



**Borislava R. Eraković<sup>1</sup>,**

**Jagoda P. Topalov**

University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Philosophy, Novi Sad, Serbia

**Original  
research paper**

Paper received: Sep 1 2021  
Paper accepted: Nov 16 2021  
Article Published: Jan 12 2022

## ***Teaching and Learning Through Moodle, Google Doc and Zoom: Fostering Student Engagement in (A)Synchronous Learning Environments<sup>2</sup>***

### **Extended summary**

In order to foster collaborative learning as a central feature in the teaching and learning scenarios based on social-constructivist epistemology (Vygotsky 1978), the teacher needs to be able to “leave the stage” at times, yet still be aware of what the learners are doing. Purely online mode of instruction realized through one channel of communication makes this a tall order, mostly because of the nature of online communication: silences cannot last for too long, so if the students are reluctant to talk, the teacher risks turning back to the traditional, transmissionist mode of instruction. A combined, at times simultaneous use of several modes of communication can create an environment where students have their own time for small group collaboration, allowing the teacher to step back and intervene when needed. The paper presents one such scenario, created through simultaneous use of LMS Moodle, Google Docs and Zoom (and Zoom Rooms) for asynchronous and synchronous teaching and learning and the characteristics of learner engagement based on their evaluative reflections following the completion of the course. Educational psychologists (Dörnyei, 2019; Fredricks, Blumenfeld & Paris, 2004) define engagement as active participation and involvement in certain behaviours. In educational settings, this refers to students’ participation and involvement in the activities and tasks. At its core, the prototypical realization of engagement in the classroom is behavioural participation. As such, it is connected with higher achievement, self-efficacy and the pursuit of mastery goals (Christensen, Reschly & Wiley, 2012).

---

1 borislava.erakovic@ff.uns.ac.rs

2 The paper is based on the research conducted as part of the project “Digitalization of university teaching of language, literature and culture: challenges, solutions and perspectives within the sustainable development of Autonomous Province of Vojvodina” (No.142-451-2260/2021-01/01). The project is financed by The Secretariat for Higher Education and Research of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina.

Copyright © 2021 by the authors, licensee Teacher Education Faculty University of Belgrade, SERBIA.

This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY 4.0) (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original paper is accurately cited.

---

The investigation focuses on the level of student (dis)engagement in relation to the type of interaction present in the students' online learning environment, their previous experience in blended learning and their overall attitudes toward online classes. Toward this end, a convergent parallel mixed methods study was conducted by means of a 30-item questionnaire, which was constructed for the purpose of this study. The questionnaire included both Likert-scale questions, aimed at collecting quantitative data, and open-ended questions, aimed at collecting qualitative data. The questionnaire invited students' reflections regarding the tools used for collaborative assignments, presentation of learning materials and teacher's instruction. The quantitative segment of the survey included a four-factor solution, validated by means of a Principal Component Analysis, comprising the behavioural factor of Engagement and attitudinal factors of Zoom Rooms, Zoom and Google Docs. The respondents were N=75 second and third year students who attended three online courses (Translation of fiction (T1), scientific (T2) and legal texts (T3)) at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Novi Sad during the autumn semester in 2020. The qualitative data were first coded, after which, by means of an inductive approach, recurring patterns and categories were identified and a set of themes was organized. The quantitative data were contrasted by means of a GLM ANOVA, following which a series of step-wise regressions were conducted in SPSS 25 statistical software.

The qualitative analysis of the respondents' comments to open questions reveal that online tools are most valued for their interactive and collaborative potential. The respondents specifically positively comment on the availability of emoticons, chat, screen sharing as interactive features of Zoom, the possibility of small group collaboration in Zoom Rooms and whole class collaboration in Google Docs. The most important quantitative results reveal that, although all students report medium to high levels of online classroom engagement, the most influential factors in the construction of their engagement are noticeably different depending on whether they had previous experience with blended learning and if they had positive or negative attitudes to online learning. While those who took part only in online learning and preferred this mode of instruction form their engagement only on the basis of online collaborative activities (small group work in Zoom Rooms), the students who took part in both online and blended learning, favouring this mode of instruction, construct their engagement on the combination of their attitudes towards both online peer collaboration (in Zoom Rooms) and teacher-fronted instruction (Zoom).

