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## CURRICULUM & TEACHING STUDIES | RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Impact of engaging teaching model (ETM) on students' attendance

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**Abstract:** Non-attendance in Higher Education is not a new concept. In recent years with the exponential growth in digital learning, physical attendance has become a more complex issue. Educators are continually advocating an engaging teaching approach for students as a means of enhancing learning. This on-going study focuses on exploring the existing issues related to student non-attendance and the impact of a proposed engaging teaching model (ETM) on students' attendance. This research questions whether an engaged learning session could make a positive impact on students' attendance. The objectives highlighted in this study are to examine the reasons for non-attendance and generic measures for increasing attendance; and highlight the impact of an engaging teaching model on students' attendance. The inference drawn from the qualitative method undertaken by 89 participants is the development of ETM to enhance students' attendance. The study is beneficial to educators, researchers and policy-makers, in order for them to consider not only the content of their subjects, but also how students engage with these resources, which consequently facilitate students' interest in attending lectures.

**Subjects:** Classroom Practice; Education Policy & Politics; Higher Education

**Keywords:** education; higher education; pedagogy; student attendance; student engagement; teaching and learning

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### PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

In this paper, we have: developed an engaging teaching model (ETM) that should be of interest to higher education planners, policy makers and particularly new higher education tutors, in developing impactful and engaging learning to students. We carried out an inclusive research from different categories of students and develop an engaging teaching model that considers students' attendance issue. This can be considered a new addition to the body of knowledge in the field of education. We categorised relevant and applicable tools and techniques to engage higher education learners in order to enhance their learning and encourage them to attend lectures, seminars and tutorial sessions.

## 1. Introduction

Today's students in Higher Education (HE) are in a very different environment from that enjoyed by previous generations. With the advancement in digital learning and free information resources; educators and researchers have developed various new approaches to improved pedagogy in order to enhance the experience of new generation students. In spite of digital flux, there are still thousands of educational institutes that provide physical space and face-to-face (F2F) interaction to students who prefer F2F or blended learning rather than online. However, those who choose F2F (Heafner & Petty, 2016) or blended learning (Dinning, Maghill, Money, Walsh, & Nixon, 2016) or in-class experiential learning (Sojka, 2016) as choices show high tendency of non-attendance. Student attendance at higher education institutions are declining (Corbin, Burns, & Chrzanowski, 2010; Gump, 2004; Moore, Armstrong, & Pearson, 2008; Snyder, Forbus, & Cistulli, 2012). Non-attendance can be puzzling because "buildings are built, rooms are reserved, teaching schedules set, and students enrol with the assumption that faculty-student encounters will occur; yet, quite often many students do not show up" (Friedman, Rodriguez, & McComb, 2001, p. 124).

In the United Kingdom, a number of factors result in student non-attendance. A key reason is financial. Many students succumb to financial pressures due to abolition of some additional student grant they receive in addition to the student loan or sudden changes in their family or individual financial situations. These students end up working during both term and vacations leading to non-attendance and low performance. Also revealed as a negative side of the technology is the use and availability of audio and video lectures (McInnis, 2002), which increase absenteeism. Another reason that is yet to be fully researched is the impact of engagement in classroom teaching as a means to enhance student attendance, which this study seeks to explore.

To engage students actively is to provide effective learning experience. Chickering and Gamson (1987) stressed three principles of pedagogies of engagement, namely student-faculty contact, cooperation among students and active learning. More recently, the UK's annual National Student Survey (NSS), launched in 2005, provides an avenue for understanding how students perceive their learning experience. The NSS conceives that student learning experience and engagement is not just a single unit or course in the student's academic development. It rather is an assessment of their development and experiences gained over the years (National Student Survey, 2016). The findings of the survey can be used as effective tool by universities and higher education institutes to assess the success or failure of their academic practices.

