Student learning engagement in the online class

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ABSTRACT

Learning online in the pandemic era raises a challenge for educators (lecturer). The challenge comes from the effectiveness of online media used and the good atmosphere built in the interactions between lecturers and students. It is due to several factors that may contribute to learning success; one of them is student engagement. This research aimed to explore student engagement in Paragraph Writing online class, involving behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement. The participants involved in this study are second-semester students of the English Department at a private college in Jombang. Using a case study, the researchers used observation and questionnaire to obtain the data. Based on the analysis, the results revealed that students tend to be actively engaged in behavioral and cognitive engagement. Furthermore, students’ perception toward their engagement in the dimension of behavior, emotion, and cognition gained positive results.

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1. Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic that has occurred in almost all parts of the world has an impact on various fields of life, one of which is in the field of education. In Indonesia, this requires the learning process from elementary education to higher education level to be carried out based on the concept of Distance Learning. Distance Learning is an organized educational process that bridges the gap between students and educators and is mediated by the use of technology, and minimal face-to-face meetings (Pannen, 2016). In this case, the use of technology and the ability of educators to utilize it optimally is an important key to realizing the success of Distance Learning.

Basically, there are several principles for implementing Distance Learning according to the Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education (Republik Indonesia, 2016); these principles
include access, equity, and quality. Implement Distance Learning based on these principles is not easy, especially in terms of quality. Implementation of Distance Learning at higher education (university) raises its challenges for educators. Besides selecting online learning media that needs to be adjusted to the effective courses, adult learners are also a separate consideration in carrying out Distance Learning. According to Esposto and Weaver (2011), students can easily feel reluctant to attend online and face-to-face lectures, where the lack of student engagement and absence from lectures can lead to poor academic performance. Therefore, the implementation of Distance Learning must be able to minimize this tendency. Spitzer et al. (2021) have investigated students’ engagement with the online learning environment Bettermark for mathematics by using survival analysis. Particularly, this re-search was done during the COVID-19 pandemic era. The study revealed that the total number of students using the online learning environment increased significantly during and after school closure, while students’ engagement decreased faster over time.

Student engagement is very important in achieving the success of the learning process, especially in learning foreign languages such as English. Student engagement in the learning process refers to the level of attention, curiosity, interest, optimism, and passion shown by students when they are learning or being taught, which can develop to the level of motivation that they must learn and progress in learning (Anita & Susilawati, 2018). Recently, Galikyan and Admiraal (2019) found that particular levels of cognitive engagement were connected with students’ academic performance. Although the academic performance only referred to their performance in the discussion forum, it gives a strong point of the significance of student engagement in the learning process. Moreover, researchers only employed content analysis to assess students’ cognitive engagement level in the online discussion forum in their research. Educators face a bigger challenge, especially English educators, to maximize students’ involvement in the learning process through online lectures. Meanwhile, in language learning, there are two types of skills: receptive and productive skills. Receptive skills include listening and reading skills, while productive skills consist of speaking and writing skills. Of course, it is possible that students’ involvement in learning these different skills also varies. Exploring students’ perception toward their engagement in the learning process is important to identify their role as learners so that the teacher or lecturer can maximize the positive role (Sari, 2020).

There are three domains of student involvement mentioned by Fredericks et al. (2004), they are behavioral engagement, emotional engagement, and cognitive engagement. Behavioral involvement refers to students’ positive behavior, for example, following the rules at school, obeying the norms in class, or not taking the opposite action, such as causing trouble at school or not attending school. Students are also involved in learning and academic tasks, efforts in completing assignments, and carrying out assignments and are actively involved in extracurricular activities. In contrast, emotional engagement is defined as a student’s emotional reaction at school. This refers to the interests and values possessed by students so that students have feelings of boredom, happiness, sadness, or anxiety, including to friends, teachers, or the lessons given. Lastly, cognitive engagement refers to specific involvement related to psychological investment in learning, such as trying to understand learning, being flexible in problem-solving, having positive coping in the face of failure, and emphasizing learning strategies.
Writing skills are productive skills in language, which are very important as a provision for students to write the thesis. In addition, good writing skills in English are also very much needed by students to continue their studies to a higher level, especially for studying abroad (Mustakim & Ismail, 2017). Thus, learning to write in Distance Learning must be meaningful, including the involvement of students in it. The online media platform used in implementing Distance Learning at the higher education level is assumed to be more diverse than the basic education level. They were starting from WhatsApp groups, Google Classroom, Zoom, Google Meet, or a combination of several of them. At STKIP PGRI Jombang itself, writing courses take advantage of various online platforms. In the Paragraph Writing course in class 2020-B, the online media used is a combination of Google Meet and Google Classroom so that the Distance Learning process can be carried out well even without face to face.