The paper offers widely applicable online instructional scenarios and student and teacher reflections on the tools that can foster online peer collaboration and greater student engagement in distance, blended or computer-aided teaching and learning.

**Keywords:** socio-constructivist epistemology, distance learning, student collaboration, engagement

## References

- Ahrens, B., Beaton-Thome, M. and Rütten, A. (2021). The pivot to remote online teaching on the MA in Conference Interpreting in Cologne: Lessons learned from and unexpected experience. *The Journal of Specialised Translation*, 36, 251–284.

- 
- Aubrey, S., King, J. & Almkhaild, H. (2020). Language learner engagement during speaking tasks: A longitudinal study. *RELC Journal*, 51 (1), 1–15. DOI: 10.1177/0033688220945418
  - Bailensen, J. N. (2021). Nonverbal overload: A theoretical argument for the causes of Zoom fatigue. *Technology, Mind, and Behavior*, 2 (1). DOI: 10.1037/tmb0000030
  - Boelens, R., Voet, M. & De Wever, B. (2018). The design of blended learning in response to student diversity in higher education: Instructors' views and use of differentiated instruction in blended learning. *Computers & Education*, 120, 197–212. DOI: 10.1016/j.compedu.2018.02.009
  - Carless, D. (2015). Exploring learning-oriented assessment processes. *Higher Education*, 69 (6), 963–976. DOI: 10.1007/s10734-014-9816-z
  - Christenson, S. L., Reschly, A. L. & Wylie, C. (Eds.). (2012). *Handbook of research on student engagement*. New York: Springer.
  - Dörnyei, Z. (2019). Towards a better understanding of the L2 Learning Experience, the Cinderella of the L2 Motivational Self System. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, 9 (1), 19–30.
  - Eraković, B. & Lazović, V. (2017). Prednosti i nedostaci sistema za podršku učenju u konstruktivističkom pristupu nastavi prevođenja iz perspektive studenata: Mudl i Edmodo. *Nastava i vaspitanje*, 66 (2), 259–272. DOI:10.5937/nasvas1702259E
  - Eraković, B. (2017). To what extent do student expectations influence the application of a collaborative learning model? In: Hagemann, S., Neu, J. & Walter, S. (Eds.). *Translationslehre und Bologna-Prozess: Unterwegs zwischen Einheit und Vielfalt / Translation/Interpreting Teaching and the Bologna Process: Pathways between Unity and Diversity* (283–307). TransÜD 87. Berlin: Frank & Timme.
  - Finn, J. & Zimmer, K. (2012). Student engagement: What is it? Why does it matter? In: Christenson, S., Reschly, A. & Wylie, C. (Eds.). *Handbook of Research on Student Engagement* (97–132). New York: Springer.
  - Fredricks, J. A., Blumenfeld, P. C. & Paris, A. H. (2004). School engagement: Potential of the concept, state of the evidence. *Review of Educational Research*, 74 (1), 59–109.
  - Herman, P. & Gomez, L. M. (2009). Taking guided learning theory to school. Reconciling the cognitive, motivational and social contexts of instruction. In: Tobias, S. & Duffy, T. M. (Eds.). *Constructivist instruction: success or failure?* (62–81). New York: Routledge.
  - Jelińska, M. & Paradowski, M. B. (2021). Teachers' engagement in and coping with emergency remote instruction during COVID-19-induced school closures: A multinational contextual perspective. *Online Learning Journal*, 25 (1), 303–328. DOI: 10.24059/olj.v25i1.2492
  - Johnson, A. (2020). *Online teaching with Zoom. A guide for teaching and learning with videoconference platforms*. Retrieved March 19, 2021 from www: <https://excellentonlineteaching.com>
  - Kahu, E. R. (2013). Framing student engagement in higher education. *Studies in Higher Education*, 38 (5), 758–773. DOI: 10.1080/03075079.2011.598505

