, where learning enhances the experience and experience gained enhances the learning process (Brüssow and Wilkinson, 2011). In the contemporary teaching, engaging students is one of the major challenges in the education sector. Engaged learning deepen the in-class experience, especially for the underprepared students by improving their effectiveness of learning. This because learning is a complex social process while underprepared of the student is a multifaceted factor, a constituent of other factors. Engaged learning, albeit focussed on the underprepared student, can be integrated in the learning environment to deepen the in-class experience and ameliorate the effectiveness of learning. Engaged learning can be applied by educators in a balanced interplay where the critical elements of the concept, such as the reflective process are implemented in teaching to improve students' in-class experience (Brüssow and Wilkinson, 2011).

V. Cooperative Learning

Cooperative learning plays a significant role during engaged learning because when teachers work together with their students, it builds the team spirit instead of competition allowing interaction. In this essence, the primary objective of cooperative learning is positive interdependence (Godwin, 2006). Therefore, the ultimate success of any given group is largely determined by the levels of interaction and collaboration. This educational strategy gives students a good opportunity of ensuring high accountability levels. They are poised to step into various roles based on their hobbies and talents rather than being forced by their teachers to participate or compete

(Goldenberg, 2014). Such opportunities for monitoring each other are participation and work quality enhances motivation and interest amongst the students (Clayton, Blumberg, & Auld, 2010). Cooperative learning is a teaching method where learners work together to benefit from group activity. In cooperative learning, students work together to maximise their own and each other's learning (Alexander and van Wyk, 2014). It is a classroom technique where learners in small groups and receive rewards from their collective effort. The set goals for the group benefit the entire group of learners. In cooperative learning, mutual respect and an insight into the learner's individuality are emphasized. Cooperative learning promotes social interaction skills among learners and can enhance teaching in the integrated school environments (Alexander and van Wyk, 2014).

VI. Theoretical Framework

The three major theories that will be used to address the idea of engaged teaching practice from the teacher perspective in Dubai are the engagement theory, Vygotsky's theory, and the behavioural theory.

VII. The Engagement Theory

According to Moody, Kostohryzand, and Vereen (2014), the learners are engaged when they spend a lot of time and effort on a specific task or when they become deeply concerned with the quality of their work. Thus, learners become committed to what they do because they see more significance in their work beyond its personal instrumental value. Akey (2006) argued that the learners that are engaged seek out activities both within and out of the classroom making the learning process a success. Also, Akey (2006) and Fernandes et al. (2014) explained that engaged learners show curiosity in their learning since they have a strong desire to understand more things and they show positive emotional responses to the school and the learning process. Lumpkin (2007) and Cook-Sather, Bovill, and Felten (2014) explain that engaged learning is the best learning process. Lumpkin (2007) states that engaged learning enables the learners to become engaged with a problem, find the best solutions, and share the solutions to their classmates, making the learning process open for everyone to see and assess. Thus, students are more likely to learn when they become engaged in the learning process (Lumpkin, 2007; Hodge, Baxter Magolda, & Haynes, 2009; Blair, 2017; Matthews & Turner, 2016).

Engaged learning is effective because it ensures that various learning responsibilities are shared between the teacher and the learner. Timperley et al. (2008) argued that both the learner and the

teacher carry the load of the learning goals as well as the teaching and learning tasks in a warming as well as a welcoming environment through the use of various strategies, resources, and methods that arouse the interest of the learners in the learning process. Various researchers identified several indicators that must be present during the engaged learning process. For instance, Lambert and Stewart (2015) found out that the learners are responsible for their learning because they regulate themselves and are able to define their learning goals as well as evaluate their learning achievements. Also, the learning tasks must be challenging, multidisciplinary, and authentic for the engaged learning to take place (Jacobsen, 2001). The learning tasks are often complex and require a lot of time. Usually, the assessment of the engaged learning involves giving authentic tasks, problems, or a project to the learners, and then interviewing and examining the artefacts and presentations to assess whether the learners understand what they are doing (Barkley, Cross, & Major, 2014; Smith & Cardaciotto, 2012; McCormick, Clark, & Raines, 2015).

The models of instructions during an engaged learning process are interactive. The learners are actively engaged throughout the learning process. Thus, the learners are encouraged to construct as well as produce knowledge in different meaningful ways as the learners interactively teach each other. Also, the learners should conceive the classroom as a knowledge-building learning community for engaged learning to take place. The importance of such learning communities is not only tied to the development of a shared understanding but they also create empathetic learning environments that incorporate diversity issues (Simonson, Smaldino, & Zvacek, 2014). Learning-centred collaborative work usually involves small teams or groups of two or more learners in the classroom or across the boundaries of a classroom.

VIII.   Vygotsky's Social Learning Theories in Engaged Learning

Vygotsky's social learning theory has been widely applied to explain the dynamics of the learners in the learning process. The theory explains how the social context affects the process of learning and informs on how the teachers can construct active learning activities to benefits the learners in the class. Vygotsky explained that people learn through their interactions as well as their communication with others. According to Vygotsky, learning occurs when the learners interact with their teachers, peers, and other experts (Cipolle, 2010). Thus, the teachers can come up with a learning environment that makes the most of the ability of the learners to cooperate with each other through active participation in class discussion and collaboration as well as feedback. Culture plays a pivotal role in knowledge construction.

People learn through the cultural lens through the interaction with others as well as observing the rules, skills, and the abilities that are shaped by their culture. According to Vygotsky, language is critical in engaged learning since it promotes thinking, develops the learner's reasoning, and supports the cultural activities such as writing and reading (Cipolle, 2010). Thus, instructional approaches that encourage literacy throughout the curriculum play an important role in the construction of knowledge and the combination of the entire class leadership, independent learning, and individual as well as group coaching. Moreover, teachers must always provide the students with the chance to participate in a managed discussion regarding their learning to promote a deeper understanding. The use of Socratic dialogues under the discussion-based classroom setting can make the learners feel valued thereby increasing the learner's motivation during the learning process (Goldenberg, 2014).

The social learning theory also explains that teachers play a significant role in aiding the learning process in engaged learning (Goldenberg, 2014). Teachers are seen as experts who play the role of a facilitator by creating a conducive environment where directed as well as guided interactions take place (Hung & Khine, 2006). Most educational theorists have adopted the ideas of Vygotsky's social learning theory and even proposed strategies that foster a deeper knowledge construction, enable the use of Socratic discussions, and use small groups to build active learning communities (Collie, Shapka, & Perry, 2012). Essentially, Vygotsky argued that learning always takes place and it is impossible to separate it from the social context (Entwistle & Ramsden, 2015). Therefore, instructional approaches that encourage the delivery of expert knowledge where the learners work collaboratively to identify the problem, find solutions to the problem, and share the solution among themselves helps in establishing a collaborative community of learners. Under Vygotsky's social context, the construction of knowledge student-student as well as expert-student partnership on problems that build on every individual's skills, language, and experience shaped by the culture of each person (Entwistle & Ramsden, 2015).

Vygotsky's theory is also closely related to Piaget's theory of cognitive development which explains that people are not able to automatically understand as well as use the information given to them since they always need to construct their knowledge prior to the practical experiences for them to create accurate mental images. Thus, Rummel (2008) explained that the essential role of teachers is to motivate the children or the learners to create personal knowledge before real experiences. Vygotsky called his work social constructionism. Although Vygotsky's theory was

largely centred on the social context of learning, his theory was closely related to the assumption of Piaget regarding ways through which children learn (Pratt et al., 2010). While the teacher played a limited role in directing the learning process in Piaget's approach, Vygotsky's approach emphasised a more significant role of a teacher (Gray, C MacBlain, 2015).

IX. Behavioural Learning Theory

Psychology became more popular during the last part of the nineteenth century where it was plainly defined as the science of consciousness. Behaviourism became the only field that rejected the definition of psychology as the science of consciousness instead replacing consciousness with behaviour. Since its inception in the late nineteenth century, behaviourism has evolved over a long time and continues to be studied by different scholars (Schunk, 2012). However, most theorists have exhibited significant divergent views especially when it comes to settling on one universal definition of behaviourism and rightly acknowledging the true behavioural theorists.