Consequently, this study aims to investigate the impact of ETM as a measure to enhance student attendance. The objectives of the study are to, first, examine the reasons for non-attendance and generic measures for increasing attendance; second, to highlight the impact of ETM on students' attendance. The inductive methodology used to achieve this aim combines both secondary and primary data. The secondary data include existing literature and archival statistical records on student attendance at the university in the east of England. The primary qualitative data were obtained by administering and analysing the findings of survey questions from 89 students. The implications of this research to policy and practice are twofold: First, it will assist researchers, educators and policy-makers to gain useful insight in designing engaging classroom practices to aid student attendance. Second, this study contributes to the field of education practice in the development of meaningful teaching and learning, particularly for early career HE tutors.

In the next sections, we review the extant literature on student attendance, possible reasons for non-attendance and explore the engagement concept as an approach to facilitate attendance, leading to the development of the conceptual framework for this study. Next, we present the methods used for the study and discuss the findings. The paper concludes with highlights of the research implications, limitations and future research.

## 2. Literature review

Systematic literature review was carried out to find the correlation between attendance with student performance and engaged learning. Historically, attendance issue goes back over a hundred years when school attendance was first made compulsory in schools. Then, as now, school inspectors were charged with monitoring this, in addition to judging the overall quality of teaching (Evans, 2006).

Surveys show school attendance ranging from 90 to 94% in primary and 84–91% in secondary schools (Blyth & Milner, 1999; HM Inspectors of School Audit Unit, 1993). By 2002 to 2003, attendance rates have improved nationally. However, unauthorised absence did not show the same level of improvement due to inconsistent practice in schools. In 2011/12, the attendance rate for UK was 94.24% in primary schools and 92.61% in secondary schools (Powell, 2014). However, it is difficult to draw direct comparison between attendances in universities and schools given the voluntary nature of the former and the mandatory nature of the latter (Blyth & Milner, 1999), which is an indication that voluntary attendance tends to be lower than compulsory attendance.

Attendance at HE can be questioned on whether it should be made compulsory or whether it represents an unwelcome blanket of surveillance (O’Keefe & Stoll, 1995; Pignatelli, 2002). But with the new policies in UK education sector, this increase in attendance monitoring becomes very crucial in the HE sector. Bevitt, Baldwin, and Calvert (2010) conducted a study of the effects of attendance on students in what they termed high-stakes classes (practical and seminars, as opposed to lectures). Bevitt’s group found that students who attended high-stakes classes less than 90% of the time were—at least half as likely to achieve a 2.1 or 1st level mark, compared to their peers with 100% attendance. There is a strong co-relation between attendance, retention and achievement (Hammoudeh & Barrett, 2002). Bowen, Price, Lloyd, and Thomas (2005) also concluded that the electronic attendance monitoring system undoubtedly provided more data than traditional paper-based registers, as shown by average increases in data capture (average 28%, as high as 90% in some learning events). Surprisingly, the other expected outcome of the trial was the positive reaction of students on attendance monitoring. Majority of students (75%) appreciated, and actually subliminally wanted their attendance to be monitored (Bowen et al., 2005). Closer monitoring and follow-up of poor attendance is one of the ways to help improve retention that might lead to enhanced achievement (Martinez, 2001). Nevertheless, given the limited discussion on the attendance issue in UK HE sector; it is evident that there is a need for research in this area, especially aligned with today’s technology-enhanced teaching and learning environment.

### 2.1. Reasons for non-attendance

According to Macfarlane (2013), poor attendance at lectures and seminars is not a new phenomenon to higher education. A number of reasons account for students’ non-attendance. Moore et al. (2008) and Friedman et al. (2001) cautioned that non-attendance should not be attributed to a single cause but multiple causes. This suggests that there is a need to examine the various factors that influence student decisions on attendance. Other fundamental issues with non-attendance are the accuracy of the records and the variation from one discipline to another. Firstly, universities’ records on attendance are not necessarily accurate and not all institutions record attendance the same way. The records also require careful interpretation. For instance, attendance records can be conflicting and difficult to explain whether it was for a whole day or just certain classes (Paisey & Paisey, 2004). Secondly, disciplines within HE do not experience non-attendance in the same ways. Students in disciplines like computing science, library science and social psychology tend to display different values, aims, characteristics and cultural bias (Ylijoki, 2000) compared with those in humanities. This study, however, focuses on students in a Business School, in order to investigate intriguing issues regarding non-attendance.

