UNIVERSITY OF READING

An Experiential Look at Learner Engagement in University EFL Courses in Japan

Thesis submitted for the Degree of Educational Doctorate

by

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Author's Declaration

Declaration

I confirm that this is my own work and the use of all materials from other sources has been properly and fully acknowledged.

Brent A. Jones, May 2018

Abstract

Despite extensive public and private spending in Japan on English education, Japanese young adults continue to underperform on international measures of English language proficiency and in cross-country comparisons of English language skills. And although all Japanese high school graduates will have studied English for a minimum of six years, the large majority of Japanese university students actually drop in English language proficiency over the course of their university studies. This, at a time when the Japanese government is wringing its hands over slipping levels of global competitiveness. At the same time, the absolute number and percentage of Japanese university students studying overseas is declining. One line of mainstream educational scholarship that offers promise in rectifying both problems is related to student or learner engagement. The current exploratory study was thus aimed at understanding how learner engagement is experienced in Japanese university English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning context, confirming the relevance or fit of established theoretical models of engagement, and testing a conceptual framework with a deliniation between motivation (composed of context & self systems) and engagement (action). An ethno-phenomenological case study approach was employed that involved classroom observations, questionnaires, follow-up interviews with teachers and learners, learning diaries and various support documents.

I was mainly concerned with exploring ways in which individual learners become engaged or disengaged in university EFL classrooms and how engagement manifests itself for groups of learners and their teachers in these contexts. My interest in these areas stem from a desire to help teachers reduce the risk of disengagement and is based on the assumption that deeper levels of engagement will result in better quality language learning. My main research question was, How is “learner engagement” experienced in university EFL classrooms in Japan? Subsidary questions included, (1) In what ways do instructional practices (or

approaches) influence learner engagement? (2) In what ways do teacher characteristics influence learner engagement? and (3) In what ways do contextual features influence learner engagement?

This investigation involved a review of how theorizing on learner, or student, engagement in mainstream education literature aligns with or compliments that in second language acquisition (SLA) literature. Engagement theory has reached a certain level of maturity in educational psychology and developmental psychology, and there is well-documented agreement that engagement is a multidimensional construct, with behavioral, emotional and cognitive engagement being the most commonly recognized dimensions. In the field of SLA, there has been some overlap or cross pollination with mainstream education, but direct reference to engagement theory is sparse, and motivation has been the dominant focus. Thus, the current study also aimed to explore whether or not engagement theory might inform SLA investigations and identify some practical applications of this theory.

Analysis of classroom episodes where deeper (emotional) engagement was evident support assertions that learner engagement in these classes is experienced:

- through the interactions with peers and the instructor,
- through instructional activities that are appropriately challenging,
- at a variety of levels (individual, small group, and whole-class),
- dialogically between the individual and the context (i.e., individuals are influenced by the context and exert influence on the context),
- differently by each individual, and
- when individuals are involved in personally meaningful activities.

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Glossary of Acronyms

BPES: Best Possible English Self

CEEP: Center for Evaluation and Education Policy

CLT: Communicative Language Teaching.

COPUS: Classroom Observation Protocol for Undergraduate STEM

EFL: English as a Foreign Language.

ESOL: English as a Second or Other Language

ESL: English as a Second Language

EWL: Engagement with Language

FL: Foreign Language

HSSSE: High School Survey of Student Engagement

JACET: Japan Association of College English Teachers

JALT: Japan Association for Langauge Teaching

L2: second or foreign language

LEQ: Learning Environment Questionnaire

MEXT: Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (Japan)

MOLT: Motivation Orientation of Language Teaching (classroom observation scheme).

NSSE: National Survey of Student Engagement

PD: Professional Development

SDT: Self-Determination Theory

SEQ: Student Engagement Questionnaire

SLA: Second Language Acquisition.

STEM: Science, Technology, Education and Math

TEQ: Task Engagement Questionnaire

TOEFL: Test of English as a Foreign Language.

TOEIC: Test of English for International Communication

WTC: Willingness to Communicate

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 SETTING OUT

This thesis is in one sense a synthesis of my more than thirty years of experience in the second-language (L2) classroom, first as a learner of the Japanese language in Hawaii in the mid 1980s and then as a teacher and researcher of English as a Second or Other Language (ESOL) in Hawaii and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Japan and other parts of Asia. In many ways, the L2 learning landscape has undergone so many changes, with the coming and going of various pedagogical approaches and methodologies, not to mention the rise of personal computers, the internet and related technological innovations. At the same time, language learners and teachers face much of the same terrain and many of the same challenges as their counterparts did thirty years ago. My decision to focus on learner engagement for this investigation stems at least partially from the struggles and successes that I have experienced firsthand as a learner and teacher, and the struggles and successes that I have witnessed among my many students.

In preparing for any meaningful journey, it is useful to explicitly plan out the trip and organize what will be needed. In this introduction, and throughout the thesis, I will make use of this journey metaphor to briefly present more of my motivation and plans for exploring the construct of learner engagement in my current teaching context, university EFL classes in Japan. Another aim of this introduction is to give readers a sense of the structure of the thesis, including an overview of the context, why I think the investigation is worth pursuing, and working definitions of learner engagement and other related terminology. At its best, the university English language class in Japan can be a dynamic, lively and inspiring place. Sadly though there are countless students and teachers in this context who, as Zyngier (2008) puts it, are just "doing time" (p. 1774).

Ainley (2012) employs the metaphor of gears interlocking or "engaging" in describing learner engagement. This analogy seems especially appropriate in that our "gears" as language teachers can be smoothly rotating, but not much will happen if the students' "gears" do not fully engage. At the same time, with full engagement, once the students' gears are moving they help to keep the teacher's "gear" spinning with less wasted energy.

I am setting out on this journey with the understanding that I likely won't be able to capture all that goes into engagement. Still, I believe it is a worthy pursuit and will hopefully result in more productive and rewarding experiences in the language classroom.

1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND MOTIVATION

The main purpose of this study is to better understand the construct of learner engagement in this specific teaching context, including whether or not established conceptualizations and frameworks from developmental psychology and educational psychology can be used to further our understanding of the complex dynamics of instructed L2 acquisition. This better understanding is important when we recognize the impact of engagement or disengagement on learning. Learner, or student, engagement is often cited as a powerful precursor of academic success (Coates, 2006; Eccles & Wang, 2012), and has been a hot topic among policy makers, educators and researchers involved in all stages of education (Coates, 2006; Parson & Taylor, 2011). And although similar or related topics have been discussed in the second language acquisition (SLA) literature (Osterman, 2014, Philp & Duchesne, 2016), there is still much work to do in terms of conceptual clarity, theorizing and suggested application. Specifically, while great strides have been made in theorizing on L2 learning motivation (Boo, Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015), there is a relative dearth of practical advice for making use of this better understanding of related constructs to effectively and efficiently help learners engage with their in-class L2 studies (Anjomshoa & Sadighi, 2015).

As mentioned above, my motivation for studying learner engagement in this context comes from the struggles that I have witnessed among my learners and wanting to help them and others with their language learning endeavors. For a variety of reasons discussed further in Chapter Two (Thesis in Context), the trend is for English language ability among Japanese students—at least as measured by standardized proficiency tests—to actually drop over the four years of university. Language can serve as a bridge between nations, ethnic groups and individuals from diverse backgrounds and cultures. These bridges are especially important now with the rising regional and international tensions as well as antagonistic geopolitical climate around the world (Global Trends, 2017), and young Japanese need to step up their game in terms of English language communication if they are to play a more active role in building and strengthening these bridges.

1.3 OVERVIEW OF THE CURRENT STUDY

Due to the social and psychological nature of the construct of learner engagement, I do not plan on testing any hypotheses or working deductively toward any hard-fast truths. Instead, I plan to inductively and abductively work towards one (of many) truths for a specific context using a qualitative case-study research approach. I am setting out on this research journey to discover how learner engagement manifests itself for small groups of students and teachers in university EFL classes in Japan. In this sense, I am attempting both an ethnographic study and a phenomenological study. I hope to describe, interpret and document how this group experiences learner engagement in their daily interactions. In doing so, this research can add to both our theoretical understanding and list of best practices for teachers and learners in this context.

The cases that I have chosen for my study are three second-year required courses being taught at two different private universities in a semi-urban part of western Japan. Specifically, I observed three teachers and their students at three different times during the fifteen-week Spring semester (April - July) in 2016. I supplemented these nine observations and rounds of teacher and learner interviews with questionnaires and related course documents.

The theoretical framework that I identified as being a useful lens through which to analyze data collected for these three cases is self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000), mainly the basic psychological needs of competence, autonomy and relatedness. This decision was made at least partially on my perceptions of the Japanese secondary education system as doing very little to meet the needs for competence and autonomy, especially in terms of English language education, and a realization that these earlier experiences lay a foundation of learner attitudes and beliefs for students entering tertiary education. My understanding is that much of the time and energy devoted to English is spent on checking or testing what students do not know. These language classrooms are also much more about control than supporting learner autonomy (Holden & Usuki, 1999; Sakai, Chu, Takagi & Lee, 2008). Students have very little choice with regards to what, when and how they study English in the classroom. At the same time, I recognize that meeting the psychological need of relatedness is one of the strengths of secondary education in Japan. Much time and effort is devoted to group cohesion as well as building and maintaining relationships among students and between teachers and students.

While self-determination theory (SDT) and the basic psychological needs should provide a good starting point for analysis, I will also look at ways in which the now firmly-established tripartite (behavioral, cognitive, emotional) framework of engagement theory (Christenson, Reschly & Wylie, 2012) compliments or aligns with SDT as well as other well-established models of motivation and engagement in the second-language acquisition (SLA) literature, namely the concepts of identity (Dörnyei, 2009; Harumi, 2011; Norton & Toohey, 2011), investment (Kanno & Norton, 2003; McKay & Wong, 1996) and willingness to communicate (Eddy-U, 2015; Fushino, 2010; MacIntyre, 2012; Osterman, 2014; Yashima, Zenuk-Nishide & Shimizu, 2004). At the same time, I am intrigued by concepts originating outside SLA circles such as the Experience Economy (Pine & Gilmore, 1999) with its business focus and Significant Learning Experiences (Fink, 2003) which has its roots in college curriculum development. I am convinced that we human beings are the sum of our experiences and thus that these last two concepts might provide some further insight into the topic of learner engagement in my teaching context and beyond. This point is discussed further in section 5.5 when answering the main research question.

As mentioned above, the context for the current study is university EFL classes in Japan. Learners in this context will have studied English for a minimum of six years upon entering university, and will likely be required to demonstrate English language proficiency on the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) or other standardized test when applying for jobs in their last year of university. For a variety of reasons described more fully in the next chapter (sections 2.3 & 2.7), learner attitudes towards and proficiency in English vary greatly and, as mentioned above, the general tendency is for English language ability to actually drop over the four years of university (Tomei, 2017). Despite a series of government policy initiatives in Japan since 1989 that stress the importance of fostering English language skills and communicative competency in schools, Japan test takers continue to underperform on standardized tests of English proficiency compared with counterparts in other Asian countries (ETS, 2017). Thus, there is a clear need for further research into how motivation is translated into action (engagement) in this context.

1.4 RATIONALE

Learner Engagement, at least initially, will be operationalized in my study as the observable outward indicators that the learner is focused on and involved behaviorally, cognitively, emotionally and agentically in classroom language activities (Reeve, 2012). This will be explained further in section 3.6.1. The word "Engagement" appears often in educational literature, and learner engagement is commonly understood as an important precursor to academic achievement and school success (Chapman, 2003; Marzano & Pickering, 2010). This is true as well for the general field of second language acquisition (Ohta, 2000) and more specifically EFL in Japan (Murphey & Falout, 2010). However, it is often unclear in the literature what exactly is meant by engagement (Reeve, 2012; Chapman, 2003). Intuitively, as a teacher, I feel that I can recognize engagement or disengagement in my own learners when I see it. Zyngier (2008) cites Newmann (1986) as expressing this same recognition, "engagement is difficult to define operationally, but we know it when we see it, and we know it when it is missing" (p. 1765). However, I am less sure of exactly where this recognition comes from, and wonder how well my perceptions align with learner realities.

In opening the lid on learner engagement, I find several areas of interest, including the interplay of cognitive and emotional engagement, the relationship between engagement and motivation, and what instructional practices best promote learner engagement in my teaching context. Having a better grasp of the construct of engagement in this specific context should facilitate more well-informed classroom decisions and further advances on the research front. As mentioned by Parsons and Taylor (2011), "educators must continue to seek to understand and apply specific, well considered, if not agreed upon strategies that support student engagement in learning both in and beyond the classroom" (p. 4).

My mission in this research journey is to help students and teachers in my teaching context to have more satisfying and efficacious learning and teaching experiences. A better contextual understanding of learner engagement as an educational construct and classroom phenomenon can potentially make classroom interactions more significant and productive for students and their teachers. Increased student and teacher satisfaction should also result in less disaffection, alienation and burn-out for all parties. The better contextual understanding should also aid program administrators, material developers, teacher trainers and policy makers in their endeavors.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

As mentioned earlier, I have been teaching English to non-native speakers for roughly thirty years, first in Hawaii and then in Japan and other parts of Asia. My classroom experiences led me toward research in the field of L2 learning motivation as there were always nagging questions as to why some learners persisted in their studies of English while others gave up, and why some learners could excel with comparatively little effort while others struggled through without achieving anything beyond basic proficiency. And although I have tried to stay current on research related to L2 motivation, the related but distinct topic of learner engagement in EFL contexts like Japan is underrepresented. Thus, I hope to make some small contribution to the field in this area by answering the following research question:

(1) How is “learner engagement” experienced in university EFL classrooms in Japan?

In attempting to answer this question, I will focus my investigation on the instructional practices, teacher characteristics and contextual features that influence (positively or negatively) learner engagement in these classrooms. Thus, I will attempt to answer the following subsidiary questions:

a. In what ways do instructional practices (or approaches) influence learner engagement?
b. In what ways do teacher characteristics influence learner engagement?
c. In what ways do contextual features influence learner engagement?

As suggested by the title of this thesis, I am interested in the quality of experiences that learners are having in their EFL classrooms as well as how these experiences impact engagement. My focus is mainly on classroom engagement, with the understanding that engagement at this level influences and is influenced by both school engagement (macro) and task engagement (micro).

1.6 TERMINOLOGY

In this section, I will briefly introduce key terminology and established definitions for concepts I have identified as central to the study, specifically learner engagement, motivation, identity, investment and flow.

1.6.1 Learner Engagement

Attempts at defining learner or student engagement have aligned more or less with the key types of engagement most often described in the literature, namely behavioral, cognitive and emotional. Skinner and Belmont (1993) contrast engagement with disaffection, focusing on the “intensity and emotional quality of children’s involvement in initiating and carrying out learning activities” (p. 572). Hu and Kuh (2002) define engagement as “the quality of effort students themselves devote to educationally purposeful activities that contribute directly to desired outcomes” (p. 555). Finally, Philp and Duchesne (2016) view engagement as “a state of heightened attention and involvement, in which participation is reflected not only in the cognitive dimension, but in social, behavioural and affective dimensions” (p. 3). For the purpose of my study, I have adopted Assor's (2012) definition of engagement as "the amount and quality of actual efforts and actions aimed at reaching a certain goal" (p. 422). This definition used in my teaching context highlights the distinction between motivations to learn a language (intentions) and language learning behaviors (actions) while at the same time including quantitative and qualitative dimensions to those behaviors.

1.6.2 Motivation

The related but distinct concept of motivation has gained lots of attention in both educational psychology and SLA literature. Russell, Ainley and Frydenberg (2005) are often cited for their distinction of motivation as why we do what we do (reasons for behavior) and engagement as energy in action (the connection between person and activity). In SLA contexts, Dörnyei (1994) described motivation as concerning "those factors that energize behaviour and give it direction" (p. 516). Dörnyei and Otto (1998) highlighted the need to view motivation as a process, and defined it as "the dynamically changing cumulative arousal in a person that initiates, directs, coordinates, amplifies, terminates, and evaluates the cognitive and motor processes whereby initial wishes and desires are selected, prioritised, operationalised, and (successfully or unsuccessfully) acted out" (p. 64). This last definition seems to blur the distinction between motivation and engagement, and I am thus drawn more to Reeve's (2012) delineation of motivation as "a private, unobservable psychological, neural, and biological process that serves as an antecedent cause to the publicly observable behavior that is engagement" (p. 151).

1.6.3 Identity

Identity is another construct that has established itself in both educational psychology and SLA circles. Sfard and Prusak (2005) define identities as collections of stories about people that are “reifying, endorsable by others and significant” (p. 14), and view a person’s stories about themselves as “profoundly influenced by the stories that important others tell about that person” (p. 14). Morita (2012) distinguishes two influential frameworks regarding identity in SLA, namely a sociocultural framework and a post-structuralist/critical feminist framework. She goes on to outline her preference for the sociocultural, and defines identity as an “individual’s sense of who they are in relation to the particular social context or community of practice in which they participate” (p. 27). This definition highlights language learning as a sociocultural event, lending support for inclusion of a social dimension in our investigation of learner engagement (Philp & Duchesne, 2016). The influential post-structuralist view espoused by Bonny Norton (Norton-Peirce, 1995) defines identity in relation to how the language learner’s identities and opportunities to practice the target language are shaped by inequitable relations of power in the larger society. This definition seems more fitting for the English as a Second Language (ESL) context in Canada where Norton conducted her study, but also helps describe learner experiences in EFL contexts like Japan.

1.6.4 Investment

Investment is another concept that has established itself in theorizing on learner engagement. Newmann, Wehlage and Lamborn (1992) viewed engagement as a learner’s “psychological investment in and effort directed toward learning, understanding, or mastering the knowledge, skills, or crafts that academic work is intended to promote” (p. 12). In their seminal review of literature on student engagement, Fredricks, Blumenfeld and Paris (2004), describe cognitive engagement as stemming from the concept of investment, “. . . it incorporates thoughtfulness and willingness to exert the effort necessary to comprehend complex ideas and master difficult skills” (p. 60). Other educational psychology researchers to employ the concept of investment in their theories of engagement include Appleton, Christenson and Furlong (2008), Marks (2000) and Yazzie-Mintz (2007), with a cost-benefit assumption where learners *invest* their time, effort, cognition or emotions in a learning task or context.

In SLA, investment is described by Norton (2000) as signaling "the socially and historically constructed relationship of learners to the target language, and their often ambivalent desire to learn and practice it" (p. 10). Although there is some obvious overlap with the definitions of investment above, Norton and colleagues (Kanno & Norton, 2003; Norton & Gao, 2008; Norton & Toohey, 2011) view investment as an interface between an individual and target language and/or culture, and that investment in the language is also an investment in the learner's identity. This view of investment has also been taken up by McKay and Wong (1996) and Pavlenko (2002). For this study, I have adopted Norton's (2000) definition of investment since there are both social and historical influences on Japanese learners' "relationship" with the target language (described more in sections 2.3 & 2.7 in the next chapter). And while the roots of the "often ambivalent desire" to learn and practice the language are different for Japanese university students and the participants in Norton's study of ESL learners, there clearly are parallels. This will be taken up again in my concluding chapter (section 6.5).

1.6.5 Flow

Another framework that has become a cornerstone of engagement research in both school settings (Shernoff, Csikzentmihályi, Schneider & Shernoff, 2003) and SLA contexts (Egbert, 2003) is Flow Theory as proposed by Mihályi Csikzentmihályi (1988). Flow is described as "a subjective state of complete involvement, whereby individuals are so involved in an activity that they lose awareness of time and space" (Fredricks, Blumenfeld & Paris, 2004, p. 63). Flow involves "a state of deep absorption in an activity that is intrinsically enjoyable, as when artists or athletes are focused on their play or performance" as well as "a symbiotic relationship between challenges and skills needed to meet those challenges" (Shernoff, Csikzentmihályi, Schneider & Shernoff, 2003, p. 160). These descriptions of flow are congruent with my understanding of higher levels of both cognitive and emotional engagement. Flow will be used in my analysis in Chapter Five (Findings and Discussion, section 5.5).

1.7 ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

In the next chapter, I attempt to further contextualize the study for readers by providing summaries of key studies of English language education in Japan together with relevant data and recent policy changes by the Japanese government. Chapter Three is then devoted to a review of existing literature on learner engagement (in general and in SLA) and related theories that have informed this investigation. I then go on to outline in Chapter Four how I have structured my study, including theoretical assumptions, methodological choices and ethical issues, i.e., packing for the trip. Findings and discussion are then presented in Chapter Five as tentative answers to the three subsidiary questions and the overarching question of how engagement is experienced in this context. Chapter Six is titled Conclusions, Considerations and Implications, and will be used to reflect on the overall research journey. This chapter will include some additional analysis based on the overarching conceptual framework as well as theory testing, building and reconceptualizing. This last chapter involves my return home from the journey, reflecting on where I have been and initial planning for possible future trips.

CHAPTER 2

THESIS IN CONTEXT

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I attempt to further contextualize the study for readers by providing some key background information, including a general overview of education in Japan, the role of English at each stage of education, related government initiatives and the topics of English for test taking (*JUKEN EIGO*), the grammar-translation approach (*YAKUDOKU*), and deviation value/school ranking system (*HENSACHI*). The main points I hope to convey are that:

(1) education is a hot topic in Japan,
(2) academic achievement is heavily emphasized,
(3) this emphasis has resulted in a test-oriented society,
(4) English is a part of most children's school experience,
(5) the unique position of English as a key test subject has resulted in overemphasis on grammar translation approaches in schools,
(6) the government recognizes the importance of nurturing communication competence in schools, has geared policy at improving the situation, and mostly failed,
(7) the educational climate and exam-focused English are major sources of this failure, and
(8) collective consciousness and individual past experiences in this context greatly influence the motivation, attitudes and beliefs about language learning students have when they get to university.

The information in this chapter provides a basis for viewing the experiences of learners in this context and assessing my analysis and interpretations. One key concern in this discussion is that despite a general awareness of the importance of English language skills in Japan and the time and other resources devoted to English language education, Japanese continue to underperform on various measures of English proficiency when compared with test takers in other Asian countries and beyond. According to the most recent Education First (EF) English Proficiency Index Report (EF EPI, 2017), Japan ranked 35th among 72 countries. There is also evidence that the average level of English proficiency in Japan–as measured by internationally recognized tests–has actually decreased despite efforts by the Japanese government (Steele & Zhang, 2016), and the general poor performance on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (ETS, 2017) by Japanese–fifth from the bottom among 30 Asian countries–is noted as evidence of the inefficiency of English language education (Aoki, 2016). It is argued that the historical context in Japan, especially the role that English has played in schools and society at large, negatively influence learner motivation and attitudes toward the language (Ryan, 2008). I will conclude this chapter with a short review of this last argument.

2.2 THE JAPANESE EDUCATION SYSTEM

The modern Japanese education system–deriving from the Basic Education Law of 1947–has adopted elements from several European models, but has been patterned mainly on the American system. Most children begin their school careers at the age of three to five, attending one of the roughly 14,000 public or private (mostly private) pre-school or kindergarten (*YOCHIEN*). Formal education that is compulsory consists of six years of primary or elementary (*SHOGAKKO*) and three years of lower secondary or junior high school (*CHUGAKKO*). The attendance rate for both *SHOGAKKO* (roughly 20,000 schools) and *CHUGAKKO* (roughly 10,000 schools) is nearly one hundred percent (MEXT, 2017a). The Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) reported that 96.6% of fifteen-year olds entered upper secondary or high school (*KOTOGAKKO*) in 2016 , and that 54.8% of eighteen-year olds went on to university (*DAIGAKU*) or junior college (*TANKI DAIGAKU*) in the same year (MEXT, 2017b). In general, high school last three years and university lasts four years, resulting in the so-called 6-3-3-4 system.

In addition to *JUKEN EIGO*, *YAKUDOKU* and the *HENSACHI* system discussed below, another characteristic of the Japanese school system relevant to this thesis is that all students get promoted from grade to grade regardless of academic achievement. In other words, students are almost never held back a grade even if they perform poorly or have not mastered the grade-appropriate knowledge and skills required for the next stage of education. Together, these structural features of the education system in Japan influence learner attitudes, beliefs and motivations as related to learning English, and thus need to be considered when investigating how engagement is experienced by learners when they get to university. As one example, learners who see English merely as a subject to be tested will experience and engage in their EFL classes quite differently than counterparts who value English language proficiency as a tool for international or intercultural communication.

2.3 ENGLISH EDUCATION IN JAPAN

In all parts of the Japanese archipelago, children begin experiencing English as part of their primary-school education at the age of ten or eleven (from the fifth grade), and as young as six or seven. The younger starting ages are due to local municipalities that introduce English in the first or second year of primary school and families that enroll their children in private English schools, *JUKU* (cram schools) or *YOBIKO* (preparatory schools). Until recently, English was not part of the curriculum until junior high school. However, in 2011, foreign language communication activities aimed at “fostering a positive attitude toward communication, and familiarizing pupils with the sounds and basic expressions of foreign languages" (p. 1) were made compulsory for fifth and sixth grade students with the updated Course of Study (discussed further in the next section) (MEXT, 2008). These weekly lessons were intended to include singing songs, playing games, or other enjoyable activities (MEXT, 2008). One key characteristic of this policy is that responsibility for these lessons rests with the homeroom teacher. The argument for this decision was that students would likely experience less anxiety and be more willing to communicate with these teachers (Tahira, 2012, p. 4).

Children begin their formal study of English as a school subject at junior high school, with three fifty-minute classes per week using MEXT approved textbooks. One calculation is that students in Japan currently receive 262.5 hours (315 classes x 50 minutes) during their their junior high school years (Hosoki, 2011). Despite government initiatives aimed at fostering communication skills in foreign languages (discussed below), the contents of the textbooks, exam pressures and teaching styles continue to steer these lessons toward teacher-fronted grammar-translation formats (Goto Butler, 2015). Most students planning to advance to high school (again, almost 97%) will need to prepare for an English entrance exam. There are, however, schools which combine junior and senior high. Students at these schools will not have the pressures of preparing for an exam to get into high school, but are never free from the ever-present testing culture that pervades schools in Japan. English tuition continues at high school, and for students in public high schools this means 612.5 hours (735 classes x 50 minutes) in the English classroom over three years, again using MEXT approved textbooks and a continued focus on grammar-translation and test preparation. For most high school students there is another English entrance exam to get into university. Finally, the roughly fifty percent of 18-year olds that go on to university will more than likely be required to study a minimum of one or more years of English regardless of their course of study. And this is just the core curriculum and does not include extra tuition at cram schools, preparatory schools or language schools.

According to The Economist (2011), nearly 20% of Japanese children in their first year of primary school attend some type of cram school or preparatory school, and this percentage rises for each stage of primary, junior high and high school education in Japan. Nearly all high school students planning on entering university will have extra tuition at cram schools, with English as one of the core subjects. Additionally, many students will study English at university or private language schools in preparation for job hunting which begins at the end of the third year of university. All told, Japanese youth can expect eight to ten years of English class, or somewhere between 1,800 and 2,500 hours.

As mentioned in Hu (2009), “English proficiency has become a very expensive commodity” (cited in Goto Butler, 2015, p. 305) and the amount of money spent on English-learning services provided by private entities is “tremendous” (Goto Butler, 2015, p. 306). A recent report by Yano (2016) on the language business market found that 827.2 billion yen (up 1.7%) was spent on the various goods and services in 2015 (foreign language classes for adults, foreign language classes for children/infants, pre-schools, deployment of teachers to kindergarten/day-care centers for children, textbooks, self-learning language hardware/software, electronic dictionaries, textbooks of English conversation classes for children/infants, correspondence education, e-learning, software, language exams, overseas-education arrangement and interpretation/translation). This same report predicted continued growth in 2016.

> *The entire language business market (total of 14 categories) for FY2016 is projected to achieve 840.6 billion yen, 101.6% of the size of the preceding year. As English is becoming the required subject at elementary schools, the future of the language business market is likely to remain robust, with continuous*

> *favorable sales expected for the services for children including foreign language classes for children/infants, pre-schools, deployment of teachers to kindergarten/day-care centers for children, and textbooks of English conversation classes for children/infants. (Yano, 2016, p. 2)*

I mention this financial information to illustrate my point that a great deal of attention and resources are devoted to English language education. Individuals, families, companies and the government clearly recognize the need for English language skills.

2.3.1 University EFL in Japan

According to government reports, there were 777 universities in Japan as of 2016 (MEXT, 2017b), with 600 (77.2%) being private. One major distinction that is normally recognized in discussions of university EFL in Japan is between English and non-English majors. Students pursuing English as a major at either public (national, prefectural, municipal) or private universities are normally matriculated in a literature (*BUNGAKU*) or foreign language (*GAIKOKUGO*) department in a humanities faculty. However, of the roughly 2.5 million students enrolled at university in 2014, less than one hundred and forty thousand were literature majors (MEXT, 2014), with English majors accounting for roughly half of these. So, while nearly all students at university in Japan will need to study English, very few in fact are English majors. I mention this mainly to show that most students are not planning on being English language specialists but (are forced to) study the language to support their other studies. In general, EFL courses for non-English majors are handled in one of three ways: courses taught by adjunct faculty hired directly by the department, courses taught by teachers from the literature department, or courses taught by teachers from a university-wide foreign language center. Traditionally, English classes at university have been taught by professors specializing in American or British literature, and this legacy continues to some extent with many university EFL classes centered around reading passages from the writings of the author or authors who the professor has focused their research on. Teachers whose mother tongue is English are sometimes hired to teach speaking and listening courses for freshmen or sophomores under titles such as Oral English or English Communication. The contents of these classes are normally not coordinated program-wide beyond guidance in selecting textbooks, and there is very little accountability (McVeigh, 2002). In response to criticisms aimed at university EFL courses and market pressures on universities due to declining birthrates, some universities are experimenting with new models of EFL curriculum and oversight. These, however, are still the exception.

2.4 GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

As mentioned above, studying English is a major part of almost every Japanese young person's world life history. Reports from MEXT say that English will become a compulsory subject throughout the first nine years of school from 2020, with a two-year transition period from 2018 (Aoki, 2016; MEXT, 2017a). The road to this juncture has been long and winding, and government policy regarding English language education at schools has nearly always been politically and/or economically motivated, heatedly debated and mostly ineffective (Goto Butler, 2015; Goto Butler & Iino, 2005; Kikuchi & Browne, 2009; Tahira, 2012). Goto Butler and Iino (2004) noted the historical tendency in Japan for English education to alternate "between a focus on English for practical purposes and English for entrance examination for higher education" (p. 27).

Much of the decision-making power regarding all aspects of education rests with MEXT. Since 1958, this ministry (previously the Ministry of Education) has issued National Standards for School Curricula (commonly referred to as the Course of Study), which are updated roughly every ten years (Hosoki, 2011; Kikuchi & Browne, 2009; Tahira, 2012).

Local school boards are responsible for hiring and dispatching teachers, but have their hands tied in terms of content and delivery. As Ryan (2008) puts it, "the ministry is responsible not only for macro-level policy decisions, but it also decides curriculum, teaching methods and materials" (p. 29).

While the full story of government policy and guidelines in English language education is beyond the scope of this study, it is important to note government initiatives contained in the three most recent updates to the Course of Study. In the 2003 revisions, the importance of communication skills was emphasized in the overall objectives for both junior and senior high school (Hosoki, 2011; MEXT, 2002; Tahira, 2012). In response to calls by industry and government officials for equipping Japanese with communication skills in English and moving away from *JUKEN EIGO*, MEXT issued an Action Plan to "Cultivate Japanese with English Abilities" as part of their Exhortation Toward Learning (Goto Butler & Iino, 2005). At this time, English classes were introduced in elementary schools as an option (Aoki, 2016). Key to our discussion is the government's clear emphasis on both English and communication skills in their strategic plan:

> *With the progress of globalization in the economy and in society, it is essential that our children acquire communication skills in English, which has become a common international language, in order for living in the 21st century. This has become an extremely important issue both in terms of the future of our children and the further development of Japan as a nation. (MEXT, 2002)*

Previous policy statements and curricular guidelines had often referred to "foreign languages," but the *de facto* foreign language taught at most schools has always been English since this language was part of high school entrance exams and the all-important Center Test for university (Goto Butler, 2015; Ryan, 2008, Tahira, 2012). The explicit focus on communication skills also highlights the government's sense of urgency and dissatisfaction with past results.

A general failure to reach the language goals set out in the 2002 Action Plan resulted in the next big policy initiative, the inclusion of compulsory foreign language activities for fifth and sixth graders as part of the 2008 Course of Study (implemented from 2011). Tahira (2012) noted that these shifts were an indication of the government's intention of fostering communicative ability in English, placing language activities at the center of language teaching, and for the first time stating that "classes, in principle, should be conducted in English in order to enhance the opportunities for students to be exposed to English" (MEXT, 2009, p. 7).

The general shortcomings of these initiatives have been reported on in Goto Butler (2015), Tahira (2012) and Steele and Zhang (2016), with analysis always coming back to the fact that guidelines and initiatives set out by the government are not being effectively followed in the classroom. Reasons put forward for this tendency are the ambiguity of communicative language teaching approaches (CLT) and insufficiency of government explanations (Tahira, 2012), conflicting ideologies (Goto Butler, 2015), lack of sufficient teacher training (Tahira, 2012; Steele & Zhang, 2016), and above all the pressures of entrance exams.

The most recent policy shift (MEXT, 2017a) includes, among other directives, moving the foreign language activities to third and fourth grade in elementary school, and introducing English as a school subject from fifth and sixth grade (Aoki, 2016). If past results are any indication, however, there is little hope that these initiatives will achieve their objectives. The source of the pessimism is the persistent presence of *JUKEN EIGO* and the resulting overreliance on *YAKUDOKU*.

2.5 *JUKEN EIGO* (ENGLISH FOR TEST TAKING) AND *YAKUDOKU* (TRANSLATION READING)

As hinted at above, testing is a big part of the educational experience for most students in Japan. A situation has developed where academic achievement at each stage of education, as measured by test scores, is the center of the school experience. The term used to describe this situation is *GAKUREKI SHAKAI* (translated as educational credential based society). Some authors derisively refer to the education system in Japan as “an enormously elaborated, very expensive testing system with some educational spin-offs” (Goodman, 2003). This perspective laments the situation where learning takes a back seat to testing. This testing covers most of the subjects taught at school, but has become particularly acute for the English language. The testing of English in Japan is characterized by the memorization of vocabulary, expressions and grammar rules with little or no connection to practical communication in the language. Ryan (2008) interprets the resulting *JUKEN EIGO* version of English as follows:

> *. . . it could be argued that English as taught in Japanese secondary schools, detached from its basic reality as a tool for communication and expression, represents a ‘pure’ form of testing knowledge. If the purpose of education is to test and stratify, then subjects such as Japanese or mathematics are tainted by their attachments to a basic reality; a subject like Japanese examination English is devoid of such complications and provides the means to test the ability of students to learn purely as they have been taught in the classroom. (p. 34)*

In a similar vein, Goto Butler & Iino (2004) cite Takahashi (2000) in describing English scores as “highly correlated with students’ analytical and logical thinking skills just as Latin used to be viewed as a means of mental training” (Goto-Butler & Iino, 2004. p. 30).

Again, government policy and public sentiment has historically swung back and forth between a focus on English for practical purposes and English for entrance examination (Goto

Butler & Iino, 2005). The heavy emphasis on academic achievement, resulting entrance exam competitiveness, and English exam contents have strongly influenced how English is taught in school (Ryan, 2008). In her historical review of English education in Japan, Løfsgaard (2015) notes that this tendency toward *JUKEN EIGO* resulted in publications focused on test taking strategies. These strategies were centered on decoding the English in the form of grammar translation. With the inherent pressures of the examinations and particular style and contents of these tests, these grammar translation (*YAKUDOKU*) strategies became popular both in and out of schools. At the same time, government approved textbooks also tended to focus on preparing students for entrance exams and the accompanying teachers manuals heavily favored teacher-fronted *YAKUDOKU* lessons and activities (Kikuchi & Browne, 2009). Another interpretation of this dominance of *YAKUDOKU* over more communicative approaches to language teaching is that the former is much easier for the teacher.

This discussion of *JUKEN EIGO* and *YAKUDOKU* is important to the current study in that students who make it to university will have likely developed attitudes and beliefs about language learning that will influence how they interpret English lessons at university. Some of these attitudes and beliefs will be associated with the goals of target-language learning (outcomes) while others will be related to how the language is best taught and learned (strategies).

2.6 *HENSACHI* (DEVIATION VALUE/SCHOOL RANKING SYSTEM)

The final concept that I will introduce here is *HENSACHI*. I have included this topic to support the notion that a great deal of attention is focused on education in Japan but that an inordinate proportion of time, energy and resources is spent in this system on testing, grading and ranking students. This again has an impact on learner attitudes, beliefs and motivations related to schooling in general and English language learning in particular. The term

HENSACHI is often translated as deviation value, but a more straightforward description is the school ranking system. *HENSACHI* scores are assigned to individual students and schools (or departments) based on performance on standardized tests in relation to the national mean. A *HENSACHI* rank of 50 thus means that the student or school can be considered at the middle nationwide, while a score one standard deviation over the mean would be 60. Newfields (2006) reports that 94.5% of all university departments rank between 30 and 70.

Despite criticisms of the *HENSACHI* system (see, for example, ELT, 2011; Murphey, 2010), it maintains its popularity among high schools, students and universities. In general, high schools and cram schools use these scores to determine which universities individual students have a high possibility of successfully entering, while universities use these scores for screening applicants and in promotional materials.

2.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, I have attempted to provide readers with some background information on the educational experience of Japanese learners and the unique role that English plays in the Japanese education system. The main points which I hope can be gleaned from this chapter are outlined in the introduction (section 2.1), and these should be kept in mind when evaluating my interpretations of various data from the observations and interviews.

As mentioned earlier, I will conclude this chapter with a short review of Ryan's (2008) discussion of student attitudes, beliefs and motivation as related to English education in Japan. The gist of this discussion is that how English is conceived of and presented in Japan has an impact on learner motivation, that English at university plays a different role and is approached quite differently from that at secondary schools, and that English education at universities is the convergence of two great failures of education in Japan, higher education and the field of language education.

Public sentiment in Japan with regards to the English language has a complicated history. From the time Japan was forced open by U.S. Commodore Matthew Perry in the mid 1800s, English has been the main foreign language studied here (Fujimoto-Adamson, 2006). While recognized as an important tool for gaining access to existing knowledge and developments from outside Japan, English has also been seen in an antagonistic light, especially leading up to the second world war. Since the war, English has played a key role in the externally imposed education system, with pendulum swings between a emphasis on English for communication and English for test taking, and between a warm embrace–by politicians and the general public–and outright disdain. English conceived of in this way thus exerts a heavy influence on young people's feelings toward the language.

Ryan (2008) also highlights some clear differences in how English language study is conceived of and pursued at secondary and tertiary levels in Japan. Whereas the contents and delivery of EFL instruction at secondary schools are mainly focused on preparing students for entrance exams (first to high school and then to university), approaches to instruction at university range from more of the same to a complete de-emphasis on grammar and test-preparation in favor of conversation/communication focused lessons. These differences will also have an impact–either positive or negative–on student's expectations and motivations regarding English, which in turn will influence how these learners experience and engage in university EFL classes.

Finally, the generally poor assessment of universities in Japan (see, for example, McVeigh, 2002) and the dismal results of language education here (discussed above in section 2.1) are seen by Ryan (2008) as converging at the university level. In more prosperous times, economic and technological advancement could mask these widespread failures. However, the current situation in Japan necessitates more accountability and return on investment in both areas. These circumstances were one impetus for Ryan's (2008) study as they are mine.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to take stock of key studies or discussions of learner engagement, the related construct of motivation, and other concepts or issues from education and SLA research that might inform my investigation. My review of existing literature has convinced me of the following:

(1) learner engagement is a well-established construct in school settings but not in SLA,
(2) learner engagement has been approached mainly from educational psychology and developmental psychology perspectives,
(3) learner engagement has been identified as a key intermediary between motivation and achievement,
(4) there is conceptual overlap and lack of consensus regarding the relationship between motivation and engagement,
(5) the construct of L2 motivation has dominated the field of SLA,
(6) SLA theory and practice could benefit from advances in learner engagement theory, and
(7) most research into learner engagement and L2 motivation has been dominated by cross-sectional quantitative studies but there are calls in both fields for more longitudinal, context-specific qualitative studies.

With the above in mind, my unique contribution will be in the following areas:

- drawing together key concepts from motivation and engagement studies into a novel conceptual framework that can advance our understanding of the two constructs,
- adopting and adapting established qualitative methods and quantitative research instruments into a flexible and powerful research design, and
- offering a context-specific view of how engagement is manifested in EFL classrooms in Japan.

Continuing with the traveler metaphor, this is the preparatory research for my trip. What are some of the must-see spots, well-worn routes, and possible side trips? As this is a qualitative study in which the researcher is one of the primary research instruments, I have chosen to present this as my evolving understanding of what has come before, current perspectives and emerging new directions. As mentioned in chapter one, my interest in learner engagement can be traced back to my early experiences teaching English as a second or other language (ESOL) in Hawaii and Japan as well as reading that I was doing on the topic of second language (L2) learning motivation. While my research interests have diverged into other areas (including trips into instructional design, curriculum development, educational technology, content-focused approaches to language learning, positive psychology and appreciative inquiry) my early interest in L2 learning motivation continued to ebb and flow in the background before eventually washing ashore as a focus on learner engagement. I have structured this chapter roughly along the path which my research interests guided me as well as how theorizing on the related topics has developed chronologically. Developments in L2 learning motivation, including the topics of language learning attitudes and beliefs, are presented in some detail as this is the dominant line of research in SLA and provides an important backdrop on which to explore learner engagement. I then move to the topic of learner (student) engagement and frameworks that have been developed for conceptualizing, measuring, investigating and promoting learner engagement in school settings and the L2 classroom. Specifically, I will review the theoretical models of self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Noels, Pelletier, Clément & Vallerand, 2003), learner identity (Deakin Crick, 2012; Norton & Toohey, 2011), investment (Fredericks, Blumenfeld & Paris, 2004; McKay & Wong, 1996) and flow theory (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Egbert, 2003; Shernoff, Csikszentmihalyi, Schneider & Shernoff, 2003). Self-determination theory (SDT), especially the basic psychological needs of competence, autonomy and relatedness, is firmly-established in motivation and engagement research in school settings as well as SLA. Together with the other models, also well established, SDT forms the core of the conceptual framework that I have adapted for my study (described in section 3.6). Finally, I briefly introduce two alternative perspectives (side trips) on engagement that center on experiences, namely the experience economy (Pine & Gilmore, 1999) and significant learning experiences (Fink, 2003). The former comes from the field of business while the latter is specific to instructional design and curriculum development at the tertiary level. The decision to extend the review beyond the boundaries of SLA to the broader field of general education and other areas was intentional to get some fresh insights or perspectives on the related issues.

3.2 SECOND LANGUAGE (L2) LEARNING MOTIVATION RESEARCH

The topic of L2 learning motivation caught my attention early in my teaching career. My first EFL teaching experience was in Hawaii when I was asked to teach a group of Japanese junior high school students that were on Maui for a short-term study abroad program. Although I did not have any experience at the time, I was invited to teach in this program through one of my teachers at the University of Hawaii. The materials and lessons plans were prepared for me, and I somehow fumbled through. What I remember so vividly though was the range of expressions and enthusiasm exhibited by the students. Some were hanging on my every word while others could not be bothered to participate and exuded something closer to apathy. Then, as a young teacher at a language school in Japan in the early 1990s, I was again confronted by a similar range of expressions of motivation. There were high school and university students, business people at different stages of their careers, housewives and retirees. Most of them were there of their own volition, but some were there at the behest of others (parents or superiors). Another thing that struck me was how some learners could pick up English with seemingly little effort while others struggled through with little or no progress. These two concepts (motivation and language aptitude) were described by Ellis (2008) as the main psychological factors contributing to individual differences in learning a second language.

Drawing on the work of Eccles, Wigfield and Schiefele (1998), Ryan (2008) outlines three perspectives that have been used to theorize on motivation beyond SLA contexts: biological needs approaches (physiological), behaviorist models (social conditioning), and cognitive perspectives (agency and appraisal theories). He offers an illustrative example of how each of these views could be used to explore something as simple or familiar as behaviors surrounding his morning breakfast choices. Motivation was recognized by second language acquisition (SLA) researchers and theorists as an important variable related to ultimate language learning success (Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2012) and has been a dominant focus of SLA research (Ryan, 2008). Dörnyei (2001) writes that "motivation explains *why* people decide to do something, *how* hard they are going to pursue it and *how long* they are willing to sustain the activity" (p. 7 - italics from original). While the distinction between motivation and engagement is often muddled in both mainstream education (Reschly & Christenson, 2012) and SLA (Lai, 2011; Mahdikhani & Rezaei, 2015) literature, the two are closely related and often conceptually linked. These links and attempts at delineation will be discussed below (section 3.2.6).