- 
- Kim, M. K., Kimb, S. M., Khera, O. & Getman, J. (2014). The experience of three flipped classrooms in an urban university: an exploration of design principles. *Internet and Higher Education*, 22, 37–50. DOI: 10.1016/j.iheduc.2014.04.003
  - Kiraly, D. (2000). *A social-constructivist approach to translator education: Empowerment from theory to practice*. Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing.
  - Kiraly, D. (2006). Beyond social constructivism. Complexity theory and translator education. *Translation and interpreting studies*, 1 (1), 68–86.
  - Kiraly, D. (2015). Occasioning translator competence. Moving beyond social constructivism toward a postmodern alternative to instructionism. *Translation and Interpreting Studies*, 10 (1), 8–32.
  - Kiraly, D., R uth, L., Signer, S., Stederoth, K. & Wiedmann, M. (2019). Enhancing translation course design and didactic interventions with e-learning: Moodle and Beyond. In: Kiraly, D. & Massey, G. (Eds.). *Towards Authentic Experiential Learning in Translator Education (2nd Edition) (103–130)*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
  - Kirschner, P. A., Sweller, J., Kirschner, F. & Zambrano, R. J. (2018). From cognitive load theory to collaborative cognitive load theory. *International Journal of Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning*, 13 (2), 213–233. DOI: 10.1007/s11412-018-9277-y
  - Lopez, S. J. (2011). *Strengths-based education and student engagement*. Washington, DC: Gallup Inc.
  - Newmann, F., Wehlage, G. G. & Lamborn, S. D. (1992). The significance and sources of student engagement. In: Newmann, F. (Ed.). *Student engagement and achievement in American secondary schools (11–39)*. New York: Teachers College.
  - Nordmann, E., Horlin, C., Hutchison, J., Murray, J. A., Robson, L., Seery, M. K. et al. (2020). Ten simple rules for supporting a temporary online pivot in higher education. *PLoS Comput Biol*, 16 (10): e1008242. DOI: 10.1371/journal.pcbi.1008242.
  - Nuere, S. & De Miguel, L. (2020). The digital/technological connection with COVID-19: An unprecedented challenge in university teaching. *Technology, Knowledge and Learning*. DOI: 10.1007/s10758-020-09454-6
  - Peřikan, A. (2010). Savremeni pogled na prirodu řkolskog uĉenja i nastave – socio-konstruktivistiĉko gledište i njegove praktiĉne implikacije. *Psiholořka istrařivanja*, 13 (2), 157–184.
  - Reschly, A. & Christenson, S. L. (2006a). Prediction of dropout among students with mild disabilities: A case for the inclusion of student engagement variables. *Remedial and Special Education*, 27, 276–292.
  - Reschly, A. & Christenson, S. L. (2006b). School completion. In: Bear, G. & Minke, K. (Eds.). *Children’s needs III: Understanding and addressing the developmental needs of children (103–113)*. Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.
  - Valentine, E. & Wong, J. (2021). Pathway into translation online teaching and learning: three case-studies. *The Journal of Specialised Translation*, 36, 220–250.

- 
- Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
  - Wanner, T. & Palmer, E. (2015). Personalising learning: Exploring student and teacher perceptions about flexible learning and assessment in a flipped university course. *Computers & Education*, 88, 354–369. DOI: 10.1016/j.compedu.2015.07.008
  - Wu, D. & Wei, L. (2021). Online teaching as the new normal: Understanding translator trainers' self-efficacy beliefs. *The Journal of Specialised Translation*, 36, 301–326.