Google Classroom is a free web service in software designed to create, distribute, and manage the delivery of learning content. Therefore, Google Classroom can be categorized as a Learning Management System because Google Classroom has a system that can help lecturers plan, manage learning materials, manage student learning activities, manage grades, recapitulate student attendance, display grade transcripts, and manage e-mail displays. Google Classroom can help educational institutions towards a paperless system (Kurniawan, 2016). In complementing the use of Google Classroom, Google Meet can be used as an alternative media to support the implementation of Distance Learning. Google Meet is an online meeting or web conferencing is a video communication service developed by Google. Google meets many users because it designs, builds, and operates its products with secure connections, aiming to thwart hacker attacks and provide security for its users (Singh & Awasthi, 2020). In addition to security considerations, users of video communication services generally consider the capacity of participants in online meetings. One of the advantages of Google Meet itself is that it can accommodate a maximum of 250 people in one online meeting and share it by streaming to 100 thousand people. In addition, of course Google Meet has a share screen feature that allows sharing images from layers and displaying material to be easily used as a learning medium. The use of Google meet in learning activities is considered effective, gets students’ positive responses, and improves their abilities (Dewantara et al., 2021; Fakhruddin, 2018).

Several studies have dealt with student engagement in writing; one of them is done by Prasetyawati and Ardi (2021), who implement Instagram to promote student engagement in EFL writing. The result showed that Instagram could encourage student engagement by allowing students to be more actively involved, providing a new learning environment, providing greater target readers, allowing the collaboration and interaction between the students, and facilitating students to select their learning style. Particularly, Abou-Khalil et al. (2021) investigate the engagement strategies used by higher education students in emergency online learning in a low-resource setting. This study reveals that the effectiveness of engagement strategies varies based on the students’ gender and technology access. The third previous study was conducted by Xu et al. (2020), in which they explored the three dimensions of student engagement in online discussion using the semi-synchronous tool WeChat. It was revealed that the behavioral and cognitive engagement of the experimental group (with teacher facilitation) were significantly higher than the control group (without teacher facilitation). Nevertheless, there was no significant difference between the two groups regarding emotional engagement. Differently, this current research aimed at fulfilling the gaps by investigating
the student engagement in an online class using different research design and setting.

In the context of this research, the researcher intends to explore student engagement in paragraph writing lectures which are carried out using two media: Google Meet and Google Classroom. Specifically, this study aimed to determine student engagement, which includes the domains of attitude (behavioral engagement) and cognitive (cognitive engagement) in Paragraph Writing lectures using a combination of Google Meet and Google Classroom. Moreover, the students’ perception toward their engagement in Paragraph Writing class was also investigated.

2. Method

The research design used in this research is a case study. According to Ary et al. (2010), case studies focus on a single unit to produce a detailed, comprehensive, in-depth description. The single unit, in this case, can be an individual, a group, a class, a program, or an institution. Furthermore, Wahyuningsih (2013) states that in a case study, the researcher explores a certain phenomenon (case) at a time and activity, such as a program, event, and collects detailed and in-depth information using various data collection procedures. In this study, the researchers investigated student engagement in the Paragraph Writing class, especially class 2020-B. The participants were chosen since they experienced online learning in writing courses for two semesters in a row due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The phenomenon that exists is the use of Google Meet and Google Classroom online media in online lectures in that course.

The data in this study consisted of several types. First, the data is in the form of interactions between lecturers and students, and students and students in Paragraph Writing lectures using Google Meet and Google Classroom. The second data is in the form of students’ perceptions of their involvement in the online lecture process using Google Meet and Google Classroom by using survey. These data were obtained from the Paragraph Writing lecture process at STKIP PGRI Jombang, especially the 2020-B class.

In the case of study research, researchers use several research instruments to obtain detailed information about student engagement in the lecture process. The main instrument is the human instrument, where the researcher observes the phenomenon of student involvement in the lecture process. In addition, observation sheets to observe student involvement in two domains (behavioral and cognitive engagement) are also be used. At the same time, the third instrument is a questionnaire to determine student involvement in the lecture process according to the student’s point of view. It involves behavioral, cognitive, and emotional engagement. The questionnaire was adapted from the previous research conducted by Abou-Khalil et al. (2021) about engagement strategies applied by higher education students.