One of the fundamental advantages of behavioural learning theory is that it is mostly concerned with the learner's outcome during the learning process. The theory does not take the feelings as well as the thoughts of the learners into account. Rather, behavioural learning approach relies on the things that provoke the learner's reactions as well as their responses and the learners' reaction to the stimuli (Ke, 2008). The basic principle of the theory is that the learners will elicit positive responses if they are given the correct stimulus during the learning process (Jonassen & Land, 2012). For instance, the teacher can present the learners with a desired behaviour such as a good problem-solving method. Once the learner gives a correct answer, the teacher should reinforce the learner's response through motivation or rewards. They should then follow up the learners' progress by providing new learning goals and repeat the same learning process consistently.
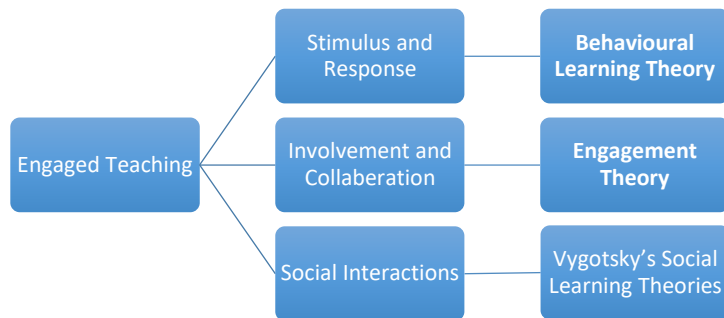
Figure 1. Theoretical framework

III. Review of related literature

I. The Role of Teachers in a Behavioural Approach to the Learning Process

Teachers play a significant role in aiding the learning process in a behaviourist-oriented learning process. First, the teacher is tasked with designing and presenting the desired behaviour to the learners and providing reinforcement to the learners' behaviours. The teacher is then required to reward the learners when they respond to the desired behaviour in the correct way. However, the teacher should not be concerned about the feelings or thoughts of the learners but just observe and focus on their responses and the learning outcomes (Harward, 2007).

In addition to classroom management, the behavioural learning approach can also be used by teachers to teach specific subject matter. For instance, consider a mathematics teacher trying to introduce a new concept in class. The teacher tells the students to keenly follow the required steps of getting the solution. However, the teacher warns the learners that no one will get full credit if he/she fails to follow every step. In this case, the desired outcome is for the learners to remain attentive throughout the learning process (Zakaria, Chin, & Daud, 2010). The teacher should acknowledge the learners who follow the right steps to reach the solution so as to motivate them to keep up the good performance.

II. Role of Teachers in Classrooms

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

III. The opposition to Engaged Learning

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

IV. The Role of the Teacher in the Engaged Learning Process

Teachers play key roles in ensuring the success of engaged learning within the classroom. However, the role of teachers in the engaged learning process is different with the role that teachers play in the teacher-centred classroom. Under the engaged learning process, the teacher is responsible for creating the culture of achievement in class, creating relevant interactive lessons,

and encouraging the learners to do more study on their own. According to Janes et al. (2000), the teacher facilitates the learners to create learning opportunities for themselves and solve problems by constructing their own meaning to the problems. Also, Janes et al. (2000) argued that the learners should be allowed to formulate problems and explore concepts that excite during the learning process. Providing the learners with the choices to explore various concepts while learning enhances the learning process. While there is the need for the learners to have the autonomy during the learning process, such autonomy must be structured by the teacher to ensure that the learners remain on the right track while learning (Klem & Connell, 2004).

Teachers are responsible for the creation of an environment that promotes achievement and encouragement rather than humiliation as well as competition. In most cases, teachers give the learners a negative impression through their negative body language as well as using highly destructive inquiries such as asking the learners questions that are difficult to them. Akey (2006) argued that teachers should aim at establishing an environment where learning is cool and positive to the learner. Teachers should avoid humiliating learners when they give wrong responses.

V. Cooperative Learning Strategies: Freedom of Choice and Collaboration

Engaged learning strategy provides students with the opportunity of working cooperatively and purposely. The formation of learning groups is often done in accordance with the objective of instruction, common interests, and the common needs. Cooperative working enables the students to adopt an appropriate problem solving and social skills. Leaning is primarily enhanced the moment traditional despotic control is relinquished. This allows the students cooperate interactively together with their colleague with the aim of achieving common goals and objectives. In this case, cooperative learning may only transpire the moment teachers take a bold step of adopting open and interactive teaching skills that embrace mutual consensus between the students and teachers. These are the kind of teachers who do not partake the roles of being the sole sources of knowledge and information, while at the same time playing a role of setting guidelines for enhancing student interactions and behavioural conducts. It depicts an environment in which the students work in small groups that enable them to discuss challenging concepts and to learn how to take control of their learning processes.

Working together ensures that team spirit instead of competition is upheld by the students. In this essence, the primary objective of cooperative learning is positive interdependence. Therefore, the ultimate success of any given group is largely determined by the levels of interaction and

collaboration. This educational strategy gives students a good opportunity of ensuring high accountability levels. They are poised to step into various roles based on their hobbies and talents rather than being forced by their teachers to participate or compete. Such opportunities for monitoring each other are participation and work quality enhances motivation and interest amongst the students (Clayton, Blumberg, & Auld, 2010).

When students take part in the engaged learning process in the supportive, cooperative, and well-structured groups, the information flow is not essentially hindered by their emotional filters. It is thus deemed significant to plan a group in a manner that ensures the mutual alignment of group member's strengths and weaknesses. This establishes a situation whereby individual skills, talents, and learning styles are valued. In this case, the students greatly benefit from the act of sharing ideas and learning new concepts from their colleagues. Apart from this, cooperative learning strategy tends to promote positive academic discourse between the students. There are various pitfalls associated to a situation characterised with poor classroom interactions between the students and teachers. This mishap is also associated with a situation whereby students are encouraged to operate individually rather than embracing group work. Such circumstances enhance poor learning skills since the students' ideologies and thoughts are not voiced. It would hence be inappropriate to equate classroom silence to the students' learning abilities. In contrast, authentic and meaningful learning occurs when students share their ideas as they work together towards solving certain problems or challenges.

Learning is particularly enhanced when students receive constructive criticisms and positive feedback from their teachers and group mates. Unlike the independent work, cooperative learning activities provide students with various opportunities of expressing their ideas, conclusions, inferences, associations, and their questions verbally. They embrace each other's guidance on the verge of solving compelling and pertinent problems as they also develop their interactive skills through healthy communication framework. The cooperative learning has proved to be of great importance to the students in several ways such as high self-esteem, high test scores, enhanced engagement, better social skills, as well as better understanding of skills and content. The positive results of this teaching style have led most teachers to incorporate it into their classroom practices. Nevertheless, it has been cautioned that various group tasks used by teachers claiming to be embracing cooperative learning have ceased to deliver positive outcomes because of one reason or the other. For example, almost the entire "jigsaw" activities cannot be regarded as cooperative

learning jigsaw activities. This is simply because it cannot be guaranteed that students working in smaller groups are more cooperative and focused by default.

There are numerous cooperative learning techniques that tend to promote interactions and effective learning amongst the students. The first strategy is that of thinking/paring/sharing. This strategy is designed in a manner that provides students with significant clues or ideologies on the topics at hand. It rather gives them the abilities to formulate and sharing individual thoughts with their group members. The second technique is a roundtable. It involves a cooperative learning framework whereby students are compelled to contribute to the classroom discussion in turns. The roundtable is often completed in a written form. The final technique is regarded as webbing. Webbing is a graphic organiser methodology that provides a clear visual view of how phrases or words connect to a concept, an object, or a topic. It boosts the students' abilities to understand certain concepts and theories through clarification.

Cooperative learning strategy cannot only be ascertained through the incorporation of students in various groups but rather ensuring application of meaning cooperative learning techniques. There are hence various agreed upon standards or elements that should be adhered to so as to ensure that realistic cooperative learning is enhanced. First and for most, specific learning outcomes at the end of every session should be formulated. As a group, the students are supposed to take such learning outcomes as their ultimate objectives. Taking the group ownership of stated goals is the primary key to ensuring that students get engaged in a significant learning process. The instructor or the teacher should then give every group clear instruction for completing the pending tasks (Law et al., 2017; Kuh, 2003). The mutual norms amongst the students aimed at basing their common interactions should also be provided before the onset of cooperative learning activity (Matthews, Cook-Sather & Healey, 2018). In this case, students are supposed to be matched heterogeneously in groups of five, four, or even three. The categories should first of all be based on their academic levels and capabilities before taking into consideration the aspects of gender, race, and backgrounds. Heterogeneous groups accord the students various opportunities of becoming tolerant to other students' viewpoints, to take into consideration each other's feelings and thoughts, as well as the need of asking clarifying questions and to seek out ideological clarifications. Other vital elements associated with cooperative learning groups include face-to-face interaction and individual accountability.