The reasons for non-attendance vary considerably from country to country, as well as individual personal student’s issues. Combining study with part-time work is a common practice in the US and UK. According to Stern and Nakata (1991), by the early 1990s, working while studying had become

the norm, which is attributed to the cost of HE education relative to family income and the limited availability of student's subsidies. However, the position is mixed in the UK. The number of students working during term ranged from 14 to 64% (Little, 2002). In Glasgow Caledonian University, 79% of students had part-time jobs, while 24% of those without a job had actively sought employment. At the University of Glasgow, 52% of students had part-time jobs (Paisey & Paisey, 2004). Furthermore, 63 and 56% of them had missed lectures and tutorials, respectively, because of their work (Paisey & Paisey, 2004). The majority of the students felt that their examinations grades would have been better if they had not worked because they found it difficult to find time to study because of the hours they worked. In UK, many students struggle to keep up with attendance requirement due to financial pressures. The most vulnerable students are from lower social classes, single parents and couples with children, who often have to work to meet their financial requirements (Paisey & Paisey, 2004).

Misra and Mckean (2000) highlighted a number of academic stresses that students encounter, namely: regular study, exams preparation, large amount of content to masters within limited time-frame and grade competition. These pressures, when excessive, could lead to physical and psychological impairment in students (Murphy & Archer, 1996); which consequently provide reasons for non-attendance. The characteristics of tutor are significant to the way students respond to attendance. Scholars have identified different observable characteristics for tutor success. These include: the tutor's academic background (Harris & Sass, 2006), certificate exam scores (Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2007) and personality characteristics (Hoy & Woolfolk, 1993). According to study conducted by Field (2012), non-attendance is not only linked to students engaged in paid work but brings into picture unavoidable factors such as illness, family emergency, like or dislikes related to subject or tutor and failure to understand the importance of attendance.

## **2.2. Engagement approach**

According to Krause (2005, p. 1), student engagement is defined as the "time, energy and resources that are devoted to activities designed to enhance learning at university". Engagement occurs in diverse forms (Sawon, Pembroke, & Wille, 2012). Christensen, Garvin, and Sweet (1991) noted that it is the teacher's responsibility to engage students in learning. The teacher becomes less an imparter of knowledge and more of a designer and facilitator of teaching and learning opportunities. In other words, the real issue confronting university lecturers is not covering the material for the students; it is uncovering the material with the students through engagement.

Traditionally, teaching involves passing information during lectures in which students are required to listen, obtain information and take notes with limited opinions given for constructive discussions (Greer & Heaney, 2004). This approach is regarded as passive learning because the students only sit and listen. On the other hand, active learning or engagement involves an interactive environment in which student asks questions, participate and exhibit critical thinking (Paschal, 2002). Accordingly, teaching strategies were developed for making lectures engaging the student through a combination of problem-solving activities and group works. McCredden and Baldock (2009, p. 988) also noted that the most important aspects of student engagement is "the switching on of a student's effortful thinking".

The practice of using an engaging pedagogy dates back to thousands of years. The Talmud stated that to understand the Talmud, one must have a learning partner. Also, the ancient Chinese philosopher Confucius is typically credited with the Chinese proverb, "Tell me and I forget; show me and I remember; involve me and I understand". Seneca, a Roman philosopher, advocated cooperative learning, saying that "Qui Docet Discet", meaning "when you teach, you learn'd". In addition, J. Amos Comenius (1592–1679) was of the opinion that students benefit both by teaching and by being taught by other students. In the late 1700s, cooperative learning groups in England and India were