The data in this study were obtained through several stages, including: (1) observing the Paragraph Writing lecture process conducted online using Google Meet and Google Classroom based on predetermined indicators; (2) preparing a questionnaire to explore student involvement in the Paragraph Writing lecture process which is carried out online using Google Meet and Google Classroom; (3) provide questionnaires to students through google forms to obtain information on
student involvement in the Paragraph Writing lecture process which is carried out online using Google Meet and Google Classroom.

After the first data from observation was obtained, it was analyzed quantitatively using percentages. The result of analysis between active and passive engagement was compared to determine the tendency of student behavioral and cognitive engagement. The second data gained from the questionnaire was analyzed by using percentages to represent the Likert scale of students’ engagement from the students’ point of view.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Results

In this section, the research results will be presented based on the formulation of the problem in the form of student engagement which includes three domains: the domains of behavior (behavioral engagement), emotion (emotional engagement), and cognitive (cognitive engagement) in Paragraph Writing lectures. Student involvement in the context of this research refers to the lecture process using Google Classroom and Google Meet as online lecture media.

**Student engagement in the Paragraph Writing class**

**Student behavioral engagement**

Based on the results of data analysis obtained through observations in the online lecture process for seven meetings, student involvement in the learning process in the realm of attitudes is presented in Table 1. In this case, the scope of student engagement is focused on the interactions that occur, both with fellow students and with lecturers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Indicator of behavioral engagement</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Actively engaged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Students interacts with other students.</td>
<td>14 (50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Students interacts with other students and the lecturer.</td>
<td>12 (43%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Students interact with the lecturer.</td>
<td>15 (54%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results of the analysis of student engagement in the form of behavior can be seen in the interactions during the online lecture process. Based on the data in Table 1, there is a slight difference in the number of actively engaged students from the first to the seventh meeting. On average, 50% of students are actively involved in student engagement in interacting with other students. Students who are actively engaged can be seen from several indicators, including asking when other students finish presenting the material, responding to a friend’s question, providing additional information, and sharing ideas.
Meanwhile, students’ engagement in interacting with students and lecturers reached an average of 43% of the total students who took the Paragraph Writing lectures. This is indicated by several activities, for example: giving feedback when students make presentations, clarifying explanations in the presentation process that invites audience questions (other students), responding to follow-up questions from lecturers, refuting the opinions of other students followed by a review from the lecturer, and concluding the material together (students and lecturers). From the average percentage of this aspect, it can be seen that students who are passively involved are higher than those who are actively engaged.

Third, the average percentage of students who interact with lecturers is 54%. Indicators of student engagement in this aspect can be seen from: asking questions addressed by lecturers or students, responding to student or lecturer questions, giving opinions during the lecture process, and adding information related to the material discussed. Among the three aspects of behavioral engagement, the interaction of students and lecturers is the highest behavioral engagement compared to the other two aspects. It can happen possibly because of the reluctance towards the lecturer so that students inevitably try to be actively involved in interacting with the lecturer.

**Student cognitive engagement**

Through Table 2, student engagement seen from several indicators shows varying results. Active student engagement with the highest percentage can be seen in the indicators for completing assignments on time (93%). This can be seen in the data in the collection of assignments through Google Classroom where almost all students submit assignments on time. In the second position, 86% of students worked on assignments according to the directions given by the lecturer. Based on the assignment archives recorded in Google Classroom, 26 out of 28 students did the Paragraph Writing assignment according to the direction of the lecturer, namely through the writing process application. Students start writing stages from pre-writing, drafting, revising and editing, to publishing, and they attach files according to instructions from the lecturer.