IV.   Summary of the Chapter

In summary, engaged learning has taken the place of traditional learning approaches in modern classrooms. The learning process has shifted from being teacher-centred to learner-centred where the learners take part in identifying the problem, finding solutions to the problem, and sharing the solutions among their peers in class. The aim of this research is to reveal how teachers can encourage active participation inside the classroom? While engaged learning is good in achieving the best learning outcomes since students take part throughout the learning process, there is the need for teachers to be competent enough to encourage active participation inside their classroom, to create the best environment for collaborative learning and able to face challenges during this process. What are the challenges that educators face during this process? Are the students ready to take ownership of their learning and full autonomy of their learning process? The role of the teacher has been shifted from being the information giver to the role of a facilitator.

V.   Current Gaps in Engaged Learning

While engaged learning process has various advantages, there are certain situations when this method of teaching becomes less effective. For instance, some learners find it difficult to respond positively to group learning activities hence affecting their learning experiences (Brill & Park, 2008). Also, the fact that collaborative learning burdens the learners with most learning activities can easily affect the effectiveness of the teacher to achieve the teaching outcomes. Finally, teachers might find it difficult to implement effective assessment of the group works. Thus, this research will suggest the optimum strategy that will maximize the benefits of engaged teaching

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

I.   Research Approach

In most major research engagements, researchers contend with a broad range of alternative research techniques for addressing their research objectives; in reality, making this choice and formulating the arguments to defend the choice represents a daunting challenge. In considering the philosophy of research there are two broad factors to consider: ontology and epistemology. In order to take ontology first, there are a number of philosophical approaches to understand how and what the world is, but the two most common approaches are the positivist and interpretivist constructs. Positivists view the world as a very clear, unambiguous, and verifiable reality that can be examined with objective detachment (Cavana *et al*., 2001). Interpretivists see the world as largely a set of social constructions (i.e. language, consciousness, shared meanings, and instruments), integrating human interest in the study and invoking the philosophical representation of idealism in the world.

Fundamentally, any research methodology will embrace an approach over the other, but there is no reason to view them as polar opposites in a methodology since they can both be used in the same project (Saunders *et al*., 2011). Epistemology, on the other hand, is a little more applied in terms of the way that a research methodology is presented, and it can be appreciated and understood also in two broad approaches: rationalism and empiricism. The empiricist approach to understanding how people come to know the world is based on the premise that the only way to gain knowledge of it is through objective study and analysis, and testing the attendant verifiable reality. In practice, this is most closely associated with the scientific method, which relates to the knowing the world through the formulation and testing of hypotheses over controlled experiments (Ghauri and Grønhaug, 2005).

Empiricists argue that conducting an objective study and analysis is the only way to build a store of knowledge free from subjective elements or biases, and that data generation is the critical component of any solid methodology; without good data, the methodology will not reach any defensible conclusions. Empiricists view data as the sole source of explanatory power within a research context; whereas, rationalists argue data alone does not unlock the mysteries of the world, such that the data must pass through the rigors and analysis of the human brain (Sekaran and Bougie, 2009).

This work leveraged empirical can be visualized to be located on the top right-hand side of the outermost ring of the Research Onion Diagram. There is need to develop primary data in addressing the research purpose, a data collection mechanism involving the qualitative method approach, premised on the empirical contexts, was adapted to the research exercise. Beyond the generation of empirical data, the thesis required rational interpretation of the qualitative data.

II. Data Collection Techniques
I. Interviews and Observation

According to Mann (2003), research approach represents procedures used by researchers ranging from wide assumptions to detailed data collection, data analysis and data interpretation methods. In the current study, the approach included collecting data using qualitative approach. The qualitative approach included focus interviews and observations. The study selected qualitative approach based on the research problem being addressed. The research problem involved included inability of learning institutions to perform well because of failing to engage students in the learning process. The study aimed towards allowing learning institutions to involve learners in the learning process, mainly research projects depending on their courses and disciplines.

The aim of interviews included collecting detailed data from teachers explaining how they motivate students to actively participate in the learning process and think critically. Therefore, before the actual research, the researcher conducted a CPD pilot study using four teachers on encouraging student active participation. Interviews and observation allowed the researcher to explore and understand teachers and methods they employ to teach students and encourage active participation. The research process included developing emerging questions as well as procedures and collecting data from the participants' setting. More so, the researcher used the qualitative approach to analyse data inductively starting from specific themes to general ones, followed by data interpretation. The approach was essential because it supported inductive style, concentrated on individual meaning through observation and personal insights (interviews), hence considering the significance of understanding the complexity of participative learning. Furthermore, the interviews aim included collecting data on learning integrative methods, challenges that hinder integration and participative learning and incentives increasing class interaction, participatory and integration methods.

II. Observation

The researcher implemented phenomenological approach as a qualitative method, which entailed collecting data by observing based on the Danielson framework's observation checklist. Observation as a data collection method represents a participatory research, with the researcher required to immerse fully in the class setting to analyse and understand the respondents, take notes or record the activities. Being a structured observation, under systematic observation, the researcher used specific variables using a pre-defined schedule. The main benefits included researcher having direct access to appropriate research phenomena, increased levels of flexibility in relation to application and generation of permanent records to be used later during data analysis and discussion. The phenomenological research design allows the researcher to assess the teachers' perception about the real-life experiences based on the Danielson framework at the school they teach. As a qualitative research based method, the phenomenological assesses a purposively-select group of participants and is important for the current study since it provides an in-depth description of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2002). The method is also flexible to allow for emerging themes on the research problem to evolve throughout the data collection, analysis and interpretation.

The main limitations however included the amount of time taken to collect data, increased bias levels, and the role the observer plays in providing primary data. It is likely that the presence of an observer is likely to influence the behaviour of selected sample of participants. More so, observation as a data collection method has many ethical issues. The researcher must obtain full consent from research participants and it is likely that the sample group could change behaviours because of the associated negative implication on type of research validity, when they are aware of the observer's presence.

III. Interviews

The researcher selected interview as a qualitative method, because of the opportunity to screen participants closely. Most importantly, since the study is open-ended, the researcher could capture the verbal and non-verbal behaviours such as body language showing discomfort levels on type of questions asked. Since the researcher did a pilot study, identifying such questions during the pilot study could help change some questions to obtain most relevant data in the best way possible. With the interviewer controlling the interview process, it was possible to keep focus and maintain track until completion. Capturing emotions and participant behaviours could help in comprehending the real current situation when it comes to teaching in a class.

The major limitations however include involved personnel and business costs, quality of collected data, which relies on the interviewer's ability. The interviewer is likely to show biasness, which impact input responses. Lastly, the limited sample size of four teachers is a major issue, which is likely to fail showing true picture of learning environment.

III.   Study Site

The study site was an elementary school in Dubai that had an American Curriculum. The total population of the school was 1480 students and 93 teachers. This population could provide an adequate sample for conducting a qualitative research through interviews and observation. The findings on teacher' perspective can be generalised to the rest of the population on engaged learning. The researcher started by first observing the sampled 100 students, with class observation tool used to measure and enhances teacher effectiveness. The factors the researcher considered included class overview and research using observation as a measure to enhance teaching scales such as class development process.

During observation, the researcher focused most on conceptual learning work, as well as basic research teaching practice elements that have a direct contribution to student learning (Almekhlafi and Almeqdadi, 2010). The most significant variables included establishing cognitive procedures, language used in class, self-regulation methods displayed by students, emotional self-control, engagement processes, motivation levels, persistence and task orientation. While observing teachers, the main observed variables included good instructions embedded in student-teacher relationships and class interaction activities. Other measures include emotional, instructional as well as classroom practices offered by teachers and how they contribute to student's social development and academic attainment (Almekhlafi and Almeqdadi, 2010). Assessing interactions among teachers and students was for purposes of gauging the teacher professional advancement, monitoring and evaluation, coherence and communication skills.

IV.   Data Sampling Techniques

A study sample simply represents the study participants. In the current study, the researcher selected four teachers for the interview and 100 students were selected for observation. This was sampled from a target population of 1480 students and 93 teachers from the Dubai school. The observations were conducted for the different age groups from grade 5 aged 11 years and grade 2 aged 7 years. In each of the age group to observations were done. The 4 teachers and 100 students served as a convenient and representative sample for the target population and its sampling frame.

The sample is a ubiquitous in research and it should not be so small such that it yields scant information or very large to impose ethical, economic and other constraints to the research. Thus, a sample of 100 students against a population of 1480 students was found to be convenient for the researcher to interview and observe considering there were no assistance in data collection (conducting interviews). In addition, the study was qualitative in nature and thus a sample of 100 provided qualitative data that was not too large to render data analysis tedious. For the teachers, a sample of 4 teachers against a target population of 93 teachers was found to be convenient for the research and would provide adequate information regarding teachers' perspective in engaged learning.