Three core historical phases have been identified with regards to L2 motivation research and theorizing (Boo, Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015; Dörnyei, 2005; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011; Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2012). The initial phase (roughly the 1960s to the early 1990s) was dominated by social psychological perspectives, in particular Gardner's socio-educational model (Oxford, 1996), with much of the research being conducted in Canada with speakers of French or English learning the other language. From the 1990s, there was a shift toward more cognitive and affective perspectives which adopted conceptual frameworks from mainstream educational psychology. Starting around 2000, research and theorizing on L2 motivation has been based more on dynamic systems perspectives, with a focus on contextual and individual contributions (Boo, Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). There was of course overlap, with each successive stage building on earlier foundations. Ryan (2008) suggests that we are entering a fourth phase where the various theories which succeeded the social psychological model are, "coming together under the umbrella of an interpretation of L2 motivation based around self beliefs" (p. 58).

I began reading on the topic in earnest well into the second phase, but work by Gardner and colleagues (Gardner, 1985; Gardner & Lambert, 1972) with its social psychological focus was still the dominant lens through which most SLA motivation theorists were looking. Although not the central focus of my investigation, I offer here a brief review of L2 motivation studies that have influenced my thinking on the topic and have informed the conceptual framework developed for the current investigation.

This overview begins with some ways L2 motivation in instructed contexts has been defined, and moves on to the main perspectives from which motivation has historically been approached, namely social psychological perspectives, cognitive and educational psychological perspectives, and dynamic systems perspectives. The study of language learning attitudes and beliefs follows, and I conclude with a brief discussion of the relationship between motivation and engagement.

3.2.1 Defining L2 Motivation in Instructed Contexts

I realized early on that the complexities and multi-dimensionality of the concept of motivation makes it extremely difficult to find or develop an all-encompassing definition. While a full review of the debates surrounding the topic are beyond the scope of this study, it is important to distinguish motivation from the related concept of engagement which is the topic of my investigation. Dörnyei (1998) pointed out that despite the frequency with which the term motivation is used in both educational and research contexts, "it is rather surprising how little agreement there is in the literature with regard to the exact meaning of the concept" (p. 117).

In the broader educational literature, Assor (2012, p. 422) describes motivation as, "referring to people's intentions to perform actions" and views "intensity (strength) and phenomenological quality" as two important attributes of motivation. He elaborates on the intensity dimension as "the amount of effort which people intend to put in an attempt to reach a certain goal, often in the face of difficulties" and the quality dimension as "people's perception and experience of the reasons or sources of their intentions or motives" (p. 422). Two points here are worth mentioning. First, this description highlights for me that motivation is more about intent rather than action (engagement). Second, this acknowledgement of "experience" as central to understanding the quality of motivation helped persuade me of its import in investigating learner engagement and inclusion in the title of this thesis. In a slightly different vein, Loewen and Reinders (2011) see motivation as a psychological construct that, "refers to the desire and incentive that an individual has to engage in a specific activity" (p. 119). This definition also highlights motivation as a antecedent to engagement.

In the field of SLA, Gardner (1985) described language learning motivation as “the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favorable attitudes toward learning the language” (p. 10). This definition–with its inclusion of effort–seems to combine the concepts of motivation and engagement, as do descriptions of motivation as a process (see, for example, Melendy, 2008) that starts with a need and results in a behaviour that moves an individual towards some goal. Citing discussions in Keller (1983) Crookes and Schmidt (1991), define motivation as referring to, “the choices people make as to what experiences or goals they will approach or avoid, and the degree of effort they will exert in that respect” (p. 481). Here we have a bit of separation between motivation and effort (engagement). In this seminal paper by Crookes and Schmidt (1991) the authors outline four motivational factors related to second language classroom learning: interest, relevance, expectancy, and satisfaction. Each of these factors have found their way into other concepts or theories related to engagement and will be touched on again in my analysis. This focus on the classroom is especially relevant to my study and have guided my decisions regarding both conceptual framework and level of analysis (see discussion of grain size below, section 3.3.3).

3.2.2 Social Psychological Perspectives on L2 Motivation

One of the most influential early distinctions in L2 learning motivation theory was between *instrumental* and *integrative* orientations (Gardner, 1985). Gardner’s constructs of integrative and instrumental motivation have been described as related to the more general distinction between intrinsic/extrinsic motivation (Dickinson, 1995). Integrative motivation is described as learning a target language with an eye to interacting with speakers of that language (intrinsic) while instrumental motivation involves learning the language for some external reward such as achieving good grades or getting a good job (extrinsic). Despite the conceptual overlap, integrative orientation is distinct from intrinsic motivation in that membership in or affiliation with the target language community provides the drive. Although Gardner (1985) viewed integrative motivation as stronger than instrumental motivation in the Canadian context, there is some evidence that this may not be true in certain EFL contexts, including Japan (Sakui & Gaies, 1999; Yashima, 2002).

In their study of 301 secondary-school pupils studying EFL in Budapest, Clement, Dörnyei and Noels (1994) found that socially grounded factors were related to "students' attitude and effort, classroom behavior and achievement" (p. 443). In Hungary, where contact with L2 speakers is limited (similar to Japan), their factor analysis identified three components that they felt were related to foreign language behavior and competence—namely integrative motivation, linguistic self-confidence and appraisal of classroom environment. In other words, successful L2 learners were seen to have an affinity to the target-language community, experience or perceive competence (self-efficacy) in their language studies and hold positive perceptions of their learning environment, including their teacher, peers and the content. These findings lend support to my decision to focus on instructional strategies, teacher characteristics and contextual features in my study.

This concept of integrativeness was reframed by Yashima (2000; 2002) as an '*International Posture'* which she described as a more general attitude toward the international community, and empirically confirmed to have a stronger influence on motivation. She concluded that this attitudinal construct more accurately represented the attitudes of EFL learners than integrativeness in a Gardnerian sense. I have included "willingess to communicate" in the conceptual framework for my study as motivational orientations impact on whether, when and how motivation manifests into engaged language learning.

One related yet seemingly underrepresented topic is demotivation. The few available findings were reviewed by Dörnyei (2001), who commented that by far the greatest source of demotivation is teachers, including personality (e.g. lack of commitment to the students or teaching, excessive criticism, and belligerent or condescending attitude), and teaching style (e.g. repetitive, monotonous, insufficient or unclear instructions or explanations, lack of enthusiasm, and inferior use of materials or equipment). These findings influenced my decision to focus subsidiary research questions on instructional strategies and teacher characteristics. Other sources of demotivation were inadequate school facilities, reduced self-confidence, negative attitudes towards L2 community, the compulsory nature of L2, interference of another foreign language (FL) being studied, attitudes of group members, and coursebook (cited in Jones, 2006). My inclusion of the one subsidiary research question dealing with contextual features was partially influenced by these later findings. This new focus on demotivation in SLA theorizing was crucial in that it accompanied and influenced the shift to a focus on individual learner characteristics and the contextual influences on L2 motivation. A similar shift also occurred in studies of learner engagement (Reschly, Huebner, Appleton & Antaramian, 2008).

In Japan, demotivation with regards to EFL learning has been described as a significant phenomenon that results from many factors in students' experience of English education (Ushioda, 2013). Studies by Sakai and Kikuchi (2009) seem to indicate that internal factors such as lack of purpose or lack of intrinsic motivation are influential in Japanese learners' tendencies toward demotivation. These findings are somewhat at odds with Dörnyei's (2001) above-mentioned view that demotivation is defined in relation to external factors (cited in Ushioda, 2013). Other investigations into the attitudes and motivation among Japanese learners of English (Burden, 2002; Brown, Robson & Rosenkjar, 2001; Kimura, Nakata & Okumura, 2001) support the notion that motivation is a multidimensional construct that is both a product and process influenced by individual characteristics and social context. These same two influences are theorized as influencing engagement (Skinner & Pitzer, 2012).

3.2.3 Cognitive and Educational Psychology Perspectives on L2 Motivation

Ryan (2008) describes how the introduction of cognitive perspectives to discussions of L2 motivation by Crookes and Schmidt (1991) shifted the focus of research toward what happens in the foreign language classroom and influenced educational psychology frameworks. Ushioda and Dornyei (2012) describe the cognitive-situated period as characterized by two main lines of inquiry, namely the adoption of cognitive theories or perspectives from mainstream motivational psychology research, and increased emphasis on situated analysis of motivation in the foreign language classroom. In the words of Ushioda and Dörnyei (2012):

> *Essentially, the cognitive-situated period entailed focusing more on motivation in L2 instructional contexts, integrating cognitive motivation concepts from the education field (e.g., intrinsic motivation, self-efficacy, attributions) and developing more extensive theoretical frameworks, yet without discarding social-psychological perspectives altogether. (p. 397)*

These cognitive motivation concepts mentioned here also come up in studies into learner engagement, and I will go into more detail when discussing these below under the heading of Dimensions of Engagement (section 3.3.2). With this more situated analysis of motivation in classroom settings, attention was also drawn to the unstable nature of motivation during the learning process, whether during engagement in a task, through successive lessons, or across the broader time span of a course of study. Dörnyei (2005) also referred to this as a "Process-Oriented Period" when researchers began recognizing the shortcomings of cross-sectional studies that provide only a snapshot of the lengthy and arduous task of learning a new language.

Ryan (2008) cites the significant contributions of Ema Ushioda (Ushioda, 1996; Ushioda, 1998; Ushioda, 2001; Ushioda, 2003) in both highlighting the influences of the social context on language learner motivation and broadening the methodological base to include more qualitative approaches that allow for the more situated analysis mentioned above. Although there has been some progress in the former, we still see an overall predominance of cross-sectional, quantitative research approaches based on psychometric instruments. While these studies have gone a long way in helping us understand the sources of and influences on motivation, we are on less firm ground when discussing when, how and why this motivation results or fails to result in actions or behaviors that will lead to successful language acquisition. The broadened methodological base mentioned above should provide more practical insight for teachers on how to translate motivation into engaged classroom learning, and influenced my decision to pursue a mostly qualitative study for my investigation of learner engagement.

Other concepts that made their way into SLA theories at this time and seem closely linked to learner engagement include self-determination theory (SDT), L2 learner identity and investment. I have adopted these key theoretical frameworks for my study and will expand on them later in this literature review.

3.2.4 Dynamic Systems Views of L2 Motivation

Ushioda (2011) discusses a "shift away from individual-cognitive perspectives on motivation towards dynamic perspectives integrating internal, social and contextual processes shaping motivation" and notes a "move away from achievement-oriented analyses of motivation to identity oriented analyses of personal motivational trajectories" (p. 222). Drawing on self-discrepancy theory (Higgins, 1987) and the concept of possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986), Dörnyei (2005) theorized that two future self guides (Ideal L2 Self & Ought-to L2 Self) and situational or contextual influences (L2 Learning Experience) form a framework that builds on both earlier social psychological and intrinsic/extrinsic models while better accounting for the dynamic nature of L2 motivation. Within this L2 Motivational Self System, Dörnyei (2009) viewed the Ideal L2 Self as being the L2-specific part of one's overall ideal self (imagined future self as speaker of the target language) and encompassing the integrative motives as well as instrumental motives toward the internalized end of the continuum. The Ought-to L2 Self was conceptualized as involving less internalized (extrinsic) types of instrumental motives, with a focus on meeting externally-imposed expectations or avoiding negative outcomes. Finally, the L2 Learning Experiences was conceptualized as working on a different level than the self-guides, with motives being related to learning environment and individual experiences in that environment (e.g., experiences of success, relationship with teacher and peers, curriculum).

Higgins (1987) noted early on, "we are motivated to reach a condition where our self-concept matches our personally relevant self-guides" (p. 321). According to this "self-discrepancy" theory (Higgins, 1987), the self is comprised of three self-states: the actual self, the ideal self, and the ought self. Higgins (1987) views each of these proposed selves from two standpoints: your own beliefs about yourself, and what others believe about you. The related concept of identity is seen as a missing link between students' motivation to learn and their instructional context (Sfard & Prusak, 2005), and is related to theories of academic self-concept (see, for example, Wigfield, Eccles, Schiefele, Roeser & Davis-Kean, 2006), self-concordance (Sheldon & Elliot, 1999) and integrated regulation (Ryan & Deci, 2009), all of which are considered to influence engagement. I discuss the concept of self in terms of identity and its role in my conceptual framework in section 3.4.2.

Sampson (2012) reports on an action research project involving several classes of female English majors at a rural university in Japan. Three cycles of action research involved (1) eliciting from students a written expression of their Best Possible English Selves (BPES) image, (2) enhancing students' ideal self concept using a variety of classroom experiences and journaling exercises, and (3) developing further an ideal self using increasingly focused activities and journaling. The author noted that participant students were able to recognize their developing sense of ideal self, take more responsibility for their own learning and express increased agency in their learning.

While a great deal of attention has been focused on developing and testing models of L2 motivation, the field is still in need of developing these elaborate theories into applicable ideas and approaches for language teachers and learners. The shift toward researching motivation as the dynamic interplay of individual and contextual features has certainly been a big step forward in helping us understand the influences and precursors of motivation, but we still need better explanations of how motivation is translated into actions and behaviors. In other words, although these more overarching theories of L2 motivation help to conceptualize what motivates learners, they don’t provide much in terms of how that motivation is translated into action (engagement) in the classroom or how engagement can be promoted and disengagement avoided for individual learners with differing motivational orientations.

3.2.5 Language Learning Attitudes and Beliefs

Attitudes and beliefs have been a central topic in the wider literature on education and engagement as well as L2 motivation and SLA studies, with discussions of attitudes and beliefs theorized as influencing behavior (Bourdieu, 1993), as a personal resource that a person brings to a learning encounter (Vygotsky, 1978), as a key determiner of the amount of effort a person will put into a foreign language learning endeavor (Horwitz, 1999), or as influencing how a person will react to feedback regarding errors (Fernández-Toro & Hurd, 2014). Attitudes and beliefs will play a significant role in my theoretical framework as they relate to learner identity and investement (section 3.4.2).

One key issue when looking at the relationship between learning attitudes/beliefs and engagement is that learners might have favorable attitudes toward learning the target language but be thwarted in their attempts to engage in classroom activities by perceived incongruities between their overall objectives and those of the teacher. Such findings are reported in Courtney's (2017) mixed-methods investigation of year six and seven students in the U.K. studying French. Such findings are especially relevant to the current study since I am looking at teacher characteristics that promote or thwart engagement through lenses such as Ushioda's (2009) person-in-context relational view of learning motivation and Norton Pierce's concept of investment in language learning/acquisition.

Citing Eagly and Chaiken (1993, 1998), Sinatra, Heddy & Lombardi (2015) discuss attitudes as valenced (positive and negative) in similar ways to emotions, and yet both more evaluative and involving appraisal. In their mixed methods study of students entering university in the U.K., Hockings, Cooke & Bowl (2007) investigated expectations of university students and discuss how these expectations might impact classroom engagement. The authors identified three main attitudes or approaches to learning, namely surface learning (related mainly to memorization), deep learning (e.g. inquiry-based) and mixed learning. Early reading that I was doing around L2 learning motivation also stressed the powerful influence of learner attitudes and beliefs, which Horwitz (1988) comments on as follows:

> *One can envision many instances where preconceived notions about language learning would likely influence a learner's effectiveness in the classroom. A student who believes, for example, that learning a second language primarily involves learning new vocabulary will expend most of his/her energy on vocabulary acquisition, while adults who believe in the superiority of younger learners probably begin language learning with fairly negative expectations of their own ultimate success. An unsuccessful learning experience could easily lead a student to the conclusion that special abilities are required to learn a*

foreign language and that s/he does not possess these necessary abilities. (p. 283)

In relation to my study, I recognize a need to uncover some of these participant attitudes and beliefs that impact on engagement at several levels, i.e. general school engagement, classroom engagement, and engagement in specific tasks. Using the 45-item language learning beliefs survey developed by Sakui and Gaies (1999), Yonesaka and Tanaka (2013) surveyed incoming university students at a large private university in Japan each year from 2006 to 2011. Despite policy mandates and curriculum changes, the authors concluded that learner beliefs regarding (1) the insufficiency of English education at school, (2) the importance of listening and speaking practice, and (3) the role of culture and other outside factors were relatively stable across cohorts for these six years. They identified three orientations (traditionalist, independent, and persevering), and concluded that "learner beliefs are not linked to traditional or communicative methodologies, but to personal goals, language choice, and the growing normalcy of English" (p. 1). This last finding in particular has some bearing on my research in that these orientations will greatly influence (for better or worse) levels of engagement and investment in EFL classroom activities.

3.2.6 Relationship Between Motivation and Learner Engagement

Before moving on to research and theorizing on learner engagement, I will finish this section with a few perspectives on how motivation relates to learner engagement. Janosz (2012) notes that despite the range of contexts and perspectives in engagement research, there seems to be consensus regarding motivation as a proximal determinant of engagement and that a learner's motivations–resulting from their "values, perceived competency/control, and expectancies regarding the learning activity or environment" (p. 699)–will influence the intensity and quality of engagement. Reeve (2012) highlights the relationship between motivation and engagement as follows: “The distinction between the two constructs is that motivation is a private, unobservable psychological, neural, and biological process that serves as an antecedent to the publicly observable behavior that is engagement” (p. 151). In a similar vein, Assor (2012) offers: “while motives refer to intentions or inclinations to do something in order to reach a certain goal, engagement refers to actual actions that are performed as one attempts to reach a certain goal” (p. 422). These descriptions hint at a uni-directional influence from motivation to engagement while other models (see, for example, Skinner & Pitzer, 2012) stress the reciprocal nature of the relationship between the two (Fig. 3.1).

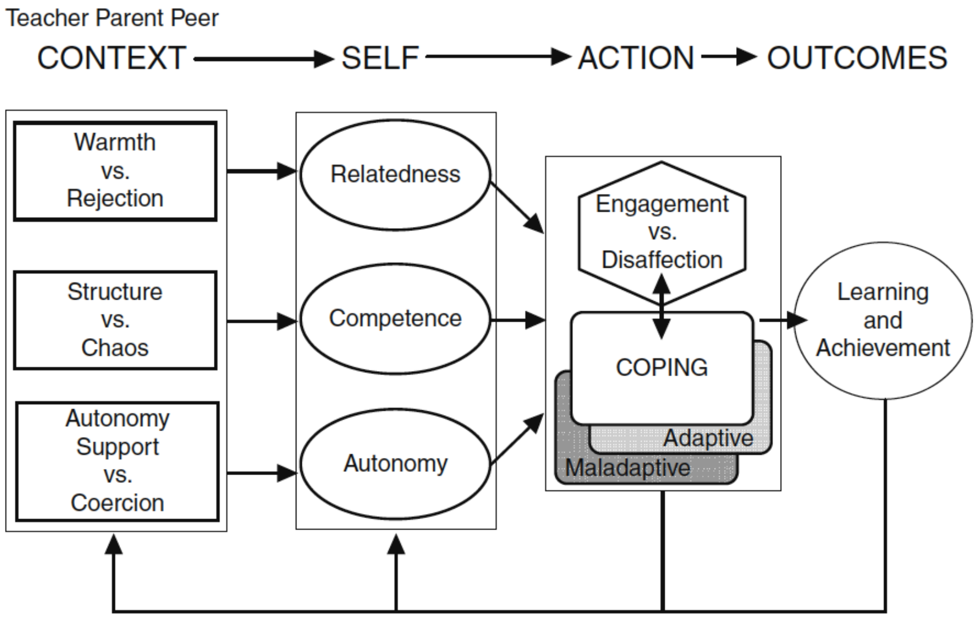


Figure 3.1 A dynamic model of motivational development organized around student engagement and disaffection (Source: Skinner & Pitzer, 2012)

This depiction of motivation better represents my understanding of the relationship between the two constructs, with motivation built on both context and self, while engagement is represented as action. Importantly, this dynamic model of motivational development includes the basic psychological needs of competence, autonomy and relatedness which is the cornerstone of self-determination theory (3.4.1). These basic psychological needs are grouped under self as the individual's perceptions of how well those needs are being fulfilled will determine the extent to which they will engage in an activity. The conceptual framework for my study uses this model as a starting point, and I will go into more detail after presenting some of the studies and theorizing on learner engagement.

3.3 THE STUDY OF LEARNER ENGAGEMENT

Learner–or student–engagement is often mentioned as being an important precursor to learning and academic achievement (Appleton, Christenson & Furlong, 2008; Zyngier, 2008), and has thus gained the attention of teachers, school administrators, parents and researchers. Unless otherwise noted, the terms learner engagement and student engagement will be used interchangeably in this thesis. One indicator of increased scholarly attention is the number of recent reports on the topic of engagement (Dunleavy & Milton, 2009; Fredricks & McColskey, 2011; Jolly, Campbell & Perlman, 2004; Parsons & Tyler, 2011; Trowler & Trowler, 2010). Other indicators are the book-length publications (Coates, 2006; Shernoff, 2013), special issues of academic journals (Sinatra, Heddy & Lombardi, 2015), anthologies (Christenson, Reschly & Wylie, 2012) and references to as many as 32,000 articles published in the last fourteen years (Azevedo, 2015).

Yazzie-Mintz and McCormick (2012) note that educational research into student engagement has emerged relatively recently, and grown in prominence over the last twenty years. Again, the focus of early studies on student engagement were mainly concerned with "at risk" or disadvantaged youth, while later investigations broadened the scope to include all learners (Parsons & Tyler, 2011). Earlier studies were also mainly concerned with behavioral markers such as school attendance and submission of homework, while more recent studies have shifted focus to enjoyment and challenge (i.e., emotional or cognitive forms of engagement). Dunleavy and Milton (2009) note the early focus by engagement researchers on demographic and social risk factors such as family circumstances and influence of peers. The same authors go on to describe the shift as follows:

> *Over time, however, the concept and its measures began to shift in meaning as a result of increased attention to the influence of school context, particularly the relationships between school climate and students' experience of engagement. (p. 7)*

This description helped convince me of the possible merits of focusing on *experiences*–both learner and teacher–in my teaching context, but also impressed upon me that motivation, attitudes and how engagement is experienced are all subject specific. This is especially important in my teaching context where learners are not majoring in English and required to study the language (Chapter Two – Thesis in Context).

Reschly and Christenson (2012) outline some of the historical developments, including an early interest in "academic engaged time" (p. 3) and improved student learning. They cite the seminal work of Finn (1989) on student engagement as related to the ongoing processes of school dropout and completion. According to Finn's (1989) often-cited Participation-Identification model, successful participation leads to school success which in turn leads to identification (completion), while nonparticipation results in poor school performance which in turn leads to emotional withdrawal (dropping out) (cited in Reschly & Christenson, 2012). The Participation-Identification Model (Finn, 1989; Finn & Voelkl, 1993) seems particularly influential in that it defined engagement in school as having both behavioral (participation) and emotional (identification) components. Nearly all models of engagement to date have included these two components or dimensions.

The work of James Connell and colleagues (Connell, 1990; Connell & Wellborn, 1991; Skinner & Belmont, 1993) is often cited for its contribution to the study of student engagement in school settings, with engagement and disaffection theorized as lying at two ends of a continuum. Engagement was described as behavioral involvement in learning, positive emotions, and perseverance in the face of challenge. Disengagement or disaffection was characterized as passivity, lack of effort, boredom, lack of persistence, and negative emotions. Other researchers that view student engagement as lying on a continuum from disengaged to engaged are Bryson and Hand (2007), who note the central role of relationships with teachers in the student engagement equation at the tertiary level. The key role played by the teacher comes up frequently and influenced my choice of subsidiary questions.

Eccles and Wang (2012) note that engagement theory has been one of two main lines of research on school success since the 1980s and 1990s, and that this research has been keenly focused on dropout prevention and at-risk populations. The other line of research mentioned by the authors is “the work grounded in psychological motivation theory that is more closely linked to academic motivation within the classroom learning context” (p. 134). They describe this second line of research as including a wide ranging list of theories or lenses on engagement that were considered for my study, including self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), achievement goal theory (Pintrich, 2000), attribution theory (Weiner, 1986), self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1997), and expectancy-value theory of achievement (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000).

Other areas of interest in early studies of L2 learner engagement or motivation were the influences that context, classroom instruction or tasks had on levels of engagement or disengagement (Fredricks, Blumenfeld & Paris, 2004). In their review of youth engagement in high school, Yonezawa and Jones (2009) found that, “how participants become part of a community of practice, and develop an identity within and to that community, shapes their ability to participate fully in the community” (p. 199). Elaborating on this, the authors state:

This helps explain why when students study diverse subjects such as math, geography, or language arts, those tasks studied in real-world contexts of athletics, local neighborhoods, automotive repair, or shopping are often more manageable, understandable and engaging. (Yonezawa & Jones, p. 199)

We see here again examples of the close link between identity and engagement. For the purposes of my study, I would like to review some of the key engagement literature with regard to how the construct has been defined or conceptualized, the different dimensions (or components) of engagement, types (or levels) of engagement, engagement as an outcome or a process, the distinctions from and overlap with motivation (discussed above in section 3.2.6), and how engagement has been measured.

3.3.1 Defining Learner Engagement

As mentioned above, learner engagement has been identified as an important precursor to learning and academic achievement. However, it has proved to be a slippery concept when it comes to definitions (Chapman, 2003; Parsons & Taylor, 2011). Reeve (2012) borrows from Wellborn (1991) to describe engagement as, "the extent of a student's active involvement in a learning activity" (p. 150). While the term "student engagement" is most prevalent in published research, I use "learner engagement" as a broader term that includes all learning contexts (including my own), not necessarily primary and secondary school settings.

Several authors have lamented on the confusion caused by the lack of agreement in defining engagement. Roger Azevedo (2015) offers the following:

Engagement has been used to describe everything including student academic performance and achievement; classroom behaviors; approaches to interacting with instructional materials; students' self-perceptions of beliefs in handling individual and contextual aspects of learning situations; students' enactment of cognitive, motivational, affective, metacognitive, and social processes, *particularly in academic contexts (e.g., classrooms, intelligent tutoring systems); teacher practices in learner-centered classrooms; and features of instructional and learning contexts designed to initiate, sustain, and foster learning. (p. 84)*

For the purpose of my study, I will stick closer to the "students' enactment of cognitive, motivational, affective, metacognitive, and social processes, particularly in academic contexts" mentioned in this rather long quote. Hu and Kuh (2002) view engagement as "the quality of effort students themselves devote to educationally purposeful activities that contribute directly to desired outcomes" (p. 555), while Philp and Duchesne (2016) have a much broader conceptualization, describing engagement as "a state of heightened attention and involvement, in which participation is reflected not only in the cognitive dimension, but in social, behavioural and affective dimensions" (p. 3). This broader view of engagement is also evident in a report by Dunleavy and Milton (2009), who conceptualized engagement as including the holy trinity of behavioral, emotional and cognitive engagement within a wider framework of academic and social engagement (Fig. 3.2).

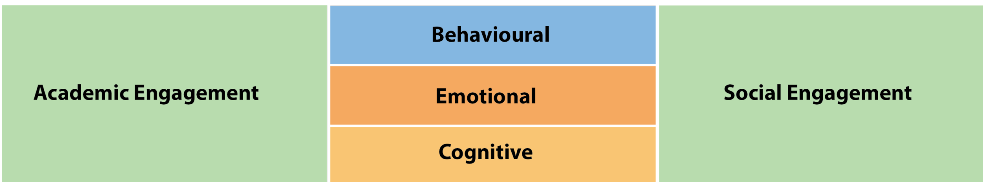


Figure 3.2 Definitions of student engagement (Dunleavy & Milton, 2009, p. 7)

As this is an exploratory study of how engagement is experienced in a specific context, I have chosen to focus my analysis on the core dimensions or types of engagement in the center of this model, but will also attempt to address the topics of social engagement, academic engagement and agentic engagement (Reeve, 2012) in chapters five (Findings and Discussion) and six (Conclusions, Considerations and Implications).

In her review of how engagement has been operationalized, Chapman (2003) notes three early trends. First was the common measure of time on task. Another was to focus on willingness on the part of students to participate in routine school activities (e.g. attendance, submission of homework, following directions). Finally, there was an orientation toward cognitive, behavioural and affective indicators of engagement with learning tasks. Skinner and Belmont (1993) conceptualized engagement in school as the opposite of disaffection, and described it as the "intensity and emotional quality" of a person's involvement in initiating and carrying out learning activities. They see engaged children as displaying "sustained behavioral involvement" in learning activities, and view this involvement as accompanied by a "positive emotional tone" (p. 572). In contrast, disaffected children are:

> *passive, do not try hard, and give up easily in the face of challenges… [they can] be bored, depressed, anxious, or even angry about their presence in the classroom; they can be withdrawn from learning opportunities or even rebellious towards teachers and classmates. (p. 572)*

This description fits with models of engagement mentioned earlier (Connell, 1990; Connell & Wellborn, 1991) that conceptualize engagement and disengagement or disaffection as opposite ends of a continuum. Another way of operationalizing learner engagement was proposed by Coates (2006), whose statistical modeling using Student Engagement Questionnaire (SEQ) data from 1,051 full-time university students from four universities in the U.S. identified clear distinctions between academic and social dimensions (Fig. 3.3).

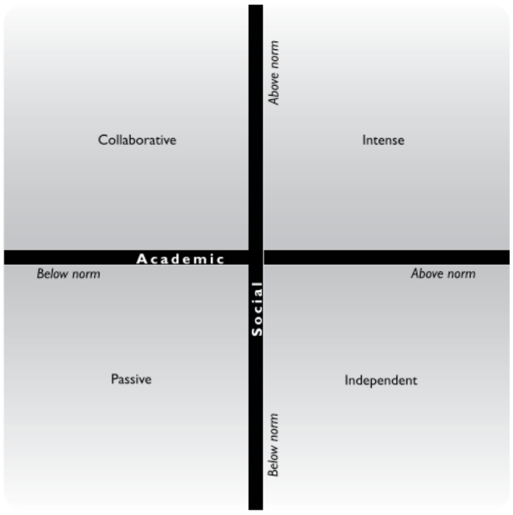


Figure 3.3 Typology model of student engagement styles (Coates, 2006)

The author theorized that these dimensions held for both face-to-face and online contexts, and that student engagement could be characterised as either intense, collaborative, independent or passive. This model struck me as relevant in that classroom experiences have shown me that students can be socially and academically engaged in different degrees, and the categories described somewhat fit the profile of current and past learners in my classes and those depicted in Fushino (2010), Harumi (2011), Tanaka (2010), and Yonesaka and Tanaka (2013).

Finally, Yazzie-Mintz and McCormick (2012) informally polled teachers and other stakeholders about their understanding of student engagement, and concluded that the complexities and range of understandings make finding a commonly accepted definition for the concept difficult to arrive at. They concluded that the question of how to measure student engagement is still “up for debate” and that the present picture of engagement lends itself better to “identification by observation” (p. 745), i.e. knowing it when we see it.

The last part of this quote resonated with me in that my time and experience in the classroom has equipped me with the ability to recognize engagement (or disengagement) when I see it, but as mentioned in Chapter One, I am less sure of where this recognition comes from. For now, my working definition of engagement is "outward signs that a learner is actively involved (behaviorly, cogntively and/or emotionally) in a target-language endeavor." I want to focus in this definition on both the action and the endeavor. The action can be physical, mental or emotive, while the endeavor can be learning, practicing or experimenting with the target language. Together, the definitions and frameworks of engagement mentioned so far provide me with a list of important considerations for structuring my study. Specifically, this literature review has convinced me that a focus on how engagement is "experienced" is a worthy pursuit, that the participation-identification model (Finn, 1989) can be updated as an identity-investment model (discussed further in the next chapter), that the core dimensions of engagement (section 3.3.2) provide a sufficient starting point for my investigation–but that academic and social engagement deserve attention, and that I need to look at both engagement and disengagement/dissafection.

3.3.2 Dimensions of Learner Engagement

As hinted at in the previous section, there now seems to be clear consensus that engagement is a multidimensional construct and the three dimensional model (including behavioral, emotional and cognitive) has gained wide acceptance (Yazzie-Mintz & McCormick, 2012). I offer here brief overviews of each.

Behavioral engagement refers to the observable actions by students in and out of the classroom. Common examples are attendance, participation, submitting homework on time and taking an active role in school-related activities (Fredericks, Blumenfeld & Paris, 2004). Sinatra, Heddy & Lombardi (2015) operationalize behavioral engagement as involvement in learning endeavors, both in general and at the task level. They note that definitions of behavioral engagement usually include "positive conduct, involvement in academic tasks, and participation in school related activities such as athletics and clubs" (p. 2).

Emotional (sometimes referred to as affective) engagement describes a deeper level of involvement and often reflects a caring for, valuing or identifying with school experiences. Some parallels can be drawn to the concept of investment from motivation theory, including the ground breaking work of Maehr (1984) in school settings and Norton (2000) is SLA research. Examples of emotional engagement include feelings of connection with the content and/or learning context (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2003; Yazzie-Mintz & McCormick, 2012). In their review of emotional engagement, Sinatra, Heddy and Lombardi (2015) discuss “task values” as “beliefs about the return benefit that individuals perceive for engaging in specific school-related tasks” (p. 2). Again, we see here a significant overlap with the concept of investment. Another related concept is expectancy-value theory (Eccles, 2005; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000), or the idea that “motivation to engage with a certain task is based on expectancy for success, interest, attainment value, utility value, and relative cost” (Sinatra, Heddy & Lombardi, 2015, p. 3). Many of these concepts have also made their way into discussions surrounding motivation, both in the broader educational psychology literature and more specifically in SLA investigations.

Cognitive engagement is the active investment of mental energy in the learning process and is exemplified by questioning, persistence and mastery of curricular material (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2003; Yazzie-Mintz and McCormick, 2012). This focus on mastery of course material is also evident in the work of Bundick, Quaglia, Corso and Haywood (2014). Often included in discussions of cognitive engagement is the concept of self-regulation (Christenson, Reschly, Appleton, Berman-Young, Spanjers & Varro, 2008; Dörnyei, 2003), or the processes used by individuals to “activate and sustain their behaviors, cognitions and affects” (Zimmerman, 2000) toward specific goals. Self-regulation is sometimes viewed as a component or dimension of cognitive engagement (Fredricks, Blumenfeld & Paris, 2004), while others recognize it as an overlapping concept or construction (Shernoff, 2013). As I have opted to use self-regulation in my operationalization of cognitive engagement, the second conceptualization seems a better fit.

Cognitive engagement is viewed by Bundick, Quaglia, Corso and Haywood (2014) as involving not only self-regulation, but a psychological investment in learning. This concept of investment is also mentioned in Newmann, Wehlage and Lamborn (1992) and Marks (2000) with regards to school settings, and was developed further specifically for SLA contexts by Norton (2000). As I embarked on my study, I envisioned analyzing participant data through the lens of investment, especially how invested learners in my study were in their English classes. Other indicators of cognitive engagement include a desire for challenge and the use of metacognitive strategies such as planning, monitoring and evaluating one's efforts (Bundick, Quaglia, Corso & Haywood, 2014).

While the above three dimensions have come to dominate discussions of engagement, Reeve (2012) proposes adding agentic engagement (i.e., the extent to which a learner tries to enrich a learning experience rather than passively receiving it as is). Conceptually, this type of engagement is a process where learners, "proactively try to create, enhance, and personalize the conditions and circumstances under which they learn" (p. 161). As mentioned above, I have chosen to focus on the core dimensions of behavioral, cognitive and emotional engagement. However, I recognize that inclusion of other perspectives (dimensions) might provide a more complete framework for judging how actively involved a learner is in a learning activity. My conceptual framework when embarking on my study is presented below (section 3.6) and I will come back to the expanded list of dimensions in later discussions.

3.3.3 Levels (Grain Size) of Engagement

Sinatra, Heddy & Lombardi (2015) discuss the importance of clarifying "grain size" in studies of learner engagement, in other words the level at which engagement is conceptualized:

ranging from the microlevel (engagement in the moment, task or learning activity) to the macrolevel (engagement in the class, course, school or community). The advice offered by Sinatra, Heddy and Lombardi (2015) regarding complementing the dimensional view of engagement with considerations of grain size seemed particularly useful:

> *. . . engagement will be operationalized more effectively if researchers state the dimension of engagement they are exploring, explicitly acknowledge that overlap likely exists with other dimensions, and state the grain size of engagement they are measuring. (p. 8)*

The authors stress that different focuses require different measurements. I propose going one step further by deliniating classroom engagment from overall course and school engagement. A visual representation is offered in Figure 3.4.

Macro Level	**Meso Level**	**Micro Level**
School Engagement	Classroom Engagement	Task Engagement
Course Engagement		Event Engagement

Figure 3.4 Grain size continuum

Bryson and Hand (2007) used focus group research involving fifty undergraduates at university in the UK (eight groups) to compile a case study investigating student perceptions of ‘good’ or ‘poor’ learning experiences. Their focus on engagement was used to pull together concepts related to improvements of student learning. Findings from this study convinced the authors that student engagement is best conceived of as lying along a continuum (from engaged to disengaged), and that engagement exists at a number of levels (task, course, module, university). The Bryson and Hand (2007) study provided a good reference point for my investigation in that they were focused on undergraduates, used a case study research design and were interested in perceptions of learning experiences. The concepts that they identified–namely engagement and disengagement as forming a continuum, and engagement at different levels–also influenced my decisions regarding an initial conceptual framework (section 3.6).

3.3.4 Determinants, Indicators, Facilitators and Outcomes of Engagement

One key source of confusion in studies of engagement has been a tendency to juxtapose or lump together indicators (signs), facilitators (promoters) and outcomes (academic results) of engagement. While all three dimensions are important for both researchers and classroom practitioners, maintaining the distinctions among the three is vital for clearer conceptualizations of the construct and better design of engagement studies (Skinner & Pitzer, 2012). For my study, I will concentrate on both indicators and facilitators of engagement while limiting my discussion of outcomes. My reasoning here is that numerous studies have shown the beneficial outcomes of learner engagement and academic engaged time (Gettinger & Walter, 2012; Philp & Duchesne, 2016). One example study was conducted in the U.S.A. by Carini, Kuh and Klein (2006), who analyzed responses to the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and measures of academic performance by 1,058 students at fourteen four-year colleges. The authors concluded that student engagement is linked positively to desirable learning outcomes such as grades and critical thinking. Intuitively, it is clear that students who are behaviorally, cognitively and emotionally engaged in their studies will do better in terms of learning outcomes. My research questions in this exploratory study are thus aimed at clarifying what teachers and other stakeholders can do to promote learner engagement and reduce the likelihood of disengagement (facilitators) and at the same time gaining a better understanding of the signs and signals of engagement or disengagement (indicators). If successful, results from this study will provide teachers with some clear guidelines for both identifying and promoting learner engagement in their university EFL classes in Japan.

One large scale study that highlighted the distinction between facilitators and indicators was conducted by Skinner, Furrer, Marchand & Kindermann (2008) based on self-report data from 805 school-aged children (10 - 13 years old). The authors used as indicators survey items that tapped into both behavioral engagement and behavioral dissaffection as well as emotional engagement and emotional dissafection. Facilitators of engagement were perceived control, autonomy orientation, sense of relatedness and teacher support. One focus of this study was to investigate what happens to both indicators and facilitators over time, and the authors found that there was a slight worsening in both over the course of the school year and between age groups (i.e. engagement decreased, disaffection increased and perceptions of control, relatedness and teacher support decreased).

Janosz (2012) weighs in with regards to how dimensions of engagement are viewed as either determinants or outcomes. Using the example of belongingness, he notes, ". . . the sense of belongingness is conceptualized by some as a determinant and by others as a manifestation (or even an outcome) of engagement" (p. 698). In the same vein, Coates (2006) saw the need to qualify some of the semantic connotations of the term engagement:

> *Depending on context, it can describe processes with different temporal, existential, directional and moral characteristics. Engagement can refer to something that happens in the past, present or future, and to something of either limited or ongoing duration . . . Depending on the entities involved, it can involve unidirectional, bidirectional or multidirectional connections. (p. 16)*

Moving forward, as this is an exploratory study of engagement in a specific context, I want to remain open to the different ways of looking at engagement but will need to be vigilant in specifying what perspective is under discussion in my analysis and interpretations.

Again, I will not be looking at the outcomes of engagement, but these views of engagement as a process or an outcome can be used in my analysis. Specifically, I am starting out with the understanding that the basic psychological needs provide a lens on facilitators of engagement (the context and self parts of Skinner & Pitzer's model), while the indicators of engagement will be viewed through my operationalization of each dimension of engagement. I will come back to how I operationalize these dimensions after reviewing how learner engagement has been measured.

3.3.5 Measuring Learner Engagement

A number of tools and methods for assessing or measuring learner engagement have been adopted or developed (see, for example, Chapman, 2003; Fredricks & McColskey, 2012). The strengths and weaknesses of the main methods (self-report measures, experience sampling techniques, teacher ratings, interviews and observations) were reviewed by Fredricks and McColskey (2012). For example, one advantage to self-report instruments mentioned in Fredricks and McColskey (2012) is that they provide insight into students' subjective perceptions that cannot be accessed via measures of behavioral engagement such as attendance or homework completion rates. Citing Appleton, Christenson, Kim and Reschly (2006), the authors point out the methods such as observations and teaching rating scales would be highly inferential when looking at emotional or cognitive engagement. And although they are easy to administer and quite often the most practical means of measuring engagement, self-report instruments include shortcomings in terms of accurate self-representation and a tendency toward broadly-worded items (Fredricks & McColskey, 2012).

Experience Sampling is described by Fredricks and McColskey (2012) as growing out of research by Csikszentmihalyi (1990) and his theory of "flow" states. In brief, this involves students being signaled several times during the day via pager or electronic device and then completing a short questionnaire regarding their in-the-moment psychological states (Egbert, 2003; Shernoff, Csikszentmihalyi, Schneider, & Shernoff, 2003). Although this method suffers some of the same shortcomings as other self-report methods, it has the advantage of capturing impressions or perceptions as they occur and not upon reflection (Fredricks & McColskey, 2012).

Teacher checklists or ratings scales of student engagement were mentioned by Fredricks and McColskey (2012) as especially useful for younger children for whom self report instruments would be impractical. Hopkins (2008) sees the reliance on rating scales and checklists as stemming from the concern (mainly in North America) for more *scientific* approaches to teaching and evaluation, while Chapman (2003) and Parsons and Taylor (2011) stress these types of instruments as helping to triangulate self-report data.

The major disadvantages of observations are that they are labor intensive, and they usually involve only a small number of students and contexts. This raises concerns about the generalizability to other settings. Finally, the quality of descriptive observations depends heavily on the skills of the observer and on his or her ability to capture and make sense of what was observed (Turner & Meyer, 2000).

One self-report survey instrument that has been developed and used for large-scale studies in the U.S. is the High School Survey of Student Engagement (HSSSE). In the words of Yazzie-Mintz and McCormick (2012):

> *There are 35 major items on the survey; including sub-questions, there are over 100 items to which students respond. Survey questions cover a wide range of aspects of engagement, including how students spend their time, the importance they place on particular activities, the rigor and challenge of classes, reasons for going to school, tendency toward boredom in school, potential for dropping out, and types of teaching they find engaging. The last question on the survey is*

an open-response question, to which students can provide longer-form thoughts on their school experience. (p. 750)

Built on the foundation of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) for postsecondary students, the HSSSE survey originally measured similar constructs of engagement (Kuh, 2003). More recently, HSSSE has been a research and professional development project directed by the Center for Evaluation and Education Policy (CEEP) at Indiana University in Bloomington. From 2006 through 2010, more than 350,000 students in over 40 states took the survey.

Although student self-report instruments have dominated the landscape of learner engagement studies, Wimpenny and Savin-Baden (2013) note recent calls for a shift away from purely quantitative to qualitative or mixed-methods investigations. DeWaelsche (2015) used a combination of student surveys and focus group discussions with 42 university EFL students in Korea to explore student participation in student-centered, critical thinking activities in their English classes. They conclude that Korean students can overcome sociocultural impediments (e.g., a reluctance to speak up in class or challenge each other) and engage in conversations and critical dialog with their peers if they have sufficient target-language skills. Target-language ability as it relates to learner engagement is not a central focus of my study but these findings suggest that I include it as a contributing factor in my conceptual model of learner engagement.

One purely qualitative study of disengagement (alienation) is reported in Case (2007). Using semi-structured interviews with third-year chemical engineering students in South Africa, Case (2007) identified six possible relationships for university students: (1) to one's studies, (2) to the broader university life, (3) to home, (4) to career, (5) to one's classmates, and (6) to the teacher. Their study found that most students identified with a small group of students and that racially homogeneous groups of two to five members was the predominant pattern of school affinities, although students in this study expressed receptive attitudes to forming relationships with different racial groups. Case (2007) defines alienation as “the absence of a relationship that students might desire or expect to experience” (p. 119), and found that negative classroom experiences (drudgery, discipline, denial, lack of passion, lack of enjoyment) can lead to complete disengagement. These findings are key to my study in that I am also looking at how well the basic psychological need of relatedness is being met in university EFL classes in Japan.

Stepping back from the research, we can see the predominance of studies that develop and/or test one or more self-report instruments, with results subjected to some type of inferential statistical analysis (e.g. structural equation modeling or factor analysis). Results from such studies have helped broaden and deepen our understanding of issues surrounding engagement as well as provided us with an expanding list of theoretical models. As with broader motivation research, however, in SLA we are still in need of more context-specific, qualitative studies of how engagement is manifested for learners, both individually and as a group. This, again, is one of the unique contributions that I hope to make through this experiential look at engagement for three groups of learners in my teaching context.