extensively used by Lancaster and Bell, which was later extended to America in 1806, when Lancasterian School was opened in New York (Lancaster, 1808 cited in Smith, Sheppard, Johnson, & Johnson, 2005). In the late 1800s, Colonel Parker clamoured in public schools for cooperative learning with practicality, idealism, enthusiasm, intense freedom, individuality and democracy (Smith et al., 2005). Following Parker, John Dewey promoted cooperative learning groups through a thinking curriculum, cooperative learning, multidisciplinary curriculum, projects, portfolios and alternative assessments to challenge students to demonstrate their capabilities (Dewey, 1924 cited in Smith et al., 2005).

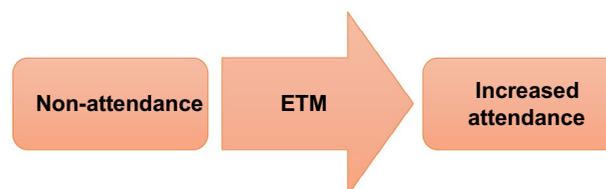
The late 1930s were an era where public schools began to clamour for interpersonal competition (Pepitone, 1980). From relatively unknown and limited usage in 1960s, cooperative learning began to gain acceptance and was often the preferred institutional system at all levels of education throughout the world from preschool through undergraduate and adult training programmes (Johnson & Johnson, 2004). In 1970s, the Sharans in Israel developed the group investigation procedure for cooperative learning (Sharan & Sharan, 1976). Also, Slavin and colleagues at John Hopkins University extended the works of DeVries and Edward by modifying Teams-Games-Tournaments (TGT) (DeVries & Edwards, 1974) into Student-Teams-Achievement-Divisions (STAD) and modified computer-assisted instructions into Team-Assisted Instruction (TAI) (Sharan & Sharan, 1976).

From the 1980s to date, academic leaders have advocated the adoption of “pedagogies of engagement” (Edgerton, 2001) as a means of increasing student involvement in their learning process. It also facilitates the application of the knowledge and skills gained in HE programmes by students (Astin, 1999; Bok, 1989; Murphy, 2006; Smith et al., 2005). This led to increasing experimentation with learner-centred pedagogies as well as problem-based learning (Bridges & Hallinger, 1995), collaborative learning (Kimber, 1996; Smith et al., 2005) and case teaching (Christensen, 1995; Garvin, 2003). The use of blended learning (López-Pérez, Pérez-López, & Rodríguez-Ariza, 2011), simulations (Salas, Wildman, & Piccolo, 2009), research (Healey, 2015), in-class experiential learning (Sojka, 2016) and flipped classroom (Hernández-Nanclares & Pérez-Rodríguez, 2016) are also useful engagement learning approaches. As shown in the literature, the efforts exerted to engage students are extensive; yet there is still a problem instigating students’ involvement and interest towards learning, which in turn impacts on their attendance.

### 3. Conceptual framework

This study conceptualises Edgerton’s work on the pedagogies of engagement as an approach for increasing student’s attendance. Edgerton (2001) pointed out that “... learning about things does not enable students to acquire the abilities and understanding they will need for the twenty-first century. We need new pedagogies for engagement that will turn out the kinds of resourceful, engaged workers and citizens ...” (Smith et al., 2005, p. 1). The proposition is that engagement of students should motivate them to attend lectures and possibly develop knowledge and skills for their academic and professional development, as shown in Figure 1. This implies that student non-attendance can be reduced by engaging them. To explore this issue from an empirical point of view led to the conduct of this study. The next section explains the methods used in conducting the study.

Figure 1. Conceptual framework.



#### 4. Methods used

This study employed an interpretive epistemology philosophy, which implies that the focus of the findings is subjected to the details and reality of the situation. To achieve this, the inductive approach is found suitable by the researcher because it is empirically based on the findings collected from the study and the outcomes from the Business School evaluated. Also of significance is that the findings of the study are used to enhance the ETM to enhance student attendance, which is inductive in nature.