According to Merriam (1998) the sampling is the task to select unit of analysis where researcher selects a sample to be used in the study depending on the data collection method. The researcher began by identifying the population under study, which include people essential in making assumptions about. In this case the population were teachers and students, groups that had been unable to interact well during class sessions, hence making the learning process hard. The researcher had identified that most learning institutions performed poorly because of the inability by teachers to engage students in the learning process.

The research aims therefore includes establishing strategies that learning institutions through teachers could implement to involve learners in the learning process, especially when conducting research projects depending on their courses and disciplines. Since it was impossible to observe students from all schools in Dubai all interview all teachers, the next step included specifying a sampling frame, used by the researcher to draw a sample. In this case the sample included four teachers for interviewing and 100 students for observation. The sampling frame used included simple random sampling method, with the researcher drawing names from 10 classes and selecting the sampling randomly. Despite large sample size offering better data analysis, the time, resources and effort involved is massive. Since the research was limited in relation to time and resource constraints, the researcher had to reduce the sample size to meet the set timelines.

Under simple random sampling, every sample had an equal chance of being selected. The names were drawn together and any was likely to be picked. After selecting the population, sample frame, method and size, the researcher set a plan in place.

V. Pilot Study

Pilot testing includes a process of establishing if the major informant interview guide, as well as observation shall work in the real study by testing it on few individuals. According to Goodman et al. (1998), the researcher chose to conduct a pilot study to ensure every sample participant understands the questions in a similar way. More so, it was possible for the researcher to point out actions and behaviours that made participants uncomfortable and the time it takes to finish the study. The main aim included ensuring every participant understood the data collection instrument, hence the need to include teachers from different grade levels as well as students (Goodman et al. 1998). Other aspects considered in the pilot study included age, race, gender and educational variables. At a minimum, it was important to include in the pilot study, participants from every sub group to ensure their views and behaviours could be confirmed by the other population.

The researcher used various methods to establish how the study participants understood the data collection instrument. The first procedure involved retrospective interview, where the researcher administered interview questions in a similar manner, as well as similar conditions, she planned to conduct actual data collection. During the interview, the researcher recorded the start and end time of the interview, as well as observation. Accordingly, the researcher paid much attention on instances of hesitation when answering questions or when seeking clarification, because it may indicate the asked questions are vague and hard to comprehend (Maxwell, 2012). The researcher made notes on questions where such hesitance occurred. After completing interviews, the researcher explained the need to know how the participants understood every asked interview questions and the provided response. Again, based on the observations, the researcher clarified from the participants, the instances of hesitation and doubt.

Other considered aspects include understanding cultural sensitivity, as well as relevance of the interview by asking if the participants identified any objectivity in the interview process. It was also important to ask questions on areas those motivated or demotivated participants from continuing with the study (Maxwell, 2012). The feedback about the instrument was done by asking every participant through the focus group during the pilot test. The sample size of the pilot constituted 1% of the sample population for the study. The pilot study was used to test the reliability and validity of the interview questions as the research instrument (Cooper & Schindler, 2006). The aim of the pilot study was to establish any inconsistences and improve the clarity of

the interview questions from the feedback of the pilot study participant. However, the data from the pilot study was excluded from the final study findings.

Focus groups were the most appropriate because together, the teachers and students could come up with significant alternatives on the best way the researcher could have handled the process.

VI.   Data Analysis

While preparing for data analysis, the researcher linked research questions to study designs. The first step included development of research questions, as well as study objectives. A major step involves planning the study according to purpose and scope, which included reflecting gaps in current knowledge to inform future studies. The researcher determined the scope of the study based on time and resources constraints. The research questions under study §included: -

Main Question:

- *How could Dubai schools using American curriculum increase awareness of teachers on strategies that reinforce engaged learning?*

Sub-questions:

- *How could American curriculum schools improve learning relationship between teachers and students in a classroom environment?*
- *What the major deficiencies of the American curriculum system in relation to engaged learning?*
- *What are the best instructional strategies employed by teachers in an engaged classroom?*

Similarly, study objectives included-

To identify how teachers can encourage active participation and critical thinking inside the classroom. Conduct CPD pilot study with 2 teachers on how to encourage active participation of students. Observe before and after then account the difference.

To establish the engaged teaching and learning as a priority in learning institutions.

After establishing research questions and objectives, the researcher chose a study design, in this case, observational, by observing what was happening in a particular context, in this case class environment when class sessions were on-going. Observational study draws inferences on impact of exposure as well as intervention on participants in a group, which is observed, with little chance of manipulation (Mann, 2003). The researcher conducted direct observation of persons in natural

setting, meaning intervention is determined through individual preferences, and effectiveness of the study.

Explanatory study design was also employed for the interview, with the researcher explaining the elements of the study in a detailed way. The researcher started from a general idea using the research design as a too likely to prepare the participants for the research idea under discussion. According to Mann (2003), the researcher chose explanatory study because it was viable to establish methods that could improve class interaction in class, encouraging student active participation. The study was not focused on providing conclusive evidence, but helps to comprehend the problem of lack of active participation by Dubai students in an efficient way. When doing the study, the researcher looked for ways of adapting to new data and insight discovered in the course of the study.

After establishing the study design, the next process during data analysis shall include ensuring ethical and participatory study by thinking about best methods to engage the study participants, in this case the students and teachers. The researcher considered many questions including the social as well as ethical implications of participants' engagement with the researcher and study in general. More so, the researcher identified ways to safeguard and enhance all participants' wellbeing and interests. With the researcher handling children, it was necessary to develop safe and ethical ways of involving students under the age of 18 in the study and protecting their rights.

VII.   Delimitation and scope of current study

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

Merriam (1998) explain that the delimitation of the study included researcher confining the research to interviewing teachers and observing students when class sessions are on-going. Similarly, study limitation included the selected sampling procedure that was purposive in nature decreasing generalizability of study findings. The researcher did not generalize all areas of active

participation in class, but picked on selective variables only. Moreover, being a qualitative study, the findings could be subjected to various interpretations, hence putting in doubt the study reliability (Mirhosseini, 2017). The study was further delimited by observing students from all grade levels in the school, as well as selecting teachers from varied classes to participate in the interviewing process. The researcher picked a single educational institution, selecting students between Grade 1 and Grade 5, hence showing the selected geographical delimitation.

VIII.   Ethical Consideration

Ethical consideration represents most significant aspect in a study. (2017) explain that every researcher must consider many factors and principles when handling participants. The researcher ensured that during the interviews and observation, none of the participants were subjected to harm in any way. Accordingly, the respect and dignity of all participants was highly valued. The researcher also obtained consent from all participants. The teachers and principal of the school also signed the consent form confirming participation.

The researcher also clarified that participants had the authority to withdraw from the study at any time without any restrictions. Additionally, the researcher did not use real names when analysing data, hence maintaining privacy and confidentiality of participants. The researcher used codes to refer to participants (Gajjar, 2013). The purpose of using codes included maintaining anonymity of research participants (Rani and Sharma, 2012). While analysing the collected data, the researcher avoided exaggerations on aim, and study objectives top void deception and ensure reliability. According to Gajjar (2013), since the researcher was not paying any participants to participate in the study, there was need for clarification to pick participants willing to volunteer. Every form of communication was done based on transparency and honesty variables. The researcher eliminated acquiescence bias by replacing questions, which implied right answers during the pilot study with those focusing on respondents' point of view and understanding. To avoid social desirability biasness, the researcher changed direct questions asked during pilot study to indirect questioning, allowing projection of own feelings, but provide honest and transparent answers (Gajjar, 2013). Habituation was avoided in cases where participants showed fatigue by keeping the conversational engagement, and varying questions to avoid repetition.

Conversely, Rani and Sharma (2012) believe that when handling researcher bias, the researcher worked towards eliminating confirmation, culture and question-order bias. Confirmation bias is rooted in natural tendencies by people to comprehend and filter information, where the researcher

ends up focusing on a single hypothesis. Gajjar (2014) believe that to minimize the bias, the researcher made continuous impressions of participants, in addition to challenging pre-existing hypothesis. According, researcher handled cultural bias by moving towards cultural relativism by offering unconditional support and positive regard to having cognizant attitude towards cultural assumptions. The study also identified researcher's based bias that may affect retrieval, analysis and interpretation of the data and influence the outcome of the research. The research adhered to the ethical conduct of research to increase the validity and reliability of the research outcome (Mears, 2009). There were bias based on the research own subjectivity. This happens when the researcher leads the participants in certain directions when answering questions or making follow-up inquiries of the study. In order to reduce bias based on the researcher's own subjectivity and ensure the interview questions were accurate and reliable, a predetermined set of questions were first reviewed and approved by a panel of experts. The researcher also avoided having leading questions and no pressure was exerted to influence participants' answers. The conversion with the research participants was allowed to flow and at no instance did the researcher dictate or dominate the conversation with the participants.