One other consideration in designing my study–in addition to finding measures that would help me answer the research questions–was to identify where on the grain size continuum (mentioned above) I would focus, and the strenghts and weaknesses of my chosen measures for that conceptualization of engagement. In brief, I have chosen to look specifically at classroom engagement (meso level), but understand there are links to both school engagement (macro) and task engagement (micro). These issues are discussed further in the next chapter (Research Design, section 4.3).

3.3.6 Engagement Research in L2 Learning Contexts

As mentioned earlier, SLA research has been dominated by the L2 motivation construct. Only recently do we see more direct references to engagement in SLA contexts. It should also be noted that there have been a range of conceptualizations and approaches to investigating learner engagement (Svalberg, 2009). Specifically related to corrective feedback, Ellis (2010) views learner engagement in terms of "how learners respond to the feedback they receive" (p. 342). In line with the core dimensions of engagement mentioned above, Ellis (2010) viewed cognitive, behavioral and affective perspectives as applicable to the study of both oral and written corrective feedback.

Philp and Duchesne (2016) see engagement as consisting of behavioral, cognitive and social dimensions, with emotion or affect related to motivation. They concur with Pekrun and Linnenbrink-Garcia (2012) that emotions are "*intrinsic to* rather than *a facet of* engagement" (p. 52 - italics from original), and influence the other dimensions of engagement in either activating or deactivating ways. Using this same framework, Lambert, Philp and Nakamura (2016) had thirty-two Japanese learners complete parallel versions of narrative tasks–one teacher generated and one learner generated–and then measured learner engagement in L2 use in terms of behavioral, cognitive, and social components. Results of their study indicated that tasks operating on learner-generated as opposed to teacher-generated content had positive effects on all aspects of engagement in L2 use during task performance. They further concluded that learners were also more affectively engaged in the performance of the tasks in the learner-generated content condition than they were in those in the teacher-generated content condition.

In her review of how learner engagement has been conceived of and investigated, Svalberg (2017) found "considerable differences" in how the term is construed. The author was interested in how her concept of Engagement with Language (EWL)–discussed in

Svalberg (2009)–relates to other views on engagement. She concluded that EWL was part of task engagement, which was in turn part of contextual engagement (described as school engagement by Skinner, Kinderman & Furrer, 2009), and that both affective and social factors impact a learner's willingness to engage. In relation to grain size (discussed above), she was interested in the micro level.

Philp and Duchesne (2016) analyzed interactions among L2 learners involved in a variety of classroom language learning tasks in an attempt to more explicitly define what is meant by engagement in these contexts. They conclude that similarly to work in educational psychology, engagement in these contexts is a multidimensional construct, with behavioral, cognitive, social and emotional dimensions operating interdependently. Questions they proposed for future research were:

- *What are the processes by which engagement and language learning are linked?*
- *How do these processes vary in different contexts?*
- *How are the dimensions of cognitive, social, emotional, and behavioral engagement evident in various learning situations? How do the dimensions interact to influence learning? (p. 68)*

This limited review of studies highlights first the need to clarify what is meant when talking about learner engagement in my context and other SLA settings. Second, there is substantial room for more detailed analysis of engagement as it is manifested in specific language learning episodes (micro) as well as a wider analysis of how engagement is influenced by external factors such as workload, family or peers (macro). My approach will be to start at the meso level, focusing on influences of the classroom learning milieu.

3.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS FOR EXPLORING LEARNER ENGAGEMENT

Although there are now dozens (if not more) theories used to conceptualize and explore learner engagement, I will limit myself to four theoretical perspectives that I have identified as particularly potent for my investigation: self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Noels, Pelletier, Clément & Vallerand, 2003), learner identity (Deakin Crick & Goldspink, 2014; Norton, 2000), investment (Fredericks, Blumenfeld & Paris, 2004; McKay & Wong, 1996) and flow theory (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Egbert, 2003; Shernoff, Csikszentmihalyi, Schneider & Shernoff, 2003). My decision to consider these theoretical perspectives in my study was that they are all firmly established in both educational research and SLA studies. At the same time, these frameworks complement each other and hold out great promise for helping me answer my research questions.

3.4.1 Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

One of the more promising frameworks for theorizing and investigating Learner Engagement is Self-Determination Theory (SDT) as described by Ryan and Deci (2000). In their extensive review of literature related to self-determination theory (SDT), Deci & Ryan (2000) highlight competence, autonomy and relatedness as innate and necessary psychological nutriments for healthy development and effective functioning. They cite empirical evidence that social contexts supportive of these basic psychological needs (a) maintain or enhance intrinsic motivation, (b) facilitate the internalization and integration of extrinsic motivation, and (c) promote or strengthen aspirations. Proponents of this lens on engagement are Appleton, Christenson and Furlong (2008) and Reeve (2012). Appleton, Christenson and Furlong (2008) view SDT as providing “an important and comprehensive theoretical framework that helps clarify the functioning of the student engagement construct” (p. 378).

Reeve (2012) believes that each learner's classroom engagement, "is invariably a joint product of his or her motivation and classroom supports versus thwarts," (p. 152) and describes three implications of the view that classroom motivation and engagement are inextricably bound to the teacher and context:

- *To flourish, student motivation and engagement need supportive conditions (especially supportive student-teacher relationships).*
- *The role of the teacher is not to create student motivation or engagement, but to support the motivation and engagement that are already there in a way that promotes high-quality motivation and engagement.*
- *The relationship between social context, motivation, engagement, and student outcomes is not strictly linear in that these relations need also be viewed as reciprocal. (p. 152)*

This "reciprocal relation" between student motivation and learning environment is described by Reeve (2012) through the lens of a student-teacher dialectical framework within SDT and supports the inclusion of agentic engagement in the broader conceptual framework of learner engagement:

> *To the extent that students are able to express themselves, pursue their interests and values, and acquire constructive new sources of motivation, the dialectical outcome of student-teacher interactions will be synthesis, resulting in greater student autonomy, engagement, and well-being. (p. 157)*

Ryan and Deci (2000) outline how their theories of human motivation have evolved from an emphasis on distinctions between intrinsic and extrinsic types of motivation toward deeper understandings of the social-contextual conditions that, "facilitate versus forestall the natural processes of self-motivation and healthy psychological development" (p. 68). Two points seem to have particular relevance to my study of learner engagement. One is the central role played by the three basic psychological needs (mentioned above), namely competence, autonomy and relatedness. Another is the recognition that intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are part of a continuum which includes several different types of motivation, and that individuals can experience specific endeavors at different points along this continuum based on self-regulated behaviors such as internalization and integration (Table. 3.1). This second point is key if we recognize that instructed English will likely not be everyone's cup of tea, especially in this context where past EFL classroom experiences might not have been so successful or rewarding.

Table 3.1 Internalization Continuum of Extrinsic Regulation (Deci & Ryan, 2000)

External Regulation	Least self determined form of extrinsic motivation - External sources such as rewards or threats of punishment
Introjected Regulation	Externally imposed rules that the individual accepts as norms that should be followed
Identified Regulation	Engaging in an activity that an individual highly values and/or identifies with
Integrated Regulation	Most developmentally advanced form of extrinsic motivation - Involving choiceful behavior that is fully assimilated with an individual's values, needs and identity

Reeve (2012) describes the five minitheories that inform Self-Determination Theory (SDT): basic needs theory, organismic integration theory, goal contents theory, cognitive evaluation theory, and causality orientations theory (Fig. 3.5). These mini-theories inform the current study by providing a comprehensive framework for understanding different motivational orientations, that in turn might help explain how these different motivational orientations are translated into learner behaviors or engagement. According to Reeve (2012), self-determination theory has moved beyond contrasting intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to a focus on the distinction between autonomous and controlled motivation.

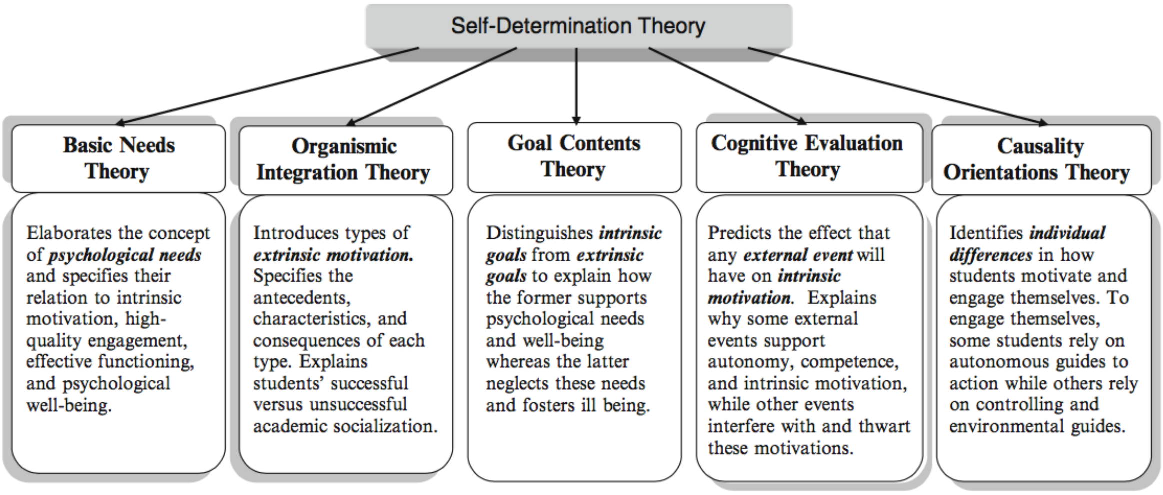


Figure 3.5 Minitheories comprising self-determination theory (Reeve, 2012)

Assor (2012) notes that the phenomenological quality of motivation is higher when people "perceive their intentions as emanating from their authentic self" (p. 422) and attributes this to the autonomous nature of the intentions. This description coincides nicely with learner engagement findings mentioned earlier from the Lambert, Philp and Nakamura (2016) investigation in Japan of L2 learning tasks based on learner-generated content as opposed to teacher-generated content.

3.4.1.1 Competence. Competence, or at least perceived competence, is recognized as having a powerful influence on engagement (Skinner, Furrer, Marchand & Kindermann, 2008), and Deci and Ryan (2000) cite evidence that perceived competence predicts well-being as well as positive school attitudes and performance.

Christenson, Reschly, Appleton, Berman-Young, Spanjers and Varro (2008) assert that effective schools and teachers promote students' "understanding of what it takes to learn and confidence in their capacity to succeed in school" and that they do this by "providing challenging instruction and support for meeting high standards, and by conveying high expectations for their students' success" (p. 1101).

In their discussion of mindsets, Brooks, Brooks and Goldstein (2012) share their conviction that lessening a student's fear of failure is key to reinforcing feelings of competence. The authors note that many students equate their own mistakes with humiliation and thus avoid overly challenging tasks.

Goto Butler (2015) cites studies in Japan (Kunimoto, 2006; Nishida & Yashima, 2009) that found perceived classroom atmosphere influenced Japanese children's perceived competence, which in turn "led to their willingness to communicate" (p. 318). Discussions of motivation and engagement in EFL contexts like Japan have centered on this willingness to communicate (WTC) model, and I will return to this when outlining my conceptual framework (3.6).

3.4.1.2 Autonomy. One of the key influences on motivation and thus engagement appears to be locus of control (autonomy), and studies on the importance of agency and autonomy-supportive teaching styles have increased (Lawson & Lawson, 2013; Reeve, 2012). In studies of competitive swimmers, researchers found that persistent athletes reported that coaches were more autonomy supportive than their less persistent peers (Pelletier, Fortier, Vallerand & Brière, 2001). These findings seem to mirror what happens in my own university EFL classes, although I have not been able to corroborate this with any existing SLA literature.

In their study of high school teachers who were trained in autonomy supportive behavior, Reeve, Jang, Carrell, Jeon and Barch (2004) found that highly engaged students exhibited higher levels of focused attention, effort and persistence. The authors noted that this engagement was "highly associated with teachers' autonomy support" and that these teachers were better able to motivate their learners.

3.4.1.3 Relatedness. Hawk, Cowley, Hill & Sutherland (2002) bring together findings from studies of students with lower socioeconomic status in New Zealand. These studies highlight the importance of teacher-learner relationships in boosting motivation to learn and increasing the likelihood of effective learning. This seems to apply to a range of ages (from primary to tertiary). Context (or environment) is also noted at being a great influence on engagement. For example, several authors have commented on the reciprocal and bidirectional nature of teacher-student interactions (Bundick, Quaglia, Corso, & Haywood, 2014; Reeve & Tseng, 2011; Skinner & Belmont, 1993). As mentioned in Chapter One (Introduction), relatedness is one psychological need that seems to be well met at Japanese secondary schools, and this tendency might provide a key to investigating how engagement is experienced in my context.

3.4.1.4 SDT in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) Studies. Several SLA theorists have adopted an SDT framework for investigating L2 motivation. This comes as no surprise since SDT has it's roots in the study of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Dörnyei (2009) notes the graded internalization of external motives as an area of conceptual overlap with possible selves theories that informed his development of the L2 Motivational Self System.

3.4.2 Identity and Investment

Identity is another construct that is hard to pin down, and there is some conceptual overlap with self-theories described above. Ryan (2008) described it as "an incredibly broad and nebulous concept" (p. 82). In school contexts, Deakin Crick and Goldspink (2014) synthesized findings from empirical studies and the broader literature on engagement to confirm the importance of learning identity and learner dispositions, concluding that pedagogical attention in these two areas can boost engagement and attainment. Bonny Norton (2000) takes both a critical and post-structuralist view of second-language learning, focusing on how identity and investment interact with social circumstances surrounding access to and willingness to communicate and thus practice the target language. Drawing on a different set of theoretical perspectives to those commonly associated with traditional SLA research, Norton (2000) was interested in what opportunities are available to second language learners to interact with target language speakers. Norton (2000) recognized the key function that practice in the target language plays in learning a second language, and exhorted that "both SLA theorists and second language teachers need to understand how opportunities to practice speaking are socially structured in both formal and in informal sites of language learning" (p. 16). Norton (2000) views identity as ways in which we make sense of our relationship to the world around us, how this relationship is formed and changes (both over time and in different contexts), and what possibilities we perceive for the future.

Another contribution by Norton (Norton, 2000; Norton Pierce, 1993) was to examine L2 behavior through the lens of power relationships between speakers. She favored the term "investment" and drew on ideas of social and cultural capital described by Bourdieu and colleagues (Bourdieu & Coleman, 1991; Bourdieu & Nice, 1977).

The construct of investment is also evident in the general education literature. Sinatra, Heddy & Lombardi (2015) state:

> *A student becomes psychologically invested when she or he expends cognitive effort in order to understand, goes beyond the requirement of the activity, uses flexible problem solving, and chooses challenging tasks. (p. 3)*

This "going beyond" also seems conceptually compatible with agentic engagement Reeve (2012) described earlier. For my study, I have identified both identity and investment as useful theoretical lenses through which to analyze both interview and observation data. I discuss this below in section 3.6 when outlining my conceptual framework.

Learning English is now recognized as requiring much more than just "acquiring linguistic aspects of the language" and can be described as a "complex social practice involving a transformation of learners' multiple identities" (Zacharias, 2010). Zacharias (2010) takes special issue with the tendency in English language pedagogy to lump English learners into "a single linguistic basket labeled non-native speakers" despite the wide array of social and cultural identities that each learner has. She goes on to identify the need for "practical classroom techniques to accommodate learners' multiple identities" (p. 26) and raising awareness among teachers and students regarding the various issues surrounding language learners' identities. While this concern is likely more acute in English as a Second Language (ESL) contexts where learners often come from a wider range of ethnic, cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds, this transformation of learners' multiple identities deserves attention in EFL settings as well. Although not central to my study, I address this issue through inclusion of learner identities in my conceptual framework (section 3.6).

3.4.3 Flow Theory

Csikzentmihályi's (1990) concept of flow (the subjective state of complete involvement, whereby individuals are so involved in an activity that they lose awareness of time and space) is also described by Fredricks, Blumenfeld and Paris (2004) as providing conceptualization of engagement that represents high emotional involvement or investment. Not surprisingly, we find attempts to assess engagement using criteria from Flow Theory in school settings (Shernoff, Csikszentmihalyi, Schneider & Shernoff, 2003; Harmer & Cates, 2007) as well as

ESL/EFL contexts (Egbert, 2003). In the Shernoff, Csikszentmihalyi, Schneider and Shernoff (2003) longitudinal study of 526 high school students in the U.S. using an experience sampling method (described earlier), participants reported experiencing increased engagement when (1) tasks were challenging but their skills were in balance with those challenges, (2) they percieved lessons as relevant, and (3) they felt they had control over the learning environment. The study also found that participants reported higher levels of engagement when working activily–either individually or in groups–when compared to listening to lectures, watching videos and other passive forms of learning.

Joy Egbert (2003) was interested in establishing flow as a research stream in the field of SLA and to investigate whether or not flow exists in foreign language classrooms. In her mixed methods (perceptions questionnaire, observations and interviews) study of 13 U.S. high school students (ranging in age from 14 - 18) in a fourth-semester Spanish course, she found that participants themselves and observers both reported flow experiences during language learning tasks that scored high on the four dimensions of Challenge and Skill, Attention, Interest, and Control. Egbert (2003) also concluded that the findings from her study supported the notion that teachers can "theoretically facilitate the flow experience for students by developing tasks that might lead to flow" (p. 513).

I include discussion of flow theory first because of its focus on experiences (a key theme of my research) and secondly for its utility in analyzing qualitatively learners' experiences, especially as related to the challenge-skills balance. Csíkszentmihályi, psychologist at the University of Chicago, was interested in what makes people happy and developed the experience sampling research protocol to investigate when people are most engaged and experience high levels of satisfaction and enjoyment. Based on his findings, he theorized that people experienced flow when presented with tasks that were challenging–in relation to the skills they possessed–but not overly so (Fig. 3.6). Csikszentmihalyi (1990) described a flow channel (Fig. 3.6) where the challenges of a particular task are neither beyond or below the participant's current skill level (e.g., high challenges and low skills result in anxiety while low challenges and high skills result in boredom).

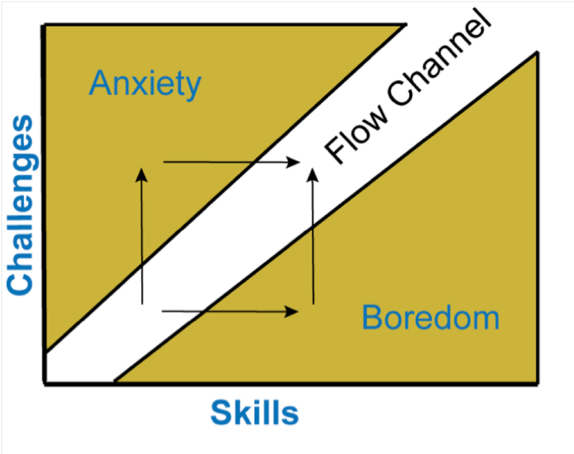


Figure 3.6 Flow channel (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990)

Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) description of conditions that are present during flow have also informed the conceptual framework of engagement that I am using for my study. Specifically, the following variables will be used in my observation and interview protocol:

- a perceived balance of skills and challenge,
- opportunities for intense concentration,
- clear task goals,
- feedback that one is succeeding at the task, and
- a sense of control.

Another aspect of this research into flow that informed my conceptual framework was the model of flow and learning (Fig. 3.7) proposed by Egbert (2003).

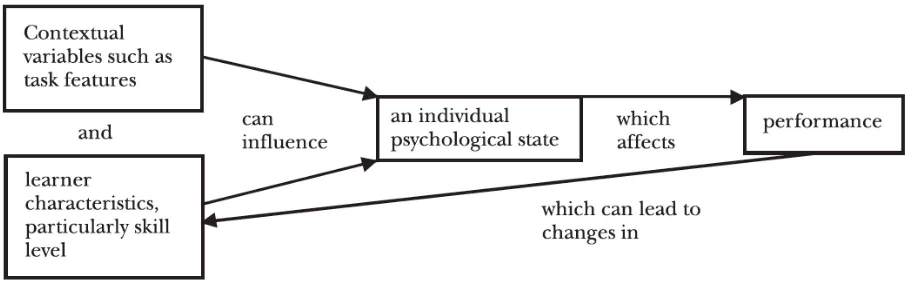


Figure 3.7 Simplified model of flow and learning (Egbert, 2003)

Significantly, we see some overlap with Skinner & Pitzer's (2012) model of motivational development (Fig. 3.1), which views both context and self as influencing the psychological state (engagement). Two shortcomings of this more general model however need to be addressed. First, we need to account for the reciprocal influence that contextual features and learner characterstics have on each other. Second, this model suggests that skill level outweighs other learner characteristics in importance. While recognizing the key role played by proficiency–or lack thereof–it is remiss to disregard or deemphasize other influential learner characteristics such as values, attitudes, beliefs, prejudices and mindsets.

Egbert (2003) goes on to propose a context-specific model of the relationship between flow and language acquisition (Fig. 3.8). This model helps elucidate contextual and self features in SLA contexts and how optimum levels of engagement (flow) facilitate target language learning. The inclusion of a path back from language acquisition to language skills (self) is an important addition, but we again see a lack of regard for other learner characteristics and we can also theorize that this improved performance will influence the learning context as well. Specifically, increased language proficiency will influence learner perceptions of task difficulty, interest and control.

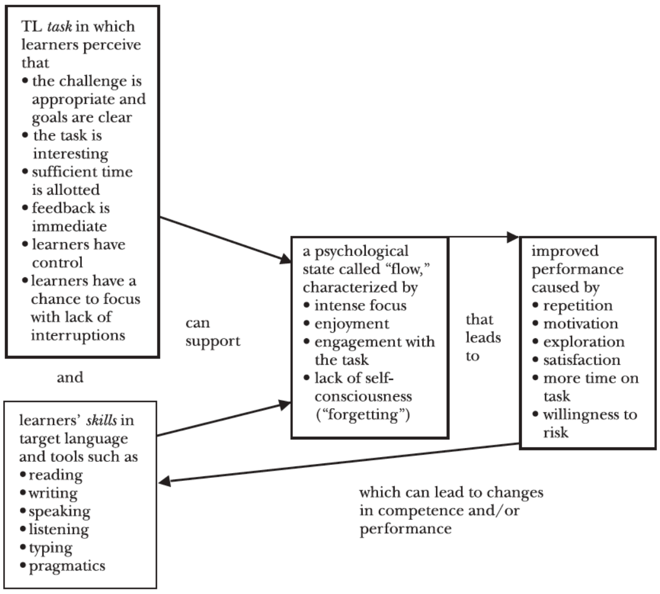


Figure 3.8 Model of relationship between flow and language acquisition (Egbert, 2003)

3.5 EXPERIENCE-FOCUSED FRAMEWORKS

I will now introduce two theoretical models that are a bit peripheral to my study but that I feel merit inclusion. Namely, I would like to look at learner engagement based on ideas from the Experience Economy (Pine & Gilmore, 1999) and Significant Learning Experiences (Fink, 2003). One of these concepts comes from the business literature, while the other has its roots in university curriculum development. The thread that ties the two concepts together is that of customer (i.e. student) experiences. Maroco, Maroco, Campos & Fredricks (2016) also recognize that engagement is a key issue in business contexts. In their review of existing studies, they note that "work engagement" is operationalized by the "three correlated constructs of vigour, dedication and absorption" (p. 2). The authors cite definitions of vigour, dedication and absorption from Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter and Taris (2008) and Hirschi (2012):

> *Vigour - is characterized by high levels of physical energy, ability to deal with the job's challenges, and a willingness to invest the required effort to overcome difficulties.*

Dedication - is characterized by a strong involvement in one's work with a sense of personal realization and pride.
Absorption - is defined as concentration and happiness in performing the job related tasks. (p. 2)

We can see in these definitions some clear overlap with the behavioral, emotional and cognitive dimensions of engagement reported in educational and SLA literature.

3.5.1 The Experience Economy

I first heard the term experience economy while I was pursuing graduate studies at Indiana University. During one course on instructional design taught by adjunct faculty member Peter Honebien, we were introduced to the concept as a framework for designing training material. *The Experience Economy: Work is Theatre and Every Business a Stage* (Pine & Gilmore, 1999) is a business book published by Harvard Business School Press, but the ideas are equally relevant to educators in that it discusses the scripting and staging of compelling experiences, which if I am not mistaken is what we are trying to do as educators. Most applicable to my current study is their concept of realms of experience (Fig. 3.9).

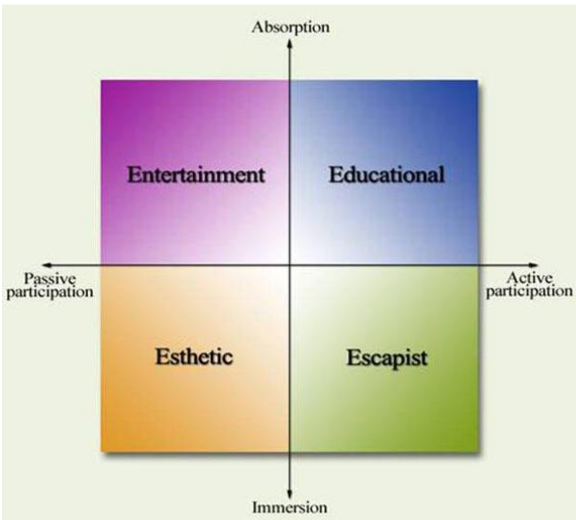


Figure 3.9 Realms of experience (Pine & Gilmore, 1999)

The vertical axis is a continuum between absorption at the top and immersion at the bottom. Does the customer take in or absorb the experience, or do they enter or immerse themselves in the experience? The horizontal continuum ranges from passive participation on the left to active participation on the right. With these two continua, experiences can be placed in a separate realm. Passive participation and absorption describe experiences that are mainly entertaining in nature. Experiences that involve active participation and absorption are more toward the educational. Experiences that customers immerse themselves in but remain passive are in the esthetic realm, while active participation and immersion fall into the category of escapist. The authors highlight that the most powerful, rich experiences are those that cross, or reach, into all four realms. In my study of learner engagement in university EFL contexts in Japan, this may provide one more angle from which to view learner experiences.

3.5.2 Significant Learning Experiences

One further experience-related concept that has influenced my work in curriculum and course development comes from the work of instructional consultant L. Dee Fink. Fink (2003) starts from the fundamental question of how we can create courses that provide significant learning experiences for our learners. His book offers several key ideas and suggestions for instructional design, including his concepts of backward design, forward assessment and the twelve steps of integrated course design. The reason, however, that I have decided to include this work as part of this literature review is Fink's (2003) attempt at updating and broadening Benjamin Bloom's (Bloom, Engelhart, Furst, Hill & Krathwohl, 1956) taxonomy of learning to accommodate a broader range of learning (e.g. learning how to learn, leadership and interpersonal skills, ethics, communication skills, character, tolerance, and the ability to adapt to change). In constructing this new taxonomy (Fig. 3.10), Fink (2003) defines learning in terms of change (i.e. for learning to occur, there has to be some kind of change in the learner).

Fink stresses that each kind of learning is related to the other kinds of learning, and that when a teacher finds a way to help students achieve one kind of learning, this can enhance student achievement in other kinds of learning.

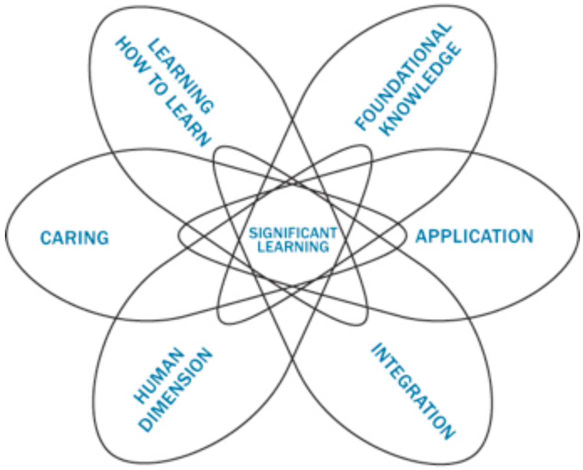


Figure 3.10 Significant learning experiences (Fink, 2003)

Fink (2003) also stresses that the intersection of all of these kinds of learning is the sweet spot, what he calls significant learning experiences. Again, these ideas seem applicable to my study of learner engagement and provide an analytical framework for viewing my data.

3.6 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE CURRENT STUDY

In this section, I attempt to draw together the salient points from the above research into a conceptual framework that will guide my investigation. As mentioned earlier, I was drawn to depictions of motivation and learner engagement in Skinner and Pitzer (2012) and Egbert (2003), especially the inclusion of both contextual features and self characteristics. In Skinner and Pitzer's (2012) theoretical model (Fig. 3.1), they include the basic psychological needs of competence, autonomy and relatedness from SDT, which has been a cornerstone of both engagement and L2 motivation research. I offer Figure 3.11 as a visual representation of my conceptual framework.

Similar to the model of motivation development from Skinner & Pitzer (2012) and the model of flow and learning from Egbert (2003), I have depicted motivation as an antecedent to engagement. Motivation is considered as a combination of contextual features and self characteristics, but with clear separation.

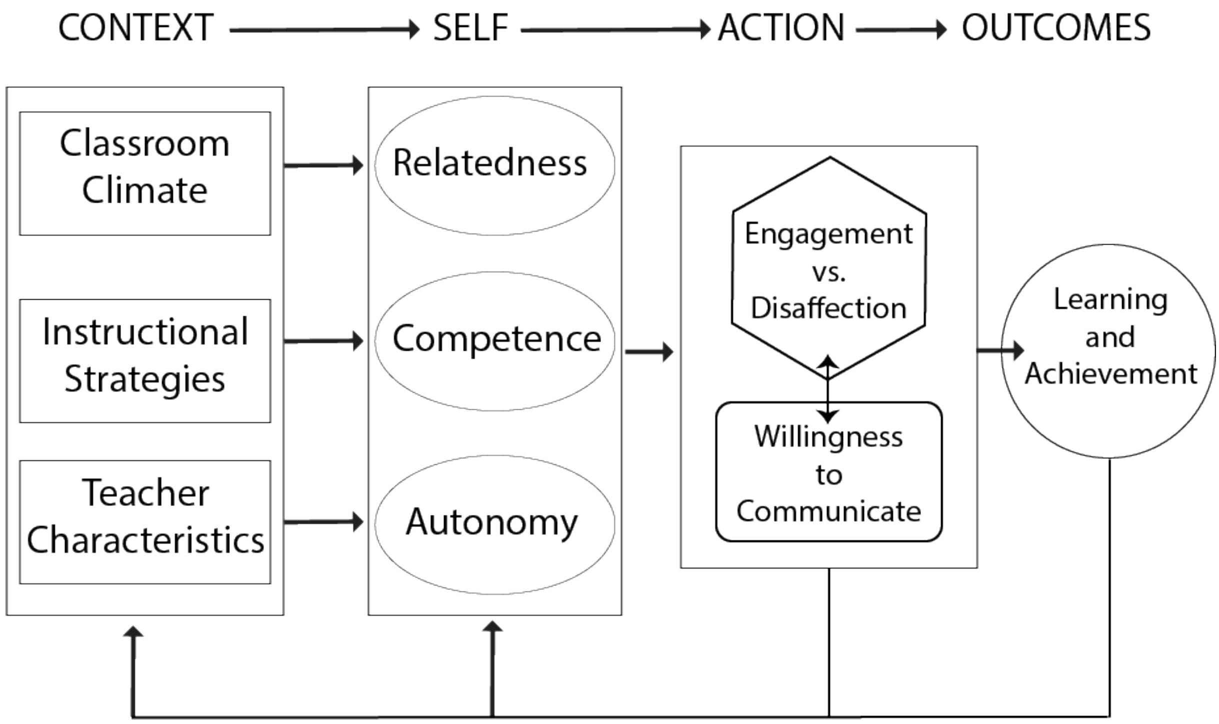


Figure 3.11 Initial conceptual framework for investigating classroom engagement

As I have chosen to focus on classroom (meso level) engagement, I have highlighted in the framework key contextual features identified in the literature and my own personal experience, namely classroom climate, instructional strategies and teacher characteristics. In this framework, these contextual features combine to influence engagement. Classroom engagement in this framework is depicted as the continuum of the engagement-disaffection continuum interacting with willingness to communicate. There are also paths back to context and self from classroom engagement (action) as well as learning and achievement (outcomes).

This depiction, however, is incomplete. As mentioned earlier, I am convinced that the concepts of identity, investment and flow can provide useful lenses through which to investigate how engagement is experienced in my teaching context. Thus, I have added these concepts to Figure 3.12.

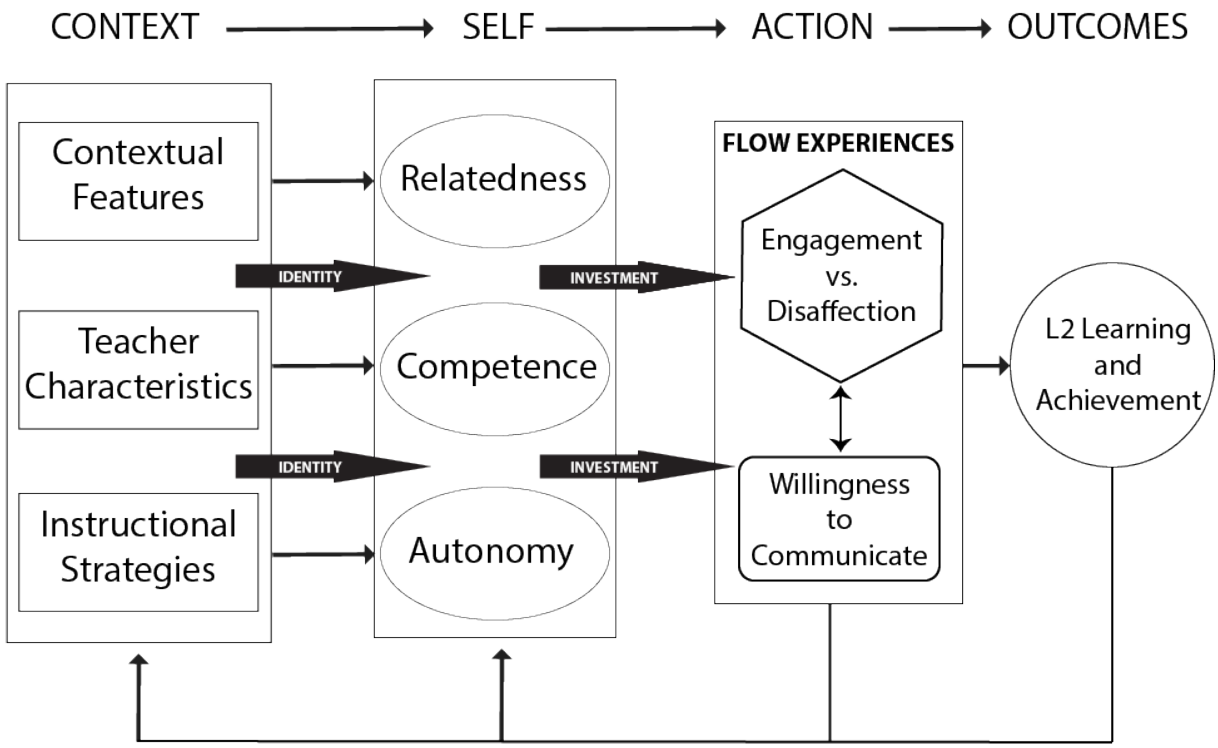


Figure 3.12 Fuller conceptual framework for investigating classroom engagement

In this framework, identity is viewed as being part of the self system and influencing learner perceptions of basic psychological need fulfillment, but also with the context as a contributing source or influence on this identity. Investment, on the other hand, is viewed as the interface between motivation (context & self) and engagement (action). Conceptually, this investment will strengthen as a person's peceived competence, autonomy and relatedness increase. Finally, I have included the concept of flow experiences in the action stage, and highlighted (bold lettering) it as the highest expressions of classroom engagement. The choice of “flow experiences” over “flow” was intended as a way of keeping the focus on experiences that learners have in the classroom.

3.6.1 Behavioral, Cognitive and Emotional Engagement Operationalized

Returning to the core dimensions of learner engagement that will be the focus of my investigation, I now try to operationalize these terms in a way that will help me evaluate to what degree learners in my study are engaged. I mentioned earlier that learner engagement, at least initially, will be operationalized in my study as the observable outward indicators that the learner is focused on and involved behaviorally, cognitively, emotionally and agentically in classroom language activities (Reeve, 2012). Table 3.2 outlines how each of the dimensions will be operationalized. Methods for collecting data related to these dimensions are outlined in the next chapter (section 4.4).

Table 3.2 Behavioral, Cognitive and Emotional Engagement Operationalized

Behavioral Engagement	Active participation in classroom activities, completing assignments, preparing for class, following instructions
Cognitive Engagement	Exerting mental effort to learn or use the target language as evident in facial expressions, body language and discourse (e.g. questioning, repeating)
Emotional Engagement	Expressions of enjoyment, caring, curiosity or other postive emotions in facial expressions, body language and discourse, going beyond minimum requirements

3.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter I have attempted to present some of the key studies that have informed my investigation and provided me with lenses through which to view the construct of learner engagement in my teaching context. While conceptualizations of learner engagement are still in a state of flux, there seems to be some consensus that a three-dimensional model (behavioral, emotional, cognitive) provides a solid foundation for studying and promoting engagement. At the same time, the addition of agentic engagement appears to have some potential for providing an even fuller picture of engagement. Also, we now recognize that engagement and motivation are distinct but related constructs, and that conceptual frameworks such as SDT, flow, identity and investment are just some of the lenses through which to view engagement.

Again, my review of existing literature has convinced me of the following:

(1) learner engagement is a well-established construct in school settings but not in SLA,

(2) learner engagement has been approached mainly from educational psychology and developmental psychology perspectives,

(3) learner engagement has been identified as a key intermediary between motivation and achievement,

(4) there is conceptual overlap and lack of consensus regarding the relationship between motivation and engagement,

(5) the construct of L2 motivation has dominated the field of SLA,

(6) SLA theory and practice could benefit from advances in learner engagement theory, and

(7) most research into learner engagement and L2 motivation has been dominated by cross-sectional quantitative studies but there are calls in both fields for more longitudinal, context-specific qualitative studies.

From this starting point, I plan to investigate how engagement is experienced in university EFL classes in Japan, especially in terms of how instructional strategies, teacher characteristics and contextual features influence levels of learner in engagement in the classroom. Through this study, I hope to contribute to SLA scholarship by:

- drawing together key concepts from motivation and engagement studies into a novel conceptual framework that can advance our understanding of the two constructs,
- adopting and adapting established qualitative methods and quantitative research instruments into a flexible and powerful research design, and
- offering a context-specific view of how engagement is manifested in EFL classrooms in Japan.

Returning to the journey metaphor, I am now mostly equipped to begin planning out my trip. In the next chapter, I lay out the philosophical underpinnings of my study together with plans for collecting and analyzing data to compile qualitative case studies for three university EFL classes in Japan.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH DESIGN

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this section, I lay out my plan for "making" and analyzing data, as well as adjustments made during the study. My use of the expression "make" rather than "gather" data was based on advice in Richards and Morse (2013) regarding approaches to qualitative data. This seemed like a reasonable perspective to take in that very little of the data that I was planning to use would be "out there" and ready to be harvested. My study was instead aimed at discovering individual beliefs, attitudes and understandings, and was thus undertaken within a pragmatic worldview (research paradigm) with healthy doses of social constructivist, interpretivist and transformative (critical) positioning. I have adopted wherever possible the terminology and descriptions provided by Creswell (2014), especially his perspectives on research approaches (plan or proposal to conduct research), philosophical worldviews (sometimes referred to as *paradigm*s or *epistemologies* and *ontologies*), research designs (i.e., *strategies of inquiry* or *methodologies*), and research methods (i.e., *data collection and analysis techniques*). Figure 4.1 provides a visual representation of these concepts.

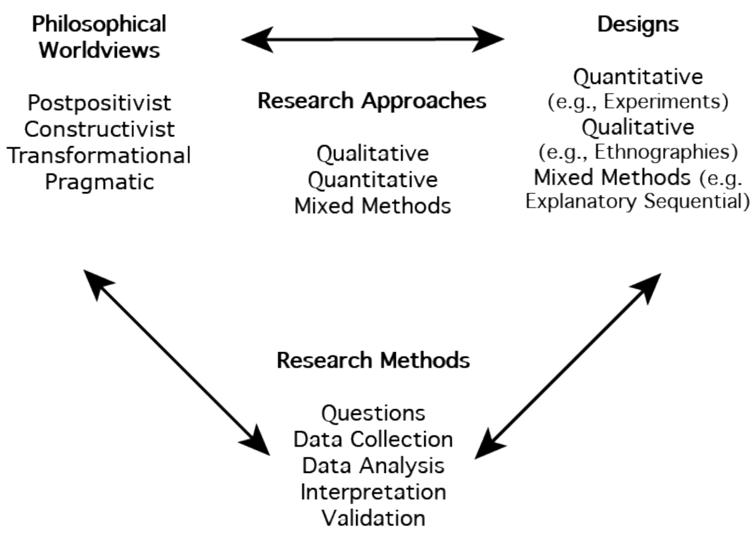


Figure 4.1 Interconnection of worldviews, designs and research methods (Creswell, 2014)

This chapter is laid out roughly according to this framework (Table 4.1), and I will first provide a brief overview of the pragmatic worldview–together with ontological and epistemological considerations–before introducing the research approach, design and methods. I then address the ethical considerations of the study as well as matters of reliability and validity. I conclude the chapter with my strategic approach to analysis.

4.2 PRAGMATIC WORLDVIEW

As mentioned above, my approach to the current study aligns most closely with a pragmatic worldview tempered by social constructivist and transformative (critical) perspectives. In the pragmatic paradigm, researchers are mostly concerned with gaining a comprehensive picture of the target phenomena (the 'what') and the controlling/contributing mechanisms (the 'how'). Mertens (2005) views pragmatism as a rejection of the belief that a single 'truth' can be gained through a single scientific method. The pragmatic worldview offers a philosophical framework for mixed-methods research, and accommodates both insider (emic) and outsider (etic) perspectives. Other proponents of a pragmatic approach to research methodology include Morgan (2007), who writes:

> *In particular, I find it helpful to think of Qualitative Research as research that emphasizes an inductive-subjective-contextual approach, whereas Quantitative Research emphasizes a deductive-objective-generalizing approach. Where we encounter problems is by treating these broad tendencies as absolute, defining characteristics for these two different approaches, and these problems become even worse when we deny the possibility of working back and forth between the two extremes. Fortunately, the pragmatic approach offers an effective alternative through its emphasis on the abductive-intersubjective-transferable aspects of our research. (p. 73)*

My understanding is that abduction, or "abductive reasoning" can be seen as inference toward the simplest, most likely or best explanation. This seems like a reasonable target for exploratory research such as the current study, and I will touch later (section 4.8) on both the intersubjective and transferable goals of my investigation.

4.2.1 Ontological Considerations

Ontology, or social ontology, is the underlying foundation upon which epistemological positions and methodological decisions are built in social science. Again, I was most interested in uncovering individual and collective beliefs, attitudes and understandings in my teaching context, university EFL programs in Japan. Collectively, these "subjective" truths will then become part of what Bryman (2008) described as: "social properties" or the "outcomes of the interactions between individuals, rather than phenomena 'out there' and separate from those involved in its construction" (p. 366).

Sometimes described as the *interpretivist* paradigm, constructivism can be interpreted as a reaction to positivism. The constructivist paradigm involves a relativist ontology and a transactional or subjectivist epistemology (Qualitative Research Guidelines Project, n.d.), which make this an attractive paradigm within which to conduct research in the social sciences. My attachment to the constructivist and social-constructivist paradigm stems from the recognition that our understanding of the world is both an individual and collective creation of the mind, which in turn is greatly influenced by our environment (the natural world) and our social interactions. Baxter (2006a, 2006b) draws on Bakhtin's dialogism theory in arguing for a conception of communication as dialogue: "Because all language use is riddled with multiple voices (to be understood more generally as discourses, ideologies, perspectives, or themes), meaning-making in general can be understood as the interplay of those voices" (p. 101). This interpretivist stance seems particularly relevant in the social sciences as it allows for multiple realities.

I acknowledge concerns regarding constructivist ontologies, mainly with regard to tendencies toward solipsism and relativism (see, for example, Phillips, 1995), and my own assumption is that there is an external world and we know this world through our senses (e.g. this rock exists, and I know this because I just tripped over it). It is difficult to conceptualize any scientific advancement without these assumptions and I agree with Phillips (1995), who posits that ". . . any defensible epistemology must recognize-and not just pay lip service to the fact that nature exerts considerable constraint over our knowledge-constructing activities, and allows us to detect (and eject) our errors about it" (p. 12). Recognizing the shortcomings of constructivism, I still believe that working in this paradigm (especially as part of a pragmatic worldview) offers an accommodating foundation when investigating people and groups where a relativist ontology makes more sense.