**Table 2. Student cognitive engagement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Indicator of cognitive engagement</th>
<th>Actively engaged</th>
<th>Passively engaged</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Answering questions or challenges from lecturer/other students.</td>
<td>13 (46%)</td>
<td>15 (54%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Stating idea or solution in group discussion or online class</td>
<td>10 (36%)</td>
<td>18 (64%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Stating argument in group of online class</td>
<td>15 (54%)</td>
<td>13 (46%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Seeing the lecturer or other students who give an opinion</td>
<td>17 (61%)</td>
<td>11 (39%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Asking the question to the lecturer or other students</td>
<td>12 (43%)</td>
<td>16 (57%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Turning on the camera when joining an online lecture</td>
<td>22 (79%)</td>
<td>6 (31%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Responding lectures</td>
<td>20 (71%)</td>
<td>8 (29%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Giving response to other students’ opinion</td>
<td>12 (43%)</td>
<td>16 (57%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Doing tasks based on the instruction</td>
<td>24 (86%)</td>
<td>4 (14%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Finishing task on time</td>
<td>26 (93%)</td>
<td>2 (7%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Active student engagement is also seen when the lecture process takes place online, including as many as 79% of students turning on the camera during online lectures. Although Paragraph Writing has a weight of 4 credits which requires an ideal lecture time of 200 minutes, some students are willing to turn on their cameras. It indicates engagement in a positive cognitive domain. In addition, 71% of students respond to lecturer calls. This fact indicates students’ positive response to the presence of lecturers through online mode.

Moreover, as many as 61% of students look at the lecturer or student who has an opinion. These results confirm that students are actively engaged in the cognitive domain even though observing this indicator is quite difficult to do in online lectures. The last indicator that shows active student engagement is as many as 54% of students stating arguments in groups or classes.

Although the six observation indicators show students are actively engaged in the cognitive domain, four other indicators reveal that student engagement is still relatively passive. For example, only 46% of students answered questions/challenges from lecturers or other students; 43% of students asked questions to lecturers or friends, and 43% of students responded to the opinions of other students. Moreover, the observations show that the activities of asking, answering questions, and responding to the opinions of other students tend to be dominated by certain students. Another indicator of student engagement in the cognitive domain that indicates passive engagement is student participation in expressing ideas/alternative solutions when working in groups or online classes. Only 36% of students seemed to be active in doing these activities.

Students’ perception of their engagement in the online class

In revealing student engagement in Paragraph Writing lectures, a closed questionnaire consisting of 15 statements explored students’ perceptions of their engagement. By using the Likert scale, the results of the questionnaire analysis are presented in the following subsections. Table 3 presents the result of students' behavioral engagement questionnaire. Meanwhile, the students’ emotional engagement is depicted in Table 4.

Table 3. Student behavioral engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>If there is a material that is not clear, I ask the lecturer via Google Meet/Google Classroom.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2 (7%)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>6 (21%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>It is better to chat with friends than to hear an explanation from the lecturer through Google Meet.</td>
<td>15 (52%)</td>
<td>14 (48%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students’ perception of their engagement in behavior indicates a positive perception in which the majority of students assumed that they could trigger themselves to be more analytical in the learning process, for instance, by questioning something that is not understandable. This answer indicates the active involvement of students in the lecture process in the realm of attitudes. As shown in the Table 3 regarding student responses to statement number 7, most of the students considered the
importance of the lecturer’s explanation and tried to pay attention to it. It is undeniable that online lectures pose challenges for both lecturers and students, where student involvement in attitudes significantly influences achieving the success of learning objectives. Student engagement in the lecture process indicates that students feel actively involved from the two statements related to behavioral engagement.

**Table 4. Student emotional engagement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I am lazy to listen to the explanation of the material from the lecturer through Google Meet.</td>
<td>12 (42%)</td>
<td>15 (52%)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I am lazy to ask lecturers when learning online using Google Meet/Google Classroom.</td>
<td>10 (34%)</td>
<td>17 (59%)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The group discussion (in the Paragraph Writing subject) continues without me being in it.</td>
<td>4 (14%)</td>
<td>16 (55%)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I feel that online lectures are a waste of time</td>
<td>10 (34%)</td>
<td>16 (55%)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I prefer to play on my cell phone when the online learning process is completed.</td>
<td>10 (34%)</td>
<td>18 (63%)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I am lazy every time I have to join a Paragraph Writing class (online)</td>
<td>17 (58%)</td>
<td>12 (42%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I don’t really think about it if my lecture assignments (Paragraph Writing) are stuck.</td>
<td>14 (48%)</td>
<td>13 (45%)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The emotional dimension, which cannot be analyzed precisely through observation, was revealed from the statements in Table 4. Based on students’ responses toward negative statements related to emotional engagement, most students felt engaged actively in the learning process. It can be seen from several indicators such as the absence of laziness feeling toward the lesson and positive consideration of taking the course. In other words, students perceive coursework as important and show positive emotional involvement. However, there are still 7% of students who do not think about it. It can be assumed from the students’ respond that they have positive emotional engagement toward the online class. Meanwhile, students’ cognitive engagement is presented in Table 5.