IX.   Trustworthiness of the Data and Sample

To increase trustworthiness, the researcher propagated credibility by prolonging the interview engagement, maintained persistent observation and practised referential adequacy (Goodman et al. 1998). Furthermore, triangulation helped in boosting credibility where the researcher employed varied research questions and used two study participants (students and teachers), where students came from different grade levels, while teachers taught different subjects that included Mathematics, English, and science. The researcher also emphasised on member checks, by asking participants to review their answers that the interpretation of the data by the researcher. According to Maxwell (2012), participants remain appreciative of the member check procedures when they are aware that they will have an opportunity to fill any left gaps from the ended interviews.

CHAPTER IV: DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

I. Overview of the chapter

The chapter provide the results for the observations and interviews conducted for the 4 teachers and 100 students. Analysis and key findings from the interviews and the observations are provided in this chapter. Finally, the chapter avails the even themes that have been developed from the qualitative study on the perspective of teachers regarding engaged learning.

II. Analysis of the interviews

The interviews, as well as observations, showed the significance of engaged learning where a teacher and learner share responsibilities. The interviews demonstrated that teachers had a significant role in facilitating the learning process in a behaviourist-oriented learning process. The interviews revealed that teachers started to design and present the desired behaviour to the learners and providing reinforcement to the learners' behaviours. Some teachers rewarded learners when they responded to the desired behaviour in a correct way. However, some teachers were concerned about the feelings or thoughts of the learners, while others observed student responses and learning outcomes.

Most teachers utilized behavioural learning methodology when teaching a particular subject matter that is taking too long for the students to comprehend. For instance, when a mathematics teacher introduced a new concept in class, the teacher asked students to follow keenly required steps to reach a solution. The teacher, however, warned learners that no one was to get full credit if he or she fails to follow each step as indicated by the teacher.

III. Key Findings from the interviews

The interviews presented critical issues regarding learning tasks that promote engaged learning. It was apparent that the tasks must be challenging and multidisciplinary, hence the complexities and amount of time required. The authenticity is reflected in tasks in the class corresponding to those at home, reinforced by collaboration alongside peers and mentors in school and at home. There is a need for integrated instructions, which include problem-solving mentality presented in early learner's curriculum. Another crucial indicator identified in the interviews include assessment during engaged learning, where students have to handle authentic tasks, investigate, observe, interview and examine presentations, to assess their potential. The most significant findings was on performance-based assessment, which must be generative in nature regarding performance

criteria as well as playing an important role in overall design, evaluations and reports on assessment.

IV.   Analysis of the observation

Observation of 100 elementary learners showed that instructional models used by teachers in an engaged class are interactive. However, as much as a teacher would have preferred the students to get engaged in the learning process for the entire lessons, it is not possible. With the learners being young, distractions were common from the observations. However, teachers must encourage learners to construct and develop knowledge in varied meaningful ways as learners interact and continue to teach one another. When a teacher is faced with a class, where the majority of students prefer to remain silent, and the teacher must introduce an opinion and engage in a demonstration to start that important conversation. During observation, the researcher observed such behaviour and since the class was new, the teacher started the conversation by asking every student to introduce himself or herself, mention where they come from, their hobbies and dislikes and future endeavours.

The observations also revealed that teachers started to design and present the desired behaviour to the learners and provided a model to the learners' behaviours. Some teachers rewarded learners when they responded to the desired behaviour in a correct way. However, some teachers were concerned about the feelings or thoughts of the learners, while others observed student responses and learning outcomes. The observation period showed that roles of teachers in the class have shifted from that of the giver of information to that of a guide, facilitator, and learner. The first step included a teacher ensuring learning environment was conducive and each learner experienced uniqueness, with the ability to collaborate.

V.   Key findings from the Observations

Observing students and teachers demonstrated that learners conceived the class as a learning community and enjoyed engaged learning, as compared to those that preferred passive learning. Albeit, while some teachers observed the rule of community learning by involving small teams of two or five learners, some were overwhelmed by the huge number of students, hence forced to manage larger groups of even 26 learners.

Observing science class showed that most students were explorers who interacted with the physical world and their peers to identify concepts and skills and apply them in the learning environment.

When a teacher is faced with a class, where the majority of students preferred to remain silent, and the teacher had to introduce an opinion and engage in a demonstration to start that important conversation. During observation, the researcher observed such a behaviour and since the class was new, the teacher started the conversation by asking every student to introduce himself or herself, mention where they come from, their hobbies and dislikes and future endeavours.

VI.   Theme 1: American Curriculum Design

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

VII.   Theme 2: American Curriculum in Dubai of inspections

In Dubai, the performance of American curriculum schools has remained unchanged for about ten years. According to Kliebard (2004), over a period of five inspection period, American curriculum schools improved performance by 15%, while the outstanding schools performed similarly during the period. DSIB assessed the effectiveness of the curriculum scoring 60%, which was an acceptable quality pass. Interviewed teachers indicated that students achieved better in English and poorly in Arabic. Arabic writing skills have been weak, and there is much need to improve English communication.

Accordingly, overall leadership has been accepted in Dubai, with leadership skills acquired in classes being higher than other curriculum systems. With most American curriculum schools complying with the requirements of the Ministry of Education to allocate some time to Islamic Education and Arabic, the system has largely been accepted in Arab culture. Teachers in the interview indicate the significance of parents familiarizing themselves with new standards set for new subjects (Kliebard, 2004). The standards indicate what students must know, and comprehend at different grade levels. One of the interviewed teachers states '*curriculum goes beyond textbooks and accomplished courses, but instructional strategies implemented and the assessment methodologies*'.

More so, parents and students being the main players in the education sector must take advantage of 'Professional Learning Communities' (PLCs) that reflect a continuous procedure where educators collaborate through collective inquiry as well as action research to attain better results for students they teach (Kliebard, 2004). Godwin (2006) asserts that during the collaborations, instructional and assessment conversations happen frequently, providing a foundation provided by American curriculum. Since assessment in the schools does not depend only on standardized tests, there is a need for parents to understand where their students perform better compared to the peers and what they can learn from them when handling group work (Goldernberg, 2014).

Without a doubt, professional development remains significant for all school leaders as well as teachers responsible for administering the curriculum. According to Almekhlafi and Almeqdadi (2010), Dubai schools must have comprehensive and effective professional development plans for the entire staff. The plan must be aligned with inspection data, accreditation results, as well as other information sources collected by the school team. It is important for schools to partner with US-based organizations to have a connection with available resources, best teaching practices and research done towards American curriculum. Teachers and parents must foster insightful and deep understanding of the contribution provided by American curriculum towards the growth of Dubai educational structures.

VIII.   Theme 3: Understanding Engaged Learning

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

The interviews, as well as observations, showed the significance of engaged learning where a teacher and learner share responsibilities. The same view was shared by Timperley et al. (2008) who argued that both the learner and the teacher carry the load of the learning goals as well as the teaching and learning tasks. The same must happen in a good learning environment, with required learning tools, methods, and resources to ensure the young learner's interest is alive. Lambert and Stewart (2015) established that learners have the responsibility to control their learning through self-regulation, which helps in defining individual learning objectives and analyse own academic achievements.

An English elementary teacher confirmed the assertions by indicating that sometimes it was important to give elementary learners challenging tasks that allow their engagement. "*As much as it sometimes discourages learners, the children have to learn the hard way and even fail, because it motivates them to learn and not fail the second time*"; said the English teacher. According to Jacobsen (2001), learning tasks that are complex require much research and time, with the teacher required to provide authentic roles, challenges, and practical projects for the learners. Interviews and assessments help learners understand their learning activities (McCormick, Clark, & Raines, 2015). Observation of 100 elementary learners showed that instructional models used by teachers in an engaged class are interactive. However, as much as a teacher would love for the student to get engaged in the learning process for the entire lessons, it is not possible. With the learners being young, distractions were common as observed by the researcher. However, teachers must encourage learners to construct and develop knowledge in varied meaningful ways as learners interact and continue to teach one another.