4.2.2 Epistemological Considerations

If indeed multiple realities exist, our job then as researchers in the social sciences is to gain a better (not perfect) understanding of mental constructs and social phenomena via naturalistic qualitative designs and methods such as case studies, participant observations, focus groups, interviews and hermeneutic endeavors that involve more interpretive and inductive reasoning. The assumptions that come along with this subjectivist epistemology are that we cannot extract ourselves the researchers from the equation. Understanding is best attained through an inter-subjective interpretation of social events or phenomenon. Working in this paradigm, I initially resisted starting with a theory and planned to work inductively and abductively towards one. My concern was that starting with a theory would influence choices regarding how and what to look at in the data. However, reading around the subject of engagement convinced me to adopt the established framework of self-determination theory as well as the commonly agreed on dimensions of behavioral, cognitive and emotional (affective) engagement as an initial lens through which to view or consider incoming data, but to remain open to other perspectives.

Challenging existing assumptions and biases is one of the central goals in transformative paradigms and investigations aimed at correcting or changing injustices. This paradigm is appealing to me in that I hope my research makes a difference in the lives of my participants and any future readers of my research. I hope through my work to make the world a better place. One of the main considerations in designing this study was to provide some level of reciprocity (Sikes, 2004), or making sure that participants benefit in some way from their involvement. I have strived to adjust the research in ways that help participant teachers with their professional development (PD) efforts and participant students in their various learning endeavors, including target language acquisition. At the bare minimum, I hope to give voice to the participants' aspirations and concerns.

4.3 RESEARCH APPROACH AND DESIGN

As mentioned in the introduction, the focus of this exploratory study was to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon of engagement in university EFL contexts in Japan. Specifically, I am interested in how "engagement" is experienced in this setting and how various contextual features interact with individual characteristics to either promote or hamper engagement at the classroom level.

A qualitative case study design has been adopted for this study as it accommodates in-depth analysis of classroom practice with attention paid to subtle processes by which individuals make decisions (Yin, 2014). At the same time, I believe the case study design can accommodate aspects of relevant designs such as ethnographic and phenomenological studies.

The cases involved three EFL instructors and their non-English major students at two private universities over the course of the Spring semester (April – July) in 2016. Referring back to Chapter Two (Thesis in Context, section 2.3.1), the rationale for focusing on these groups was that roughly seventy-seven percent of universities in Japan are private and the vast majority of university students in Japan are non-English majors (MEXT, 2017b).

In the next three sub-sections, I outline my understanding of case study research, ethnographic research and phenomenological research together with how these designs can jointly help me answer the above research questions and contribute to our understanding of engagement in the current context.

4.3.1 Case Study Research

Case study research has gained recognition as a viable qualitative research design, and despite the relative small slice it still accounts for in the overall research methodology pie, the frequency of case study shows a distinct upward trend as compared to survey research, experimental designs, and random assignment studies (Yin, 2009). Baxter and Jack (2008) describe qualitative case study methodology as providing: “tools for researchers to study complex phenomena within their contexts” (p. 544). The complexity of learner engagement as an educational construct as well as the importance of context in exploring engagement have been cited by several authors (Azevedo, 2015; Reschly & Christenson, 2012). Some of these complexities were already touched on in section 3.3.5 (Determinants, Indicators, Facilitators and Outcomes of Engagement) in Chapter Three, while calls for better contextual understanding of learner engagement are now common in broader educational literature (see, for example, Reschly, Christenson & Wylie, 2012) as well as SLA studies (see, for example, Ushioda, 2011).

Qualitative case study research is described by Stake (1995) as a: "palette of methods" (p. xii) that incorporates "naturalistic, holistic, ethnographic, phenomenological, and biographic research methods" (p. xi). This metaphor was intuitively appealing to me in designing my study as painting a fuller picture of learner engagement in my teaching context was one of my central aims. Hyett, Kenny, Dickson and Swift (2014) view interpretive or social constructivist approaches to case study research as supporting a "transactional method of inquiry, where the researcher has a personal interaction with the case" (p. 2). As Hyett, Kenny, Dickson and Swift (2014) see it "the case is developed in a relationship between the researcher and informants, and presented to engage the reader, inviting them to join in this interaction and in case discovery" (p. 2).

Case study research is also an established methodology in second language acquisition research. In L2 learning contexts, McKay and Wong (1996), Norton Pierce (1995), and Osterman (2014) have relied on case study research to investigate the complexities of EFL learning, specifically issues surrounding identity, investment and willingness to communicate.

4.3.2 Ethnographic Studies

Another early recognition was that an ethnographic approach could help me gain a holistic view of the participants, including behaviors, beliefs, attitudes, understandings, rituals, and experiences. In outlining qualitative research design choices, Creswell (2014) defines Ethnography as,

> *. . . a design of inquiry coming from anthropology and sociology in which the researcher studies the shared patterns of behaviors, language, and actions of an intact cultural group in a natural setting over a prolonged period of time. Data collection often involves observation and interviews. (p. 14)*

Angrosino (2007) describes ethnography as “the art and science of describing a human group – Its institutions, interpersonal behaviors, material productions and beliefs” (p. 14). The ethnographic researcher normally spends an extended amount of time in the field (fieldwork) as a participant observer, balancing the objective collection of data with subjective and reflexive insights (Angrosino, 2007). The importance of researcher reflexivity in qualitative studies in general and ethnographic studies in particular is highlighted in the literature (Creswell, 2014; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Hatch, 2002; Richards, 2009). The researcher cannot remove her/himself from the context being studied and instead needs to continually reflect on their own positioning and influences on the phenomena under investigation. This issue of reflexivity will be a central consideration as the cases for my study involve teachers and learners at my own institution as well as one other institution, while my experience in this teaching context will make a purely objective analysis next to impossible. I discuss some of the ethical implications below in section 4.7.

4.3.3 Phenomenological Studies

At least part of this research was aimed at gaining access to how teachers and students in this particular context understand learner engagement. From this point of view, my research can be considered a phenomenological study. Phenomenological research is described by Creswell (2014) as a:

> *Design of inquiry coming from philosophy and psychology in which the researcher describes the lived experiences of individuals about a phenomenon as described by participants. This description culminates in the essence of the experiences for several individuals who have all experienced the phenomenon* (p. 14).

So while I have adopted a qualitative case study design, a central aim of this exploratory research is to gain an understanding of how participant teachers and students in this study experience and understand the phenomenon of engagement. To “get at” these lived experiences, I have intentionally drawn on research methods common to ethnographies and phenomenographic studies.

4.4 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

One concept that has influenced my methodological choices is sociological hermeneutics, or the idea that it is only possible to understand an event or action in context through the worldview of the participants (see, for example, Baert, 2002). This seemed particularly relevant given that I am attempting to find out how learner engagement is experienced in this context, specifically how instructional practices, teacher characteristics and contextual features influence levels of engagement. After reviewing the various choices regarding research design, I determined that qualitative case studies—tempered with ethnographic and phenomenographic approaches—would likely paint the fullest picture for answering these questions. To compile these case studies, my plan was to follow three teachers (initially four) and their students for a full 15-week school semester (term), observing and meeting with each participant teacher and volunteer students three times: at the beginning, middle and end of the term. A timeline for data collection and analysis is presented in section 4.4.6.

I decided early on that classroom observations would be a useful and effective method for collecting data on learner engagement, but also that observations alone would probably not provide a full enough picture. As mentioned in my introduction, as a teacher with over twenty-five years of experience in the EFL classroom, I feel relatively confident in recognizing engagement as well as disengagement in my students. Getting at the sources of this engagement or disengagement though would require another approach, and I decided on follow-up interviews, questionnaires and supporting documents such as course outlines and student participation sheets. Toward the middle of my study, I added guided reflective journaling as a way to gain a more intimate picture of how participant students experienced engagement in their various English classes. Table 4.1 shows my conception of what research methods would help me answer each of the research questions, and this is followed by short overviews of each of the methods as well as a timeline for data collection.

Table 4.1 Research Questions and Methods

Main (Q) and Subsidary (SQ) Questions	Observation	Interviews	Surveys	Documents	*Journals
Q1 - How is "learner engagement" experienced in this context?	YES	YES	YES	MAYBE	YES
SQ1 - In what ways do instructional practices influence engagement?	YES	YES	YES	MAYBE	YES
SQ2 - In what ways do teacher characteristics influence engagement?	YES	YES	YES	MAYBE	YES
SQ3 - In what ways do contextual features influence engagement?	YES	MAYBE	YES	MAYBE	YES

*Added during the study.

4.4.1 Classroom Observations

To gain a better understanding of influences on learner engagement in the classroom, I initially planned to observe and videotape the three teachers' classes at week three, week eight and week thirteen. My rationale for the number and timing of observations was that I was aiming at gathering longitudinal data, and wanted to get enough data to provide me with a full picture of what was happening in the class without being overly burdensome on the teacher and students. At the same time, I was hoping that observing the classes somewhere near the beginning, middle and end of the semester would provide exposure to a variety of classroom interactions and reduce the novelty of my presence. As for my decision to video record the observations, I understand that classrooms of any kind are a complex interaction of the members and artifacts, and I was not confident that I could capture the richness of those interactions with just fieldnotes. I decided to keep the initial classroom observations open-ended. This decision was influenced by descriptions in Hopkins (2008), as well as Mackey and Gass (2005). Specifically, I was hoping to set aside theoretical assumptions that I held at the time of the first observations and see the classroom interactions with fresh eyes. These initial observations were aimed at gaining a general sense of the personalities involved and the types of interactions, as well as gauging overall levels of learner engagement. I also felt it was important to get a feel for each teacher's teaching style and idiosyncrasies.

One aim of qualitative research is to observe naturally occurring behaviors. Chapman (2003) stresses the need for a contextual understanding of learner engagement and viewing specific tasks *in situ*. One challenge was to make the classroom observations as unobtrusive as possible, and I tried to observe from the back corner of each classroom. As mentioned above, I was not confident of my ability to capture all of the nuances of the lessons and student reactions, and decided to video record the classes. The ethical considerations of this decision are discussed later in this chapter in section 4.7. I observed each participant teacher and their class for a full lesson three times throughout a fifteen-week semester. In this way, I felt that I would be able to observe teacher interactions with students in sufficiently varied settings (e.g. warm up, instruction, facilitating, wrap up) to compile the case studies. It was also my understanding that regular repeated observation would help diminish some of the Hawthorne– or Observer–Effect (Hatch, 2002).

Again, my aim during the first observations was to get a feel for each case (teachers, students, classroom setting), and field notes were mainly descriptive in nature with diagrams of classroom layout, outlines of what was happening, and notes on things that caught my attention or came to mind. The challenge was to resist the temptation and tendency to "assess" the teachers. To polish my observation skills, I tried to follow advice and suggestions in Wragg (1994) and existing studies (see, for example, Bigdeli, 2007; Nagamine, 2007) regarding what to focus on during observations and how to record what you see as an observer. Specifically, from the second observation on I decided to use an observation protocol that involved focusing on teacher and learner behaviors as well as recording roughly how many of the learners were showing signs of engagement.

This observation protocol (Appendices 1 & 2) that I decided on was slightly modified from the Classroom Observation Protocol for Undergraduate STEM (COPUS) project (Smith, Jones, Gilbert & Wieman, 2013), as it allowed me to focus on what both learners and teachers were doing throughout the 90-minute classes. At the same time, this instrument afforded the opportunity to record observed levels of engagement as low (20% or less students engaged), medium, and high (80% or more students engaged).

I considered several other observation protocols for my study, and the two closest candidates were the Motivation Orientation of Language Teaching (MOLT) developed by Marie Guilloteaux (Guilloteaux, 2007; Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008), and the task observation chart used by Joy Egbert (2003). Although the focus of the MOLT is aligned fairly closely with my research objectives–namely a focus on both learners' motivational behavior (engagement) and teaching strategies–my understanding was that this instrument would require multiple observers with extensive training in the protocol because of the large number of codes and detailed coding scheme. The adapted version of the COPUS sidestepped both of these issues. Although establishing interrater reliability in the pilot study (discussed below in section 4.6.1) necessitated finding an additional observer, the two of us were able to train ourselves using the supplemental materials provided by Smith, Jones, Gilbert and Wieman (2013) in about two hours. Although the Egbert (2003) task observation sheet allowed for detailed observation of task characteristics that promoted flow, there were no observation categories to record teacher behaviors or characteristics.

During the in-class observations and later viewings of the recorded videos, I was also watching for signs of engagement (as operationalized in section 3.6.1) as well as verbal and nonverbal ways in which these teachers promote learner engagement and mitigate or avoid disengagement (instructional practices, teacher characteristics), and ways in which learners interacted with their classmates and surroundings (contextual features). I kept detailed field notes with my observations of classroom activities and interactions as well as my reflective notes on these observations.

As mentioned earlier, I very much wanted to make this research a collaborative endeavor with the participants, and attempted wherever possible to check my perceptions and interpretations with the participants (Hatch, 2002). The classroom observation sheets afforded me one opportuntity to achieve this goal, and teachers were provided with access to the video recordings and my completed observation sheets. None of the participant teachers identified any misinterpretations, while one teacher in particular mentioned the videos and observation sheets as being both informative and educational in terms of self reflection and professional development.

4.4.2 Teacher and Student Interviews

To overcome my limited perceptions, gain a fuller picture of the classroom interactions and triangulate data from the observations, I chose to conduct audio-recorded interviews with teachers and students as soon after the observations as possible. The teacher interviews were one-on-one, while the students were sometimes conducted one-on-one or in pairs (see section 4.4.6). I prepared starter questions (Appendix 3) for the first round of semi-structured interviews with the aim of gaining a general sense of perceived levels and sources of engagement during different parts of the lessons, as well as participants' feelings as to the relevance of the psychological needs in this context. An ancillary aim was to find how well teacher intent aligned with student experiences, expectations and perceptions.

I was fairly confident with interviewing techniques and strategies as I have been studying and teaching Oral Histories (Abrams, 2010) for nearly ten years. However, the Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) book brought to the forefront some considerations such as power asymmetry, setting the stage for interviews and the art of the second question. Based on descriptions in Osterman (2014), I took hand-written notes during both the classroom observations and interviews. Taking these notes was my attempt to "capture the overall feel and emotional atmosphere," which Osterman (2014, p. 3) mentions as being difficult using recordings only.

Drake (2010) highlighted four potential problems of interviewing at one's own institution, namely (1) personal relations and expectations position everyone in the interview; (2) the motivation for the research affects what the researcher learns; (3) the same material generates accounts that emphasize different things; and (4) things happen in people's heads during the interviews that are not recorded. The conclusion here was that the validity of insider research (addressed further in section 4.7), "requires reflexive consideration of the researcher's position, and this is especially pertinent in the case of research undertaken by practitioner researchers on professional doctorates" (p. 87). My main means of mitigating these potential problems were to communicate as openly as possible with the participants about any concerns and what each of us hoped to get out of the study. At the same time, I tried to remain as vigilant as possible about checking my assumptions or biases through the reflexivity mentioned earlier. In order to further check findings and interpretations with participant teachers, I conducted one last round of interviews in the Spring of 2017.

4.4.3 Survey Instruments

I intended to use a short questionnaire to help triangulate data I was generating through the observations and interviews. I considered that results could be shared with teachers and students at the interviews to facilitate reflection and as a prompt for deeper discussions. I looked at several existing instruments, including the Student Engagement Measure (SEM - Fredricks, Blumenfeld, Friedel & Paris, 2005), the Student Engagement Scale/Questionnaire (SEQ - Steinberg, Brown & Dornbush, 1996) and School Engagement Instrument (SEI - Anderson, Christenson, Sinclair & Lehr, 2004), which were designed to gauge levels of engagement in classroom activities and/or school, but none seem suited to the current context and the questions I was trying to answer. Specifically, the scope was too broad and/or it would have been overly burdensome on respondents.

Eventually, I decided on the Learning Climate Questionnaire (LCQ), which was adapted by Williams and Deci (1996) from the Health-Care Climate Questionnaire (Williams, Grow, Freedman, Ryan & Deci, 1996). The LCQ (Appendix 4) is a self-report instrument that measures learners' perceptions of autonomy support in their classrooms. This seemed particularly important for triangulating data from the observations and interviews. After the first two rounds of observations, LCQ data revealed fairly high levels of perceived autonomy support in all three classrooms and consistent responses between administrations. Thus, I determined that a third administration of the LCQ would likely not add to these findings. Thus, for the final observation, I decided to administer an adapted version (Lee, 2012 - Appendix 5) of the Task Engagement Questionnaire (TEQ), which was designed by Joy Egbert (2003) to gauge task-engagement in SLA contexts along the four flow dimensions of interest, control, focus and challenge.

For both questionnaires, I prepared Japanese translations with the help of colleagues who are proficient in both English and Japanese, confirmed individual items via back translation from Japanese into English (with only minor adjustments necessary), and test piloted the final versions with a group of second-year university students I was teaching at the time of the study (described in section 4.6.3). I announced at the beginning of each observation that a short questionnaire would be administered during the last ten minutes of class.

4.4.4 Guided Journaling

At around the time of the second round of observations, I decided to solicit volunteers from the three classes to participate in a guided reflective journaling (Meel, 1999; Ross, 2016) portion of the study. My decision to include this method was motivated by worries that I was having regarding the adequacy of the other methods to provide robust evidence to answer my questions. Specifically, I was not obtaining intact dialogs or verbal interactions between participants in their pair or group work. During the observations I was sitting too far away, while the noise levels made transcription of these interactions impossible. Eventually, three students (one from each class) agreed to take notes during each of their four ninety-minute English classes for one full week.

Because of institutional restrictions on paying students as research participants, I compensated the three students with gift coupons that could be redeemed at department stores and shops in the area. The instructions to student participants and proposed format for journaling are included in Appendix 6. Basically, I asked students to note down their level of engagement roughly every ten minutes, describe what was happening and the influences on their level of engagement. We then met for a debriefing session where I checked the journal entries and confirmed or clarified my understanding of entries written in Japanese. In preparation for the journaling, I stressed to participants that their unfiltered and honest descriptions and reactions were welcome and that I hoped they would not embellish or overstate their experiences. My explanation in Japanese was that I was hoping to gain their raw (*NAMA*) impressions and reactions to different parts of each English lesson for the whole week. I also stressed to participants that they should not let the journaling interupt their participation in the class or distract them from the lessons. I believe the explanation and instructions together helped lessen the risk of Hawthorne–or Observer–Effect (Harvard Business School, 2018) and keep these learners focused on their in-class studies.

4.4.5 Support Documents

Several types of support documents were collected as an additional window into understanding the context of these classrooms and various participants. To better understand the context, I relied on course outlines (Appendix 7), lesson plans and course materials provided by the instructors. To gain a clearer vantage point on participant perspectives, I also referred to teacher-developed participation sheets that were used by one of the teachers in the study to solicit simple feedback from students. Learners used these sheets to rate their own participation (not good, okay, excellent) and share with the teacher comments or questions on the lesson (prompts – What did you do well? What can you do better? Anything you don't understand?). Students agreed to let the researcher view these participation sheets on the condition of anonymity (names blacked out).

4.4.6 Timeline for Data Collection

My initial plan was to observe each of the classes, administer questionnaires and conduct follow-up interviews at around weeks three, eight and thirteen, but understood that some adjustments might be necessary to accommodate teacher preferences and flow of the curriculum (e.g. avoiding days with major tests or events such as the Company Expo or guest speakers). Table 4.2 includes my planned timing for the various research activities.

Table 4.2 Planned Timeline for Research Activities

	Observations	Interviews	Questionnaires	Transcription	Analysis/Writing
Apr 2016	#1	#1	LCQ #1	Start	Start
May-Jun	#2	#2	LCQ #2	Continue	Continue
Jul	#3	#3	TEQ	Continue	Continue
Aug-Dec	X	X	X	Finish	Continue
Jan-Mar 2017	X	X	X	X	Continue
Apr-Jul	X	#4	X	X	Continue
Aug-Dec	X	X	X	X	Continue

As mentioned above, the final round of interviews with participant teachers was conducted to gain additional feedback on findings and interpretations. The eventual timing of the classroom observations are listed together with the interviewees (pseudonyms) in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Observation and Interview Schedule

	Observation # (Week)	Date	Interviews
Case One - Robert	# 1 (Three)	April 22	Robert, Minako
	#4 (Eight)	May 27	Robert, Norihiko
	#9 (Fourteen)	July 8	Robert
Case Two - Mariko	#2 (Three)	April 27	Mariko, Amiri, Yuri
	#5 (Nine)	June 8	Mariko, Amiri, Maki
	#7 (Thirteen)	July 6	Mariko, Amiri
Case Three - Sylvester	#3 (Three)	April 28	Sylvester, Mikiko, Masaki
	#6 (Ten)	June 9	Sylvester, Kana, Erika
	#8 (Fourteen)	July 7	Sylvester, Kana

4.5 PARTICIPANTS

While I was weighing my options in terms of research design and methods, I began considering the type of participants, selection criteria and sampling frame that would likely help me answer the research questions. As mentioned above, I decided to conduct this research at my institution and one other university. This decision was based partially on the teachers that I solicited for participation using a purposive sampling technique–described below–and partially on the institution and EFL program offered. The two programs are comparable in that neither offers an English major, both are relatively new, and both have coordinated English programs. As the large majority of university students in Japan are non-English majors, it was deemed important to select cases in this category. The decision to focus on relatively new programs was also intentional since these types of programs would be less likely to have fossilized approaches to language education or other curricular restraints. As mentioned in chapter two (Thesis in Context, section 2.2.1), EFL program coordination is often minimal or non-existent at universities in Japan. However, awareness is growing that this is an unsustainable model and university applicants are becoming more selective while universities are seeking new identities (Nippon.com, 2018). We can anticipate that more universities will focus their energies and resources on coordinating their EFL programs.

In this section, I outline the sampling method and selection criteria separately for teachers and students, and include short profiles for each participant.

4.5.1 Participant Teachers

One aim was to include teachers with a range of backgrounds and experiences while at the same time observing teachers that were fairly representative of the types of teachers teaching in this context. An early consideration was to find conscientious teachers who had track records of interest and involvement in professional development activities. Toward this goal, I decided to solicit the help of colleagues or acquaintances who were members of two professional EFL teachers organizations in Japan: The Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT – jalt.org/) and the Japan Association of College English Teachers (JACET – www.jacet.org/).

In terms of sampling frame, I initially identified four candidate teachers who met the criteria of having a range of teaching backgrounds and experiences. Both Japanese and non-Japanese were represented, and these candidates also received their education in different countries and had teaching careers of different lengths and contexts. I explained the research verbally based on information in the participation information sheet (Appendix 8), and ensured the candidates that they were under no obligation to participate and could withdraw at any time. Eventually, through mutual agreement, one of the candidates pulled out since they were moving into a new teaching position and taking on added obligations that would have made participation in my research especially onerous. Short profiles of the teachers who eventually agreed to participate in my study are provided in Table 4.4. All names in the report are pseudonyms.

Table 4.4 Teacher Participant Profiles

Case One – Robert	Robert is a fifty-three year old male teacher from Australia with twenty years of university EFL teaching experience in Japan. He has co-published several textbooks for this context, sits on a government advisory board for junior and senior high school textbook selection, and presents regularly at academic conferences in Japan and overseas. He completed EFL teacher training certification and has an advanced degree in teaching English as a second or other language (TESOL).
Case Two – Mariko	Mariko is a thirty-eight year old female with twelve years of university EFL teaching experience. She grew up in Japan but spent seven years in the U.S. working and studying for a master’s degree in TESOL. She is currently pursuing doctoral studies in applied linguistics, and has published two textbooks and a number of academic articles for peer-reviewed journals.

Case Three – Sylvester	Sylvester is a thirty-four year old male teacher from Canada with nine years of EFL teaching experience: four years at high school, and five years at university. He is currently pursuing a master's degree in applied linguistics with a focus on TESOL.

Note: All names presented in this thesis are pseudonyms.

4.5.2 Participant Students

The students in these classes were second and third-year non-English majors at two private universities in Japan. The range in age was 19 to 21. I decided to focus on second and third-year students since the novelty of studying English at university would have worn off and students would likely be accustom to their university studies. This was deemed as important to avoid temporary or artificial expressions of engagement as well as the Halo Effect (Thorndike, 1920). On the first day of observations, I distributed participation sheets, gave a brief explanation of my research, and collected signed copies of the consent form (Appendix 9). At the same time, I mentioned that I was soliciting volunteer participants for follow-up interviews. For pragmatic reasons, this was a convenience sample, with the understanding that I would solicit the participation of select individuals if my sampling frame lacked coverage in some area. The sampling frame included gender, language proficiency, and personality type (e.g. introvert or extrovert) as subjectively judged by their teacher and/or myself.

Table 4.5 includes short profiles for the eight students who volunteered after one or more of the classroom observations (Case 1 = Robert, Case 2 = Mariko, Case 3 = Sylvester).

Table 4.5 Student Participant Profiles

Minako (Case 1)	Is a twenty year old female student from a semi-rural part of Japan who is studying management. She has experience traveling abroad, and has a non-Japanese boyfriend who resides in an EU country where English is not the first language. Her English language skills would fall somewhere around B-1 (threshold or intermediate) on the CEFR scale

	or 615 TOEIC. I was teaching her in another course during this study. She was interviewed formally after the first observation and informally on several occasions throughout the study.
Norihiko (Case 1)	Is a twenty one year old male student from a semi-urban part of Japan who is studying management. As a child, he lived and studied overseas for three years as a primary school student. He expressed an interest in learning English and was involved in several target-language pursuits at school. His English language skills would fall somewhere around a high B-1 (threshold or intermediate) on the CEFR scale or 750 TOEIC. He was interviewed formally after the second observation and informally on several occasions throughout the study. He also participated in the journaling part of the study.
Amiri (Case 2)	Is a nineteen year old female student from a semi-rural part of Japan who is studying international relations. She expressed a long-held interest in learning English and participated in English speech contests starting in junior high and continuing into high school. Her English language skills would fall somewhere around a high B-1 (threshold or intermediate) on the CEFR scale or 735 TOEIC. She was interviewed formally three times and participated in the journaling part of the study.
Yuri (Case 2)	Is a twenty year old female student from an urban part of Japan who is studying international relations. She expressed an interest in English from her early high school days and was preparing for an overseas exchange program at the time of the study. Her English language skills would fall somewhere around B-1 (threshold or intermediate) on the CEFR scale or 710 TOEIC. She was interviewed formally one time after the first observation.
Maki (Case 2)	Is a nineteen year old female student from an urban part of Japan who is studying international relations. She expressed fluctuating interest in English with some downward dips during high school. She was considering an overseas exchange program at the time of the study. Her English language skills would fall somewhere around B-1 (threshold or intermediate) on the CEFR scale or 670 TOEIC. She was interviewed formally one time after the second observation.
Go (Case 3)	Is a nineteen year old male student from a semi-rural part of Japan who is studying management. I had taught him in the second semester of his first-year. He expressed a keen interest in learning English, and this interest was subsequently confirmed through his enrollment in elective English classes and volunteering to present in English at a school event. His English language skills would fall somewhere around a high

	A-2 (waystage or elementary) on the CEFR scale or 465 TOEIC. He was interviewed formally one time after the first observation and informally several times throughout the study.
Mikiko (Case 3)	Is a twenty year old female student from a rural part of Japan who is studying management. She expressed a fluctuating interest in learning English and a current lack of confidence and enthusiasm. I was her academic advisor at the time of the study but had not taught her in any English classes. Her English language skills would fall somewhere around a high A-2 (waystage or elementary) on the CEFR scale or 505 TOEIC. She was interviewed formally after the first observation and refused to have the interview audio recorded.
Kana (Case 3)	Is a nineteen year old female student from an urban part of Japan who is studying management. I had taught her in the second semester of her first-year. She expressed a moderate interest in learning English, and this interest was subsequently confirmed through her enrollment in several elective courses and projects taught in English. Her English language skills would fall somewhere around an A-2 (waystage or elementary) on the CEFR scale or 465 TOEIC. She was interviewed formally after the second and third observations and informally several times after the observation period. She also participated in the guided-journaling part of the study.
Erika (Case 3)	Is a nineteen year old female student from an urban part of Japan who is studying management. I had taught her in the second semester of her first-year. She expressed a moderate interest in learning English, and this was confirmed via her voluntary registration for elective English courses in subsequent school terms. Her English language skills would fall somewhere around a high A-2 (waystage or elementary) on the CEFR scale or 515 TOEIC. She was interviewed formally after the second observation.

4.6 PILOT STUDIES

In preparation for the main study, I conducted a pilot study of the classroom observation protocol and follow up interviews during the last week of February and first week of March in 2016. Additionally, I test piloted the LCQ in early April before the first round of observations and the TEQ and guided reflective journaling in late May before the final round of observations.

4.6.1 Pilot Observations

The aim of these pilot observations was to test the effectiveness and useablility of the classroom observation protocol in capturing interactions in my context. The pilot study was conducted at my own institution, and I observed a colleague who was teaching a three-week test-preparation course for students planning on studying overseas. I submitted an overview of the study together with participant information sheets and consent forms for both the teacher and students to the department head, and was able to gain ethical approval at the department level. The pilot study also offered an opportunity to check the video camera placement scheme and the quality of resulting video and audio. Although my plan did not involve additional raters other than myself in the main study, I did plan to share the video recordings of classroom observations and my completed observation sheets with participant teachers as a way of confirming my findings and maintaining reliability (robustness). For the pilot study, I enlisted the help of the one candidate teacher who was dropped from the main study. As he was soon assuming an English program coordinator position in another private university in the same region, he was interested in learning about the classroom observation protocol that I was planning to use. We met in March, 2016 after the pilot observation, and reviewed the COPUS training materials prepared by Smith, Jones, Gilbert and Wieman (2013). We then watched a forty-minute segment of the pilot observation and completed a draft version of the classroom observation sheet together. Two adjustments were made. First, we recognized in the student behavior category that having both Group Discussion (GD) and Working in Groups (WG) codes was both confusing and likely not necessary for my study. We thus combined these two codes into a new code titled Group Work/Discussion (GW), described as "working in groups of 2 or more students on assigned activity/discussing question or problem." A similar issue came up in the teacher behavior category with the Moving/Guiding

(MG) and One-on-One (1o1) codes. These codes were combined under the MG code and reworded as "moving through class guiding ongoing student work during active learning task (group or 1 on 1)." We then separately watched a second 40-minute segment of the pilot observation and filled in a revised version of the classroom observation sheet. I then calculated the Jaccard similarity scores (Jaccard, 1901) using the description in Smith, Jones, Gilbert and Wieman (2013). The equation they outline for calculating the Jaccard cofficient is $T = n_c / (n_a + n_b - n_c)$, with n_c being the number of 2-minute increments marked the same (checked or unchecked) by both observers, n_a being the number of 2-minute increments marked the same by both observers plus 2-minute increments observer 1 marked that observer 2 did not, n_b being the number of 2-minute increments marked the same by both observers plus 2-minute increments observer 2 marked that observer 1 did not. The resulting calculation of $18/(20 + 19 - 18) = .86$ indicated acceptible levels of consistency to proceed with the study.

4.6.2 Pilot Interviews

The aim of the pilot interviews was to gauge the effectiveness of the starter questions for the semi-structured interviews. I conducted pilot interviews (one with the teacher and one with a student) after the pilot observations in early 2016. The pilot included my description of the study and the starter questions (mentioned above). No major problems arose in the pilot, however it became evident that some participants might have difficulty putting a numerical value (between 1 – 10) on perceived levels of engagement. The two interviewees were eventually able to assign a numerical value to different parts of the lesson with the help of examples. As the purpose of these questions was to get a general understanding of the participant's perceptions, I decided to maintain these questions for the actual study.

4.6.3 Pilot Questionnaires

To get a general feel for timing and whether or not learners would struggle with answering any of the items, I conducted a small scale pilot study with twenty-three second-year students I was teaching in the Spring 2016 semester, first in April for the LCQ (Black & Deci, 2000) and then in early June for the TEQ (Egbert, 2003). This was also intended as an informal test of reliability and validity. No items on either instrument resulted in cause for concern.

4.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

I began preparing the ethics documentation and approaching potential teacher participants in January, 2016 for the Spring 2016 school term (April to July). After gaining approval from the four top candidates, it was decided through mutual agreement that one participant would pull out because they would be changing positions for the upcoming term and would likely be experiencing a certain amount of stress and time pressure that might make the class observations overly burdensome. To help ensure anonymity, each participant was assigned a unique pseudonym to distinguish them from other participants (see participant profiles above). I confirmed with participant teachers that they were under no obligation to continue with the study, could request adjustments to any descriptions in the study they felt might sacrifice anonymity, and that no part of this study would be used for purposes other than that stated in the participation information sheet. For student participants, I visited the first or second meeting of the class, distributed the participation information sheet and consent form, and explained the purpose of the study and their rights as participants if they agreed to sign the consent form. All teacher and student participants willingly signed the consent form before the first round of observations.

The decision to record the observations (video) and interviews (audio) brought into play some additional ethical considerations. For teacher participants, I explained that these recordings would help me better capture the nuances of engagement and avoid misunderstandings or misrepresentation. For student participants, I explained during the above-mentioned first or second meeting of the class that one aim of the study was to capture learner reactions during the lesson and stressed that the video recordings would not be used for any purpose other than the study, and would only be viewed by the researcher and their instructor. I showed the class where I was planning to place the two cameras, and assured everyone that the video recordings would be destroyed after the completion of my study. Additionally, I followed up at the beginning of each observation by reminding participants of the research goals and camera placement.

4.7.1 Ethical Implications of Insider and Outsider Research

As described above, I chose for my cases the classrooms of three university EFL teachers at private universities in a semi-urban area of Japan. Two of the three cases were at my own institution, which involved some definite benefits (e.g. intimate knowledge, proper representation) but also some dangers or challenges (e.g. dispositions of power, anonymity, neutrality). The inclusion of the one outside case was an attempt to reduce the number of blind spots in my investigation as well as offer a more balanced perspective on the construct of engagement. This "outsider" research also offered both benefits (e.g. neutrality) and challenges (e.g. proper representation, exploitative positioning). With the one case where I was an outsider, I followed advice in Bridges (2001) regarding the kinds of relationships between researcher and participants that facilitate non-exploitative, respectful experiences and adhere to the ethical and epistemological truths of "nothing about us without us" (p. 384).

My decision to conduct part of my research at my own institution was intentional in that I want very much for findings to inform and benefit current and future teachers and students in our program, but also understand that scholarly work should have a wider impact.

I have made every attempt to familiarize myself with the dangers or pitfalls of this type of insider research, namely issues of anonymity, neutrality and disparities of power, but also felt the benefits justified the decision to include these two cases.

Two key considerations with insider researcher are (1) how to maintain a balance of "emic" and "etic" perspectives, and (2) how to balance anonymity (both individual and institutional) with transparency (Creswell, 2014; Hatch, 2002; Trowler, 2011). Having an understanding of the context and actors will likely aid the creation of the "thick" descriptions required of case studies, ethnographies and phenomenological research. At the same time, this intimate knowledge or involvement may lead to blind spots and/or interviewer bias (Trowler, 2011). The issue of anonymity is included with other considerations in Table 4.6 as a list of questions to assist researchers in thinking through the various issues related to insider research:

Table 4.6 Questions for Those Embarking On Endogenous Research (Trowler, 2011)

1. In designing the research, how do I know that the approach adopted will answer the questions I have?
2. How do I design the research to take best advantage of the benefits of endogenous research while avoiding its pitfalls as far as possible?
3. Conceptually, how do I represent my organization, its culture and its practices?
4. How and from whom will I secure access to the data I need?
5. Whom should I inform about the project, and how should I describe it, when I seek 'informed' consent?
6. How will I ensure that the project is run ethically so that all participants and institutional bodies are protected?
7. If I am using participant observation, what are the ethical issues in relation to the people I observe in natural settings (e.g. should I frequently remind them about my dual role)?
8. If using interviews, what measures do I take to deal with interview bias?
9. What should the balance be between collecting naturalistic data and formally 'collected' data?
10. How should I analyse the different forms of data I have, given that there will almost certainly be a large amount of various sorts?
11. How, and how much, will I communicate my findings to participants to ensure that they are happy with what I intend to make public?
12. How do I satisfy the reader about the robustness of my research and its findings?

Trowler (2011) reviewed some of the key issues surrounding insider research at higher education institutions, including the recent advocacy of conceptualizing insider and outsider research as a "continuum" rather than "binary opposites" (p. 1). Where an investigation falls on this continuum will depend on the researcher's "identity positioning" (p. 1) as well as which aspects of the institution are being investigated and where the data is coming from (Trowler, 2011). The ethical issues related to investigating one's own institution are also reviewed in Floyd and Arthur (2010), in particular issues related to on-going relationships, insider knowledge and tensions arising from the different roles of the researcher, and the authors express the need for thoughtful consideration of the issues and avoiding an over-reliance on the ethics review process and ethics checklists.

4.8 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

Moving on to the question of validity, reliability and generalizability, my understanding is that these terms do not have the same meaning when dealing with people and social settings as they do in the natural sciences. Several authors have discussed the importance of focusing instead on alternative criteria for judging qualitative research. Lincoln and Guba (1985), as cited in Devers (1999), discuss the issue of *trustworthiness* as the criteria when using qualitative research methods, and endorse credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability as criteria for assessing qualitative research. Stiles (1999) offers some "good practice" criteria and "validity" criteria for qualitative research: *Good Practice* (Clarity of description and justification of investigator's choices, Analytical practices that enhance permeability, Reporting practices for assessing permeability), and *Validity* (Impact on the readers, Impact on the research participants, impact on the investigators and the theory).

A related topic is the question of objectivity. Is objectivity desirable when researching in the social sciences? I believe objectivity is desirable, but that this does not preclude a subjective stance as well. The attraction of objectivity in science is related to the question of neutrality and bias. Maintaining distance is seen as a defense against conjecture and over-reliance on interpretation. According to my understanding, many researchers in the field of education have moved beyond this objective/subjective dichotomy (Angen, 2000; Pring, 2000) and understand that both perspectives are important. Related to this discussion, both *emic* and *etic* perspectives are important when trying to understand social and psychological phenomena. A thicker description (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) of the phenomenon results from understanding both accounts when researching cultural contexts such as the classroom or the teachers' room. The analogy that I like is zooming in (microscope) and out (telescope) as needed to look at detail or the big picture. To illustrate, I will use an example from my own past research into second-language learning motivation. An emic (and subjective) account would include the voices of second language learners, and provide a clearer picture of their subjective understanding, attitudes, beliefs and biases. An etic (and objective) account would be a step back to see how those understandings, attitudes, beliefs and biases look within the larger context of second-language learner affect.

To address these issues of reliability and validity in my study, I have attempted to provide readers with a detailed description of how the research and analysis was conducted, including where and when my reflections and interpretations informed the study.

4.9 ANALYSIS

The general lack of agreement regarding analysis of qualitative data was emphasized by Miles and Huberman (1984), who lamented: "we have few agreed-on canons for qualitative data analysis, in the sense of shared ground rules for drawing conclusions and verifying their sturdiness" (p. 16). Despite these limitations, I was able to glean useful advice from Creswell (2014), Hatch (2002), Miles and Huberman (1984) and Richards (2009) regarding the iterative process of qualitative research and how to make sense of the huge amount of data that I was anticipating. I decided early on that my first step in analyzing the data would be to transcribe verbatim (Smart Docs, 2017) all classroom observations and follow-up interviews. This was indeed an onerous task but I felt strongly that this would afford the “closeness” to the data advocated by Richards (2009). My plan was then to roughly follow the major phases of data analysis described by Miles and Huberman (1994), namely data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. My one adjustment to this was to include thematic analysis throughout these phases.

To assist with data analysis, all transcripts, typed fieldnotes and support documents were uploaded into NVivo version 11.4.0, and I made constant reference throughout the study to online tutorial videos and other resources provided by QSR International (2017) and the qualitative research community.

4.9.1 Data Reduction

Although data reduction is most often associated with quantitative research methods, Miles and Huberman (1994) include it as the first step of their framework for qualitative data analysis: “Data reduction refers to the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the data that appear in written up field notes or transcriptions” (p. 10). They see this as a necessary step in ensuring that data are manageable and can be used to address the research questions.

I did not have a concrete plan for data reduction going into the study, but hit on the idea of writing up vignettes during my early attempts at thematic coding and writing up the findings. I wanted to share with the readers the story that was unfolding for me as I observed the classes and met with teachers and students, and vignettes for each case at each stage of the study seemed like the best way to do this. These vignettes included descriptions of the physical setting, flow of the lesson, interactions among participants and classroom atmosphere. I also included some participant impressions gleaned from the interviews, as well as my own initial thoughts and possible areas for follow-up. The vignettes also included a short introduction for each of the three stages as well as a follow-up with some general commentary on each round of observations and interviews. This commentary dealt mainly with issues related to the basic psychological needs of competence, autonomy and relatedness, but also included other topics from the literature on learner engagement and L2 learning motivation and that seemed to merit further analysis.

4.9.2 Thematic Analysis

As mentioned above, I employed thematic analysis alongside the phases described by Miles and Huberman (1994). I actually started this thematic analysis prior to hitting on the idea of vignettes, as soon as I had completed the first transcriptions. I embarked on this thematic analysis to discover common themes or issues according to suggestions by Braun and Clarke (2006) listed below in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7 Six Steps for Conducting a Thematic Analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006)

Step	Description
1. Familiarising yourself with your data	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas
2. Generating initial codes	Creating interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code
3. Searching the themes	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme
4. Reviewing themes	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic ‘map’ of the analysis
5. Defining an naming themes	Ongoing analysis to refine the specfics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme
6. Producing the report	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back from the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis

This process of thematic analysis did not proceed in a linear fashion, but instead was a much more iterative process in that I cycled from coding themes that I found in the transcripts to analyzing data for fit with the three subsidiary questions and/or three main dimensions of engagement, to looking for patterns in the vignettes, and back to coding themes. Although much of the detailed thematic analysis was done in NVivo, I found that working with print outs of the vignettes and query results from NVivo afforded a better balance between macro and micro views as well as emic and etic perspectives.

4.9.3 Quantitative Data

Data from the classroom observation sheet were entered into a spreadsheet, with the number 1 being entered under each code where a student or teacher behavior was observed during each two-minute increment. The number of entries for each code were added up and divided by the total number of observed behaviors. This calculation was made separately for student and teacher behaviors, and resulted in percentages for each observed behavior.

As mentioned above, the two questionnaires were administered mainly to assist in triangulating findings from the classroom observations and interviews, and to provide a springboard for discussions with teachers and students in the interviews. As my focus was not on determining correlation, factor loadings or generalizations, no inferential statistical analysis was conducted, and instead results for numerical data for both questionnaires were listed up and calculated for means and standard deviation. Data from the short answer (text) questions on the TEQ were uploaded into NVivo for thematic analysis alongside transcript data from the observations and interviews.

4.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY

My intent is to focus on teacher actions and characteristics as well as contextual features that promote or impede engagement. My initial search uncovered very little research looking at teachers rather than students, and this does not seem to be a major focus. I also realized early on that the reciprocal relationship between teachers and students would be important to look at or report on. From my own experiences, students are normally more engaged when the teacher is fully present and expresses genuine enthusiasm and/or interest in the lesson and the students.

To answer my research questions, I considered three approaches, namely qualitative case study, phenomenological study and ethnographic study. I saw advantages to all three approaches, and have decided that collecting and analyzing data from all three perspectives might provide the fullest picture that I am currently able to gather. Initially, I believed that a grounded-theory approach might provide some unique and/or interesting insights. However, I soon realized that my years of experience as a classroom teacher, researcher and teacher trainer would make it extremely difficult for me to set aside assumptions or prejudices.

In the next chapter, I present the findings and my initial interpretations regarding how engagement is experienced in these university EFL classrooms.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

So, how is “learner engagement” experienced in university EFL classrooms in Japan? In this chapter, I attempt to answer that question through my inductive and abductive analysis of the various data and will start by addressing the following subsidiary questions: (1) In what ways do instructional practices influence engagement? (2) In what ways do teacher characteristics influence learner engagement? (3) In what ways do contextual features influence learner engagement? Again, the three cases involved individual teachers and students enrolled in one of their second-year EFL classes at private universities in a semi-urban area of Japan.

As mentioned in the previous chapter (section 4.9.1), my initial analysis involved data reduction (Miles & Huberman, 1984) through the writing of vignettes for each of the cases at each stage of observation. These vignettes (tinyurl.com/vignettes-jones)–based on data from the classroom observation sheets (tinyurl.com/y83gckeu), my fieldnotes, interviews, support documents and guided reflective writing–included descriptions of the physical setting, flow of the lesson and interactions among participants. I also included my own initial thoughts and possible areas for follow-up. Anyone with the above URLs can access the vignettes and completed observations sheets, but all information has been anonymised to conceal the identities of participants. In compiling these vignettes, I was attempting to capture key contextual information as well as perceived fluctuations in levels of engagement for the whole class and individual learners for my next layers of analysis. Another aim of the vignettes was to provide readers with a feel for the texture of the courses and the personalities involved.