Student responses to statement number 1 indicate a strong desire to complete the Paragraph Writing task. This can be seen from the student responses where 52% agree and 38% strongly agree that they are trying to complete the task even though it is late at night. However, 10% of students answered that they did not agree with the statement. The results of the analysis of statement number 2, 52% strongly agree, and 48% of students agree if they seek information in other media if they have difficulty with coursework. This shows that students are trying to find a solution if they experience problems completing their coursework. Thus, it can be concluded that students have active cognitive involvement in the lecture process.
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In terms of concentration, 52% of students agree, and 48% strongly agree if they try to pay attention to every material given by the lecturer through Google Classroom and Google Meet. When students focus on paying attention, this indicates students’ active involvement in the cognitive domain. Similar to statement number 3, statement number 4 focuses students’ attention on the lecture process. However, this statement is more focused on the lecturer’s explanation. As many as 59% of students agree, and 34% strongly agree that they are fully concentrated to understand the material presented by the lecturer through Google Meet. This shows the active involvement of students in the cognitive domain even though 7% of students do not agree with this statement.

To understand the lecture material online, 59% of students agree, and 41% think they read Paragraph Writing material repeatedly. This result shows the active involvement of students in the cognitive domain. In terms of completing the task, 48% of students stated that they do not agree, and 35% strongly disagreed that they delayed on doing the assignments given by the lecturer. Meanwhile, 17% agreed. These responses indicate the active involvement of students in the cognitive domain.

3.2. Discussion

Student engagement in online classrooms has become one of educators’ attention during the past few years. Since it contributes to learning success, especially in today’s pandemic, the learning process should be done through the distance learning method by utilizing technology. This study indicates that the student engagement in Paragraph Writing online class by using the collaboration of Google Classroom and Google Meet gain active behavioral and cognitive student engagement. This finding supports Dewantara et al. (2021) and Fakhruddin (2018), who stated that one of the benefits
of using Google Meet in learning is getting a positive response from the students. It is also supported by the result of students’ perception about their online class engagement, which tends to be positive.

The result of students’ perception of their engagement through online class shows the positive perception toward behavioral engagement complete Prasetyawati and Ardi’s study (2021). They found that Instagram can promote student engagement by being actively involved and improving collaboration among students. Even though the media used is different, it may add the reference in the field of study. Moreover, the student cognitive engagement that tends to be active with lecturer’ facilitation corroborates the study done by Xu et al. (2020), who revealed that students with teacher’ or lecturer’s facilitation in using WeChat as online discussion media obtained higher behavioral and cognitive engagement compared to those who learn without teacher’s facilitation.

The positive result of students’ perception of their engagement, especially emotional engagement, may also determine their role as learners. Recognizing the learners’ role can maximize their learning process and improve their learning engagement. This finding supports Sari’s (2020) research, in which she found that most students conveyed positive responses toward their online engagement. Thus, the student’s role as the learner can be identified through the indicators of each engagement dimension.

4. Conclusion

To sum up, student engagement in Paragraph Writing lectures in this study was obtained from lecturer observations and student perceptions. In general, student engagement in the domain of behavior (behavioral engagement) obtained from observations during the lecture process shows that more than 50% of students have an active involvement in terms of interactions between students and other students and interactions between students and lecturers, while for interactions between students with other students and lecturers are less than 50% who show active involvement. Student engagement in the cognitive domain (cognitive engagement) can be concluded that students are actively involved in the Paragraph Writing lecture process. In addition, students’ perceptions of their engagement in the lecture process, especially in behavior, emotions and cognitive, showed almost the same results. In behavior (behavioral engagement), most students feel that they are actively involved. While in the realm of emotion (emotional engagement), the majority of students have positive emotional engagement in online Paragraph Writing lectures using Google Meet and Google Classroom. Meanwhile, engagement in the cognitive domain (cognitive engagement) also indicates the active engagement of students.

By considering the study results, there are several suggestions put forward. First, lecturers who teach Paragraph Writing courses are expected to increase student engagement in various aspects of behavior, emotions, and cognitive in the lecture process to achieve learning objectives and increase student competence. Second, further researchers can research student engagement in other courses using different methods or research designs to add to the scientific repertoire. In addition, further research can also be done using various learning media besides Google Classroom and Google Meet.
5. References