Observing students and teachers demonstrated that learners that conceived a class as a learning community enjoyed engaged learning, as compared to those that preferred passive learning. According to Simonson, Smaldino, and Zvacek (2014), learning communities help to develop a shared understanding between learning peers as well as their teachers. However, while some teachers observed the rule of community learning by involving small teams of two or five learners, some were overwhelmed by the huge number of students, hence forced to manage larger groups of even 20 learners.

IX.   Theme 4: Strategies Used in Engaged Learning
While teaching elementary learners, it is likely that most could become easily disengaged and daydream, making it challenging for the teachers. Successful competition with other forces affects

the consciousness of the young learners. However, teachers must have much influence on learners to encourage developmental procedures. Teachers must show passion, sensitivity, innovative as well as persistence to help students pay attention in class and develop into engaged learners. According to Godwin (2006), through the interviews, it was apparent that teachers implemented pedagogies learning strategies such as the audio teaching versions that compelled students' active learning. Others included frequent feedback by asking short questions, researching on the curriculum, cooperative learning as well as enhancement of learning communities.

Some teachers were convinced that when a student paid attention in class, it was termed as engaged learning because it allowed students to acquire knowledge as well as skills. However, there was another crop of teachers that prefer liberal learning, hence wanting more from their students more than just paying attention. Such types of teachers prefer transformative learning, where students must respond to what they have learnt. Transformative learning encourages intensive and personal engagement, with students making attempts to reconcile what they learn with their beliefs and demonstrate growth in their general understanding (Blair, 2017). Students that enjoy engaged learning are likely to hold on to the school values and culture, in addition to acquiring mature cognitive development. According to Barkley, Cross, and Major (2014), when students show intense engagement during a lesson, then they develop values that lead to cultural coherency.

For example, one of the interviewed English teachers asserted that "In UAE, Arab students specifically perform poorly in English languages, hence the need for more engagement from the language learners". Fernandes et al. (2014) explain that teachers that employ transformative learning must offer their learners additional challenges. "It is beyond the normal challenge of just ensuring students pay attention because many are likely to resist the transformation"; explained one teacher. The teacher further explained that such an approach threatens a learner's identity as well as an educational worldview. According to Fernandes et al. (2014), Socrates view that students resist conclusions to which he advised them when they differed with their own, hence the perception by a student to still hold on the already-held assumptions and beliefs. Goldenberg (2014) explains that most local students are unlikely to engage in any discussion unless they have fixed held views on particular issues and feel prepared to defend themselves. As such, the students' main interest includes defending established views and convinces their peers of the same.

X.   Theme 5: Types of Strategies

I.   The object of Study Engagement

During observation and interviews, teachers that implemented object of study ask students to examine, evaluate and determine the object of study to allow them to build knowledge as a response. The approach is significant specifically in science classes, to allow direct engagement with the study object using empiricism methods. In other subjects, the adopted features include a close examination of students, close reading, as well as rigorous analysis (Blair, 2017). The affected subjects include history, English literature, and anthropology. Engaging a study object always assumes a learning process, even in cases where the teacher does not engage in transformational leadership. The teachers' main concentrations as observed among the learners include teachers giving them priority to provide opportunities as well as student motivation permitting engagement of study objects.

II.   Contexts Engagement

Contexts engagement adds other dimensions in learning, including breath, where complementary disciplinary perspective on a particular subject leads to a holistic as well as realistic examination. According to the English Language Arts teacher (*interview 1*), "*When teaching students about on population dynamics of a fish population in freshwater lakes, then there is need to implement practices such as visiting one lake to ensure the students understand the real discussion. By moving students to the lake, they will grasp pollution effects as well as weather cycles of the fish population, including the impact on local economy and fishing culture in Dubai*".

XI.   Theme 6: Challenges of Engaged Learning

Through observation and interviews, the researcher identified numerous challenges that included:

I.   Inability to Balance varied Students' learning needs

The teachers emphasized that every student is unique, with some having abilities in sciences, others in languages, while others perform better in mathematics. Accordingly, other students learn better by reading a book, while another group prefers listening to a lecture and the last group prefers solving school work on their own (Blair, 2017). Every teacher must learn the principle of differentiation, which includes involving many different learning ways to cater for every unique student.

II.   Meeting Expectations of the School Leadership

Teachers must ensure that every student in the class is engaged and learning. However, the engagement must be linked to school objectives. The learning lessons provided must help the

learner advance to other grades, enter and blend in the workforce, as well as help them make better choices. However, there are many incidents that the teacher must consider, such as school assessment programs set by the school management, appraisals, available training for the teachers, assemblies, the relationship the school has with the government and club activities the school engages in. Every teacher must be flexible to rearrange plans and have enough backups for all school-related activities. Lesson and event planning is significant to ensure every teacher understands the resources and tools that students require (Blair, 2017). Accordingly, good planning must be accompanied with good communication to ensure learners obtain educational, psychological, emotional and social school experiences.

III. Arguments during Class discussions

Since engaged learning encourages discussions among learners, it is likely that arguments will erupt. One student may make an inflammatory statement, hence the need for a teacher to maintain a peaceful learning environment. First responsibility includes maintaining a safe environment for the students, hence prohibiting debates that could turn into personal attacks on others. Even the teacher must keep cool and remain respectful when a student challenges you, to ensure his/her trust in you does not disappear. Another aspect includes looking for a learning opportunity in every argument experiences. One teacher narrated "There is much value when students listen to other people's opposing views, as well as challenging held stereotypes". According to Richardson (2017), the decision includes using the argument content to work as teaching objectives, or if the student learnt better by defusing tension and swiftly turning concentration back to class activities.

IV. One student Dominating Class Discussions

Some students are very talkative and disruptive, hence derailing the class. When a single student dominates a class discussion, the teacher has a responsibility to request other students to provide their contributions and propose their alternative perspectives. Accordingly, participative strategies remain significant, because a teacher has an opportunity to engage all students (Godwin, 2006). It is important for the teacher to understand that enthusiastic and disruptive students believe, it is the only way to learn and show that they are motivated, hence the need to show appreciation for their commitment and advice ways they can channel the motivation.

V.   Some students choosing to Remain Silent

When a teacher is faced with a class, where the majority of students prefer to remain silent, and the teacher must introduce an opinion and engage in a demonstration to start that important

conversation. During observation, the researcher observed such behaviour and since the class was new, the teacher started the conversation by asking every student to introduce himself or herself, mention where they come from, their hobbies and dislikes and future endeavours.

XII.   Theme 7: The Effective role of a Teacher

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

Other roles as explained through interviews and observation included class management classroom management. Most teachers utilized behavioural learning methodology when teaching a particular subject matter that is taking too long for the students to comprehend. For instance, when a mathematics teacher introduced a new concept in class, the teacher asked students to follow keenly required steps to reach a solution. The teacher, however, warned learners that no one was to get full credit if he or she fails to follow each step as indicated by the teacher. Zakaria, Chin, and Daud (2010) explain that the desired outcome included learners remaining attentive throughout the learning process. According to Entwistle and Ramsden (2015), every teacher should acknowledge the learners who follow the right steps to reach the solution to motivate them to keep up the good performance.

The observation period showed that roles of teachers in the class have shifted from that of the giver of information to that of a guide, facilitator, and learner. The first step included a teacher ensuring learning environment was conducive and each learner experienced uniqueness, with the ability to collaborate. According to Bethell and Morgan (2011), every teacher is a facilitator, hence the need to offer rich learning environments that provide effective learning experiences that could back up engaged learning. Observing science class showed that most students were explorers who interacted with the physical world and their peers to identify concepts and skills and apply them in the learning environment. Thus, Bethell and Morgan (2011) explain that interactive learning environment encourages the learners to reflect upon their discoveries and gain more insight into the process.

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

Table I. Key themes from the interviews and observations

Theme No.	Theme	Highlights
Theme 1	**American Curriculum Design**	• 'CCSSI represents an educational initiative developed by the US detailing learning requirements in English language, arts, history literacy, social studies, sciences, technical subjects and mathematics. • The initiatives strived towards establishing consistent and apparent education standards in US states and ensure graduating students in high school can comfortably join credit-related courses in colleges
Theme 2	• American Curriculum in Dubai of inspections	• Performance of American curriculum schools has remained unchanged for about ten years in Dubai. • Interviewed teachers indicated that students achieved better in English and poorly in Arabic.