One of my main concerns in presenting these findings is to maintain a distinction between indicators of learner engagement and facilitators of learner engagement (Skinner & Pitzer, 2012). Engagement Theory (Eccles & Wang, 2012; Lawson & Lawson, 2013) offers a framework for investigating indicators of engagement via the three main types of engagement identified in the literature (behavioral, cognitive, emotional), while the SDT framework, specifically the basic psychological needs (competence, autonomy, relatedness), offer a window into facilitators of engagement and thus form the core of my conceptual framework (section 3.6) for the study. I conclude this chapter by stepping back for a macro view in answering my main research question regarding how engagement is experienced in this context.

5.2 SUBSIDIARY RESEARCH QUESTION ONE: IN WHAT WAYS DO INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES INFLUENCE LEARNER ENGAGEMENT?

Again, I am using the terms instructional practice and instructional approach interchangeably to mean ways in which the instructor interacts with the instructional content and learners. This includes, for example, when and how teachers use repetition, ask questions and promote interaction among learners. At the same time, this includes choices made by teachers regarding material, tasks, transitions between tasks, etc. In other words, instructional practices are the interface that the teacher provides between the curriculum and the learners. In my analysis of the vignettes as well as raw data from the observation sheets, interviews and support documents, I soon realized that delineating instructional practices from both teacher characteristics and contextual features would be challenging, and despite some obvious overlap I attempt here to keep the focus on teachers' actions in the classroom. Several instructional practices that I observed in the classroom and discussed with participants surfaced as influencing learner engagement, some positively and others negatively. For the purpose of answering this first subsidiary research question, I present here four instructional practices that clearly facilitated learner engagement, namely the strategic use of pair and group work, patterns or rhythms of instruction, questioning style and scaffolding techniques. These categories emerged mainly from reoccuring themes that appeared in the thematic coding of qualitative data and were supported by classroom observation sheet data. I conclude this section by presenting findings regarding practices that appear to hinder learner engagement, as well as how findings related to this subsidiary question help to answer my main research question.

5.2.1 Strategic Use of Pair and Group Work

Drawing on data from the observation sheets and interviews, the highest levels of learner engagement in each class meeting for all three teachers were observed when teachers got their learners to communicate with each other in English or with the teacher, and when there was a clearly perceived need to convey or gather information. This observation, again, was based on learners' facial expressions such as raised or furrowed eyebrows, body language such as forward leaning posture or gesturing with hands, as well as length and content of verbal interactions (indicators). Length was subjectively judged by apparent willingness to communicate (i.e. not retreating from interaction) and elaboration or questioning. These high perceived levels of engagement in pair or group work were confirmed in interviews with both teachers and learners. Minako, for example, when discussing levels of engagement during Robert's week three European Studies class, expressed feeling most engaged when listening to her partners' presentation about research they were doing on EU and non-EU countries. The following excerpt comes from the follow-up interview:

Researcher: *Okay, about food or culture—*

Minako: *Yes.*

Researcher: *—something like that?*

Minako: *Or the location about the movie.*

Researcher: *Oh, okay, where they shot the movie?*

Minako: *Yes.*

Researcher: *Oh, really? Which country was that?*

Minako: *It was Hungary, about Kiki's Delivery Service.*

Researcher: *Right. That's the Miyazaki—?*

Minako: *Yes. And Heidi.*

Researcher: *And Heidi. That's the location?*

Minako: *Yes.*

She mentioned this interaction as especially engaging because she had to listen carefully to catch what her partner was saying and that she liked learning something new about a country she had never visited. In discussions with Robert, he explained that learners were responsible not only for information they were gathering for their own EU or non-EU countries but also information they recorded from classmates' presentations. Reflecting on my own classroom experiences, *laissez faire* or hands-off approaches to pair or group work are often unsuccessful, and the teacher needs to provide structure, offer or facilitate feedback, and remain engaged themselves. The following comment by Minako on how Robert keeps her and her classmates engaged in pair and group work reminded me of this (all direct quotes are presented verbatim).

> *It happens when we have to work with partner, and after we finish, he—while we work, he always goes around to see if they are working, and also if they have a question or not because Japanese people feel shy to ask question in front of the class, so when he ask, like, "Do you have a question or something?" or people*

say, "Yes, I don't know this," or something. And then he always explain about extra information.

I also commented in my field notes on another occasion that while students are checking their partner's paper, Robert is moving from group to group and is down at eye level asking individual students what their partner's main argument is.

Three other episodes stand out as showing the power of well-structured pair or group work in this context. One was an activity in Mariko's week nine class where students worked in groups to prepare an illustration (visual representation) that reflected contents from a paragraph they were reading on megalopolises. The second was an inflection activity in Sylvester's week ten class where students would read a paragraph to a partner while using voice inflection to stress certain content. The final example was an information gap in Mariko's week fourteen class where students were assigned one of two paragraphs, completed a worksheet, confirmed their understanding with classmates who had read the same paragraph, and eventually summarized the paragraph for a student or students who had read the other paragraph.

5.2.1.1 The Illustration Activity. In Mariko's week nine Intensive Reading class, the learners were working through a challenging textbook passage on the topic of economic corridors (or megalopolises) that have developed in different parts of the world. While much of the textbook reading is assigned out of class, the basic approach for this and other similar readings during the class is for (1) Mariko to present the topic or focus of the text verbally and/or with slides she has prepared, (2) Mariko to assign a paragraph or section of the text for students to discuss and answer prepared comprehension and/or personalization questions, and (3) Mariko to follow up with a whole class discussion. In my three observations of Mariko's class, engagement levels and focus normally dropped while learners (re)read the text and struggle through some awkward silence with their partners, but eventually the energy levels rise and most learners exhibit facial expressions and body language that hint at cognitive engagement. With the illustration activity, the dynamic was different. Students still struggled to get going at the beginning, but quickly seemed to immerse themselves in the activity and became quite animated (emotional engagement).

The high levels of engagement during this activity were also mentioned by Mariko and the two students who were interviewed following the lesson. Both Amiri and Maki singled out this part of the lesson as being most engaging. Maki expressed that she and her partner were struggling to interpret the numbers in the sentence and that this kept her focused on the activity. Amiri mentioned the novelty of the activity, "Also, writing the image of the topics from these sentences. It's a new idea for us in English class for a long time."

In the following excerpt, Mariko responds to my question about a time when she saw that either one student or a group of students was completely engaged in what was happening during a lesson:

> *Mmmm, I saw in today's class, they were pretty good at, you know when they had to do that illustration thing, they were really thinking how to interpret those numbers. I could tell because they were talking in pairs and some of them got their illustration totally wrong. They thought that 660,000,000 was the total world population rather than 10%. And they're really thinking in pairs, and some of the students on the participation sheet wrote "Oh, my partner really helped me understand." So I thought they were engaged in that moment.*

One additional comment here is that Mariko had changed the seating arrangement earlier in the class, so students were working with a new partner. I commented in my notes that this would likely impact levels of engagement, especially in this class where students seemed to regularly sit with the same partner in the same part of the room near the back corner (discussed in section 5.4.1). However, energy and engagement levels through the first part of the lesson fluctuated between low and medium (on the observation sheet) and it was only for this illustration activity that high engagement was sustained (9 consecutive 2-minute intervals). During the interviews, I found out that this group of students were taking four English classes a week together. So, while changing seating arrangements might impact levels of engagement, I interpreted the high levels of engagement as resulting from how Mariko had set up this activity (instructional practice) rather than seating arrangement or partner (contextual features).

5.2.1.2 The Inflection Activity. Another pair work activity that impressed me as greatly promoting learner engagement was observed in Sylvester's week ten Business Communication class. At about thirty-three minutes into the class, Sylvester distributed a worksheet and explained that one point which concerned him in the Company Expo (described in Appendix 10) was that some students did not effectively use voice inflection such as stress or tonal variation. He emphasized that this was a very important part of public speaking and informed students that they would review something they had done in their year-one *Speech and Discussion* class. Using the worksheet (with an excerpt of a short speech), he asked students to listen and repeat each sentence without inflection. He then asked students to go through the worksheet and underline any words or phrases that they felt should receive emphasis or stress when they next read it out loud. Finally, he had students stand up and *JANKEN* (rock-papers-scissors - described in the next section) with a partner to decide who would speak first. He explained that the winners should read one sentence at a time without emphasis and the loser should (without looking at their paper) repeat each sentence with the proper inflection. Students got started right away and the energy level quickly rose. Students were focused on their partner and facial expressions and gestures hinted at high levels of engagement. As the noise level began to die down after both partners had read with inflection, Sylvester asked them to stop, praised their efforts and advised them to say each sentence with the inflection and gestures two or more times. He then told everyone to find a new partner and try the activity again. This was repeated one further time so that all students were assured three chances for practice. While the students were still standing, Sylvester emphasized to students that deciding what to stress and then practicing is an important step in preparing for their presentations.

After students returned to their seats, Sylvester asked them to take out their textbooks again and turn to the last page of the chapter which included instructions for preparing their upcoming sales presentations. This was basically a review of key points from the chapter, and Sylvester asked students to *JANKEN* (rock-paper-scissors) one last time, and read either the first paragraph or second and third paragraphs. Even though they were working in the textbook (normally accompanied by lower levels of engagement), the level of engagement remained high and students were much more focused than before the voice inflection activity. High levels of engagement were recorded on the observation sheet from the forty-minute interval (when they began working in pairs) through the fifty-four minute interval (when they finished the pair work) to the sixty-two minute interval (where they completed the textbook activity).

In the follow-up interviews, Sylvester and the two students Kana and Erika all felt the highest level of engagement in the lesson was achieved during the inflection practice. Kana talked about her interest and confidence in public speaking, and that this activity had some meaning (relevance) for her. She and Erika both agreed that they had to stay focused to hear what their partners' were saying and working out where to stress or what tonal variation to use. Sylvester mentioned that he was basing his interpretation of higher levels of engagement on body language and perceived levels of concentration (indicators). Again, it is interesting that these higher levels of engagement during the voice inflection activity also seemed to carry over into the following textbook activity.

5.2.1.3 The Information Gap. Information gaps are a staple part of the EFL teacher's repertoire, likely because they encourage interaction and provide a structured communication activity with clear goals and immediate feedback. Towards the end of Mariko's week fourteen Intensive Reading class, where students were working through the last part of a textbook reading on mortality rates in preparation for the final quiz the following week, Mariko organized an information gap that resulted in the highest levels of perceived learner engagement that I had witnessed during any of my visits. Here are her instructions:

> *Okay. I have divided you guys into two groups. Okay. Half of you have paragraph 10. The other half have paragraph 12. Okay. If you have paragraph 10, could you come over here? [pointing to front right corner of room]. And if you have paragraph 12, could you sit over there? [pointing to left side of room] Okay? And your job is to really, really understand the assigned paragraph. Okay? And you can work together with people who have the same worksheet. Later, you have to explain this paragraph to your new partner who doesn't have the same one. Okay? And, I made some comments on the side with questions. Okay? This will help you understand the reading. So, try to answer the questions. Also some words are underlined. That means I want you to explain the meaning of the words. Okay? So, paragraph 10 can you come over here? Paragraph 12 can you please come over here? You can work in a group. Go ahead.*

As with almost every pair or group activity in all three cases, there were a range of responses and it took most groups several minutes to begin interacting with their partners. Mariko seemed to recognize this and began prodding each group to check their understanding. There was a slow but noticeable increase in levels of engagement, and there was a distinct change in the type of interactions within groups. Individual members seemed much more determined to get their meaning across (repetition, gestures and facial expressions), and there was much more give and take to these interactions. My notes at around twelve minutes into this activity read:

> *The highest observable level of engagement occurred when students were trying to explain something to another student - there seemed to be an authentic need to make oneself understood or convey the content that one was responsible for.*

With just a few minutes left in class, Mariko assigned new groups of four with two members having the same paragraph. She instructed students to share what they learned from their respective paragraphs. This transition was the smoothest of the entire class (possibly because class was nearly finished) and all groups seemed to get started right away. Students who were explaining were using gestures and checking with their partner who had read the same paragraph. The other two members were writing notes and asking questions. Again, my notes:

> *Definitely highest level of engagement comes right at the end of this lesson. Students intent on explaining and listening to their partners. The fact that students stay after the bell and continue with the task into their break time is a good indicator of high levels of engagement - not everyone though? Clear goal to the task and cognitive and linguistic challenge of the task seems to be important contextual/task factor that influences levels of engagement.*

In our follow-up interview, Mariko also mentioned this last activity as being the most engaging for the students. She said her impression was that students were intent on both conveying their information and listening to their partners, to the point that staying late did not matter. The following is an excerpt of our interview:

Mariko:	*Ummmm, and then I think, as you can see probably, the information gap part was the most exciting for them.*
Researcher:	*Sure, it changed . . . The whole atmosphere of the class changed.*
Mariko:	*Right. So I think they were engaged in . . . after . . they didn't mind staying after the . . . even after the bell rang.*
Researcher:	*Yeah, that one group in the middle in the front, especially the one, the one guy right he was kind of leading that discussion. But they probably could've kept talking for another 20 minutes. (laughs)*
Mariko:	*Right, right. And I saw one kid from one group who couldn't quite understand their partners, so he went to another friend and they explained it to him too.*
Researcher:	*Oh good.*
Mariko:	*So they just kept on going, so that was good. I don't like keeping students late...that was the first time in the semester...but yeah, I think they got really into the topic. So . . .*

Amiri was the one student that I interviewed immediately after the lesson. We spent most of our time talking about the guided journaling she was doing as part of the current research project, but she did make a point of describing how the worksheet that Mariko had prepared helped her and her classmates understand the contents of the reading and also provided structure for their conversations about the respective paragraphs. She also mentioned that the pressures of the test the following week had helped to keep her invested in the activity. Some conflicting results came out of the classroom observation sheet, where the initially high level of engagement at the sixty-four minute interval was not maintained. Medium levels of engagement were recorded from the sixty-six minute mark through to the eighty-eight minute interval and the end of the lesson. In reviewing the video recording, we can see two pairs (four students) during the first phase and one group (five students) in the second phase that cut the activity short and/or seem preoccupied with something other than the task. As mentioned in section 4.4.1, I maintained the conservative cutoff for high engagement at 80% or more described in Smith, Jones, Gilbert and Wieman (2013). This accounts for the drop from high to medium soon after the start of the information gap, while Amiri and other participants perceived the activity as being engaging.

It should be noted that learner engagement in all nine classroom observations varied greatly from task to task and from student to student. Thus, even when I recorded high levels of overall engagement, there were individual students who exhibited signs of not being as engaged as their classmates.

5.2.2 Patterns or Rhythms of Instruction

One thing that became clear in the observations was that each teacher has their own patterns or rhythms of instruction but also that there is a general pattern which looks something like this: (1) the teacher introduces a topic or issue via a lecture, reading or video clip, (2) the teacher assigns some type of pair or group task, (3) the learners work collaboratively on completing the task, (4) the teacher checks on outcomes by leading a class discussion or debriefing session. From my experiences in the classroom, this pattern is pretty standard and accounts for the majority of interactions in many educational settings. The predictability of these patterns likely have a settling effect in that learners can anticipate what is coming and can prepare behaviorally, cognitively and emotionally. The downside is that this predictability also allows students to tune out (Ainley, 2012). In our follow up interview after Sylvester's week ten Business Communication class, Kana said that she was fairly engaged throughout the class, with an estimate of eight out of ten, but that she had grown accustomed to the video tasks where a bad example is followed by a good example. She expressed that this had become boring for her and that she sometimes catches herself thinking, "enough already, let's move on." In the same interview, Erika estimated that four out of ten was her low, and said these dips came when she could anticipate what was coming and didn't need to listen that carefully or concentrate on what was happening.

The influences that these patterns or rhythms of instruction have on levels of engagement were seen in all three cases, and I will present here three instructional practices that illustrate this point: Pulling Learners in with Quizzes or Tests, Mixing it Up, and Well-Timed Shifts. Again, these categories emerged mainly from reoccuring themes in the thematic coding of qualitative data and were supported by classroom observation sheet data.

5.2.2.1 Pulling Learners in with Quizzes or Tests. One somewhat surprising finding for me was the power that quizzes or tests have to focus the attention of learners in this context. Upon reflection, however, learners in this context are accustomed to test taking (see Chapter Two - Thesis in Context) and are familiar with this style of study (Goto Butler, 2015). Also, I have noticed this tendency for Japanese university students to dive right into quizzes or tests in my own classes as well. In my analysis of the nine vignettes, I found four examples where teachers started their lesson with a quiz, test or test-related activity. First, in Robert's week three European Studies class, he had pairs of students quiz each other on information researched for their EU and non-EU countries. Then, in Robert's week eight class, he uses a more formal quiz to check learners' understanding of other information they had collected about these same countries using a teacher-prepared worksheet. Next, in Mariko's week nine Intensive Reading class, she passes back the mid-term test that students had taken the previous week and leads a debriefing session on parts of the test that students struggled with. Finally, in Mariko's week thirteen class, she leads off with a vocabulary quiz. My observation notes for all four instances include comments about how these quizzes or activities seem to pull learners in. The topic of quizzes or tests did not come up with any regularity in the interviews and I am relying here on my observation notes, commentary in the vignettes, and remarks by learners on the participation sheets. Beginning the lessons with these quizzes, tests or test-related activities may or may not have been a strategic instructional practice on the part of the teachers, but it did seem to have the favorable outcome of increased learner engagement (at least behavioral and cognitive) early in the lesson for these two groups of learners in their 9:00 a.m. classes. Both teachers and learners made more than one mention of engagement levels at the beginning of these classes as normally being particularly low.

5.2.2.2 Mixing it Up. Also related to the patterns or rhythms of instruction, was how teachers wove together activities and either stretched or shortened tasks in ways that influenced (and were influenced by) levels of learner engagement. When observing Robert's classes, I saw examples of mixing it up in the ways he varied the style of quizzes (mentioned earlier), how he shifted the order of regularly-occurring tasks (country presentations, e-portfolio work, mini-lectures with note-taking). Robert also used at least one instructional practice that caught me off guard. After learners finished the quiz at the beginning of the week eight class (mentioned above), he called on each student and asks them to publicly report their score on the quiz. When I queried him about this in the interview, he explained that he did this to put a fire under some students who had gotten off to a slow start and were not doing much research on their countries or preparation for the classes. Robert also picked up on learner interest and stretched out a couple of classroom exchanges. One of the lengthier interactions involved the topic of false friends, or loan words from English into Japanese that have completely different meanings from how they are used in English. The words "mansion" and "tension" are two of the examples he touched on. This topic seemed to be of interest to students and Robert picked up on this and expanded on the topic.

Although my general impression was that Mariko mixed things up less than the two other teachers, likely due to the restraints placed on her by the textbook, she did have her own ways of switching things around to keep students engaged. Despite the general pattern of classroom interactions outlined earlier, Mariko would vary the types of questions she prepared for the slides, interject with personal stories or advice, or organize supplementary tasks like the illustration and information gap activities mentioned above. In her week nine class, she and the learners were struggling through a particularly challenging part of the text on the megalopolises. There were several rounds of students reading and discussing with a partner, followed by Mariko checking comprehension and trying to personalize the material. In one of these exchanges where the topic of light emissions mapping came up, Mariko closed the shades and played a short video of satellite images of light emissions from the Earth at night that was accompanied by music. Students were focused on the screen throughout, and Mariko followed up by switching back to the slideshow and questions about what these light emission maps tell us. This interjection (although rated as a medium level of engagement for the sixty-two and sixty-four minute intervals) seemed to have the desired result of refocusing the learners and helping them through this part of the text.

My observations of Sylvester revealed similar practices to the other two teachers, namely the shifting of order of regularly-occurring tasks, interjecting with personal stories or advice, and expanding on topics of perceived interest to learners. One example of an attempt to mix it up came in his week four class where they were preparing to watch one bad and one good example of a business presentation. In preparation for the bad example, he asked students to work in pairs, and assigned one student to focus on what was wrong with the manner in which the speech was delivered (physical message) and the other to focus on the content of the talk (story message). The assignment of roles or areas of focus for the listening task seemed to have the desired effect, and most students seemed highly engaged, even Kana who later reported some boredom with these video activities. This strategy was mentioned in the teacher’s manual and Sylvester had slightly altered it to good effect for his class.

5.2.2.3 Well-Timed Shifts. Another instructional practice related to patterns or rhythms of instruction are short, strategic shifts in direction or jolts that are used by the instructor to grab attention or shake learners out of a lulled state. In the three classrooms that I observed, these shifts sometimes came when teachers seemingly recognized drops in engagement or when an activity was winding down. I am relying here mainly on my observation notes and commentary related to the vignettes. However, I was able to augment these with interview data. The two most prominent of these shifts were the game of rock-papers-scissors used by Sylvester to decide speaking order or student roles and short breaks used by Mariko to wake up or refresh learners. After students are in pairs in Sylvester's week three class, he tells them to *JANKEN* (rock-paper-scissors). Sylvester uses the Japanese word *JANKEN* and later explains that this is one of his strategies he often uses for getting students' attention and keeping the class engaged. He refers to the winner as *JANKEN* Master (a twist on a Jackie Chan movie) and the loser as Lucky Loser. In our follow up interview, Sylvester makes a point of mentioning his use of *JANKEN* to keep students focused:

> *Yeah. I—I've sort, I did -- I taught in high school, and it's – part of the culture isn't it? With janken I think if it's there why don't you use it? [. . .] Because they're used to that kind of action. And sometimes I noticed them sort of dropping off a bit if I speak too much. I ask them to do janken they're awake suddenly, so it's a good quick thing to get them back into the lesson.*

This was obviously a go-to strategy for Sylvester, and I observed him using it between three and seven times per lesson on the three occasions that I observed his class. In my vignette for Sylvester's week fourteen class, I note that at the beginning of the lesson Sylvester asks students to open their textbooks and again uses *JANKEN* to decide reading order. The students seem quite accustomed to this routine and the winners immediately start reading their part (problems) aloud while their partners follow along in the textbook.

At around forty-five minutes into Mariko's week three class, she comments to learners on the waning energy level in class and tells students to take a short break, get up and walk around, stretch, get some coffee, etc. There is a palpable sigh of relief and the energy level spikes upwards as students move around and talk in Japanese. Although I did not complete an observation sheet for this meeting, my fieldnotes included mention that a majority of learners exhibited signs of cognitive engagement when they came back from the break and continued working through the text. In the follow up interviews, Mariko mentioned this break was an attempt to bring the students back, and both Amiri and Yuri also mentioned high levels of engagement when Mariko gave them a break. In one of my follow up questions after Mariko's week nine class, I asked Amiri and Maki what they would do if they were in the position of the teacher. Amiri offered the opinion that students are often very busy, stressed or tired and she said she would offer them more breaks and concentrate the study into shorter chunks. This topic of the packed schedule of students came up in earlier interviews and I will need to return to this in my further analysis. In my notes for Mariko's week nine class, I entered the following:

> *Although Mariko has asked students to check with a partner, most students are working by themselves. My impression is that some are not sure how to proceed. The contents are quite challenging, with information about how these economic centers attract global talent and of how global talent is mobile. Mariko recognizes that students are struggling to stay focused on the reading and uses different strategies to maintain interest. She tries to connect the contents of the reading to Japan and students' realities, offers words of encouragement, and eventually tells learners to take a short break and passes around a bag of candies.*

In talking with the three teachers, it was clear that they recognize engagement when they see it. They described "reading" students or the class and making adjustments. These teachers also seem to have strategies for boosting engagement (Sylvester using *JANKEN* and giving students responsibility, and Mariko providing students with breaks). Returning to my conceptual framework, these strategies would be part of the interface between motivation (context and self) and engagement (action), in that teachers are likely to be interpreting contextual and self features in ways that help them translate learner motivation into action.

5.2.3 Questioning Style

Another instructional practice that impressed me in the observations and interviews as impacting levels of engagement was questioning style. Questions that were directed at getting the learners to connect the content to their own experiences or reflect critically on their own assumptions or beliefs clearly had a positive impact on overall levels of engagement. Conversely, questions straight from the textbook or restricted to comprehension seem to be less engaging. Questioning styles where the teacher is looking for one correct answer seemed least engaging. This type of questioning might be necessary to gauge student understanding, but there clearly seems to be a downside. Mariko having students discuss particularly challenging passages from the text seemed to be much preferable to just asking comprehension questions or dishing out the answer and teacher interpretations.

Questioning style also refers to how the teacher poses questions: to the class in general, by asking one student, or questioning a limited number of students engaged in group work. When asked about things Robert does to keep students interested or engaged, Minako talked about how he moves from group to group during the activities and checks their understanding and progress. She mentioned this as especially important since she and her classmates are normally shy about asking questions in front of the class, and felt that everyone appreciates that he always offers explanations and extra information. Three other issues that came up in this same interview were calling students by name, active participation in class, and classroom atmosphere. Minako mentioned that in some of her other English classes, the teacher asks questions to the group but all members are reluctant to raise their hand even if they know the answer (contextual feature). She feels that Robert does a good job of calling students by name, making it much easier for students to answer and reducing the amount of wasted time.

When talking with Mariko after her week three class, she highlighted that different questions impacted engagement in different ways. With some questions, students find the answer right away and then tend to drift off with little or no interaction with their partner. At other times, when the question is too difficult, they also switch off. She feels the most engaging questions are open-ended, opinion type questions and said she was still testing what worked with this group of students. During the same interview, Mariko expressed feeling that a big part of her job was to think on her feet and make adjustments when delivering lessons. This discussion comes up in the literature on expert teachers (Goodwyn, 2010) and reflective practice (Farrell, 2008), and might be an area requiring further analysis. She talked about picking up on some eye contact and body language from students which she interpreted as expressing engagement and a desire to be called on. She also recognizes that students do not react well to questions aimed at the class, but sometimes does this intentionally with the understanding that students will likely be faced with this questioning style when studying abroad. In talking with Amiri and Yuri after this same class, their feeling was that the average level of engagement was up around eight (out of 10). Amiri felt her engagement was highest when Mariko was asking questions, especially questions outside of the textbook that required students to use their imagination.

I commented in my observation notes that Sylvester sometimes asks a question to the whole class, and that these questions are mainly met with an uncomfortable silence, but that eventually the same two or three students speak up. In talking about posing questions to the class, Sylvester expressed that this is something he still struggles with. He says he doesn't expect students to put their hands up right away, but feels putting them on the spot a bit is a form of positive pressure. He tries to offer hints and tries to read students' expressions for signs that they understand the question and/or know the answer.

Returning to SDT and my conceptual framework, we need to ask how certain questioning styles meet or thwart learners' psychological need for competence, autonomy or relatedness. Both Mariko and Sylvester mentioned using easy questions to promote feelings of competence. Mariko commented in interviews that competence is extremely important, and offered the observation that Japanese students are especially hard on themselves and require a boost in confidence. She feels she promotes feelings of competence through the use of easy questions, praise and positive reinforcement. My impression is that listing up the various questions on slides, having students discuss possible answers and then checking answers as a class is one way the Mariko's lessons can potentially boost feelings of competence. As for autonomy, the open-ended, experience-based and opinion-type questions provide learners with room to exert their autonomy and agency. In terms of relatedness, we can recognize a preference for questions aimed at individuals rather than the group, and calling on students by name is well received in this (and likely most) contexts. Again, we see questioning style as one more interface betweeen motivation and engagement, i.e. getting learners to translate their motivation into language learning behaviors in the classroom.

5.2.4 Scaffolding Techniques

One additional practice that seemed to help learners engage with the instructional task or material was the skillful use of scaffolding. The practice mentioned above of preparing slides with questions and having learners read and discuss possible answers is one example. Others were the worksheets that Mariko used to facilitate the information gap described earlier and the ones that Sylvester used to facilitate the company expo meetings in his class. In discussing the meetings, Sylvester stressed that the detailed worksheets seemed to be working but that his plan was to slowly offer less structure so students would not become too dependent on them. In the interview with Mariko after her week nine class, she described another class where she had provided scaffolding for listening comprehension and how this had engaged her students:

> *Uhh, also today in the second period, we were studying content words and function words and I used uhh Eric Clapton's "Change the World." Uhh, they had to listen to it and especially pay attention to content words, so I took out some modals, you know, "I can change the world, I would . . . could be the king" and for the highest level students I took the modals out, I say "Listen carefully because he uses "can" and "could" differently," he uses "can" in the beginning and changes to "could" because he feels less confident about this woman he wants to get, so when I play the song I could tell my higher level students are really listening and say "Oh that was can" or "That was could" so I could tell they were really listening carefully, talking to their partner, asking me questions like "Oh wasn't it will" or "Why was it would. Let's listen again." I thought that they were quite engaged.*

Robert's use of scaffolding was apparent in several parts of each meeting that I observed. Some of the more salient examples were (1) the detailed agendas and lists of learning outcomes that he wrote up on the whiteboard each week, (2) the information cards used on week three to focus attention on the types of information learners should be investigating, and (3) the e-portfolio examples he used to illustrate what was expected of learners. Additionally, Robert transitioned to a mini lecture in his day fourteen class by asking students to discuss with their partner the meaning of capitalism. This scaffolding or priming also seemed to bolster learners' sense of competence and encourage deeper investment in listening to the lecture. In my conceptual framework, these deeper levels of investment in classroom activities are theorized as promoting better quality langauge learning.

5.2.5 Summary

I will conclude this section with a few instructional practices that seemed to have a detrimental impact on learner engagement, and reflect back on our main research question. Based on observation sheet data and the vignettes, the lowest levels of engagement came when learners were in a passive role as receivers of information from the teacher, or when they perceived the task or material as either too difficult, too easy or too predictable. Minako brought up the fact that students in her program are expected to work in small groups and be active. She contrasted this to her experiences in secondary school classes, where, "We have to sit, and we have to stay silent, and we just have to write or read something. It's not like we are join. We are just working about one thing."

Although not directly related to any of the instructional practices outlined above, Erika mentioned her disappointment when teachers do not collect homework assignments. She feels it is frustrating when she has put the effort into doing a good job and then the teacher does not make the effort to check.

Relating back to our main research question, we have support for the claim that learner engagement in this context is experienced through the instructional practices, with active interactions with fellow learners and the teacher offering the most engaging experiences. At the same time, instructional practices that are personalized, meaningful (relevant to the learners' realities) and appropriately scaffolded promote the highest levels of engagement. These findings lend support to discussions of teacher expertise (Hattie, 2003), professional development (Day, 1999), and expanding young people's capacity to learn (Claxton, 2007). Viewed in relation to the conceptual model, these instructional practices seemingly work with other contextual features to meet or thwart the psychological needs (self), and thus strengthen or weaken the motivation (via learner identity). The strength of the resulting motivation is then translated into action (engagement), possibly via learner investment.

5.3 SUBSIDIARY RESEARCH QUESTION TWO: IN WHAT WAYS DO TEACHER CHARACTERISTICS INFLUENCE LEARNER ENGAGEMENT?

To answer this question I again relied mainly on data generated during the classroom observations (observation sheets and fieldnotes) and follow-up interviews, but supplemented this with entries in the learning journals and on the participation sheets as well as my own experiences in the classroom. At the same time, I looked at quantitative data generated from the Learning Climate Questionnaire (LCQ) for indications of perceived levels of autonomy support in these classes. My findings are organized below under four headings (Teacher Preparedness, Teacher Investment, Approachability, Supportive Attitudes) that emerged from thematic analysis of the vignettes and help to explain how teacher characteristics promote or hamper classroom engagement and how this influences how engagement is experienced in this context.

5.3.1 Teacher Professionalism

One of my early impressions during the study was how well prepared and professional the three teachers were. Although there was likely some Hawthorne Effect (Harvard Business

School, 2017), with these teachers making at least some attempt to impress the researcher, my estimation from the observations, interviews and other interactions was that their professional approach to teaching and being well-prepared for their lessons was normal practice for all three teachers. As mentioned in the previous chapter, I initially selected these instructors as exemplary models, and this type of professionalism is to be expected. This professionalism was reflected in the fact that these teachers were in the classroom well before their lessons started, had organized themselves and the environment before or as students arrived, had organized all components of the lessons, and had anticipated parts of the lesson that students would struggle with or need support for. Referring to the vignettes, we have numerous examples of this professionalism and preparedness and the following three excerpts are representative:

> *European Studies (Day Three) - Robert has arrived early, written up an outline of activities for the day on the left side of the whiteboard, pinned up a map of Europe next to the outline, connected his computer to the flat panel screen, started a slideshow of scenery from Europe, and is playing some soothing (presumably European) music.*

> *Intensive Reading (Week Nine) - Mariko has arrived early, connected her computer to the projector and arranged student participation sheets and a box for collecting homework on a table at the front. She greets students as they arrive, settle in and come to the front to retrieve their participation sheets.*

> *Business Communication (Week Ten) - Sylvester has arrived early, connected his tablet to the flat screen monitor, arranged some papers and student name cards on a high table at the front, written up a menu for the day on the left side of the white board, and written up four questions about a presentation from the textbook.*

In all three cases, the teacher's level of preparedness is seemingly setting a tone for the class that includes high expectations, which surfaced as promoting motivation and deeper levels of engagement. These high expectations are hinted at throughout this chapter in how the three teachers talk to their learners about the bigger goals of individual tasks and how the skills and knowledge they are learning reach beyond the classroom. My commentary from the vignettes read:

> *In the discussion following the good example, Sylvester stresses to students that appropriate gestures, voice inflection and professional attitude are what he is expecting from their upcoming mini presentations.*

High expectations came up in the student interviews as well, especially as related to discussions of how teachers promote feelings of competence. Robert's attention to proper pronunciation came up in the week three interview with Minako. She felt that requiring students to repair and repeat were especially well received and helped individuals feel like they could accomplish what was required of them. Sometimes these high expectations can be expressed in quirky ways. My notes from Robert's week eight class highlight a slightly negative way of sharing his expectations of the class:

> *Robert expresses a combination of disappointment and surprise or bewilderment at students who have not prepared and done poorly on the quiz. He seems to intersperse this with humor in an attempt to keep the atmosphere light and positive.*

From my observations, these high expectations held by the three teachers were never conveyed to students as a strict attitude toward mistakes. Conversely, the teacher's attitude toward mistakes came up as a key element with regards to both competence and relatedness.

The feeling expressed in interviews with teachers and learners was that a relaxed atmosphere toward mistakes helps create a positive atmosphere and closes the distance between teacher and students (increased sense of relatedness). As mentioned earlier, material that is perceived as too difficult seems to undercut feelings of competence and lead to disengagement. This was confirmed in interviews with Mariko's students (discussed below in section 5.4.4.4), and relates to the work of Dörnyei (2001) mentiond before on demotivation. It should be mentioned that students in two of these classes (Robert's and Mariko's) have higher levels of English proficiency compared to the others (Table 4.5). Overall classroom engagement, however, does not seem to be dependent on English level of the learner. This observation is based on comments by both Robert and Sylvester regarding students who require more reassurance and support for the idea that making mistakes is okay.

It might seem to readers unfamiliar with this teaching context that arriving to class on time, being prepared and having a professional attitude is nothing special and to be expected. In my experience, however, more than a few teachers in the main three teaching categories (full-time tenured, full-time limited-term contract, and part-time) at Japanese universities have no qualms about regularly arriving late to class, leaving early, and getting by with minimal preparations. My interpretation is that the teachers in these three classes are leveraging their professional attitude (teacher characterstics) to create a classroom atmosphere (contextual feature) that encourages investment in the learning activities. In other words, helping students to translate motivation into engagement.

In terms of anticipating necessary learner support, I have already mentioned instructional practices used by all three teachers where scaffolding or support are offered. One observation from the textbook portion of Sylvester's week four class was that he had anticipated words or expressions that might be challenging for some students, and prepared slides or images to explain or elaborate on some of these. For example, the word "cubicle" came up in the video and Sylvester had done a Google image search in preparation and showed students the results. These short injections seemed helpful as several students appeared to tune out or begin to shut down in the later part of earlier individual tasks, as evidenced by fidgeting, checking smartphones or schedule books, or seemingly daydreaming. Another example comes from my fieldnotes for Sylvester's week ten class:

> *Sylvester has anticipated points of difficulty and prepared slides with images or text-based support. As one example, he has selected a quote from Mahatma Gandhi as an example of a quote and how this might be used in a speech.*

In addition to keeping students engaged during challenging parts of the lesson, this preparedness and overall professionalism on the part of instructors appeared to have influenced most learners to also come to class prepared and invest more in the individual parts of the class as well as the overall course. I do not have any data from the current study to support this claim but am basing this on anecdotal evidence from other classes I have observed in the past where teacher apathy is apparent and is reflected back as apathy on the part of learners. In other words, investment appears to be reciprocal in that teacher and learner levels of investment seem to impact each other. I discuss teacher investment further in this next section.

5.3.2 Teacher Investment in Students, Classes and Program

Another finding from the data was that teacher investment at different levels impacts learner engagement. There was evidence of investment in students, the content and delivery of individual lessons, and the overall program within which teachers were working. I mentioned above the reciprocal nature of investment in this context, and teacher investment was evident in attempts to remember student names, a tendency to keep checking in on students as they work in pairs or groups, creating a supportive and challenging classroom environment, and recognition of how their course aligns with the overall curriculum.

Minako expressed feeling that Robert does a good job of calling students by name, and that this makes it much easier for students to answer and reduces the amount of wasted time. Remembering students' names goes a long way in creating a welcoming classroom atmosphere (relatedness support), and calling students by name avoids the uncomfortable silence that meets questions to the group in this context. Student participants mentioned feeling uncomfortable volunteering answers in front of their peers even when they know the answer. I also made a note that letting students know that the teacher is at least trying to memorize their names seems to have a positive impact. In her week three class, Mariko reassured students that she could now associate eighty percent of the names and faces, and announced that she was determined to have them all by the following week. This elicited smiles and positive body language.

I have mentioned already the instructional practice of checking in on students during pair or group work, but again discuss it here since the style in which it is done seems to impact learner engagement. Both Minako and Norihiko expressed the engaging way in which Robert moves from group to group, gets down to eye level and tries to elicit more from the students. When discussing things the teacher did to promote a sense of competence, Amiri mentioned Mariko's small words of encouragement and silence when waiting for students to answer. She felt this gave students a little positive pressure to not give up and try to answer. Sylvester's students Go and Mikiko also mentioned how they looked forward to these small interactions with the teacher when they were working on a task with a partner or partners. Mikiko mentioned the teacher's use of praise, humor and working with individual students on their problems as helpful in keeping her focused and motivated to continue even when faced with difficult tasks. Again, I am mentioning this here as these interactions with the teacher are occasions that seem to draw out the deepest levels of engagement for many (not all) learners.

Similarly, signs of investment at the class level were apparent for all three teachers in their efforts to create a comfortable, yet challenging classroom climate. Robert's use of music at the beginning of class and public accountability on the quizzes are two examples. Mariko's personal stories and repeated reminders and meta level discussions of the various reading strategies are another. An example of this second characteristic comes from the vignette for her week three class:

> *Some of the discussion is devoted to study skills and the importance of reading strategies. Mariko stresses several times that good readers actively engage with the text, questioning the contents and trying to connect it to their understanding of the world.*

In Sylvester's classes, we can see his classroom level investment in his reminders to students of how each task is linked to either an upcoming presentation or a follow-up to something they had already done. His inflection activity, which again was singled out by the two students that I interviewed as being one of the most engaging part of his week ten class, was prefaced with his expression of concern that some students did not effectively use voice inflection such as stress or tonal variation in the previous week's Company Expo (Appendix 10). He emphasized that this was a very important part of public speaking and informed students that they would review something they had done in their year-one *Speech and Discussion* class, the inflection activity.

This last connection to the year-one class offered evidence of a recognition of how this course fits within the program. Although only anecdotal, these expressions of investment in the program by the teacher appear to be sending the message that the teacher cares about the learner beyond the boundaries of their own class. Mariko also exhibited this characteristic when she connected content from her class to other English classes that the students were taking. At the beginning of her week ten class, when reviewing the previous week's class where students had taken their mid-term test, she mentions that many students had expressed surprise at not having the actual text from the textbook on the test. It seems that another teacher the previous year had included the text. An excerpt from the transcript for that part of the lesson:

> *Okay. And some of you on the participation sheet talked about how surprised that you were that you didn't get the actual reading of the test. Because I know some of you had a teacher last year who gave you a reading. Okay, so I talked to the teacher who gives the reading and we kind of compared the average score, with the reading or without the reading. And it was above [indistinct]. So it is not a memory test, of course. But some of the key points that we spent a lot of time discussing. I thought you could do it that or that you remembered kind of the important ideas. And all of the detail questions, I try to give you the phrase from the textbook. So I don't think having the text or not having the text affected you too much.*

Taken together, these findings suggest that investment by the teacher in the students, in their class, and in the program are another teacher characteristic that impacts learner engagement (likely through deeper levels of investment on the part of learners). In my conceptual framework, this deeper investment–emotional engagement–on the part of learners results in higher quality language learning.

5.3.3 Approachability

Although this teacher characteristic has already been alluded to, I will review four aspects that came out in the thematic analysis of data as supporting the notion that approachability fosters a sense of relatedness and engagement among learners: casual interactions, humor, authenticity and personal stories.

During each of the classroom observations, I saw examples of informal interactions between the teacher and students that seemed to contribute to a supportive classroom climate and a boost in perceived competence on the part of individual learners. These informal interactions came mostly as students were arriving for class, before the school bell had rung, and often involved small talk about the weather, the morning commute or the day's schedule. I mentioned several times in the vignettes that the interactions among students and with the teacher increasingly seemed to be warm as the semester progressed.

Humor was another aspect of teachers' character that contributed to an overall aura of approachability, with learners mentioning humor as making the students feel at ease (Mikiko), boosting a sense of relatedness (Minako), lightening the atmosphere (Norihiko), and building rapport (Maki). Humor was also mentioned by all three teachers as important in setting the right tone for class. Mariko mentioned joking as a strategy to reduce the distance between her and her students, and also that her attempts at humor also seem to foster an environment where students feel comfortable joking with each other.

Another topic that came up in the interviews with teachers was the importance of being authentic with students. Sylvester said that he often tries to share his genuine enthusiasm for the course content and that this is picked up and reflected back by the students. He also shared his natural tendency to be open about his weaknesses or shortcomings and feels this helps him connect with students. Something I noted during Robert's lecture on capitalism in his week fourteen class was that he sometimes goes off script in an attempt to grab students' attention. He did this with jokes, anecdotes or connecting to other things that students are studying. The following excerpt is one example of the later, where he turns the mini lecture into a dialog:

Robert: *And, why do you have this system? To make a profit. Work hard. [pointing to whiteboard] Your labor. Work hard and you can get rich. Yeah. The American Dream. Work hard. So you get . . . And have you studied supply and demand? [nods of agreement] Really? You have? You've studied this in economics class? Have you studied Supply and Demand? [student's name] what is supply and demand?*

Student: *[indistinct]*

Robert: *How does it work?*

Student: *The market . . . people who want to buy something . . .*

Robert: *Yeah.*

Student: *. . . If people want to buy something . . . [indistinct]*

Robert: *Yeah.*

Student: *. . . and the supplier makes something [gesturing] [indistinct] marketplace.*

Robert: *So if people want to buy more, you produce more . . . yeah? And that affects the price, right?*

Engagement levels during this part of the lesson remained mostly high (from the 38 minute mark through the 46 minute interval), which I interpreted as being quite a feat at this point of the semester when rising temperatures and mounting outside commitments were clearly taking their toll. Of the three teachers, I noticed the tendency to share personal stories most clearly in Mariko's classes. Amiri and Yuri both expressed that personal stories was one of the ways that Mariko helps promote relatedness among participants. In her week three class, when working through part of the text dealing with economic prosperity and the historical shift from an agricultural economy to a market economy, Mariko shared the following:

Okay? I remember when I first got married, over ten years ago. I was very poor. My husband was super poor. Right, so when we got married we have to make some choices about what to buy and what not to buy. Okay? I really, really wanted a microwave but we didn't have enough money, so I gave up. So, after ten years, we are not rich but we have more money than ten years ago. Now I said SENTAKU KANSOKI HOSHII (I want a washer/dryer combo) every day. We didn't even have a microwave but now I want some super nice SENTAKUKI (washing machine). I think maybe I have to wait ten more years to get it. But, the more money we have, the more things, the better things, you want. So maybe that's what happened.

The above examples combine to show that approachability is another teacher characteristic that seemingly impacts levels of engagement, possibly through the fulfilment of the psychological need for competence and relatedness. These teachers are lowering the barrier between themselves and the students and creating a welcoming atmosphere where mistakes are recognized as an acceptable (even necessary) part of the language learning process. Returning to my conceptual framework, this approachability lowers the barrier between context and self, and the resulting motivation increases learner investment and is translated into action (engagement).

5.3.4 Supportive Attitudes

My analysis of the various data (especially the vignettes, observation notes and interviews) also pointed to the positive impact that supportive attitudes can have on learner engagement. The topic of autonomy support in particular allows me for the first time in this chapter to refer to quantitative data that was collected via student questionnaires. Other supportive attitudes that surfaced were teacher praise, encouragement and meaningful feedback.