This study combines secondary research in the form of systematic literature review on the factors associated with attendance and engagement; and primary research in the form of gathering qualitative data. The collection of primary data was done during a term period. The data analysis sought to provide an in-depth picture of the impact of this study on student attendance at the Business School of a university in the east of England. A key strength of this research method lies in the longitudinal reflection of the model by stakeholders.

The empirical data collected from 89 questionnaires' are used to assess students' views on attendance and engagement. The questionnaire used is a combination of open and closed-ended questions to explore the implementation narrative of the model designed. This information is used to construct the narrative of the impact of engagement teaching model (ETM) on student attendance, and addresses the key objectives of the study. The questions in the questionnaire are centred on four key categories, namely: the background of the respondent, the reasons for non-attendance, ways to increase attendance and ETM.

To maintain inclusivity and enhance the quality of the study, the respondents were randomly selected across undergraduate and postgraduate levels. These respondents were examined on their business units over a term. All the participants were informed about the study and its motives before collecting data from them via paper-based survey. The findings of the study were validated quantitatively through Cronbach alpha reliability test using Statistical Package for Social Scientist (SPSS) version 22.

#### 5. Findings and discussion

##### 5.1. Background of participants

Out of a targeted sample of 100 respondents across postgraduate (PG) and undergraduate (UG) levels, 89 participants were engaged in the study that is a high response rate of 89%. Majority (52%) of the respondents were male, compared to 48% who were female, see Table 1. The students' response on their awareness of the university's attendance policy (in Table 2) clearly indicates that they are fully aware of the policy, as highlighted by 71%, while 29% felt that they are not aware of the attendance policy.

**Table 1. Respondent's gender**

Gender	Postgraduate	Undergraduate	Total	Percentage
Male	30	16	46	52
Female	14	31	43	48
			89	100

**Table 2. Awareness of attendance policy**

Awareness of attendance policy	Postgraduate	Undergraduate	Total	Percentage
Yes	32	31	63	71
No	10	16	26	29
			89	100

**Table 3. Generic reason(s) for non-attendance**

Reasons for non-attendance	Postgraduate	Undergraduate	Total	Percentage
Financial/job	7	29	36	29
Academic pressure	14	7	21	17
Health reasons	12	20	32	26
Course/tutor related issues	10	2	12	10
Social and family reasons	13	7	20	16
Other	1	1	2	2
			123	100

### 5.2. Reasons for non-attendance and ways to increase attendance

The reasons for non-attendance examined empirically both the generic reasons for non-attendance and the student’s personal reasons for not attending lectures. The students were asked to choose one or more reasons for non-attendance, which resulted in 123 responses (Table 3). Out of which, 29% of the students indicated that students’ absenteeism is attributed to financial (job) commitments and 26% for health reasons. Seventeen per cent highlighted academic pressure and 16% felt that family pressure was responsible for students’ absence. The remaining 10% indicated course and tutor-related issues such as wide gaps between lectures and limited impact from the tutor on teaching and attendance awareness.

From the narratives of the open-ended questions, the summary of some reasons given for non-attendance are:

Lectures is too long, boing and saying same things. Early morning classes, project pressure and lengthy classes (PG student)

Some lectures do not include enough practical application of theories (PG student)

Some lectures don’t have time to explain to students (UG student).

The ways to increase attendance were also examined empirically from two perspectives; generic reasons and the student’s personal reasons. This resulted in 98 responses (Table 4). Majority (i.e. 54%) pointed out the need for an active learning and engagement to facilitate student attendance. From the remaining, 32% felt that by linking attendance to performance students will attend lectures and 14% felt tutor’s verbal aggression (i.e. constant reminder) on attendance is needed.