		• Many parents value and prefer their children joining American curriculum schools because of the outstanding and better performances in the system.
		• Overall leadership has been accepted in Dubai, with leadership skills acquired in classes being higher than other curriculum systems.
		As most American curriculum schools complying with the requirements of the MoE, the system has largely been accepted in Arab culture.
		• Teachers in the interview indicate the significance of parents familiarizing themselves with new standards set for new subjects.
Theme 3	**Understanding engaged learning**	• Engaging elementary learners during lessons increase their attention in addition to motivating them to enhance their critical-thinking skills and improves learning experiences
		• Integration of active learning strategies in a course, by first having clear expectations, develop working evaluation strategies and consider feedback from your students is vital in engaged learning.

Theme 4	Strategies used in engaged learning	• Successful competition with other forces affects the consciousness of the young learners. • Teachers must show passion, sensitivity, innovative as well as persistence to help students pay attention in class and develop into engaged learners.
Theme 5	Types of strategies	• The object of study engagement • The context engagement
Theme 6	Challenges of Engaged Learning	• Inability to Balance varied students' learning needs. • Meeting Expectations of the School Leadership • Arguments during Class discussions • One student Dominating Class Discussions • Some students choosing to Remain Silent
Theme 7	• The Effective role of a Teacher	• Teachers have a significant role in aiding the learning process in a behaviourist-oriented learning process. • roles of teachers in the class have shifted from that of the giver of information to that of a guide, facilitator, and learner • The interview revealed the role of a teacher in helping parents and students attain long-term objectives

		• Cooperative learning plays a significant role during engaged learning because when teachers work together with their students, it builds the team spirit instead of competition allowing interaction

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

I.   Summary of the study

The research aimed at establishing strategies for learning which institutions through teachers could implement to involve learners in the learning process, especially when conducting research projects depending on their courses and disciplines. Since it was impossible to observe students from all schools in Dubai all interview all teachers, the next step included specifying a sampling frame, used by the researcher to draw a sample. In this case, the sample included 4 teachers for interviewing and 100 students for observation. The sampling frame used included a simple random sampling method, with the researcher drawing names from 10 classes and selecting the sampling randomly. Despite a large sample size, offering better data analysis, the time, resources and effort involved is massive. Since the research was limited in relation to time and resource constraints, the researcher had to reduce the sample size to meet the set timelines.

The interviews presented important issues regarding learning tasks that promote engaged learning. It was apparent that the tasks must be challenging and multidisciplinary, hence the complexities and amount of time involved. The authenticity is reflected in tasks in the class corresponding to those at home, enhanced by collaboration alongside peers and mentors in school and at home. There is a need for integrated instructions, which include problem-solving mentality presented in early learner's curriculum. Another important indicator identified in the study include assessment during engaged learning, where students have to handle authentic tasks, investigate, observe, interview and examine presentations, to assess their potential.

However, it is important to understand that the role teacher's play in a teacher-centred class varies from a class where engagement of learners is prioritised. In an engaged learning environment, the teacher has a responsibility of developing attainment and motivated culture, interactive lessons and self-related learning to ensure the students are creative and innovative. Teachers only act as facilitators for the students, encouraging them to think and create learning opportunities, solve problems by offering solutions. Accordingly, learners must formulate problems, analyse concepts and learn ways to improve the learning process. Learners require autonomy, but a teacher plays a significant role to structure the freedom and flexibility, to ensure learning objectives remain achievable.

Generally, an engaged learning environment requires teachers to motivate and encourage students to achieve, rather than forceful teaching that humiliates learners to feel like losers. The interviews

revealed cases, where teachers developed a negative learning environment by presenting negative body language and implementing destructive teaching methodologies. The behaviours were reflected in the implementation of punitive measures for those that fail. The study identified negative and positive implications of engaged learning under the American curriculum system. Teachers' perspective was essential in helping understand learner's difficulties when responding to class activities and the likely impact on their learning experiences. Collaborative learning is hectic for some learners, hence the need for a skilled teacher to ensure effective teaching outcomes. Another area of concentration includes the assessment process, both for individual and group work, hence the need to understand teacher's view and American schools' curriculum in general, on the most successful assessment plans. Through the study, teachers suggested optimum strategies essential in maximising benefits of engaged learning, particularly under the American curriculum. The study established the importance of assessment during engaged learning especially if they represent equitable learning standards applicable to all students. Another significant variable in the study included instructional models and learning strategized employed in engaged learning. Powerful strategic instructional models remain interactive, educator instruction must engage the learner actively, and the learning lessons must be generative. Learning instructions permit a learner to develop and create knowledge meaningfully. Additionally, students must teach their peers in an interactive way, allowing co-construction of knowledge that encourages engaged learning that is a problem and goal-oriented.

Through literature review and responses from teachers, the study established common strategies implemented in engaged learning frameworks, both for individuals and groups. Additional study significance included the exploration of multiple perspectives and technicalities to build upon knowledge, problem-solving mechanisms, team-learning, Socratic dialogue as well as brainstorming elements. Despite the study focusing on the teacher's perspective, learners' context also plays a significant role. Engaged learning success in a classroom environment must build a knowledge-learning community. The study analysed how such communities developed shared understandings in a collaborative manner through the creation of an empathetic learning environment that concentrates on diversity as well as multiple perspectives. The communities identify strategies that build their members in a collaborative classroom, encouraging students to ask and solve difficult questions, define existing problems and lead important classroom discussions.

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

II.   Key Findings

The study identified cooperative learning as important in any form of engaged learning, as it allows teachers to work together with a colleague, as well as students. Cooperative learning promotes teamwork, eliminating the unnecessary competition among learners that could be very negative. Conventionally, the ultimate success of any given group is largely determined by the levels of interaction and collaboration. Cooperative learning represents an effective educational strategy that helps students identify significant learning that promotes accountability. They are poised to step into various roles based on their hobbies and talents rather than being forced by their teachers to participate or compete. Such opportunities for monitoring each other's participation and work quality enhances motivation and interest amongst the students.

American curriculum supports engaged learning, which is a relatively new and emerging trend in the United Arab Emirates Engagement in a learning process, depending upon a student's relationship with teachers. The result revealed that in any learning system, teachers' play significant roles in ensuring students are motivated to learn. Every teacher must assert a leadership role in class to meet the needs of learners by coordinating and aligning school objectives with student's desires to arouse their motivation and engagement in class. Therefore, flexibility is important for the teachers to cater for the variations presented by students in a class because of their diverse cultures and educational needs.

Teachers must develop long-term relationships with both parents and students, which makes it easier to seek help when in need. Schools operate as communities, requiring teachers to understand

the culture where the students come from. Including parents in the learning process, builds student's confidence as they move up to higher education learning. When students receive such motivation from home when they come in class, they have the desire to learn and the teacher's role is only to guide, ensuring that the child achieves desires instilled in him/her by a parent or guardian. The research demonstrated the significance of involving teachers in the implementation of blended learning processes. It allows students to accomplish much because teachers challenge them to do much and commit more to their learning process. While past studies on student engagement and self-determination theories suggested student having the sole-responsibility of showing commitment, teachers' role cannot be undermined. The study show that engaged learning success is attainable only when students become responsible for own learning, remain self-regulated, and can define own learning, objectives, as well as evaluate performance. The interviewed teachers believed that engaged learners showed energy and joy when in class, having a passion to solve challenges, inquire from colleagues and teachers, showing analytical and critical thinking skills.

III.   Implications of the current study

The study is important because elementary learning represents the foundation of a child starting the education process, there is need to ensure students understand the significance of engaged learning as early as elementary, to continue with the same attitude even in higher education learning. More so, the students can implement the same strategies at the workplace, helping eliminate boredom and disinterest at the place of work, allowing individuals to develop society.

The study presented reasons why teachers must maintain open communication, with both parents and learners. Teaching is a challenging profession, but as long as a teacher cares about his/her students, then they go an extra mile to help them succeed. School leadership must ensure availability of learning tools and materials to ensure the learning process is rewarding. The study ensured teachers understand their professional needs, duties and responsibilities in supporting classroom engagement of classes. Classroom engagement requires effective teaching styles, skills, commitment and professionalism from teachers. The educators had to adapt teaching and curriculum needs, learning tools and resources to the needs of elementary learners.

IV.   Limitations of the Current study and the scope for future study

The study may have been limited by the qualitative research approach used. Qualitative approach is limited in the size of the data due to the content analysis and the resources that can be committed in interviews. The observations may also be subjective and thus biased based on the researcher's

knowledge, views and experiences. There was high possibility of the role of the researcher affecting the validity of the research findings especially in the observations done by the researcher. However, on the positive side, observational research provided strong validity and in-depth insight on the perspective of teachers regarding engaged learning. The observations provided the researcher with the true view of their teachers' perspective on engaged learning since people are not always willing to write their true views. Interviews, though they provide in-depth understanding of the study subject, they can be time-consuming, thus limiting the study to a small sample population. The interviews also limited the researcher to carry the interviews since different interviewers may understand and transcribe interviews in different ways based on their knowledge and experiences.