5.3.4.1 Autonomy Support. As I prepared to begin the classroom observations and interviews, I felt confident in my decision to focus on the basic psychological needs of competence, autonomy and relatedness. As mentioned in Chapter One, my experiences and impressions have convinced me that Japanese secondary schools come up short in meeting the first two needs while excelling at meeting the need for relatedness. Thus, I felt this framework provided a useful lens for viewing ways in which engagement was experienced by Japanese learners transitioning from secondary school to the university context. In retrospect, my assumption that autonomy was the most important of these needs likely influenced my decision to use the Learning Climate Questionnaire (LCQ), with its focus on autonomy supportive behaviors by the teacher. And while the questionnaire yielded clear indications that learners in all three classes perceive their teachers as autonomy supportive (Appendix 11), interviews with teachers hinted at lower prioritization for autonomy than I had anticipated. Results for the six items on the short version of the LCQ (items 1, 2, 4, 7, 10, 14 in Appendix 4) are displayed in Figures 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3. Again, this questionnaire is measuring learners' perceptions of autonomy support.

These results for all three teachers show fairly consistent results between administrations and despite the limited number of respondents hint at reasonably high internal validity.

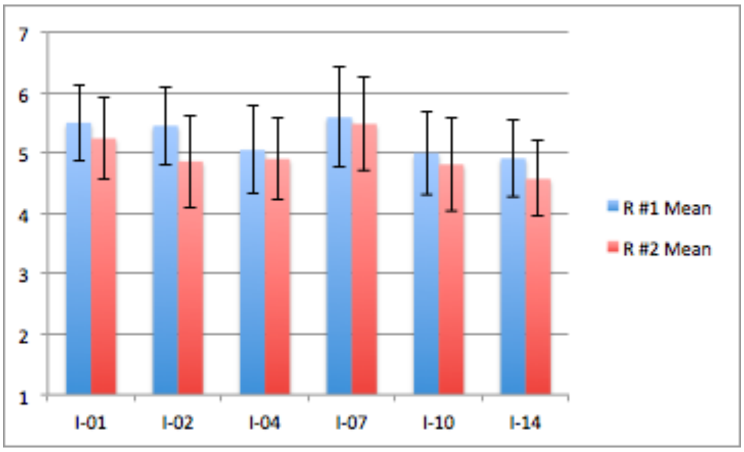


Figure 5.1 Robert LCQ Mean & SD Results (blue = week 3, red = week 8)

I interpreted the slightly lower scores reported by Robert's students as resulting from the teacher's push to get all learners up to speed on basic information needed for the European Studies class. This would likely be interpreted by learners as more controling than autonomy supportive and he mentioned several times in our interviews that he had other priorities that were higher on his list than autonomy support for learners.

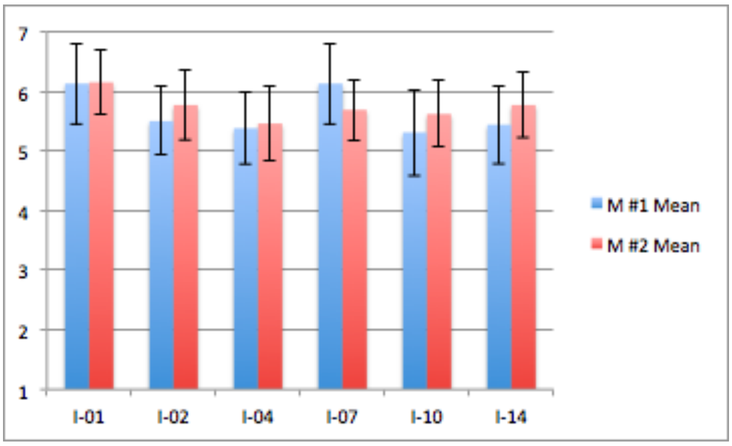


Figure 5.2 Mariko LCQ Mean & SD Results (blue = week 3, red = week 9)

Despite promises of anonymity in my explanation and the participation sheet, I was a bit concerned how Mariko's students would respond on this questionnaire administered by an outsider, especially as the items were asking them to rate their teacher. However, the consistent scores across teachers and between the two administrations bolstered my confidence in the results. The interviews that I was able to conduct with the three students added another form of triangulation.

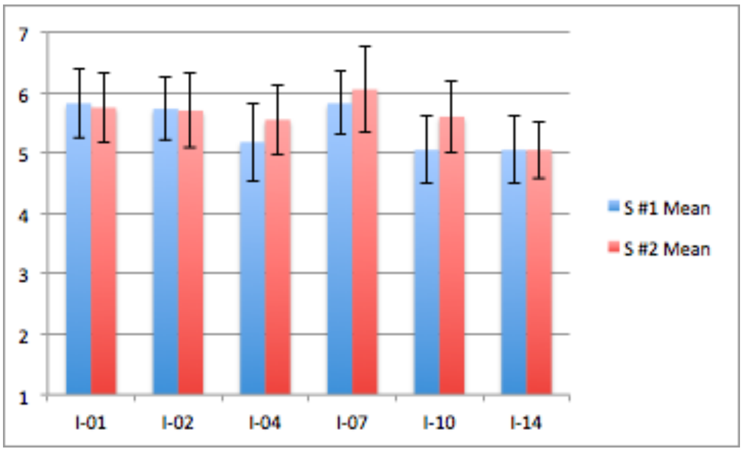


Figure 5.3 Sylvester LCQ Mean & SD Results (blue = week 3, red = week 10)

Together, these results indicate that learners in the three classes perceive their teacher and the classroom environment as autonomy supportive. In my conceptual framework, these perceptions would help form positive self theories (identity) and interact with other contextual features to translate language learning motivation into investment and language learning behaviors (engagement). Looking at classroom observation data for Robert's day eight class, we see low levels of engagement where Robert is collecting worksheets (two consecutive intervals from minute 6), having students verbally report their quiz scores (two consecutive intervals from minute 20) and soliciting presenters (three consecutive intervals from minute 24). All three of these classroom interactions would likely be interpreted by students as controling versus autonomy supportive. Conversely, in Mariko's week nine class, we see high levels of engagement when students are directed to find maps of the economic corridors that make up the megalopolises mentioned in their text using their smartphones. This activity would likely be interpreted as autonomy supportive by learners. This is not definitive evidence that perceived autonomy directly influences levels of engagement, but combines with other findings to help paint such a picture. It should be noted that I am merely providing a sampling of the data that I interpreted as being related to autonomy support and am not comparing the two teachers.

5.3.4.2 Use of Praise. Another supportive attitude that came up in the data as influencing levels of learner engagement and meeting the psychological needs of competency and relatedness were teachers' use of praise. While I witnessed first-hand Mariko and Sylvester praising their students more often and more readily than Robert, I heard from both Norihiko and Minako how Robert had praised their efforts on the e-portfolio or other work in one-on-one encounters in the class. And although there were no outward signs of the influence of praise on learner engagement, learners did mention on the participation sheets (Mariko) and in the interviews that praise does boost their sense of confidence and encourages them to invest (engage) more in the class.

During the first interview with Ami and Yukiko after their week three class, they described how Mariko's use of follow up questions or silence provides some pressure to elaborate on their answers or express themselves in a different way. Amiri said she felt especially appreciative of the teacher's small words of praise such as "good" or "great" when she was able to successfully express herself on these occasions. My notes from the interview with Mikiko after Sylvester's week three class are also indicative:

> *The discussion about competence elicited comments about how the teacher uses praise and works with individual students on their problems. She believes that competence is important and gave the example of how her tennis SEMPAI (senior classmate) berates or criticizes mistakes and how deflated that makes her feel. She uses the word JISHIN (confidence) to express how she feels when Sylvester notices and comments on her in-class answers or homework assignments.*

When explaining the day's activities for the week ten class, Sylvester comments on students' presentations in the previous week's Company Expo.

I think your delivery was very good for your presentation, but many students can still get better at emphasis, stress, okay. Not the stress that makes you lose hair. I mean voice stress. Voice emphasis. Okay. So, today I want to focus a little bit on emphasis.

Then, from the transcript where students have finished their first round of practice in the inflection activity, Sylvester explains:

Okay, stop. And stay standing. Don't sit down yet. We are not finished yet. Okay, my feedback. First of all, yes, pretty good. Most people. Be careful. You don't want to be unnatural. [gestures overemphasis and over-exaggeration]

Later, after their second attempt at the same task:

Okay. Stay where you are. You are going to do the last time. But, this is your last time, so it should be your best time. Because now you have practiced a few times. Now you can work more on your emphasis and gesture.

Finally, after completing the third and final attempt:

Teacher: *Okay, stop. Ding, ding, ding. Time out. Okay. Wow. The last time, the third time was better. Best time yet. Why?*

Student: *Practice*

Teacher: *Practice. Yeah. So, when you have your presentation, do your research, write your notes, and then practice. The next stage is underline words you want to emphasize, or words you want gestures. Many students skip this stage. They don't do it so they don't have very good emphasis or very good gestures. It's an important stage. Eventually, you don't need to underline. You can keep practicing because eventually it will be natural. You will know when to emphasize and when to gesture. But, at the beginning, it's a good idea to think . . . okay, that's important [gesture underlining], [indistinct] word here. And then, close the door. Practice in your room. Speaking, okay. I promise you your audience will appreciate it and they will remember your facts better. If you don't emphasize, you'll get this [T acts out a boring, monotone speech - and audience boredom].*

So, emphasis means that you are passionate, you are interested in your topic. Show your audience [indistinct]. Okay, last thing, please give yourself an applause. Well done.
Students: *[students clap]*

This episode highlights how Sylvester makes a point of offering feedback and praise to the class. At the same time, he is conveying the high expectations he has of them, highlighted by Hattie (2003) as a key characteristic of expert teachers. It was mentioned earlier how Japanese learners are generally hard on themselves, and this was highlighted in an excerpt from the interview with Robert about a student who was suffering from a lack of confidence but was actually doing good work and just needed some encouragement.

Robert: *I was just going to say—just when you talk about particular students, the—for me the most engaged student right now, in a sense, would be the one I've taught before, [student name].*
Researcher: *[student name], . . . I know the name.*
Robert: *And the reason for that is, having taught her before, she had some confidence problems. And I told her last year that she was actually a lot better than she thinks she is.*
Researcher: *Right.*
Robert: *And she did really-really well. She was in my second semester [class name] class.*
Researcher: *[overlap] Oh, so that was the second highest right? So that means she pushed herself up into the highest level European Studies class.*
Robert: *Right. And she's—she's got good studying habits. And not—actually I think a good student who—and in her writing, the stuff she wrote was very interesting and I used to take her aside and ask her about certain things she wrote. Because I said to her: "You can do very well with language study. Don't be so hard on yourself," that kinda of thing.*
Researcher: *Right.*
Robert: *And she seems to have a very positive attitude in class, which is good. And that she can do very well. So she's an interesting one to keep in mind.*

Together, these excerpts indicate that all three teachers express a supportive attitude toward their students through praise and that this is sometimes aimed at the group and other times delivered individually.

5.3.4.3 Expressions of Encouragement. Another supportive attitude exhibited by teachers was their use of encouragement or pep talks. The excerpt above from Sylvester's week ten class was one example. Also, I mentioned earlier how Mariko stressed several times that good readers actively engage with the text, questioning the contents and trying to connect it to their understanding of the world. Again, Amiri talked about how Mariko's small words of encouragement and silence when waiting for students to answer were two ways she promoted a sense of competence. Amiri felt this gave students a little positive pressure to not give up and endeavor to answer. In my conceptual framework, competence is part of the self system that interacts with context (in this case teacher characteristics) to form or strengthen motivation and acts together with other basic psychological needs to strengthen a sense of identity that influences levels of learner investment and the behaviors (actions) they will pursue in the classroom.

I comment on encouragement in my notes from Sylvester's week three class:

> *Sylvester moves from group to group and checks on their progress, answers questions and offers encouragement. He stops students a few times to explain or elaborate on a language point or other issue that one of the groups has struggled with.*

Sylvester says in one of our interviews that he likes to provide positive feedback (during the lessons) and feels this has a good influence on or encourages other students. This is one reason he takes pictures of students' work that is especially good, and shows it to other students (after hiding the name). He says this is a practice he picked up from one of his teacher-trainers in graduate school and that he has used it to good effect, with students normally responding well. He mentioned this as useful for the class in general, with his expectations on display, but especially so for the individual whose work is being shown. He described students as “puffing up” with pride when their work is singled out.

5.3.4.4 Meaningful Feedback. The topic of meaningful feedback is a mainstay in most teacher-training programs, and surfaced in the observations, interviews and journals as another supportive attitude that potentially influences learner engagement. The following two excerpts from Amiri’s learning journal hint at the power of feedback:

> *Thanks to advise and help from the teacher, I could clearly figure out the cause and effect relationship that I was having trouble understanding. I received an extremely useful hint.*

> *The teacher praised us for the picture and summary of the paragraph! Furthermore, the teacher used my . . . our picture and paragraph in her explanation until the end of class.*

Minako expressed her feeling that Robert’s feedback on the e-portfolio and use of examples in week three helped promote feelings of competence for her and some of the classmates that were seated closeby. She mentioned that this is the first time that many of the students had kept an e-portfolio, and she felt there was a general confusion regarding what was expected. The feedback, examples and explanation seemed to have a settling effect. My notes from the vignettes provide another example of how Robert provides feedback, this time with regards to presentations:

> *After groups have finished the first presentation, Robert reminds students that preparing a script helps make the presentation smoother, pushes the boundaries of their vocabulary and sentence structures, and can be used for the e-portfolio. The message is that students who present without preparing a script will rely on words,*

expressions and grammatical structures that they already know (i.e. no language growth). Robert also gives some general feedback on the first round of presentations and encourages students to make the second presentation smoother.

In discussing feedback with Sylvester, the topic came up of how to handle answers that are clearly wrong and those that are slightly off topic or are in the grey zone between right and wrong. Sylvester says he usually tries to find something positive to say at these times but intimated that this was another area that he still struggles with.

5.3.4.5 Sensitivity to Student Needs. A related yet distinct characteristic was teacher sensitivity to student needs. I have mentioned several times that the teachers appear to "read" their students, and there was ample evidence in the teacher interviews where they talked about individual students and how they were succeeding or struggling. In the observations as well, there were signs of the teacher making adjustments to the lesson based on unspoken feedback they were receiving from the students. Mariko's week three class again illustrates this point:

At around forty-five minutes, Mariko comments on the waning energy level in class and tells students to take a short break, get up and walk around, stretch, get some coffee, etc. There is a palpable sigh of relief and the energy level spikes upwards as students move around and talk in Japanese.

Mariko's week nine class offers another example:

Mariko recognizes that students are struggling to stay focused on the reading and uses different strategies to maintain interest. She tries to connect the contents of the reading to Japan and students' realities, offers words of encouragement, and eventually passes around a bag of candies.

We see here examples of Mariko reading the class and using every device at her disposal to keep the learners focused on and invested in the reading. My impression from the video excerpts for these points in the lesson is that this is a huge feat, as students are obviously struggling with the difficult content and having trouble keeping focused in this early morning class. In terms of where in the context-self (motivation) and action (engagement) framework this supportive characterstic fits, this can be interpreted as mainly supporting a sense of relatedness. In discussing the Expo meetings, Sylvester said that the detailed worksheets (mentioned earlier under scaffolding) seem to be working but that the plan is to slowly offer less structure so they don't become too dependent on them. Sylvester also said he tries to offer hints and tries to read students' expressions for signs that they understand the question and/or know the answer.

Most of these characteristics have been hinted at under other headings, but it seems worth mentioning these supportive attitudes or expressions again as very individualistic ways these teachers interact with their students and intentionally and unintentionally promote learner engagement and/or work to avoid disengagement.

5.3.5 Summary

Returning to our question regarding teacher characteristics that influence learner engagement, we have here ample evidence of positive influences that some characteristics have as well as hints at characteristics that might have negative influences on behavioral, cognitive and emotional engagement. At the same time, we have further support for the notion that learner engagement in this context is closely linked to the basic psychological needs of competence and relatedness, while the relationship to the need for autonomy is not as clear cut. Based on the categories that emerged from my analysis of the data, we can visualize these influences along a series of continua, with higher expressions of each teacher charactersitic as promoting engagement and lower expressions as creating a contextual climate conducive to disengagement. However, we need to interpret these findings with caution in that teachers express their preparedness, investment, approachability and supportive attitudes in different ways and also that students do not perceive these expressions uniformly. Several authors have noted the importance of relationships with teachers in the student engagement equation (see, for example, Bryson & Hand, 2007), and we have here the beginnings of a list of characteristics that possibly form the foundation of those relationships.

5.4 SUBSIDIARY RESEARCH QUESTION THREE: IN WHAT WAYS DO CONTEXTUAL FEATURES INFLUENCE LEARNER ENGAGEMENT?

In attempting to answer this question, I again referred first to the vignettes and then to the raw data for classroom observations and interviews, and supplemented this with entries in the learning journals and on the participation sheets as well as my own experiences in the classroom. The main contextual features that came up in my analysis as influencing levels of engagement were physical features, general classroom climate, interlocutors and curriculum and tasks. Outside obligations also came up as strongly influencing levels of engagement, but I will address this separately at the end of this chapter as it is outside the boundaries I established for the study, and teachers in this context likely have little power to influence or change those outside obligations. Time of day also came up as influencing levels of engagement, but I have also judged this as being beyond the scope of this study except to say that it does have an influence and the influence is different for each individual.

5.4.1 Physical Features

The main physical features that potentially influence learner engagement are the classroom size, type of furniture and furniture arrangement, and climatic conditions. Some of this is out of the hands of teachers, but it is useful to consider how these features influence individuals and groups of learners.

Classroom size came up as a feature that influences engagement because the rooms that the two male teachers occupied were rather small and cramped while Mariko's classroom was quite spacious for the sixteen students registered for the course. While the size of the class was not mentioned by any of the participants as having a positive or negative influence on levels of engagement, several entries in my field notes included comments or thoughts on the topic. As I have been teaching in the same program as Robert and Sylvester for some time, I have become accustomed to the size of the rooms there. During the early part of the first visit to Mariko's class I sketched the layout of the room (Fig. 5.4), and noted how far away Mariko seemed to be sitting from the students, who sat mostly to the back and to the right (exit) side of the classroom.

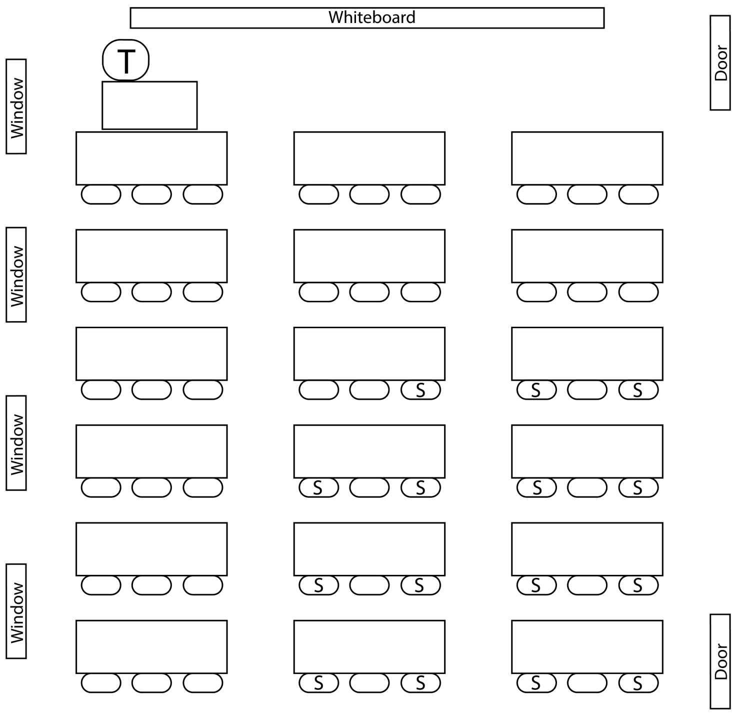


Figure 5.4 Classroom layout - Mariko

I also mentioned several times in my notes Mariko's tendency to retreat to her laptop computer and desk at the front left side of the classroom between short intervals when she would step out towards the students when explaining something or giving directions, or walk around the room checking in with individuals or groups. My interpretation was that the classroom layout promoted this type of action and interaction. The size of the classroom came up again in my second observation (week ten) of Sylvester and his students. The classrooms set aside for language classes in this program normally accommodate twenty or twenty-one students, but classes were oversubscribed (Fig. 5.5) for both Robert (23) and Sylvester (24). Normally, I would observe the class from the seat nearest the back door. However, during this week ten class there were not enough seats so I observed from a standing position in this same corner. I noted that the somewhat cramped conditions in the room seemed to be promoting a sense of solidarity among learners and stronger feelings of relatedness. I based this observation on the joking and jostling when learners had to move around.

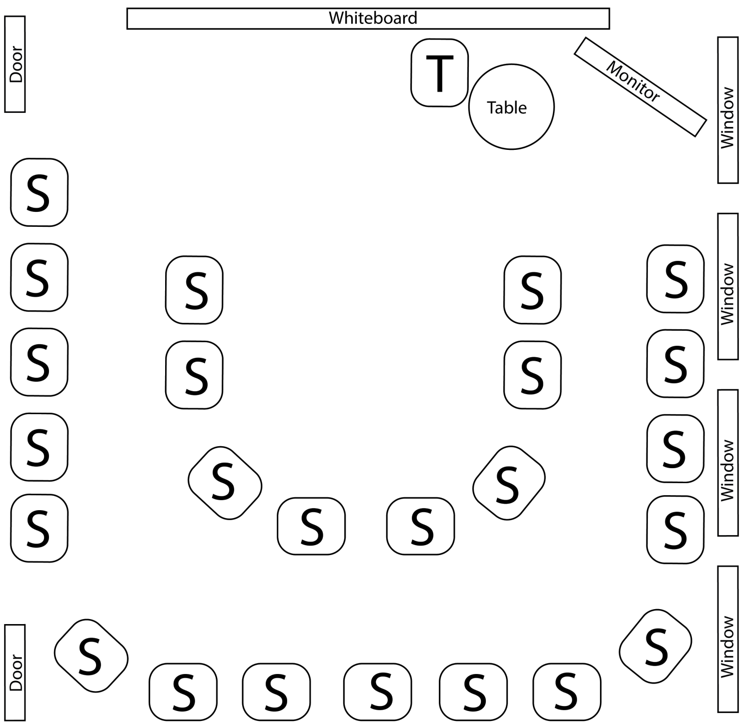


Figure 5.5 Classroom layout - Robert and Sylvester

Another related contextual feature that seemed to be influencing levels of engagement was the type of furniture and furniture arrangement. The starting seating arrangement in Robert's and Sylvester's classroom was nearly identical. The furniture included a large whiteboard at the front of the room, a flat screen monitor, a small round teacher's table, a teacher's chair with rollers, and twenty-plus tablet arm chair desks with rollers for students. As can be seen in Figure 5.5, the student chairs/desks were arranged in two concentric semi-circles open to the front of the classroom. However, this arrangement changed several times as the teacher assigned different pairs or groups of learners to work together. My notes again from Sylvester's week ten class included the following:

> *As each student has a backpack or bag, the room seems quite full, and students have trouble moving to the new positions when reassigned by Sylvester. It does not seem overly crowded though and the close proximity actually seems to promote a sense of camaraderie or closeness both between students and with the teacher.*

Again, I am basing this observation on the joking and jostling that seem to be promoting a sense of relatedness. Conversely, the seating arrangement for Mariko's class was much like that at all of the other universities where I have taught in Japan. Although not bolted into position, the long desks were lined up in neat rows and columns with three chairs per desk all facing the front of the room. The furniture and seating arrangement in this class seemed to create a barrier or distance between the teacher and students, thus diminishing a sense of relatedness. And while there is no direct evidence in my data of this seating arrangement negatively influencing levels of engagement, contrasting the two setups provides a glimpse at how this feature impacts classroom climate.

Furniture (or equipment) other than the seats and tables that may impact learner engagement include white or blackboards, projectors and screens, television monitors and bulletin boards. Mention of these items come up mainly in the descriptions of the classrooms, but I did write in my fieldnotes how each of the teachers use these items to get learners' attention or enrich the learning experience. I have already discussed how Mariko prepares slideshows with questions or prompts to facilitate discussion and comprehension of the texts students are working on in her classroom, how Robert adorns the whiteboard with maps of Europe or other items and uses slideshows related to the content of the course, and how Sylvester introduces bad and good examples of presentations via the supplemental videos and uses Google image searches to assist with vocabulary learning. One potentially intriguing issue that I have not included in my analysis is ways in which teachers use the whiteboard or blackboard, and how this might impact learner engagement. Both Robert and Sylvester had clear outlines and learning objectives for their classes written up on the whiteboard, while Mariko included something similar in her slides for each lesson. Although I noted how the teachers drew students' attention to these items, there was only a slight outwardly noticeable rise in levels of engagement for individuals and the groups.

The other physical feature that came out from the observations and the interviews was climatic conditions, namely temperature and humidity levels. In talking with students after Sylvester's week ten class about influences on engagement, Kana mentioned the weather and humidity as negatively influencing her levels of engagement. It should be noted here that temperatures and humidity levels were both high for a week or so before this class. Also, I commented in all three vignettes for the last round of observations something to the effect that energy levels at this time in the semester were noticeably lower, and that the hot and humid weather seemed to be taking its toll.

5.4.2 Psychological Climate of the Classroom

In the previous section, I described the physical climate. Here, I am introducing the psychological climate. This issue comes up in the literature as related to classroom goal structures (Anderman & Patrick, 2012) as well as emotional climate (Pianta, Hamre & Allen, 2012). Classroom climate is discussed by Pianta, Hamre and Allen (2012) as including:

> *. . . observable behavioral indicators such as the frequency and quality of teachers' affective communications with students (further specified in terms of smiles, positive verbal feedback) as well as the degree to which students appear to enjoy spending time with one another (p. 378).*

Features that came up as contributing to the classroom climate in my study were make-up of the class (specifically member proficiency levels and characteristics), the power of one or two individuals, and the reciprocal nature of investment and engagement.

5.4.2.1 Make-up of the Class. The influences that the make-up of a class have on classroom climate came up in the observations and interviews for all three teachers, with key issues being the gender balance, proficiency levels, willingness to communicate, and age or grade level. The gender balance in Robert's class, with nineteen of the twenty-three learners being female, seemed to have a strong influence on the classroom climate. His comments in our interviews included the recognition of a different dynamic for this group of learners and his struggles with how best to push/pull these learners along. As I was working with this same group of students, I was also trying to interpret the dynamic and did not recognize in this group many students "enjoying" spending time with each other (Pianta, Hamre & Allen, 2012). Norihiko also mentioned the high ratio of girls in this class, especially girls with high

English aptitude, as undermining his sense of competence. He expressed his feelings that students had a fairly good relationship among themselves and with Robert, but that he felt more comfortable working with one of the other male students that he had been in class with the previous semester.

This issue of English proficiency levels also came up as an influence on classroom climate, with comments from learners in all three classes to the effect that individuals with high English proficiency can have either a positive or negative effect on classroom climate, while individuals with low English proficiency have mainly a negative effect. This issue comes up later in the discussion about interlocutors, but these positive or negative influences at the pair or small group level also contribute to the larger classroom climate. Comments by Amiri and Yuri (Mariko), Minako (Robert) and Kana and Go (Sylvester) pointed to the positive influences that one or two high proficiency speakers of English can have on a class, sometimes by providing good examples of spoken interaction when these students interact with the instructor but also in contributing to a challenging atmosphere with higher expectations and thus deeper levels of investment (engagement) for more students.

Conversely, Norihiko (Robert) and Mikiko (Sylvester) expressed that they or their classmates were inhibited from speaking up in English when classmates had superior command of the language. These inhibitions were based on feelings of inadequacy, inferiority or shame, and together threw up a roadblock to engagement. I will discuss later (section 5.4.3) the negative influences of lower proficiency students, but again the micro level (pair or small group) influences contributed to changes at the macro level (whole class) learning climate.

Moving to willingness to communicate—which together with engagement form the action component of my conceptual framework—the interview with Kana and Erika hinted at the strong influence that the collection of classmates has on classroom atmosphere and engagement. Both ladies chimed in on their Japan Studies class where certain students are not focused or invested in the class. They felt these individuals negatively influenced other classmates who were interested and wanted to engage. When pressed on this, they said it was not a problem of poor relationships. Conversely, they said that the members of this class had good relationships and felt that this might be the cause of a negative or unproductive atmosphere in the class. Both Amiri and Yuri mentioned a tendency on the part of Japanese students to shy away from speaking up even when they know the answer. Yuri mentioned often feeling frustrated or uncomfortable when other students don't speak up. She also offered an anecdote of how she helped change the silent, almost dark atmosphere in one of her Chinese classes by working through her frustration and speaking up with her questions. She felt this helped the students bond and they became more positive about asking questions (willingness to communicate). These issues regarding the importance of classmates and context are discussed in both the wider literature (see, for example, Fredricks, 2011) as well as SLA (Eddy-U, 2015).

I have also mentioned elsewhere my observation that certain individuals tend to shut down or disengage as soon as they have completed the minimum requirement of an activity. This tendency can also be interpreted as a lack of willingness to communicate (MacIntyre & Doucette, 2010; Yashima, 2002), and my interpretation is that these individuals are less invested in the activity, class or school (possibly due to the pressures or structure of the education system in Japan) and/or have more of an "English-learner" identity rather than an "English-user" identity. I am reminded here of discussions of communities of practice, especially the concept of trajectory discussed by Wenger (1999). I also commented in my fieldnotes how it is hard for students to engage when their partner shuts down, and also that these groups that do the minimum also influence nearby groups and thus the overall classroom climate.

5.4.2.2 The Power of One or Two Individuals to Influence Willingness to Communicate. This issue was one of the more surprising of the findings for me personally. Kana and Erika discussed in their interview how if there is one person who is persistent about sticking to the English only rule in group work, other members will speak more English and less easily slip into Japanese. Conversely, if there is no one in the group who pushes for English, the conversation moves to Japanese and this negatively influences nearby groups. They said that their classmates did speak English in Sylvester's Business Communication class because there was one member who was persistent about using English. Their earlier comments about the negative influence of the one or two students in the Japan Studies class also hint at the power that one or two individuals have on the classroom climate. Comments by Mariko's students also indicate that some students are put off when classmates talk amongst themselves about unrelated topics during lectures. This kind of atmosphere was mentioned as making it hard to stay engaged.

5.4.2.3 The Reciprocal Nature of Investment and Engagement. One other issue that came up in the classroom observations and interviews as influencing classroom climate was the reciprocal nature of investment and engagement. I am talking here about the reciprocal influences that learners have on each other as well as the reciprocal influences between teachers and students. The earlier discussions on willingness to communicate and the power of one or two individuals hint at these reciprocal influences that learners have on each other. We saw how learners who shut down after the minimal completion of tasks influence their partner or partners to do the same, but this is also reflected back at the learner who initiated the shutdown. I could not transcribe any examples of this (discussed in shortcomings section of my final chapter), but made notes in my observation sheet (46 minute interval) for Robert's day eight class to the effect that:

[student name] seems to have retreated again after finishing the bare minimum. Difficult for her partners to continue, even if they want to. Bad cycle since [student name] now has no incentive to continue.

At the same time, I witnessed several cases where one partner's attempt to engage with the content and/or their partner was picked up on and reflected back at them, creating a virtuous cycle of engagement. My numerous comments in the vignettes regarding the tendency for pairs/groups to slowly begin interacting and then to become increasingly animated and expressive in those interactions provide some evidence of this reciprocal nature. My notes from Robert's week eight class deal with both the positive and negative influences that learners have on each other:

Robert also tries to connect the content of this reading back to the research that students are doing on their EU and non-EU countries. He puts students into groups and asks them to share anything unique or interesting that they have found so far. Some groups dive right in but the majority of students keep their attention focused on their notes or computer screens until they or their partner(s) break the silence. Then, the interactions slowly increase to the point where both partners are contributing and there is a healthy back and forth volley of communication.

Again, some students seem to use body language or mannerisms that say, "leave me alone." This seems to be initiated by one member of the group but is then adopted by their partner(s).

In the first excerpt, the "healthy back and forth volley of communication" involved interupting, questioning and cross-talk. Students were obviously invested (emotionally) in getting their message across or contributing to the interaction. The body language and mannerisms mentioned in the second excerpt included leaning back away from the group and shifting focus to notes, phone or the computer. The teachers in my study also seemed to pick up on learner enthusiasm, investment and engagement and reflect this back at the class. Mariko and Robert made explicit mention of how positive and negative cycles of engagement can be created between themselves and their classes, while this was hinted at in the week fourteen interview with Sylvester. The topic of moods came up and he talked about a recent incident when he unintentionally cut short an interaction with a student because he was occupied with some non-class-related concerns and stress he was feeling to cover the day's material. He mentioned how this normally active student took on a bit of a sullen attitude and did not open up to him or classmates for the rest of the lesson. Although anecdotal, this data hints at the reciprocal nature of classroom engagement and the influences this has at both the individual and group level.

5.4.3 Interlocutors

Another issue that came out of the interviews and has already been hinted at was the importance of the partner (or interlocutor). The main issues related to interlocutors were preparation and again willingness to communicate (or reticence), proficiency levels and a tendency for some learners to shut down. Intuitively, it would seem that conversation partners who had prepared better for certain task or the class in general would help to promote engagement while those who had not would have the opposite effect. Support for this intuitive observation was found in the data, starting with my notes for Mariko's week three class:

> *My impression here was that some students had obviously read in advance and were waiting on their partners while others were seemingly reading for the first time.*

The presentations in Robert's week eight class provided another glimpse at the influences of preparations by the interlocutor. Minako's earlier description of her classmate's small group presentation about Hungary offered a clear indication that well-prepared partners can have a positive impact on learner engagement. Conversely, Go lamented that one member of his group for the Company Expo in Sylvester's class neglected or forgot preparations for their weekly meetings on more than one occasion. Go described his sense of frustration and dips in personal levels of engagement.

> *She bothered our group again. She supposed to check website and bring information about money . . . finance . . . finance data. We were just waiting and have nothing to do . . . this was bad for me. And I think other member is frustrating.*

In the previous sub-section on classroom climate, I mentioned willingness to communicate as a key contributor. This again came out as important when considering specific interlocutors, and appeared in the data via my fieldnotes and as comments by teachers about specific learners. There was one higher level female student in Robert's class who seemed to regularly put up a wall around herself. As with most students in this class, she sat in roughly the same location at the start of all three observations and normally interacted with the same few classmates. Despite her ability to sustain a conversation and expand on topics being discussed, my impressions in the observations was that she would reluctantly complete the minimum requirement of the pair or group task that Robert assigned and then soon retreat behaviorally, emotionally and cognitively by busying herself with other work or her computer. As mentioned, there is a clear reciprocal nature to investment and engagement, but my observations that she was normally the instigator of this quick shutdown was confirmed by Robert. We postulated that her higher proficiency level might be influencing these interactions, either through her own worries about standing out or showing up her interlocutors or her interlocutors' lack of confidence or other insecurities.

On a more positive note, there was ample evidence that greater willingness to communicate on the part of interlocutors contributed positively to levels of engagement. Mariko and I talked about one of the male students who seemed to have trouble focusing during the textbook activities. During the observation, Mariko called on this student to read aloud part of a paragraph just as I was making a note about his body language and apparent lack of engagement. She said that she noticed it too and this was why she had called on him. Soon after this though, when this same student was paired with a particularly talkative classmate for the last activity, his whole demeanor changed. He had an extended dialog with his partner, and facial expressions and body language reflected concentrated attention and focus.

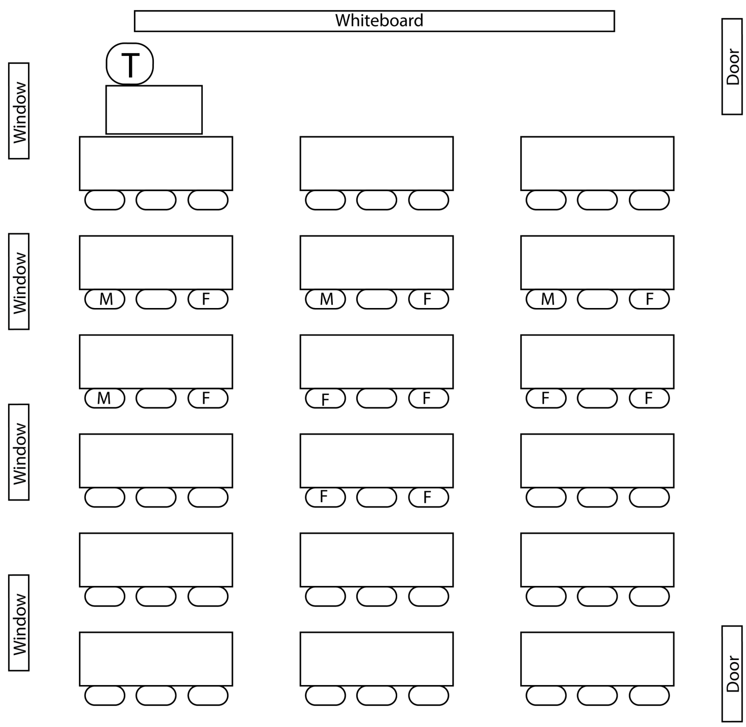


Figure 5.6 Seating arrangement (Mariko - Week 13)

I would also like to mention here how changing interlocutors can impact levels of engagement. This was most evident in the classroom observation sheet data for Mariko's week thirteen class when she forced students into new groupings via the information gap. I mentioned this earlier as one of the most engaging activities in all three classes, and my impression was that this was at least partially due to the new seating arrangement (Fig. 5.6).

I am basing this observation on the body language, facial expressions and verbal interactions just before the move and just after the move. Soon after the move, learners are sitting more attentively, smiling, gesturing and extending their conversations via questioning and elaboration. Again, I do not have any viable transcriptions to support this interpretation (mentioned in shortcomings in the last chapter). Taken together, though, we can see how preparations, willingness to communicate (or tendency toward reticence or closing oneself off), proficiency levels, and seating arrangements combine to make the interlocutor a major contributor to or detractor from engagement. Similar findings are reported in Shernoff (2013).

5.4.4 Curriculum and Tasks

The final contextual feature that I have identified as influencing learner engagement includes both curriculum (macro) and task (micro) level elements. My coding of vignettes and interview transcripts yielded the following categories: Content (Topic/Issue), Delivery (Type of Task), Positioning (Linear Placement), and Difficulty Level. I also present here descriptive statistics for the Task Engagement Questionnaire (TEQ), with my analysis and discussion.

5.4.4.1 Content (Topic/Issue). I have labeled the first two categories of curriculum or tasks in our discussion of contextual influences on engagement as content and delivery. This is basically the what and how at both the macro and micro levels. Looking at the observation sheet data for the second and third observations for each teacher, we see sustained levels (3 or more 2-min. intervals) of high engagement (80% or more students displaying signs of being engaged) during one or two parts of each lesson (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1 Engaging Content During the Second and Third Observations

Case/Observation (Date)	Task	2-Min. Time Intervals (Total)
Robert/2nd (05/27/16)	Student EU Presentations	32-48 (18 min.)
	Class System Reading & Discussion	52-60 (10 min.)
Mariko/2nd (06/08/16)	Research Economic Corridors on Smartphones	32-36 (6 min.)
	Illustration Activity	68-84 (18 min.)
Sylvester/2nd (06/09/16)	Voice Inflection Activity	40-52 (14 min.)
	Textbook Review (Reading to Partner)	54-60 (8 min.)
Mariko/3rd (07/06/16)	Mortality Reading & Discussion (test prep)	22-36 (16 min.)
Sylvester/3rd (07/07/16)	Group Preparation for Final Presentation	24-48 (21 min.)
Robert/3rd (07/08/16)	Peer Review of Essays	12-22 (12 min.)
	Presentation & Class Discussion of Capitalism	38-42 (6 min.)

One thing that stands out in this table is the predominance of group activities (student presentations, discussions, tasks). At the same time, six of these tasks involve some type of reading (either individual or group). One explanation is that these learners are investing (Norton, 2000) themselves in tasks that involve some type of active learning and in topics they are familiar with or that interest them. I commented earlier on Robert's week fourteen class where they were discussing economics. This topic was mentioned by students as being familiar (as economics is part of their overall curriculum), and seemed in my observations to draw many (not all) of the students in. Interest in the topic or issue was another quality that surfaced as a facilitator of engagement. One clear example of this that already came up was the classmate's presentation about Hungary described by Minako, whose interest in the animated films produced in Hungary were the focus of her interest.

One surprise came when talking with Sylvester's students about what influences levels of engagement and the most and least engaging classes this (their third) semester. Erika said that the most engaging for her was Introduction to TOEIC class, which is a test preparation class focused on test strategies and practice. When queried about reasons, she felt the narrow focus on specific grammar points made it easier to concentrate than when the topics or discussion are wide ranging. She also felt the content was relevant for her and her classmates in that they would need to achieve a good score on the TOEIC to help with their job hunting from the following year. These findings lend support to discussions mentioned earlier by Sakui and Gaies (1999) and Yashima (2002) regarding the proclivity toward instrumental over integrative motivational orientations. Kana echoed these feelings but expressed a preference for European Studies because she felt she was learning something new about her EU (The Czech Republic) and non-EU (Norway) countries as well as those of her classmates. We see evidence again that engagement is an individual matter and also that when and where engagement is manifested is linked to motivational orientations. Motivational orientations were investigated by Bailey and Phillips (2015) in relation to well-being among college students. The authors found that intrinsic motivation and sussessful adaptation to school were positively associated with both well-being and school performance.

In the Japanese university EFL context, Yashima and Noels (2009) investigated motivational orientations in relation to language learning anxiety. One significant finding was that women in their study appeared to self-regulate better than their male counterparts in learning English, which may account for gender differences in level of engagement in my study. This was not a focus of my study but might merit further investigation.

5.4.4.2 Delivery (Type of Experience). The type of experience also came up in the observation and interview data as a key element of the context that contributed to or took away from engagement. The delivery (or type of experience) does have some overlap with instructional practices discussed earlier but I decided to list it separately as it clearly is a contextual feature on equal footing with the content. Mariko shared her perspective that the type of activity strongly influences engagement as does the mixture or combination of activities. In my commentary on the vignettes for the first round of observations, I wrote that the highest levels of engagement seemed to be when students were sharing their research (Robert), discussing their own experiences (Mariko) and working on tasks with clear, meaningful goals (Sylvester). This is again bore out in Table 5.1, and the implication here is that engagement promoting experiences are those where learners have some human interaction, have an opportunity to personalize the content, have an understanding of what is expected of them, and perceive alignment with their own interests and goals.

Novelty is another aspect of delivery that seems to influence levels of motivation (at the intersection of context and self) as well as if and how that motivation is translated into engagement (action). The illustration activity in Mariko's week nine class has already been discussed for its engagement boosting qualities. Conversely, Kana's negative comments ("enough already, let's move on") regarding the bad and good video examples are the flip side of the novelty coin. However, in discussing the Introduction to TOEIC class (mentioned above), Erika expressed a preference for simplicity and the predictable routine of solving problems, checking answers, and memorizing words and phrases. Regretably, I was not able to observe those lessons and cannot corroborate any behaviors that confirm deeper levels of engagement.

Finally, several students also mentioned feeling sleepy or bored and thinking about other things during tasks where they were working by themselves in class (e.g. the e-portfolio in Robert's class, and the product presentations in Sylvester's class). I interpret this as resulting from the already mentioned heavy class loads and numerous outside commitments most students have in this context, and base this interpretation on interviews and personal experience. At the same time, these tasks might not have the same relevence for these learners as they do for their more engaged classmates. Another explanation would be that these learners are not self-regulating as well as their classmates.

5.4.4.3 Positioning (Linear Context). Analysing the data, it also became clear that there were contextual influences beyond the task at hand. I will repeat here two episodes that highlighted this for me, both from Sylvester's week ten class. In our follow-up interview, Sylvester expressed that students seemed less responsive than usual that day. In line with my interpretations, he also mentioned the emotional let-down of finishing the Company Expo the previous week as a possible cause. He said this occurred every year. At the same time, Sylvester senses that these students are also tired of (possibly burned out on) giving presentations. Students in this program are required to give several presentations over the first three semesters, many of these are for their English classes, but there are several presentations in their Japanese classes as well. He mentioned that he struggles with how to keep learners motivated and involved during this last stage of their required English courses.

The other episode highlights the power that deeply engaging activities have on subsequent tasks. Readers are reminded of the higher levels of engagement reported for the textbook activity that followed the voice inflection task in this same class. Despite the lower than usual levels of engagement reported by Sylvester at the beginning of class, this voice inflection task (14 consecutive minutes from the 40-minute mark) seemed to pull learners in and this deeper involvement carried over to the following activity where learners were reading to their partners (8 consecutive min. from the 54-minute mark) parts of a chapter summary.