From the narratives of the open-ended questions, the summary of some ways to increase attendance are:

Introducing engaging class activities and break assignment into smaller units (i.e. multiple submission) (PG student)

**Table 4. Ways to increase attendance**

Ways to increase attendance	Postgraduate	Undergraduate	Total	Percentage
Link attendance to performance	15	16	31	32
Tutor’s verbal aggression on attendance	9	5	14	14
Active learning issues	22	31	53	54
			89	100

**Table 5. Engaging teaching model (ETM)**

Will ETM increase HE attendance	Postgraduate	Undergraduate	Total	Percentage
Male	25	27	52	69
Female	7	16	23	31
			89	100

Developing good study materials and understand students better. I feel if there is more engagement in class i.e. student-tutor it gathers one's interest in the subject and will result in greater attendance. Hence, make lesson interesting for students (UG student)

Make the class more than what can be accessed simply through the University's virtual learning environment (UG student)

### 5.3. The engaging teaching model (ETM) as a tool to increase attendance

In Table 5, 75 responses were collected to confirm students' opinion on whether or not engagement model could improve attendance. Majority (69%) believe that ETM will lead to improved attendance. The remaining 31% felt otherwise.

In addition, the students were asked to suggest other contemporary measure(s) that can be used to increase student attendance. The main reason was lecturer and lecture-related issues, which accounted for 45%. The issues highlighted here are proper lecture plans, short lecture durations, periodic breaks, limited teaching slides and lecturers available outside lectures. Next is an in-class related issue with 26%, such as use of engaging activities, in-class interactions and good online supporting materials. Twenty-one per cent suggested that there should be a link between attendance and performance. Assignment-related issue and linking learning to real life both have 2%. However, 4% were optimistic that the on-going practices that they are experiencing are okay (Table 6).

Some narratives on engagement deduced from the empirical findings were that:

Friendly interactive session with much of student involvement and various other programs where students will have desire to come to the class. Teaching with interaction and debate kind of activities to remove boredom from class and motivate and involve students. Teaching approach with real examples and discuss, take ideas from students. Show the real world scenario to enable students effect on what is going on out there (PG student)

More practices will enhance participation. The use of enough practical application of theories would engage learners. More practical visit to real companies and industries. More real life scenario, more guest lectures from industrial experts (PG student)

**Table 6. Respondent's suggestions on contemporary measure(s) to increase attendance apart from ETM**

General suggestions on contemporary measure to increase attendance	Postgraduate	Undergraduate	Total	Percentage
Assignment related issues	0	1	1	4
In-class activities related issues	6	8	14	2
Lecturer or lecture related issues	15	9	24	26
Link attendance to performance	6	5	11	45
Link learning to real life	1	0	1	21
Others	0	2	2	2
			53	100

**Table 7. Reliability test for the study**

		<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Reliability statistics - Cases	Valid	25	35.7
	Excluded	45	64.3
	Total	70	100
Cronbach's alpha	<b>.851</b>	12 items	

I feel if there is more engagement in class i.e. student-tutor it will gather one's interest in the subject and will result in greater attendance. More examples with real businesses (UG student)

In class activities and thorough assessment/exam help in lectures. Not having hundreds of slide for a lecture because students tend to lose concentration when lecture notes are too much. More practical things if possible (UG student).

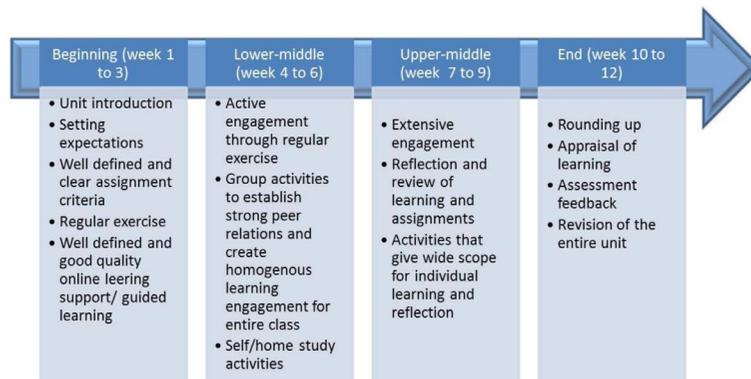
**5.4. Reliability tests**

All scales were made up of different items. The step was to check the reliability and internal consistency of the values examined in this study. The value of the Cronbach's Alpha is 0.851, which is above the acceptable Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.7, as presented in Table 7. This is considered a good and acceptable level as suggested by Hair, Black, Babin, and Anderson (2010). The reliability tests show that measurements used in the questionnaire have high consistency. Therefore, the study confirmed the validity and reliability of the research instrument used for this study.