However, interviewing and observation proved most appealing because they allowed first-hand information from teachers enhancing the teacher-perspective element. The aim of interviews included collecting detailed data from teachers explaining how they motivate students to actively participate in the learning process and think critically. Therefore, before the actual research, the researcher conducted a CPD pilot study using four teachers on encouraging student active participation. Interviews and observation allowed the researcher to explore and understand teachers and methods they employ to teach students and encourage active participation. The research process included developing emerging questions as well as procedures and collecting data from the participants' setting. More so, the researcher used the qualitative approach to analyse data inductively starting from specific themes to general ones, followed by data interpretation. The approach was essential because it supported inductive style, concentrated on individual meaning through observation and personal insights (interviews), hence considering the significance of understanding the complexity of participative learning. Furthermore, the interviews aim included collecting data on learning integrative methods, challenges that hinder integration and participative learning and incentives increasing class interaction, participatory and integration methods.

V. Concluding note

Without a doubt, teaching is a challenging profession, but as long as a teacher cares about his/her students, then they go an extra mile to help them succeed. School leadership must ensure availability of learning tools and materials to ensure the learning process is rewarding. While teaching elementary learners, it is likely that most could become easily disengaged and daydream, making it challenging for the teachers. Successful competition with other forces affects the

consciousness of the young learners. However, teachers must have much influence on learners to encourage developmental procedures. Teachers must show passion, sensitivity, innovative as well as persistence to help students pay attention in class and develop into engaged learners. Observation of 100 elementary learners showed that instructional models used by teachers in an engaged class are interactive. However, as much as a teacher would love for the student to get engaged in the learning process for the entire lessons, it is not possible. With the learners being young, distractions were common as observed by the researcher. However, teachers must encourage learners to construct and develop knowledge in varied meaningful ways as learners interact and continue to teach one another.

VI.   Recommendation

- In cases where there is massive disruptive learning, teachers could place the affected learners near their reach, to ensure close monitoring. According to Goldenberg (2014), a teacher understands the weaknesses and strengths of his/her teacher, hence the need to set student expectations, to ensure they accomplish tasks that are likely to motivate them. However, teachers must not fear giving learners challenging tasks, because failure is the best way of learning no matter how difficult it is to a student. Every teacher must empathize with a learner, even when handling rude students because it is likely that there are underlying issues that must be addressed.

- Additionally, every teacher must build a common ground to boost the relationship between a teacher and student. Moreover, it should aim towards encouraging students to achieve desired goals and objectives. The learning lessons provided must help the learner advance to other grades, enter and blend in the workforce, as well as help them make better choices. However, there are many incidents that the teacher must consider, such as school assessment programs set by the school management, appraisals, available training for the teachers, pep assemblies, the relationship the school has with the government and club activities the school engages in (Entwistle & Ramsden, 2015). Every teacher must be flexible to rearrange plans and have enough backups for all school-related activities. Lesson and event planning is significant to ensure every teacher understands the resources and tools that students require. Accordingly, good planning must be accompanied with good communication to ensure learners obtain educational, psychological, emotional and social school experiences.

- Engagement learning could fail because teachers are not ready or prepared to support it. It is a common feature among novice teachers that are experiencing a difficult transition. Teacher mentoring could help to unblock impediments, by helping teachers enhance their self-confidence, as well as self-esteem. According to Fletcher (2012), mentoring improves teacher's ability to direct, manage and instruct students improving engaged learning. Despite variation in the definition of mentoring, many relate it to coaching. Zhang (2011) defined mentoring as the one-on-one help of less experienced or novice teachers by an experienced teacher, developed for purposes of improving the mentee's expertise, in addition to facilitating their assimilation into the culture.

- Despite teacher mentoring having numerous benefits, the main one includes assisting novice teachers being successful in their teaching profession. The success promotes retention of the teacher in the long-term, helping them build strong relationships with students and improved interaction in class. Mentoring is essential to improve teaching quality for both novice and experienced teachers (Zhang, 2009). The most effective for the study include content-based mentoring, which ensure a close correlation between teaching processes and related outcomes (Luft & Patterson, 2002). When a school emphasizes on linking teachers' roles with relationships they share amongst themselves and with their students, it means mentoring represents a micro-practice level.

VII.   Recommendations for Future Research
- With the research being an investigative undertaking, the research yielded various interest points. According to Meyer and Turner (2002), future research could establish new frameworks that explore interpersonal relationships between teachers and students in a class setting. This would make future research findings relevant to teachers and students and even look for a way to integrate school leadership and parents. It is important to write a comprehensive study which articulates how emotions, motivation, as well as cognition interact in a classroom context, to determine the way forward when it comes to engaged learning.

- As the study focused on understanding teacher perspective in relation to engaged learning, for elementary students, the researcher became interested in understanding the view of teachers for middle-class students. Same interest grew for high school and university students, with comprehension of how a teacher can take a different approach to build

effective student relationships. It is a consideration for future studies, because of its ability to identify additional strategies to increase student motivation, by improving their interaction with the teachers.

- Teachers must move away from normal mentoring and implement educative mentoring that helps teachers use their teaching practice as a learning location, as they collaborate with experienced teachers to enhance co-thinking relationships. Luft and Patterson (2002) assert that the major benefits of educative mentoring involve cultivation of inquiry-based teaching, focusing on student thinking and comprehension. It also fosters disciplined interaction on teaching practice challenges. However, teachers in elementary classes must understand the context included in teacher mentoring in relation to the policy as well as socio-cultural contexts (Zhao, 2008). It is important for schools to take a critical approach to support mentor training as an output towards engaged learning.

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Appendix

Observation plan:

Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching (Danielson, 2011)	
Domain I: Planning and Preparation	Domain II: The Classroom Environment
• Demonstrating knowledge of students • Designing coherent instruction • Demonstrating knowledge of content and pedagogy • Setting instructional outcomes • Demonstrating knowledge of resources • Designing student assessment	• Managing classroom procedures • Establishing a culture for learning • Creating an environment of respect and rapport • Managing student behaviour • Organizing physical space
Domain III: Instruction	**Domain IV :Professional Responsibilities**
• Using questioning and discussion techniques • Communicating with students • Demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness • Engaging student in learning • Using assessment in instruction	• Maintaining accurate records • Reflecting on teaching • Communicating with families • Showing professionalism • Participating in a professional community • Growing and developing professionally

Interview Questions

Questions to Measure Instructional Competency

- Kindly describe any unique school experience you had when teaching students and how it prepared you towards teaching in a better way and encouraged student participation.
- As a teacher, how do you integrate technology in your daily lessons in a class setting?
- Provide an example how you used cooperative learning in your class?
- What five words would your students provide in explaining your teaching strategies?
- Kindly describe your teaching style and procedures you follow in class, to accommodate varied learning styles of your students

- What methods do you use to keep students on a task in class, active and well-behaved during collaborative team activities?

- Questions on Class Management Expertise

- Which class management strategies and teaching techniques do you use to enhance effective classroom setting?

- Explain your expectation concerning student behaviour in a class?

[English Language Arts teacher (*interview 1*): , "*My name is R.M. I am grade 5 English Language Arts. I graduated from a Canadian university Intermediate and Secondary education. My focus is on literacy acquisition. I have degrees in English literature and psychology for me getting in this field was a conscious decision. When teaching students about on population dynamics of a fish population in freshwater lakes, then there is need to implement practices such as visiting one lake to ensure the students understand the real discussion. By moving students to the lake, they will grasp pollution effects as well as weather cycles of the fish population, including the impact on local economy and fishing culture in Dubai. For me engaged teaching is when you are having discussions, students' views are valued and heard. I try to keep in mind the different types of learners. At the beginning of the year, I conduct a survey in order to see what types of learners I have. Majority of time I find my learners are tactile learners. We do a lot of drama and adaptation in my room. I try to plan my lesson in a way that we are not seated the same way. I try to make my classroom the opposite of traditional. I face some challenges when I plan my close reading. As we have to read the book regardless. I can't mimic the voice or do different accents. I feel we need more Professional Development for the engaged teaching that the school can provide as we as teachers are lacking this kind of support. I try to integrate technology in my lessons. I use different types of websites and apps. "*