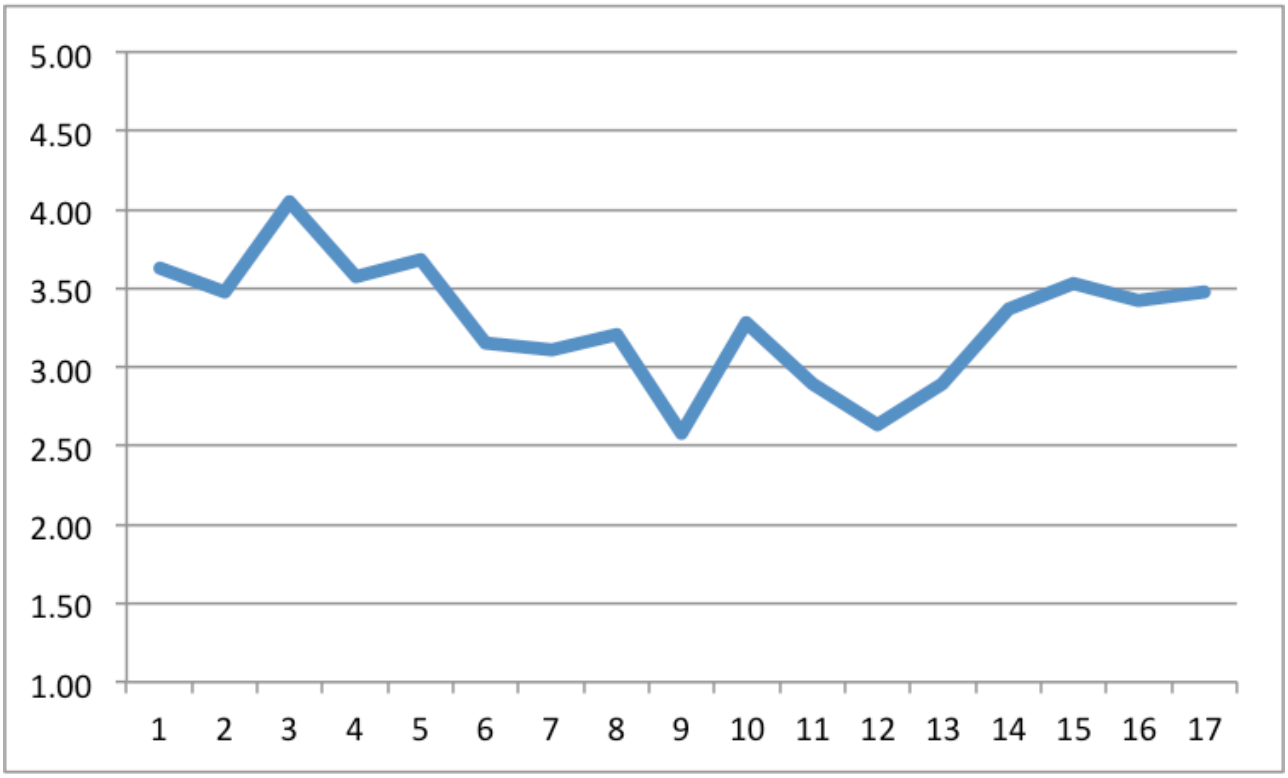
5.4.4.4 Difficulty Level. One other curriculum/task-related contextual feature that came out in the data as influencing levels of engagement was difficulty level. It appears that tasks that are either too easy or too difficult have a negative impact on learner engagement. Both Mariko and Sylvester mentioned specifically that learners often tune out or shut down when questions are too easy. These comments came out in our discussions of the fine line walked by teachers in trying to boost confidence and feelings of competence while at the same time challenging them at the appropriate level. In Mariko's week nine class, she asked students to check with a partner regarding a particularly challenging passage in the text. Despite these instructions, most students continued working by themselves (recorded as low level of engagement at the 50-minute interval and then medium for the following 2 intervals). The following comments from my fieldnotes have already been quoted, but are presented here again to illustrate this point regarding difficulty levels:

> *My impression is that some are not sure how to proceed. The contents are quite challenging, with information about how these economic centers attract global talent and of how global talent is mobile. Mariko recognizes that students are struggling to stay focused on the reading and uses different strategies to maintain interest. She tries to connect the contents of the reading to Japan and students' realities, offers words of encouragement, and eventually passes around a bag of candies.*

Her students Amiri and Maki commented that engagement for this class was as low as four, especially at the beginning and when confronted by longer, more difficult questions. They noticed a clear jump in content difficulty compared to the previous year, and felt that confusion regarding the content resulted in a drop in engagement. Again, low levels of engagement were evident when students were passively listening to the teacher speaking to the group or when the task or materials were either too challenging or too predictable or routine. Returning to my conceptual framework, these variables of content, delivery, positioning and difficulty all seem to be acting at the interface between context and self (motivation) and are translated into action (engagement) via learner investment in material or task.

5.4.5 Task Engagement Questionnaire

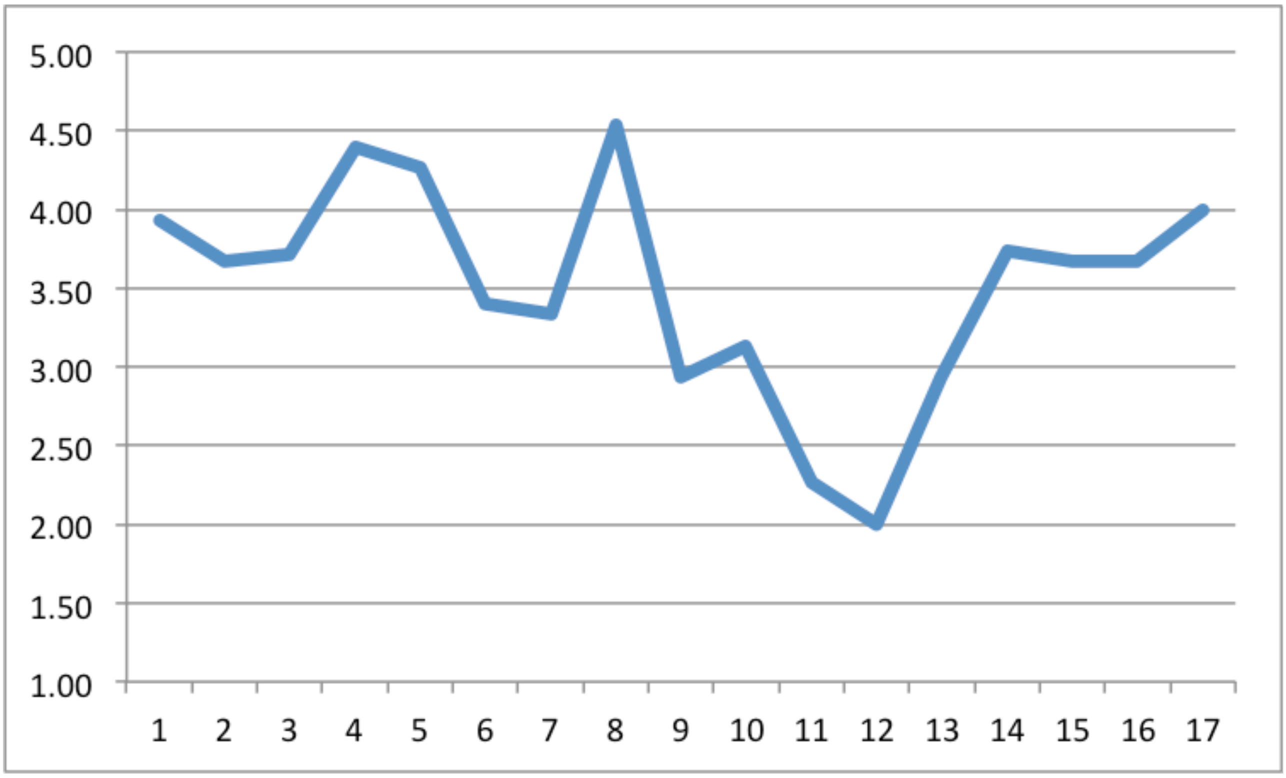
The findings from the TEQ (Appendix 5) also shed light on impact that curriculum or tasks have on learner engagement and can help triangulate other findings. The TEQ includes statements which require answers via rating scale (items 1-17) and short-answer questions (items 18-25) about one specific task (selected by teacher). Appendix 12 includes descriptive statistics for items 1-17. Visual representations of resulting means and standard deviations for each teacher are presented in Figures 5.8 (Robert), 5.9 (Mariko) and 5.10 (Sylvester).



#	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
M	3.63	3.47	4.05	3.58	3.68	3.16	3.11	3.21	2.58	3.28	2.89	2.63	2.89	3.37	3.53	3.42	3.47
STD	0.90	1.07	1.18	1.26	1.06	1.01	1.15	1.47	1.39	1.07	1.33	1.16	1.15	1.16	1.12	1.07	1.02

Figure 5.7 Task Engagement Questionnaire Data (Robert)

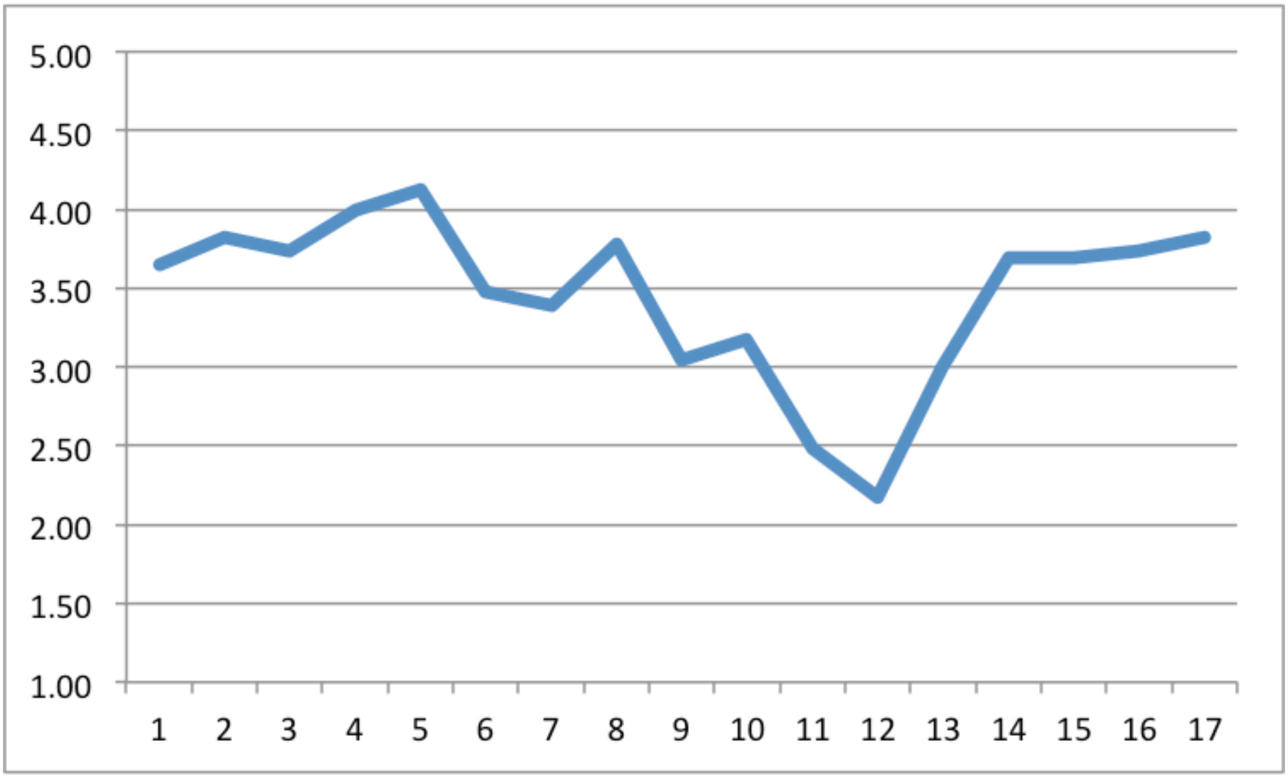
The task for Robert's day fourteen European Studies class was an interactive mini-lecture on historical developments of economic theory in Europe. This data for Robert shows the narrowest range in responses among the three teachers, with highest level of agreement for item 3 (*I will use the things I learned in this task outside of the classroom*) and the lowest level of agreement on items 9 (*I was interested in this task because other students in the class were interested*) and 12 (*During this task I was aware of distractions*). A simple interpretation of the high response for item 3 would be that learners generally recognize the value of the learning outcomes (knowledge and skills) for this task. Again, the content from this mini lecture was somewhat related to their general course of studies in this program. I interpret the lower mean score for item 9 as related to the psychological need for autonomy, with lower scores representing learner's desire for or belief of being in control of their own interest levels. While item 12 hints at mild states of flow, with learners reporting low levels of distraction, low scores for item 13 indicate low levels of absorbtion in the activity and lack of flow.



#	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
M	3.93	3.67	3.71	4.40	4.27	3.40	3.33	4.53	2.93	3.13	2.27	2.00	2.93	3.73	3.67	3.67	4.00
STD	0.80	1.05	0.91	0.83	0.70	0.91	0.98	0.64	1.33	0.92	0.70	0.65	0.96	0.80	0.82	0.98	0.76

Figure 5.8 Task Engagement Questionnaire Data (Mariko)

The task for Mariko's day thirteen Intensive Reading class was the information gap mentioned several times above as being one of the most engaging. The results for Mariko show the highest rates of agreement for items 4 (*The content of this task was meaningful to me.*), 5 (*I was challenged by this task*) and 8 (*I received the help that I needed to do this task*). On the low side, we can see item 12 (*During this task I was aware of distractions*). Again, learners seem to recognize the value of the learning outcomes. At the same time, they report being challenged while not experiencing great levels of distraction. The relatively high response for item 8 was interesting in that the teacher did not provide much support for this activity. Students here are likely reporting the help they were receiving from classmates (mentioned on the participation sheets), hinting at satisfaction of the need for relatedness.



#	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
M	3.65	3.83	3.74	4.00	4.13	3.48	3.39	3.78	3.04	3.17	2.48	2.17	3.00	3.70	3.70	3.74	3.83
STD	1.07	0.83	1.10	0.85	0.69	1.04	1.08	1.04	1.02	0.98	1.04	0.94	1.17	0.93	0.93	0.81	0.72

Figure 5.9 Task Engagement Questionnaire Data (Sylvester)

Finally, the activity for Sylvester's week fourteen Business Communication class was group preparation (with some individual work) for the following week's presentation. We again see items 4 (*The content of this task was meaningful to me.*) and 5 (*I was challenged by this task*) in the high range, indicating a similar recognition of the value of the task and some degree of challenge. The relatively low rating for item 12 (*During this task I was aware of distractions*) during this activity was a bit surprising in that individual work (which occupied a large portion of this activity) was mentioned in the interviews and journals as less engaging. One possible explanation was that students realized this was one of the last chances to prepare for their final presentations and thus immersed themselves in both the individual and group parts of the task.

Responses from items 18 to 25 are presented in Table 5.2 (Robert), Table 5.3 (Mariko) and Table 5.4 (Sylvester).

Table 5.2 Task Engagement Questionnaire – Short Answers (Robert)

18	What in this task did you find challenging? - Of the nineteen responses, the poster presentation was mentioned four times while the e-portfolio, researching and reporting on the countries, and dealing with new or difficult vocabulary were all mentioned as challenging three times. There was one mention each of communism, merchantilism and the economic content.
19	What did you find that was boring or too easy? - Most respondents left this item blank or listed nothing as being boring or too easy. Art was mentioned three times, and politics was mentioned once. One respondent wrote that they could not understand the English and that not being able to envision what was being expressed made the activity boring.
20	What was too hard or that you didn't have the appropriate skills or knowledge for? - There were a range of responses for this item, including mentions of the persuasive essay, e-portfolio, researching or understanding politics, understanding words or expressions, and lack of experience in evaluating/interpreting art. Several people also mentioned the heavy workload or outside commitments.
21	What made this task interesting or not interesting to you? - Most responses were positive, with individuals expressing interest in learning about the countries and the topics of Adam Smith, European history, and economic theory. There were several mentions of learning something new or important. Politics was the only thing mentioned as being uninteresting.
22	What helped you to focus on this task? - The teacher and classmates again accounted for the majority of responses. The teacher's additional stories and explanations were singled out as especially helpful. Interest in the topic, deadlines and the internet were each mentioned once.
23	What, if anything, made you lose focus during this task? - Several respondents left this item blank or listed nothing as making them lose focus. Sleepiness was mentioned three times. Thinking about other classes, people passing by outside the class, unknown words or expressions, and classmates speaking in Japanese were also mentioned.
24	What parts of the task did you have control over? - The range of responses dealt with being able to express one's own opinions, the portfolio, the poster

	(including design and contents), discussions, and how to go about completing the various tasks.
25	What parts of the tasks could you not control? - Again, the majority of respondents left this item blank or listed nothing as being out of their control. Other responses included compiling notes (presumably for the e-portfolio), the meaning of communism, and inability to meet deadlines, using adjectives in their writing, and managing their time.

My general impression was that these responses provided further support for three of the curriculum and task variables identified in the observations and interviews as influencing learner engagement (i.e. content, delivery, difficulty), with the issue of positioning not coming up. At the same time, most of these learners seem to value the learning outcomes and have internalized or integrated forms of extrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000) with regard to course content. The important role of the teacher and classmates (relatedness) was again highlighted and the answers to number 24 hint at a variety of ways in which these learners are expressing their agency (Reeve, 2012). Finally, there are obviously a few students who are experiencing engagement in these classes differently from their classmates.

Table 5.3 Task Engagement Questionnaire – Short Answers (Mariko)

18	What in this task did you find challenging? - Of the fifteen responses, roughly half mentioned explaining to others (6) and the other half listed understanding the text (9).
19	What did you find that was boring or too easy? - A large majority of responses mentioned nothing as being boring or too easy. One response was that just reading the text was boring, and another mentioned discussion time as being too long.
20	What was too hard or that you didn't have the appropriate skills or knowledge for? - Most responses (8) dealt with the difficulty of vocabulary, expressions or text. Two responses mentioned interpreting information in graphs.
21	What made this task interesting or not interesting to you? - A majority of responses (9) mentioned group discussions as interesting. Nothing was mentioned as not interesting. Other responses were, "intensive reading," "the subject is related to our life," and "the content."
22	What helped you to focus on this task? - Almost all responses listed teacher (10) and/or classmates (6). The break time and sweets offered by the

	teacher were each mentioned once.
23	What, if anything, made you lose focus during this task? - The majority of responses touched on sleepiness or tiredness, while there were four responses that nothing made them lose focus. The heat and humidity were listed twice and one respondent mentioned feeling sick.
24	What parts of the task did you have control over? - Several responses dealt with having control of how to interpret and discuss the content. Other comments were related to taking notes, making illustrations, and having control of reading the text (e.g. speed)
25	What parts of the tasks could you not control? - Most responses were that no parts of the task were out of their control, but there were two mentions of not being able to express themselves in English. Understanding the contents of the reading was mentioned once.

Looking at Mariko's data, we have further support for other findings regarding a preference for group discussions. Some of these responses here also lend support for including both physical and psychological climate as contextual influences on learner engagement. Additionally, several of these learners report being challenged by the level of the reading material in this class, but also seem to enjoy the autonomy afforded by interpreting and discussing these reading passages with classmates.

Table 5.4 Task Engagement Questionnaire – Short Answers (Sylvester)

18	What in this task did you find challenging? - Of the twenty-three responses, there were several mentions of the presentation slides or script (5) and groupwork (5), including negotiating, roles or decision making. Expressing oneself in English was also mentioned by four respondents. Other comments dealt with researching overseas businesses, deciding new products or functions.
19	What did you find that was boring or too easy? - Several respondents (8) reported that nothing was boring or too easy, with comments that all contents were relevant or meaningful. Only one mention was made that the contents were not meaningful, while one other respondent said that the task (or class) was "unbelievably difficult." Other comments included the interview, interview sheet, watching the video, making slides, and searching for information as boring or too easy. One respondent mentioned here and in other places that their team struggled with finding new functions for the product they were assigned which was a washing machine.
20	What was too hard or that you didn't have the appropriate skills or knowledge for?

	- The presentation (including research, making slides and generating ideas) was listed most often (10). Group work (deciding roles, decision making) was again listed here, and four respondents made explicit mention of English ability. There were also two mentions of the lack of creativity or imagination.
21	What made this task interesting or not interesting to you? - Group work again came up frequently in the responses, including mentions of partner's opinions or creativity made the task interesting. The presentation was mentioned as interesting by some respondents but not interesting by others. There were two comments where it was not clear. Singled out as especially interesting were thinking about their own product, exchanging ideas with partners, researching the products, comparing products, gaining new knowledge and the topic itself.
22	What helped you to focus on this task? - The teacher (8) and/or classmates (8) accounted for the majority of responses. Other responses included being able to present on something that was personally meaningful, the necessity of time management, moving on to the next steps after deciding on the function, one's own will, an understanding that the contents would be useful in future negotiations with people from overseas, the efforts of others, and personal perseverance. One person mentioned they could not focus because the topic/content was too difficult.
23	What, if anything, made you lose focus during this task? - Seven respondents listed nothing as making them lose focus. The range of other respondents included time pressure or feelings of impatience/edginess, lack of English ability, lack of information during research, technology (smart phone or computer), people walking by outside, unfamiliar topics/information, and friends.
24	What parts of the task did you have control over? - The majority of responses were related to the slideshow presentation, including the contents, design and script. The interview sheet, consulting with the teacher, expressing opinions, deciding which skills required attention or brushing up, thinking or sharing ideas, and team meetings.
25	What parts of the tasks could you not control? - Eight responses listed nothing as being out of their control. Mention was also made of the slideshow presentation, specifically the contents, design, other members part, and overall flow. I interpreted this discrepancy with number 24 as reflecting certain members as taking the lead or pushing forward their ideas while others were conceding. Other comments dealt with not being able to find alternative functions (washing machine) or control other people's contribution/effort.

I am not sure if this represents contrasting opinions, but group work is mentioned in these responses as both too hard and interesting. It may be that the lower proficiency students are reporting frustration or stress while the more proficient students are enjoying the group interactions more. As the TEQ was completed anonomously, I cannot confirm that impression. My general understanding here is that this group of learners values the learning outcomes for the course and interpret the content as meaningful. This is not unanimous though and there are two, possibly three, individuals who either don't find the task or content meaningful or who feel they are being challenged beyond their comfort zone (i.e. psychological need of competence is not being met). Again, we have support for the highly engaging nature of group work for most, but not all, learners.

It thus appears that both content (what) and delivery (how) of tasks and the curriculum influence engagement in different ways. At the same time, the positioning of a task within the overall curriculum or the individual lesson plan can influence how individuals or groups experience engagement. Finally, tasks or materials that are too easy or difficult are experienced as less engaging, making it imperative that teachers finely match the level of challenge to the current skills of learners as described by Csikszentmihalyi (1990) in his theory of flow. How this is done will depend on the context, content and learners.

5.4.6 Summary

It became apparent that each of the participants has a life outside the classroom that influences their psychological states they bring to class. Still, I believe my analysis has identified several key contextual features of the classroom that influence levels of engagement. Specifically, it appears that physical features, psychological climate, interlocutors and instructional content combine at the interface between context and self to determine levels of classroom engagement (at both the individual and group level), possibly through their influences on identity and investment. There are likely other contextual features which influence learner engagement that fall outside the above-mentioned categories, and further situation-specific studies will be required to uncover these. However, we have here the foundations of a theoretical framework of potential contextual influences on learner engagement in the university EFL class in Japan. Information related to the specific features for each category could, for example, be used to visualize relative supports and thwarts for engagement via radar graphs or some other visual representation.

In setting out on this research project, I fixed the boundaries for the study to what goes on in the EFL classroom at universities in Japan. However, some contextual features outside the boundaries of our study that also came out as impacting levels of engagement are the heavy class loads at most Japanese universities and the competing priorities held by individual learners. I will have to leave these for future studies.

5.5 MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION: HOW IS "LEARNER ENGAGEMENT" EXPERIENCED IN UNIVERSITY EFL CLASSROOMS IN JAPAN?

Returning to our overarching question for the study, we see that instructional practices, teacher characteristics and contextual features combine to shape learner experiences in the Japanese university EFL classroom. We saw that active interactions with fellow learners and the teacher offer the most engaging experiences, and that instructional practices that are personalized, meaningful (relevant to the learners' realities) and authentic promote the highest levels of engagement. In terms of teacher characteristics that influence learner engagement, we discussed positive influences that some characteristics have as well as characteristics that might have negative influences on engagement. Based on the categories that emerged from my analysis of the data, it is theorized that higher or fuller expressions of these teacher characteristics (professionalism, investment, approachability, supportive attitudes) would potentially lead to higher levels of engagement (again, via investment) while lower or weaker expressions would lead to lower levels of engagement. Finally, my analysis identified several key contextual features within the boundaries of the EFL classroom that influence levels of engagement. Specifically, it appears that both content (what) and delivery (how) of tasks and the curriculum influence engagement in different ways. At the same time, the positioning of a task within the overall curriculum or the individual lesson plan can influence how individuals or groups experience engagement. Tasks or materials that are too easy or difficult are experienced as less engaging, making it imperative that teachers finely match the level of challenge to the current skills of learners as described by Csikszentmihalyi (1990) in his theory of flow. The findings above also appear to lend support for theorizing teacher characteristics as a mediator between engagement and the other influences. In other words, teacher characteristics can be used to leverage contextual features and instructional practices to maximize learner engagement and mitigate disengagement.

The various data also support the notion that learner engagement in this context is closely linked to the basic psychological needs of competence and relatedness, while the relationship to the need for autonomy was slightly less convincing. Returning to the work of Crookes and Schmidt (1991) reviewed in chapter three, the findings outlined above appear to lend support for their four motivational factors of interest, relevance, expectancy and satisfaction. These same motivational factors seem to describe how engagement or disengagement are manifested in these classrooms, and it is the learners' perceptions of how interesting and relevant the classroom instruction is, and how well the instructional practices and contextual features meet their expectations. It is not clear if the basic psychological needs were part of the authors' concept of satisfaction, but it has helped describe how learners experience the instructed EFL classrooms in this study. In my conceptual framework, these variables would again be somewhere at the intersection between context (instructional strategies, teacher characteristics, contextual features) and self (competence, autonomy, relatedness), and influence engagement via learner identity and investment.

Readers are reminded of the description by Dörnyei (2001) that "motivation explains *why* people decide to do something, *how* hard they are going to pursue it and *how long* they are willing to sustain the activity” (p. 7). This definition seems to imply the following relationship:

Motivation + Engagement => L2 Acquisition

A clearer understanding of the relationship in these classes though needs to account for the various facilitators of and thwarts to engagement, and how this can influence both L2 learning motivation and acquisition. A better representation of the interrelated phenomenon would be:

Motivation <=> Engagement <=> L2 Acquisition

Again, the current study made no attempt to measure actual L2 acquisition but proceeded on the assumption that higher quality engagement leads to higher quality language learning. This second model highlights the reciprocal influences that motivation and engagement have on each other as well as the bi-directional influences between engagement and L2 acquisition (both mentioned in Skinner & Pitzer, 2012). However, we must also recognize that L2 acquisition influences motivation directly without the mediation of engagement, and can thus conceptualize the relationship as follows:

Motivation <=> Engagement <=> L2 Acquisition => Motivation

We have here a more cyclical conception of motivation, engagement and L2 acquisition. With this conceptualization, we can apply the findings from the current study to a model of EFL classroom engagement as represented visually in Figure 5.10.

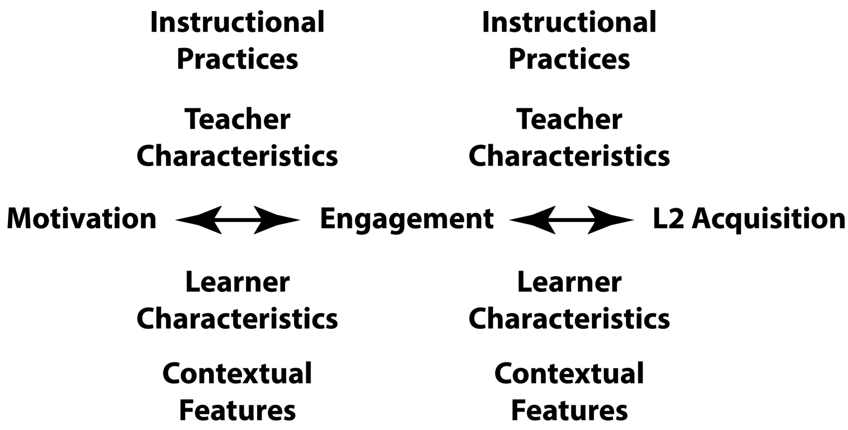


Figure 5.10 Theoretical model of influences on EFL classroom engagement

This theoretical model attempts to capture the major influences on motivation, engagement and L2 acquisition during instructed EFL. Although the current study did not include data on L2 acquisition, this model rests on the assumption that high quality engagement leads to high quality acquisition through improved retention and learning. This conceptualization also highlights how instructional practices are mediated by teacher characteristics while contextual features are mediated by learner characteristics, and how these classroom influences occur both where/when motivation is translated into engagement (possibly via identity and investment) and where/when engagement facilitates L2 acquisition.

Another finding from the study was the wide range of expressions of engagement in this context. The outward signs of engagement (body language, facial expressions, quantity and quality of discourse) expressed by these learners hint at a range of individual experiences. As mentioned earlier, with the more situated analysis of motivation in classroom settings discussed by Ushida and Dörnyei (2012), attention was drawn to the unstable nature of motivation. We see this instability when using outward signs of engagement as an indicator of motivation. The same classroom activity can result in a range of levels of engagement, while the same learner can express differing degrees of engagement during different points in the lesson.

Theorizing engagement and disaffection as lying at two ends of a continuum (Connell, 1990; Connell & Wellborn, 1991; Skinner & Belmont, 1993) also seems to work in this context, with the various data revealing quite convincingly the behavioral involvement in learning, positive emotions, and perseverance in the face of challenge (engagement) as well as passivity, lack of effort, boredom, lack of persistence, and negative emotions (disengagement or disaffection) described by these authors. Although the above findings lend support for viewing learner engagement in this context using the well-established tripartite of behavioral, cognitive and emotional dimensions, the inclusion of agentic engagement as proposed by Reeve (2012) seems to provide a fuller picture of how engagement is experienced in this context. Additionally, the issue of "grain size" does deserve consideration, and while my analysis shifted in focus between the meso (classroom) and micro (task) levels, deeper analysis would benefit from limiting the focus of investigations in terms of both dimension and grain size.

I mentioned in the introduction my belief that a focus on learner experiences would help in answering my research questions and gaining a better overall understanding of what learner engagement looks and feels like in my teaching context. Looking at the data using the framework of "realms of experience" proposed by Pine and Gilmore (1999) in their experience economy theory, we find some intriguing perspectives on what makes certain classroom tasks and interactions more or less engaging. The four quadrants formed by the vertical continuum (absorption at the top and immersion at the bottom) and horizontal continuum (ranging from passive participation on the left to active participation on the right) can be used to describe different parts of these lessons. We see certain examples such as the light emission video in Mariko's class where students are mostly passive but absorbed in the task (i.e. entertainment). At the same time, we saw examples where students were more active and absorbing the experience (i.e. educational) such as Sylvester's voice inflection activity.

Then, there were the peer presentations in Robert's class were listeners were in a passive role but immersed in the task (i.e. esthetic). Each of these activities seems to have been engaging for different reasons, and I imagine tasks where the learners are both active and immerse themselves (i.e. escapist) might result in even deeper engagement. Again, the authors highlight that the most powerful, rich experiences are those that cross, or reach, into all four realms. Although there were no examples of tasks or activities that achieved this goal, this framework has potential for developing some powerful, highly engaging L2 classroom experiences.

Moving to Fink's (2003) theory of significant learning experiences, we see examples in the classroom observation data of each of the different kinds of learning included in his taxonomy of learning. Specifically, there were parts of each class that represented foundational knowledge (with Robert's mini lecture standing out), application (especially the group meetings and presentations in Sylvester's class), integration (the link with economics classes), the human dimension (group learning), as well as caring and learning how to learn (both of which were addressed implicitly or explicitly by all three teachers in their teacher talk). The issue though is that we don't see more than a couple of these kinds of learning in any one task. The challenge would be to design into tasks/lessons each of these kinds of learning to achieve that sweet spot of significant learning (and deeper engagement) discussed by Fink (2003). Although slightly tangential, these different types of learning would be included as instructional practices and contextual features that interact with self to form motivation in my conceptual model (section 3.6).

5.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

As mentioned in the introduction, the aim of this research journey was to gain a better understanding of the what and how of learner engagement in university EFL classes in Japan. The "why" at the heart of this investigation was to help learners and teachers toward more meaningful and productive language learning encounters in the classroom. In this chapter, I reported on findings as related to the research questions and analyzed them using the conceptual framework outlined in the literature review. At the same time, I have attempted to describe how these findings might advance our theoretical understanding of SLA in this specific context as well as practical guidance that students and teachers might glean from these cases.

Returning to chapter two (Thesis in Context), findings from this study have also highlighted for me how some learners in this context lack the desire and/or incentive to persist in their language learning endeavors. This lack of desire/incentive presents teachers with particular challenges, but hopefully this study has resulted in some insight into how these challenges might be overcome. I will return to this discussion in the next chapter where I present some concluding remarks, acknowledge some of the shortcomings of the current study and point to some pedagogical implications.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS, CONSIDERATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The title of this thesis is “An Experiential Look at Learner Engagement in University EFL Contexts in Japan.” I attempted throughout to maintain a focus on what kind of experiences learners were having in their English classes, especially how learners in three second-year, required EFL classes in Japan “experienced” classroom and task engagement. With the understanding that individual learners arrive in these classes with a variety of past experiences, personality traits, attitudes and beliefs, I have attempted to uncover when and how EFL classroom engagement is heightened or hobbled. That is to say, what are the facilitators or triggers of classroom engagement and disengagement? I have adopted the theoretical framework of SDT (Deci & Ryan, 2000), specifically the basic psychological needs of competence, autonomy and relatedness, and augmented it with the concepts of identity and investment from SLA research and beyond (Deakin Crick, 2012; Fredericks, Blumenfeld & Paris, 2004; McKay & Wong, 1996; Norton & Toohey, 2011). In terms of indicators of classroom engagement, I have referenced mainly the three well-established types or dimensions of engagement (behavioral, cognitive, emotional), while recognizing that other dimensions exist such as academic, social and agentic engagement. Each dimension of engagement was operationalized as the outward expression of that engagement. Returning to the journey metaphor, this chapter represents our return home. We can think of this as the unpacking, reflecting on the overall journey, lamenting over missed opportunities, and initial planning for future trips. I offer here a summary of the overall aims of the research, how I structured the study, how I positioned myself within the study, answers to the three subsidiary questions as well as the umbrella question of how learner engagement is experienced in my teaching context, how the chosen conceptual framework helped in answering those questions, some shortcomings of my study and implications for both teachers and researchers.

6.2 BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH

A major impetus for setting out on this research journey was to find ways that I might help my own learners with their language learning endeavors and ways in which fellow language teachers in Japan and beyond might better promote language learning in their classes. My reading on the topics of learner engagement and L2 learning motivation convinced me of the following:

1. learner engagement theory is a hot topic and continues to mature in the fields of educational psychology and developmental psychology,
2. SLA research is dominated by the motivation construct, with much of the theorizing based on cross-sectional quantitative studies using psychometric survey instruments and inferential statistical analysis,
3. L2 teachers and researchers would benefit from a better understanding of the relationship between motivation and engagement,
4. SDT and the basic psychological needs of competence, autonomy and relatedness can help explain the various influences on learner engagement, and
5. context-specific, qualitative investigations of learner engagement can advance theorizing on classroom SLA while providing practical advice for classroom practitioners.

Based on findings from the literature review and my past experiences in the classroom, I decided to focus my investigation on how learner engagement is experienced in university EFL classes in Japan. Recognizing that learner engagement is experienced at different levels or grain sizes (e.g. school engagement, class engagement, task engagement), I decided to focus my analysis on classroom (meso) level engagement but at the same time check links to both school (macro) and task (micro) level engagement. I deemed it important to concentrate on learner experiences, as this perspective is underrepresented in existing studies. However, I understand classroom engagement as a dialogical co-construction of meaning between teachers and learners and thus decided to also explore teacher perspectives.

As mentioned in chapter two (Thesis in Context), Japanese test takers tend to underperform on international English proficiency tests. Several barriers to successful target-language acquisition were mentioned, including English for test purposes, the predominance of reading-translation pedagogies, and resulting negative language-learning attitudes and beliefs. A better understanding of learner engagement should help teachers and learners to overcome some of those barriers, and I thus decided to approach this as an exploratory study of key elements and how they interact. The dearth of this type of study was mentioned by Deakin Crick (2012), who wrote, ". . . studies have focused on particular elements of engagement, and few, if any, have attempted to look at engagement from the perspective of all the relevant elements and the patterns and relationships between them" (p. 676). Although "all of the relevant elements" was an immoderate target, I embarked on this exploratory study to find out qualitatively how learner engagement is experienced in my teaching context. In the next section, I layout the research design and how the research methods helped me to answer this question.

6.3 RESEARCH DESIGN AND THE RESEARCHER

To clarify how learner engagement is experienced in university EFL classes in Japan, I decided on three subsidiary questions related to influences on engagement found in published reports. Specifically, I identified instructional practices, teacher characteristics and contextual features as potentially impacting learner engagement in either positive or negative ways. To find out how these elements interact with each other and influence learner engagement, I wanted to capture the perspectives and understandings of teachers and learners in this context. Thus, I decided on a phenomenographic case study design using classroom observations (video recorded) and follow-up interviews (audio recorded) with teachers and students. Eventually, I was able to observe three teachers and their learners at the beginning, middle and end of a fifteen-week term in the Spring of 2016, and used a modified version of an established classroom observation protocol for the second and third rounds of observations. I supplemented these observations and interviews with two questionnaires and other course-related documents, including participation sheets that students filled out after every session for one of the teachers. Additionally, I asked one learner from each of the classes to journal about all of their English classes for one full week around the middle of the semester.

I began transcribing verbatim the recordings of classroom observations and interviews as soon as the first round of observations was completed, and at the same time began some surface level analysis via memos and annotations. I began content analysis of the transcripts once they were uploaded to NVivo. The three rounds of observations resulted in more than thirteen hours of video recordings, while the interviews resulted in almost the same amount of audio recordings. It became apparent that some type of data reduction would be required, and I decided that writing up vignettes for each of the observations was the most pragmatic approach to this. These vignettes included descriptions of the physical setting, classroom activities and participant interactions, as well as teacher and learner perspectives from the interviews, my own initial interpretations, and areas for further analysis.

My review of existing literature on qualitative research approaches and the case study method of inquiry impressed upon me the need to carefully consider the role I would play in the research, i.e. how I would position myself. As I have been teaching EFL for approximately thirty years, with nearly twenty of those years in the Japanese university EFL context, I felt my experiences might inform the investigation but also that these same experiences might create some blind spots. To mitigate some of the potentially negative effects of my previous knowledge and experience of the context, I made every effort to set aside or question my assumptions or interpretations when gathering and analyzing data.

6.4 ANSWERING THE THREE SUBSIDIARY QUESTIONS

My operationalization of engagement evolved into a combination of willingness to communicate and outward signs of cognitive or emotional investment, including (1) how quickly, how extensively and how persistently learners communicate with their partners and/or teacher, (2) movement of gaze over the page and annotating or note-taking, and (3) expressions of emotion through facial expressions and body language. Although I approached the analysis of the three influences (instructional practices, teacher characteristics, contextual features) separately, it must be noted that there is often overlap and the three often combine in complex ways to either boost or hinder engagement. I touch on this again below in reviewing answers to my main research question. Table 6.1 provides an overview of findings in list form.

Table 6.1 Influences on Learner Engagement

Instructional Practices	- strategic use of pair and group work - patterns or rhythms of instruction (pulling learners in with quizzes or tests, mixing it up, well-timed shifts,) - questioning style - scaffolding techniques * passive forms of learning and tasks/materials that are too easy, difficult or predictable
Teacher Characteristics	- teacher professionalism and preparedness - teacher investment in students, classes, program - approachability - supportive attitudes (autonomy support, use of praise, expressions of encouragement, meaningful feedback, sensitivity to student needs)

Contextual Features	- physical features - psychological classroom climate (make-up of the class, the power of one or two individuals, the reciprocal nature of investment and engagement) - interlocutors - instructional content (topic/issue, type of experience, linear context, difficulty level)

* Negative influences

6.4.1 In what ways do instructional practices influence learner engagement?

One convincing finding from the study was the general preference for active types of learning and well-structured pair and group work. Instructional practices identified as having a positive influence on learner engagement were those that were personalized, meaningful and appropriately scaffolded. These findings are supported in both mainstream educational literature and SLA (see, for example, Gettinger & Walter, 2012; Egbert & Roe, 2014). With the understanding that second language learning in this context is not itself intrinsically motivating, teachers will need to find ways to help these learners with the identified or integrated regulation discussed by Deci and Ryan (2000). Assor (2012) addresses this issue in stating, “when students are provided with clear and convincing rationale for actions they do not find particularly interesting or valuable, they tend to feel less coerced” (p. 426). The use of novel instructional practices also came up as positively influencing learner engagement, but at the same time there were learners who expressed an appreciation for instructional practices that are familiar, clearly understandable and predictable. The general importance of instructional practices is also highlighted in Hattie (2003).

6.4.2 In what ways do teacher characteristics influence learner engagement?

My interpretation of the data pointed to teacher preparedness, investment in the students and in teaching, approachability and supportive attitudes as influencing learner engagement in this context. I also theorized that higher or fuller expressions of all of the above characteristics would likely impact learner engagement in positive ways and lower or weaker expressions would likely impact learner engagement in negative ways. Interestingly, teacher characteristics seem to mediate both instructional practices and contextual features. By this I mean that teacher characteristics can act as an amplifier or filter/barrier to learner experiences of engagement with certain instructional practices or contextual features. These findings align with discussions in Hattie (2003) regarding the difference between expert and experienced teachers.

6.4.3 In what ways do contextual features influence learner engagement?

Contextual features seem to influence learner engagement in this context in several ways, mainly as the backdrop for the instructional practices and teacher characteristics but also more directly or forcefully as when the conversation partner is particularly engaging (or not) or when the contents of the lesson are highly interesting and relevant (or not). The main contextual features that came up in my analysis as influencing levels of engagement were physical features, general classroom climate, interlocutors and curriculum and tasks. These features are also included in discussions in Bundick, M. J., Quaglia, R. J., Corso, M. J. & Haywood, D. E. (2014) as well as DeWaelsche (2015). Although there are limitations on what instructors can do to manipulate some of these contextual features, a better understanding of the various influences can help teachers to make better classroom decisions. Another contextual feature that surfaced as influencing learner engagement was the positioning of the task or activity within the overall curriculum and lesson plan for that day. The findings related to the negative impact of tasks or materials that are either too easy or too challenging align with ideas from flow theory (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). At the same time, interviews with students hinted at the significance of peer pressure, mentioned by Betts (2012) as sometimes discouraging learners from participating and even actively to “act dumb” or “devalue educational attainment in general” (p. 786). Betts (2012) saw this phenomenon as a call to broaden the focus of motivation/engagement studies beyond individuals and individual differences to "the study of environments and local ecologies that foster or inhibit active engagement related to education and school" (p. 786).

6.5 OVERALL CONCLUSIONS: HOW IS LEARNER ENGAGEMENT EXPERIENCED IN UNIVERSITY EFL CLASSES IN JAPAN?

My overall impression during the classroom observations was that although the teachers tried very hard to get and keep learners engaged, the majority of the students during all nine observations exhibited few outward signs of sustained engagement beyond behavioral types. Students appeared somewhat cognitively engaged at different points in each lesson, but signs of emotional engagement were scarce. However, data from the interviews, questionnaires, learning journals actually pointed to deeper engagement than my impressions. This mismatch might be explained in a number of ways, including students reluctance to give a bad impression of themselves as a student or to reflect poorly on their teacher. Another explanation might be that these students are comparing these classroom experiences to those in high school.

My analysis of these few instances of deeper (emotional) engagement helped me to answer the subsidiary questions. Stepping back from the data, I can now offer a few assertions regarding how learner engagement is experienced in this teaching context. Specifically, I recognize learner engagement in these classes as experienced:

- through the interactions with peers and the instructor,
- through instructional activities that are appropriately challenging,
- at a variety of levels (individual, small group, and whole-class),

- dialogically between the individual and the context (i.e., individuals are influenced by the context and exert influence on the context),
- differently by each individual, and
- when individuals are involved in personally meaningful activities.

Expanding on this, we can delineate ways that the teacher, learner and context influence how learner engagement is experienced in the university EFL classroom in Japan. Figure 6.1 is offered as a visual conceptualization of these influences.

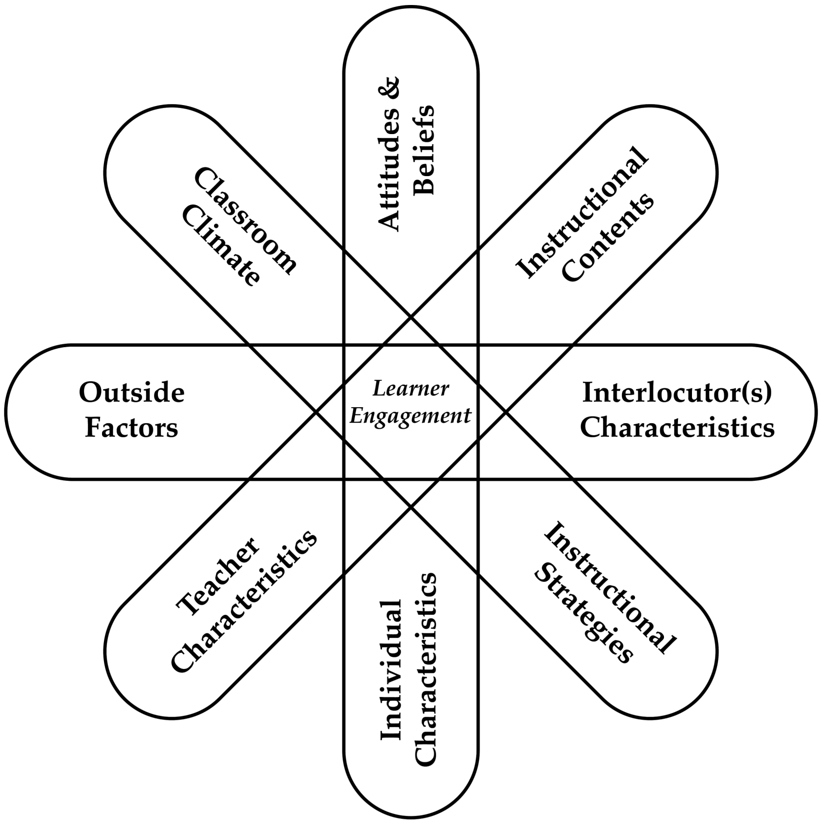


Figure 6.1 Influences on learner engagement

I acknowledge that these factors could be organized in a number of ways, but have chosen this arrangement as it reflects several key issues that I hope to highlight in this study. First, I have separated individual characteristics from attitudes and beliefs, and arranged these on the vertical axis to convey my understanding that learners themselves are a key contributor to how engagement is experienced. The separation was based on my interpretation of individual characteristics being less malleable than attitudes and beliefs, and also that teachers would likely approach individual characteristics (personality traits) such as introversion or neuroticism differently than attitudes and beliefs. Teachers would normally not try to change learner characteristics, but instead incorporate or work around them by for example allowing less outgoing or gregarious learners to express themselves in different ways. Attitudes and beliefs though can be targeted by instructional interventions such as awareness-raising activities.

The two factors on the horizontal axis are in most cases outside the influential reach of both teachers and learners, but both were found to influence learner engagement in the classroom. The central role of interlocutors cannot be overstated, and classroom training in ways to become a better conversational partner might be one teacher intervention that could be pursued.

Finally, the four factors on the diagonal axes are teacher related or within their realm of influence. The two items on the left side (teacher characteristics & classroom climate) are somewhat more fixed than the other two, but can be leveraged or influenced in ways that have a positive impact on learner engagement at both the individual and class level. The two factors on the right (instructional strategies & instructional content) are two areas that the teacher likely has the most power to influence.

It must be noted that these various factors can unite in favorable and less favorable ways to impact learner engagement. For example, certain instructional practices and/or teacher characteristics might work independently or synergistically to negate contextual inhibitors to engagement. Conversely, certain practices or characteristics might actually compound negative dynamics in the classroom.

6.5.1 An Engagement Theory Perspective

Based on findings from the current study, my understanding of engagement now aligns most closely with that of Reeve and colleagues (2004), who view engagement as the "behavioral intensity and emotional quality of a person's active involvement during a task" (p. 147). Backing out to classroom engagement in my context, we can change this to "active involvement" in EFL class. Findings from my study support the notion that language learning is an emotional endeavor and that emotional engagement is the highest and likely most potent form of engagement (see, for example, Dewaele, 2011; Schutz & DeCuir, 2002). Descriptions of the levels or layers of engagement would place behavioral engagement as the weakest or shallowest form of engagement while emotional engagement would be represented as the strongest or deepest form of engagement.

Findings also support the notion that emotional engagement is likely related to identity and investment. One way of conceptualizing the role of identity and investment is as a mediator between L2 learning motivation and engaged language learning (Fig. 6.2).

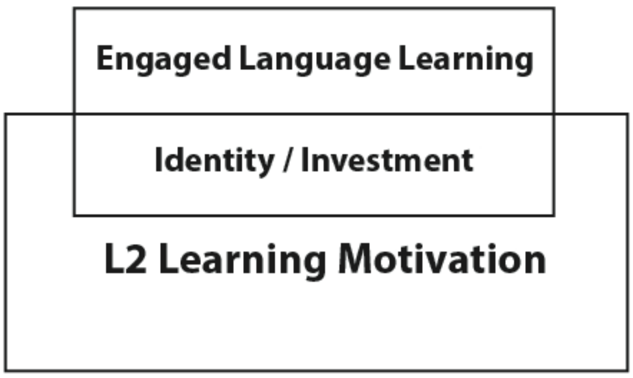


Figure 6.2 Identity and investment as mediator between L2 learning motivation and engagement.

This conceptualization places L2 learning motivation as the bedrock on which engaged language learning occurs. Without this motivation, learners will have great difficulty engaging in language learning activities and will likely give up rather than persist in the face of difficulty. We also see here that motivation and engagement are related but mostly distinct concepts, while L2 learning motivation is viewed as translated into engaged language learning through the learner's identity and investment. In the current study, we saw examples of individual learners who clearly had an EFL user identity, milking classroom target-language interactions for their learning opportunities, while others had more of a EFL learner identity and would quickly retreat from these interactions after completing the minimum requirements of the activity. These different identities result in different levels of investment, whether it be investment of psychic energy, emotional investment or just investment of time and effort. Together, these identities and investment seem to act as an interface between motivation and engagement, with stronger language user identities and deeper levels of engagement translating into higher quality language learning.

As mentioned earlier, Zacharias (2010) takes issue with the tendency in English language pedagogy to lump English learners into "a single linguistic basket labeled non-native speakers" despite the wide array of social and cultural identities that each learner has. This argument extends to EFL context like Japan, where learners share social and cultural identities but have a range of underlying motivations and self-images. We have a need here as well for "practical classroom techniques to accommodate learners' multiple identities" (p. 26) and raising awareness among teachers and students regarding the various issues surrounding language learners' identities.

6.5.2 A Self Determination Theory Perspective

As mentioned earlier, I decided on Self-Determination Theory (SDT) as a core feature of my conceptual framework from which to view learner engagement in this context. This decision was not made lightly, and I took serious the challenge of keeping open to other perspectives or lenses which I could use for analyzing the data. With all of this in mind, it seemed appropriate to begin my analysis by looking at how well the basic psychological needs of competence, autonomy and relatedness were being met in these teachers' classrooms. Placing SDT as a key component of the conceptual framework offers a useful way forward with future studies. This SDT perspective on the data allows me to claim the following:

- Learner engagement is more apt to be experienced in this context when individuals perceive themselves as competent in a language learning endeavor that is meaningful to them.
- Learner engagement is more apt to be experienced when individuals perceive that they have some control over the learning event.
- Learner engagement is more apt to be experienced when individuals feel connected with other learners and/or the instructor.

One key distinction here is between the actual fulfilment of these basic psychological needs and learner perceptions regarding the fulfillment of these needs. Gaps between the two result from different past experiences as well as the attitudes and beliefs that are derived from those past experiences. I mention this here because individual learners will experience classroom interactions in different ways and will perceive those interactions as being supportive or thwarting of the basic psychological needs regardless of teacher intentions or lack of intentions. In my conceptual framework, these experiences would influence and be influenced by the learner's identity, and would in turn determine or influence levels of investment. Returning to my understanding of the Japanese secondary education system as being geared heavily toward testing and checking what students do not know, we can theorize that learners in university EFL classes in Japan would experience scaffolded activities (e.g. the slideshows or worksheets in Mariko or Sylvester's classes) as supporting a sense of competence more than it actually is or was intended.

Results from the LCQ indicated that on average learners in these three classes perceived their teachers and the context to be autonomy supportive, while interviews with teachers revealed a general perception of the importance of learner autonomy but not a high prioritization. My interpretation is that these learners are comparing their current classroom experiences with those at secondary school where they likely had very little say in what and how to study in their English classes.

There was also evidence that relatedness or connections to classmates are necessary facilitators of engagement but not sufficient to ensure engagement. Kana and Erika's story of the Japan Studies class highlights that good relationships in class can actually work against classroom and task engagement.

6.6 IMPLICATIONS

So what has this journey revealed in terms of theoretical and practical implications? First, my study offers tentative support for adopting a more engagement-focused theoretical perspective on SLA over the motivation-heavy research agenda. The dimensions of behavioral, cognitive and emotional engagement also appear to offer a solid theoretical foundation for classroom EFL learning studies, with other types of engagement (social, academic, agentic) potentially adding to a more nuanced understanding of sources, indicators, facilitators and outcomes of engagement in this and related contexts. The psychological needs of competence, autonomy and relatedness also provide a useful theoretical framework for understanding how various classroom events and interactions work to promote or thwart learner (and teacher) engagement, especially when combined with the concepts of identity and investment.

In terms of pedagogical implications, my study offers suggestive evidence for designing overall curriculum and specific classroom activities that maximize interaction among learners and with the instructor. Both types of interactions were revealed as generally more engaging than individual tasks or passive roles for most learners in my study. Also, there is support for using a combination of predictable, easily negotiable activities and those that are more novel and cognitively challenging. These need to be skillfully woven into the patterns or rhythms of instruction mentioned in my findings. To capitalize on such well-intentioned instructional practices, teachers in these types of EFL classes can and should consider how physical features and the psychological climate of the classroom influence engagement. As examples, teachers can use visual or tactile supports (e.g. maps, cuisenaire rods, multimedia presentations) to guide, scaffold and intrigue learners, as well as consider what learner pairings or groupings might create the best dynamic. It is also clear that instructional content plays a key role in pulling in or pushing away learners, and turning over to learners some of the decisions related to content should boost a sense of autonomy and investment (Lambert, Philp & Nakamura, 2016). Reeve and colleagues (2004) see autonomy-supportive teachers as facilitating congruence between students' self-determined inner motives and their classroom activity. The way this is done is by identifying and nurturing students' needs, interests, and preferences as well as "creating classroom opportunities for students to have these internal motives guide their learning and activity" (p. 148).

I recognize clearly from the research and my own experiences that asking or expecting teachers to change their personality or characteristics is somewhat futile. However, it is important to recognize the power that teacher characteristics have in mediating the instructional practices and contextual features mentioned in this study. Specifically, great benefits in terms of learner engagement, and thus achievement, can be reaped from deeper investment in learners, classes and programs. Belief in learners and expressing high expectations of learners also appear to have great potential in boosting engagement, especially when combined with the appropriate use of praise, expressions of encouragement, and meaningful feedback–although how, when and what form of feedback to deliver remains a big question in instructed SLA. Conveying a sense of approachability to learners and a sensitivity to student needs also hold promise in terms of return on investment in the classroom.

Finally, in terms of research design, the current study offers a framework for gathering and analyzing qualitative data in a range of contexts beyond university EFL classes in Japan. Specifically, the combination of data gathering techniques and compilation of vignettes as a form of data reduction stand out as particularly useful in similar phenomenographic studies.

6.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

As with any research project, the current investigation included several limitations. I mentioned earlier that research and theorizing on L2 motivation from around 2000 has been based more on dynamic systems perspectives, with a focus on contextual and individual contributions (Boo, Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). While the current study has helped elucidate some of the contextual influences on motivation and engagement, not much has been revealed in terms of individual contributions. At the same time, I regrettably could not delve below the surface with regards to psychological processes of engagement. Deci and Ryan (2000) stress the importance of a dynamic perspective when researching the psychological needs in different cultural contexts, ". . . to go deeply enough into psychological processes to find linkages between the underlying needs and phenotypic behaviors that are different in different cultures, indeed, that may even appear on the surface to be contradictory" (p. 246). One glaring example is the limited discussion I was able to provide regarding the contextually nuanced experience of autonomy of learners in my study. Reeve and colleagues (2004) cite research that students with autonomy supportive teachers “show greater mastery motivation, perceived competence, and intrinsic motivation, more positive emotionality, greater conceptual understanding, higher academic performance, and greater persistence in school” (p. 149). This aligns with my understanding of desired outcomes for my teaching context and thus the psychological need of autonomy deserves more attention.

Another limitation of my study was the inability to capture in detail the interactions among learners. While the camera placement allowed me to capture the visual clues of engagement, the resulting audio recordings of pair and group work could not be transcribed. The overall background noise during these interactions and learners’ tendency to speak softly made it impossible to capture intact chunks of dialog. Future research would benefit from having at least some individuals wear portable microphones.

6.8 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

In this section I would like to share a few of the many areas that merit further investigation. First, the construct of willingness to communicate (MacIntyre & Doucette, 2010; Yashima, 2002) deserves closer analysis, especially how the concept might be used in this and other similar contexts as a window onto motivational orientations, for example Yashima’s (2002) concept of international posture, and manifestation of motivation into classroom engagement. The great lack of willingness to communicate expressed by a significant number of learners in this context may account for the generally poor performance on standardized measures of English fluency mentioned in chapter two (Thesis in Context). A detailed look at how this lack of willingness to communicate is translating into fewer opportunities to practice and develop target language skills should be pursued, possibly following on studies reported in Norton (2000).

Related to the topic of willingness to communicate, more empirical investigations are merited regarding why certain individuals tend to retreat or disengage quickly after completing a task. My impression is that this is a highly complex issue that could be approached from various angles, including language learning beliefs and attitudes, self theories or identity, and investment. One approach might be to capture in detail the verbal interactions of some of the more and less engaged pairs or groups, and subject resulting transcripts to discourse analysis. This could be combined with in-depth interviews and stimulated recall using video or audio recordings.

Findings regarding the psychological need of relatedness and the central role of relationships among learners and with the teacher point to need for further research into the phenomenon of social engagement (Philp & Duchesne, 2016). Specifically, a worthy line of research would be to clarify how social engagement relates to or aligns with the well-established tripartite of behavioral, cognitive and emotional engagement. Intuitively, the links with emotional engagement would seem to be strong, and one line of possible research would be to design and test survey instruments to tease out the distinctions and correlates between the two. This could be combined with or followed up by qualitative investigations aimed at theory building and finding practical applications.

Another line of related research would be longitudinal studies that compared and contrasted the typical pattern of fifteen-week semester EFL courses in Japan with shorter or extended timeframes. Findings from my study pointed to a general tendency for groups of students to “warm up” to one another and the teacher as the semester progressed. Empirical research related to the optimal frequency and duration of classroom groupings would benefit teachers, program coordinators and other stakeholders.

In terms of research design, there seems to be great potential in studies that employ experience sampling (Larson & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014), the idiodynamic method (MacIntyre, 2012), or similar methods where learners record real-time levels or quality of engagement during specific tasks or parts of class. This type of research could push forward our understanding of the triggers of engagement (Azevedo, 2015) or disengagement, again with both theoretical and practical implications. This line of research might also shed light on if, when and how EFL learners experience flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) as well as the role of distractions.

Last, but not least, it might be useful to explore learner engagement as related to teacher engagement. Findings in my study pointed to the key role played by the instructor and the reciprocal nature of engagement among learners. A better understanding of the sources, indicators and facilitators of teacher engagement in my teaching context and beyond would help teachers themselves as well as program coordinators, administrators, policy makers and other stakeholders.

6.9 PARTING COMMENTS

In this chapter I have tried to retrace my steps, including the motivation for the study, gap in the literature that I identified, design of the study, and key findings. I have also tried to address some of the fringe topics and areas for possible future studies. I have also presented what I feel are some of the shortcomings as well as key pedagogical implications that we can draw from my study. In terms of unique contribution to SLA scholarship, I believe that I succeded in:

- drawing together key concepts from motivation and engagement studies into a novel conceptual framework that can advance our understanding of the two constructs,

- adopting and adapting established qualitative methods and quantitative research instruments into a flexible and powerful research design, and
- offering a context-specific view of how engagement is manifested in EFL classrooms in Japan.

It is often the case with journeys, especially long and arduous ones, that the traveler returns a different person. That can certainly be said about the current research project. I feel that I have grown in many ways, both as a researcher and educational practitioner. First, I was humbled by the study and now more fully recognize the challenges and barriers that accompany research projects of this scope. At the same time, I feel that I am better equipped to take on such challenges and overcome the barriers thrown up in future research endeavors. As both a researcher and teacher, I feel that I have a much better understanding of the construct of engagement as well as how engagement is manifested in my teaching context. However, I also recognize that there is so much more to know and many more avenues of inquiry that are ripe for further research. Again, this is humbling but at the same time exciting. We have many more journeys ahead of us. In conclusion, I can say with confidence that learner engagement should be at the center of EFL program development and teacher training programs.

CHAPTER 7
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CHAPTER 8
APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Classroom Observation Coding (adapted from on Smith, Jones, Gilbert & Wieman, 2013)

1. Students are Doing	
L	- Listening to instructor/taking notes, etc.
Ind	- Individual thinking/problem solving. Only mark when an instructor explicitly asks students to think about a question/problem on their own.
GW	- Working in groups of 2 or more students on assigned activity/discussing question or problem
AnQ	- Student answering a question posed by the instructor with rest of class listening
SQ	- Student asks question
WC	- Engaged in whole class discussion by offering explanations, opinion, judgment, etc. to whole class, often facilitated by instructor
SP	- Presentation by student(s)
TQ	- Test or quiz
W	- Waiting (instructor late, working on fixing AV problems, instructor otherwise occupied, etc.)
O	- Other – explain in comments
2. Instructor is Doing	
Lec	- Lecturing (presenting content, problem, solution, etc.)
RtW	- Real-time writing on board, doc. projector, etc. (often checked off along with Lec)
FUp	- Follow-up/feedback on question or activity to entire class
PQ	- Posing a question to students (non-rhetorical - mark the entire time the instructor is using a question, not just when first asked)
AnQ	- Listening to and answering student questions with entire class listening
MG	- Moving through class guiding ongoing student work during active learning task (group or 1 on 1)
	- Showing or conducting a demo, experiment, simulation, video, or animation
D/V	- Administration (assign homework, return tests, etc.)
Adm	- Waiting when there is an opportunity for an instructor to be interacting with or observing/listening to
W	student or group activities and the instructor is not doing so
O	- Other – explain in comments
3. Student Engagement (optional)	
L	- Small fraction (10-20%) obviously engaged.
M	- Substantial fractions both clearly engaged and clearly not engaged.
H	- Large fraction of students (80+%) clearly engaged in class activity or listening to instructor.

Appendix 2 Excerpt of Classroom Observation Chart (adapted from on Smith, Jones, Gilbert & Wieman, 2013)

Date: ____________ Class: ____________ Instructor: ________________________________ No. students ____________ Arranged how? ______________________

1. **L**-Listening; **Ind**-Individual thinking; **GW**-Group Work/Discussion; **AnQ**-Answer Q; **SQ**- Student Q; **WC**-whole class discuss; **SP**-Student present; **TQ**-Test/quiz; **W**-Waiting, **O**-Other

2. **Lec**-Lecturing; **RtW**-Writing; **FUp**-Follow-up; **PQ**-Pose; **AnQ**-Answer; **MG**-Moving/Guiding/One on one; **D/V**-Demo+; **Adm**-Admin; **W**-Waiting; **O**-Other

For each 2 minute interval, check columns to show what's happening in each category (or draw vertical line to indicate continuation of activity). OK to check multiple columns.

Min.	1. Students doing										2. Teacher doing										3. Engagement			Notes/Comments
	L	Ind	GW	AnQ	SQ	WC	SP	TQ	W	O	Lec	RtW	FUp	PQ	AnQ	MG	D/V	Adm	W	O	L	M	H	
0 - 2																								
2																								
4																								
6																								
8 - 10																								
	L	Ind	GD	AnQ	SQ	WC	SP	TQ	W	O	Lec	RtW	FUp	PQ	AnQ	MG	D/V	Adm	W	O	L	M	H	
10 -12																								
12																								
14																								
16																								
18 - 20																								
	L	Ind	GD	AnQ	SQ	WC	SP	TQ	W	O	Lec	RtW	FUp	PQ	AnQ	MG	D/V	Adm	W	O	L	M	H	
20 – 22																								
22																								
24																								
26																								
28 - 30																								
	L	Ind	GD	AnQ	SQ	WC	SP	TQ	W	O	Lec	RtW	FUp	PQ	AnQ	MG	D/V	Adm	W	O	L	M	H	
30 - 32																								
32																								
34																								
36																								
38 - 40																								

Appendix 3 - Interview Starter Questions

(Teachers)

The starting point for interviews will be individual items on the Learning Climate Questionnaire. The following questions will be used to explore other areas related to learner engagement, learner autonomy, learner competence and relatedness.

1. Looking back at today's class, how representative was the classroom climate for this group of students and other groups that you are teaching?
2. Overall, how engaged do you feel the learners were today? (Low = 0, High = 10)
3. Did you notice or feel any changes in levels of engagement during the class? Explain.
4. What activities, tasks or parts of the lesson do you feel were most engaging for the learners? Any ideas why this was so?
5. What activities, tasks or parts of the lesson do you feel were least engaging for the learners? Any ideas why this was so?
6. Overall, how successful or competent do you think learners felt during today's lesson?
7. During which activities, tasks or parts of the lesson do you think students felt most confident? Why do you think so?
8. How well did the learners connect with you today? Was this representative of a typical class? Explain.
9. How well did the learners connect with each other today? Was this representative of a typical class? Explain.
10. Which parts of today's lesson were you most satisfied with? Explain.
11. Which parts of today's lesson were you least satisfied with? Explain.
12. In your opinion, what should a good English language teacher do to engage her students in learning English?

(Students)

The starting point for interviews will be individual items on the Learning Climate Questionnaire. Some of the additional areas I hope to explore are reflected in the following questions.

1. Looking back at today's class, how representative was the classroom climate?
2. Overall, how "engaged" were you in today's class? (Low = 0, High = 10) Explain.
3. Specifically, what activities, tasks, teaching materials or parts of today's lesson caught your attention and/or kept you engaged? Explain.
4. What parts of the lesson were least engaging? Explain.
5. Overall, how successful or competent did you feel during today's lesson?
6. During which activities, tasks or parts of the lesson did you feel most confident?
7. How well did you connect with the teacher today? Was this representative of a typical class? Explain.
8. How well did you connect with your classmates today? Was this representative of a typical class? Explain.
9. Which parts of today's lesson were you most satisfied with? Explain.
10. Which parts of today's lesson were you least satisfied with? Explain.
11. In your opinion, what should your English teacher do to engage her students in learning English?
12. What should be done to make students more engaged in learning English?

Appendix 4 - Learning Climate Questionnaire **(Source: www.selfdeterminationtheory.org)**

This questionnaire contains items that are related to your experience with your instructor in this class. Instructors have different styles in dealing with students, and we would like to know more about how you have felt about your encounters with your English instructor. Your responses are confidential. Please be honest and candid.

学習環境アンケート
このアンケートは授業内で教員との関係性についてあなたの経験について尋ねるものです。教員の学生に対する接し方は様々です。英語教員の接し方についてあなたがどのように感じたかを教えて下さい。あなたの回答は秘密厳守されます。正直に率直な意見をお聞かせください。

1. I feel that my instructor provides me choices and options.
私の先生は選択肢や選択の自由を与えてくれている。

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly disagree			neutral			strongly agree

2. I feel understood by my instructor.
先生に理解されていると感じる。

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly disagree			neutral			strongly agree

3. I am able to be open with my instructor during class.
授業中先生に対しオープンな気持ちになれる。

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly disagree			neutral			strongly agree

4. My instructor conveyed confidence in my ability to do well in the course.
先生は私がこのクラスでうまくやっていける能力があると信じてくれている。

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly disagree			neutral			strongly agree

5. I feel that my instructor accepts me.
先生は私を受け入れてくれていると感じる。

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly disagree			neutral			strongly agree

6. My instructor made sure I really understood the goals of the course and what I need to do.
先生は私が授業の目標や何をする必要があるか本当に理解しているかを確認している。

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly disagree			neutral			strongly agree

7. My instructor encouraged me to ask questions.
先生は私が質問しやすいように勇気づけてくれる。

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly disagree			neutral			strongly agree

8. I feel a lot of trust in my instructor.
私は先生に大きな信頼を寄せている。

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly disagree			neutral			strongly agree

9. My instructor answers my questions fully and carefully.
先生は私の質問にきっちり、注意深く答えてくれる。

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly disagree			neutral			strongly agree

10. My instructor listens to how I would like to do things.
先生は私がどのよう課題に取り組みたいかを聞いて、理解してくれる。

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly disagree			neutral			strongly agree

11. My instructor handles people's emotions very well.
先生は学生の感情をうまくコントロールしている。

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly disagree			neutral			strongly agree

12. I feel that my instructor cares about me as a person.
先生は私を人として気にかけてくれていると感じる。

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly disagree			neutral			strongly agree

13. I don't feel very good about the way my instructor talks to me.
先生の私への話し方は好きではない。

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly disagree			neutral			strongly agree

14. My instructor tries to understand how I see things before suggesting a new way to do things.
私の先生は新しいやり方を提案する前に私がどう考えているかを理解しようとする。

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly disagree			neutral			strongly agree

15. I feel able to share my feelings with my instructor.
先生と感情的に共感することができる。

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly disagree			neutral			strongly agree

Appendix 5 - Task Engagement Questionnaire (Joy Egbert, 2003)

勉強課題の取り組みに関するアンケート（ジョイ•エグバート、2003）

(Student Name 生徒名: ______________________)

Section 1. Instructions: Choose one response for each item.

各項目において１つだけ選んでください。

1 = Not at all, 2 = Partially/Slightly, 3 = Somewhat, 4 = A great deal, 5 = Completely/Always

１ 全くそうでない　２ 部分的に/多少はそうである　３ ある程度そうである　４ 多いにそうである　５ 完全に/いつもそうである

1. This task was interesting to me. この課題は面白く興味があった	1 2 3 4 5
2. The content of this task addressed my interests. 課題の内容は私が関心のあるものだった	1 2 3 4 5
3. I will use the things I learned in this task outside of the classroom. この課題で学んだ事をこの授業以外で活用すると思う	1 2 3 4 5
4. The content of this task was meaningful to me. この課題の内容は私にとって有意義であった	1 2 3 4 5
5. I was challenged by this task. この課題は私にとってチャレンジだった（努力を要した）	1 2 3 4 5
6. I had the skills to complete this task. 私はこの課題をやり遂げるスキルを持っていた	1 2 3 4 5
7. I had the knowledge I needed to succeed at this task. 私はこの課題を成功させる知識があった	1 2 3 4 5
8. I received the help that I needed to do this task. 私はこの課題をやり遂げるのに援助を受けた	1 2 3 4 5
9. I was interested in this task because other students in the class were interested. 私がこの課題に興味があったのはクラスメートが興味を持っていたからだった	1 2 3 4 5
10. This task engaged me. 私はこの課題に引き込まれた	1 2 3 4 5
11. During this task I thought about things not related to this task. この課題に取り組んでいる間、課題に関係ない事を考えながら取り組んだ	1 2 3 4 5
12. During this task I was aware of distractions. この課題に取り組んでいる間、気が散ることがあった	1 2 3 4 5
13. During this task I was so absorbed in what I was doing that time seemed to pass quickly. この課題に取り組んでいる間、夢中になって時間の経つのも忘れた	1 2 3 4 5
14. During this task I controlled my learning. この課題に対し、自分なりに自分のやり方で取り組む事ができた	1 2 3 4 5
15. During this task I could make decisions about what to do.	1 2 3 4 5

この課題に対し、やるべきことを自分で決断して取り組む事ができた	
16. I could express myself freely during this task. この課題に取り組む間、自分の事や意見などを自由に表現できた	1 2 3 4 5
17. I understood the rules for this task. この課題に対し、与えられたルール（きまりごと）を理解できた	1 2 3 4 5

Section 2. Instructions: Please answer the questions below as completely and concisely as possible.
下記の質問に出来るだけ的確に詳しく答えて下さい

18. What in this task did you find challenging?
この課題のどの部分が努力を要しましたか？（どの部分が一番チャレンジでしたか）

19. What did you find that was boring or too easy?
何がつまらなく、また簡単すぎましたか？

20. What was too hard or that you didn't have the appropriate skills or knowledge for?
何が難しすぎて、自分のスキルや能力を超えていると感じましたか？

21. What made this task interesting or not interesting to you?
この課題で何があなたにとって面白かったですか、また面白くなかったですか？

22. What helped you to focus on this task?
この課題に集中するのを助けたのは何ですか？

23. What, if anything, made you lose focus during this task?
何がこの課題に集中するのを妨げましたか？

24. What parts of the task did you have control over?
課題のどの部分が自分なりに自分のやり方で取り組む事ができましたか？

25. What parts of the tasks could you not control?
課題のどの部分が自分なりに自分のやり方でできませんでしたか？

Appendix 6 Guided Journaling Request Letter

Dear [Student's Name],

Thank you again for agreeing to help with my current research project. My research is focused on learner engagement in English classes at Japanese universities. Specifically, I am interested in what teacher or classroom characteristics influence levels of engagement.

I would like to ask you to take notes during your English classes for one full week. I understand that you have four ninety-minute English classes this semester. I would greatly appreciate it if you could take notes in a notebook or on some other paper as follows:

Course Name:	Day/Time:	
Classroom Activity (describe what you are doing)	Your current level of engagement (low 0 - 10 high)	Influences (what is it about the task, teacher, atmosphere, or other that is enhancing or hindering your engagement?)
Task/Activity #1 Task/Activity #2 . . Task/Activity #10	0 2 4 6 8 10 0 2 4 6 8 10 0 2 4 6 8 10	Influences - Influences - Influences -

Please feel free to take your notes in Japanese, and try to record separate entries at approximately 5-10 minute intervals (or anytime you feel there is a change in your level of engagement).

As soon as possible after the class, please type or write up a summary (in Japanese), including a short review of the day's tasks or activities, how engaged you were in each part of the lesson, and what teacher, task or classroom characteristics you think influenced your level of engagement throughout the class.

Please provide me with a copy of your notes and summaries for each class. We will have a short follow up meeting (30 - 45 minutes), which I will also record for my research. For your assistance with this research project, you will be paid ¥10,000 in shopping coupons.

Sincerest Thanks,
Brent

Appendix 7 - Course Outlines

European Studies (Semester 3)
Course Description: This is a survey course offering an overview of cultural, economic, historical, social and political developments in Europe. A variety of materials (including readings and films) and tasks will be used with the aim of gaining an insight into the field of European Studies while improving overall academic and research skills. Topics will include both historical and contemporary issues that relate to Europe and its place in the world.
Course Goals: The main goal of the course is to provide students with an introduction to a broad range of themes and issues, including past and future challenges in Europe. Additionally, students will further hone their reading, writing and critical thinking skills to help them in their other studies and future endeavors. Upon completion of the course, students will demonstrate the ability to (a) identify key points in readings, short lectures, films, or other presentations, (b) write clear notes based on reading and listening tasks (c) demonstrate a broad understanding of European themes and developments up to the present day, (d) conduct country-specific research and present findings to the class, and (e) develop a digital portfolio to expand on what is studied in class.
Lecture Method: Class meetings will include a combination of the following: (1) a short lecture on a topic or concept related to European Studies, (2) a communicative exercise in pairs or small groups, (3) reading & writing workshop, and (4) student-led presentations on EU and non-EU countries. Various types of individual feedback will be provided by the instructor on a regular basis.
Assessment: Evaluation will be based on classroom participation (20%), homework (20%), country presentations (20%), a persuasive essay (20%), and a digital portfolio (20%).
Course Schedule: Part of each class will be devoted to teacher-generated content and related activities.
Weeks 1 - 3 Historical Overview
Weeks 4 - 6 Art and Culture
Weeks 7 - 9 Society and The Economy
Week 10 Review
Weeks 11 Student Presentations
Weeks 12 - 14 Politics
Week 15 Wrap up & Final Oral Exam

Business Communication (Semester 3)
Course Description: This is a practical business skills course. The aim is to prepare students for international and domestic business contexts using a variety of tasks and exercises (including reading, writing, speaking, and listening). Students will work in groups to research a specific company and conduct mock business meetings. Students will be responsible for individual preparation and contributions to team projects. In doing so, they will gain experience with the expectations of the workplace.
Course Goals: The main goal of the course is to provide students with opportunities to develop knowledge and skills for business contexts. In addition, students will be introduced to the various roles and functions in company settings. Upon completion of this course, students will demonstrate the ability to: (1) understand and use spoken English for business, (2) analyze different business concepts, (3) participate in a variety of business meetings, (4) research and report on specific business-related topics, and (5) write effectively for business situations.
Lecture Method: Class meetings will include a combination of the following: (1) group tasks, (2) case studies, (3) business meetings, and (4) practice with writing for business (email, letters, memos, and meeting minutes).

Assessment: Evaluation will be based on classroom participation & weekly Expo meetings (30%), homework and Meeting Leader preparation/minutes (20%), presentations (30%), a mid-term company expo project (20%).

Course Schedule

Week 1: Course Overview
Weeks 2 - 3: Option Presentation & Company Expo
Weeks 4 - 6: Proposal Presentation & Company Expo
Weeks 7 - 8: Company Expo
Week 9: Company Expo Critique
Weeks 10 - 12: Sales Presentation
Weeks 12 - 13: Technical Presentation
Weeks 14 - 15: Team Presentation & Course Wrap Up

English III Reading 1 (Intensive Reading)

Course objectives: Students will…

- Accurately read and understand intermediate nonfiction texts in English.
- Read and react critically to a topic as portrayed from different perspectives.
- Improve vocabulary and grammar knowledge through the analysis of written texts
- Increase automatic recognition of frequent words and phrases.
- Achieve receptive understanding of approximately 2200-2600 high-frequency headwords.
- Summarise and react to a written text.
- Learn to make annotation (main and specific ideas)

Assessment: Participation 10%**,** Midterm 20%**,** Final: 20%**,** AWL 30% (Quiz= 20%, Worksheets = 10%)**,** Homework: 20%

90-100: S	**80-89: A**	**70-79: B**	**60-69: C**	**0-59: FAIL**

Tentative Schedule

Week	Date	Contents	AWL Quiz
1	4/13	Orientation	
2	4/20	AWL 5.1, Unit 1 (1) “The architecture of the marketplace”	
3	4/27	AWL 5.1, Unit 1 (1) “The architecture of the marketplace”	
4	5/4	Unit 1 (1) “The architecture of the marketplace”	5.1
5	5/11	AWL 5.2, Unit 3 (1) “Public art controversies”	
6	5/18	AWL 5.2, Unit 3 (1) “Public art controversies”	
7	5/25	Unit 3: Unit 3 (1) “Public art controversies”	5.2
8	6/1	MIDTERM	
9	6/8	AWL 6.1, Unit 2 (1) “The new megalopolis”	
10	6/15	AWL 6.1, Unit 2 (1) “The new megalopolis”	
11	6/22	Unit 2 (1) “The new megalopolis”, Unit 4 (1) “The determinants of mortality”	6.1
12	6/29	AWL 6.2, Unit 4 (1) “The determinants of mortality”	
13	7/6	AWL 6.2, Unit 4 (1) “The determinants of mortality”	
14	7/13	FINAL	6.2

Appendix 8 - Participant Information Sheet
[University of Reading LOGO]

Participant Information Sheet

Research Project:	A Transformative Look at Learner Engagement in University EFL Contexts in Japan
Principal Researcher:	Brent A. Jones
Supervisor:	Dr Xiao Lan Curdt-Christiansen Tel: +44 (0) 118-378-2680 Email: x.l.curdt-christiansen@reading.ac.uk

We would like to invite you to take part in a research study about learner engagement.

What is the study?
This study is being conducted as part of Brent A. Jones's Educational Doctorate (Ed D) dissertation research for the Institute of Education at the University of Reading. The aim of this study is to investigate what contributes to or promotes learner engagement in university English as a Foreign Language (EFL) courses in Japan, as well as what impedes or diminishes this engagement. It is hoped that this study will result in a list of best practices for teachers, students and other stakeholders in these and similar contexts.

Why have I been chosen to take part?
You are being invited to take part in the project because you are currently enrolled as a student in a university EFL program (or similar program) in Japan.

Do I have to take part?
It is entirely up to you whether you will participate. You may also withdraw your consent to participation at any time during the project, without any repercussions to you, by contacting the principal researcher Brent A. Jones by phone (0906-739-3513) or email (B.A.Jones@pgr.reading.ac.uk).

What will happen if I take part?
You are being asked to participate in one or more of the following:

(1) Classroom Observations – One of the EFL classes you are enrolled in will be observed during the Spring 2016 or Fall 2016 semester. Your class will be observed three times, at around weeks three, nine and twelve.

(2) Semi-Structured Interviews – An interview lasting between thirty and sixty minutes will be conducted as soon as possible after each classroom observation. Interview questions will deal mainly with your experiences during the observed class. Sample questions include: Which parts of today's lesson were you most/least involved in? Can you think of any reasons for these differing levels of involvement? What are some things the teacher did to increase student involvement? How well do you feel you were able to complete the various language tasks in today's lesson? Do you feel you had some freedom to decide the direction or focus of activities today? How would you describe your interactions with the teacher and classmates today?

What are the risks and benefits of taking part?
We do not foresee any risks in taking part in the study. The information gathered during this study will remain confidential and will only be seen by the researcher and project supervisor. Neither you nor your teacher will be identifiable in any published reports resulting from the study. Information about individuals will not be shared with their institution. As for benefits, we anticipate that the findings of the study will be useful for EFL teachers, students and other stakeholders in understanding various classroom interactions and theories of practice. An electronic summary of the findings of the study can be made available to you by contacting the Principal Researcher.

What will happen to the data?
Any data collected will be held in strict confidence and no real names will be used in this study. The records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking you or the school to the study will be included in any published report or presentation. Participants will be assigned a number and will be referred to by that number in all records. Research records will be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet and on a password-protected computer and only the principal researcher will have access to the records. The data will be destroyed securely once the findings of the study are written up, after five years.

Who has reviewed the study?
This project has been reviewed following the procedures of the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct. The University has the appropriate insurances in place. Full details are available on request.

What happens if I change my mind?
You can change your mind at any time without any repercussions. During the research, you can stop completing the activities at any time. If you change your mind after data collection has ended, please contact us using the contact details and we will discard your data.
What happens if something goes wrong?
In the unlikely case of concern or complaint, you can contact Dr Curdt-Christiansen at University of Reading by phone (+44 [0] 118-378-2680) or by email (x.l.curdt-christiansen@reading.ac.uk).

What do I do next?
We do hope that you will agree to participate in the study. If you do agree, we ask that you sign and return the attached consent form. You will then be contacted about the timing of the classroom observation or to negotiate the timing of the interviews.
Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Brent A. Jones

Appendix 9 - Participant Consent Form
[University of Reading LOGO]

CONSENT FORM

Research Project: A Transformative Look at Learner Engagement in University EFL Contexts in Japan

Principal Researcher: Brent A. Jones

Supervisor: Dr Xiao Lan Curdt-Christiansen Tel: +44 (0) 118-378-2680
Email: x.l.curdt-christiansen@reading.ac.uk

I give my consent to take part in the research as follows:

_____ I agree to take part in classroom observations and related interviews

_____ I agree that these classroom observations and interviews can be recorded (video/audio).

Name: ______________________________

E-mail: ______________________________

Phone: ______________________________

Sign and date below.

Signed: ______________________________

Date: ______________________________

Appendix 10 - Company Expo Project Introduction (Business Communication)

Introduction

The aim of this project is to research and present about overseas companies and their business operations. There will be six groups in each class. Each group of students will choose a company, find out as much as they can about this company, and report on various aspects of the business. This Expo should be approached as a business project and focus will be on the process and documenting this process. This will give students a chance to develop their research, communication and presentation skills.

Timeline

Lesson 2 - Make teams, choose roles and begin company research.
Lesson 3 - Compare research findings and decide on a company to present about.
Lesson 4 - Students turn in draft of their section of the presentation
Lesson 5 - Team meeting to discuss company expo progress and planning
Lesson 6 - Preparation meeting
Lesson 7 - Expo prep final / finish up and video each other
Lesson 8 - Company Expo

Research Advice

Step One: From the list provided by the teacher, choose companies for each student to research. Each student should explain each of their assigned companies to the team. Which ones are you most interested in?
Step Two: Compare all the companies on your team's lists.
Step Three: Select one company for further research.
Step Four: Visit the company's website and record the major information. Take notes, do not copy whole sentences.
Step Five: Do a websearch to find out more about the company. Do they have a good reputation? What are other people saying about the company?
Step Six: Each person should compile information on a specific part of the company (e.g. profile, company history, products/services, finances, customers/competitors)

References: S&P 400 www.marketvolume.com/indexes_exchanges/sp400_components.asp

Appendix 11 - Learning Climate Questionnaire Results (Mean & Standard Deviation)

Item	R #1 Mean	R #1 SDV	R #2 Mean	R #2 SDV	M #1 Mean	M #1 SDV	M #2 Mean	M #2 SDV	S #1 Mean	S #1 SDV	S #2 Mean	S #2 SDV
I-01	**5.50**	**1.26**	**5.24**	**1.37**	**6.13**	**1.36**	**6.15**	**1.07**	**5.82**	**1.14**	**5.75**	**1.16**
I-02	**5.45**	**1.30**	**4.86**	**1.53**	**5.50**	**1.15**	**5.77**	**1.17**	**5.73**	**1.03**	**5.70**	**1.22**
I-03	5.45	1.79	5.14	1.53	5.75	1.61	5.46	1.27	5.45	1.22	5.70	1.22
I-04	**5.05**	**1.46**	**4.90**	**1.34**	**5.38**	**1.20**	**5.46**	**1.27**	**5.18**	**1.30**	**5.55**	**1.15**
I-05	5.50	1.41	5.33	1.49	5.94	1.39	5.92	1.19	5.55	1.14	5.75	1.21
I-06	5.00	1.63	5.14	1.56	5.56	1.46	5.62	1.04	5.41	1.14	5.35	1.42
I-07	**5.59**	**1.65**	**5.48**	**1.54**	**6.13**	**1.36**	**5.69**	**1.03**	**5.82**	**1.05**	**6.05**	**1.43**
I-08	4.91	1.34	5.00	1.41	5.94	1.29	5.77	1.36	5.57	1.36	5.80	1.40
I-09	5.73	1.32	5.86	1.24	5.94	1.39	6.31	0.85	5.81	1.40	6.10	1.25
I-10	**5.00**	**1.38**	**4.81**	**1.54**	**5.31**	**1.45**	**5.62**	**1.12**	**5.05**	**1.12**	**5.60**	**1.19**
I-11	5.27	1.20	5.33	1.39	6.00	1.41	6.15	0.80	5.05	1.20	5.45	1.23
I-12	5.45	1.14	5.48	1.29	5.88	1.36	5.92	1.04	5.43	1.25	6.05	1.19
I-13	2.23	1.72	2.76	1.45	1.56	1.50	1.31	0.63	2.43	1.69	2.05	1.43
I-14	**4.91**	**1.27**	**4.57**	**1.25**	**5.44**	**1.31**	**5.77**	**1.09**	**5.05**	**1.12**	**5.05**	**0.94**
I-15	4.68	1.32	4.43	1.29	5.38	1.02	5.62	1.33	5.29	1.31	5.10	1.25

*Note: R = Robert, M = Mariko, S = Sylvester; Bold items from short version; Item 13 is negatively worded and thus lower numbers represent higher autonomy support.

Appendix 12 - Task Engagement Questionnaire Results (Items 1 - 17)

Item	R n=19	M n=15	S n=23	T n=47
1. This task was interesting to me.	3.63	3.93	3.65	3.72
2. The content of this task addressed my interests.	3.47	3.67	3.83	3.67
3. I will use the things I learned in this task outside of the classroom.	4.05	3.71	3.74	3.84
4. The content of this task was meaningful to me.	3.58	4.40	4.00	3.96
5. I was challenged by this task.	3.68	4.27	4.13	4.02
6. I had the skills to complete this task.	3.16	3.40	3.48	3.35
7. I had the knowledge I needed to succeed at this task.	3.11	3.33	3.39	3.28
8. I received the help that I needed to do this task.	3.21	4.53	3.78	3.79
9. I was interested in this task because other students in the class were interested.?	2.58	2.93	3.04	2.86
10. This task engaged me.	3.28	3.13	3.17	3.20
11. During this task I thought about things not related to this task.	2.89	2.27	2.48	2.56
12. During this task I was aware of distractions.	2.63	2.00	2.17	2.28
13. During this task I was so absorbed in what I was doing that time seemed to pass quickly.	2.89	2.93	3.00	2.95
14. During this task I controlled my learning.	3.37	3.73	3.70	3.60
15. During this task I could make decisions about what to do.	3.53	3.67	3.70	3.63
16. I could express myself freely during this task.	3.42	3.67	3.74	3.61
17. I understood the rules for this task.	3.47	4.00	3.83	3.75

*R = Robert, M = Mariko, S = Sylvester, T = Total

**1 = Not at all, 2 = Partially/Slightly, 3 = Somewhat, 4 = A great deal, 5 = Completely/Always