**6. Discussion**

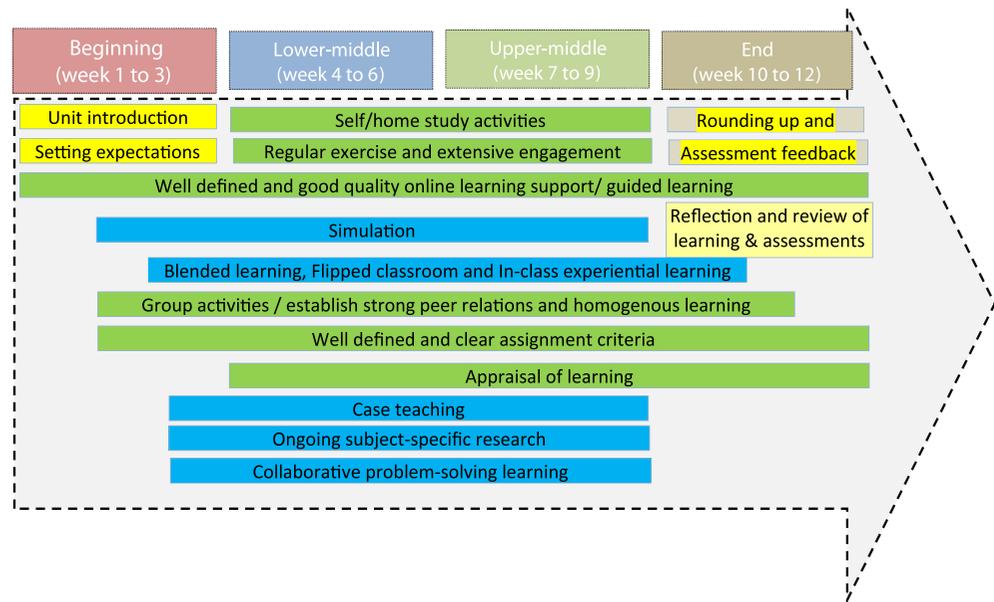
The ETM adopted over a term is shown in Figure 2. As a study to improve practice, the model is modified over time in line with the authors and stakeholders' perception, findings from secondary and empirical data. It also considers the unit learning outcomes, university teaching policy and the QAA (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education) quality code. Being stakeholders, the authors were keen to ensure their personal experiences did not unduly influence the direction of the study but rather enhance it. For this reason, the approach used in this study was wide and inclusive, covering various classifications of students. During the remaining part of the study, the authors were able to take advantage of the researcher-stakeholder role; and in doing so, were able to use their personal knowledge objectively to interpret and challenge the data collected without bias.

**Figure 2. Tentative ETM for a term.**



**Figure 3. Engagement teaching model (ETM) for a term.**

Source: Modified by Author (2015).



The model began with a tentative model at the beginning of term (Figure 2) from the authors' previous experiences. In the third week, the model was discussed with the students and administered. The suggestions for improvement and modification of the model evolved. Some vital engagement approaches identified are that the students enjoy and want more subject-specific video, interspersed with turn-to-your partner discussion and in-class peer assessments. This was included in the model. At the end of the term, the model was modified (Figure 3) based on the tripartite classification from students' empirical data, key findings from existing literature and authors-stakeholder's experiences.

In Figure 3, the approaches are categorised in blue, green and yellow. The blue colour contained approaches deduced from literature such as: Christensen et al. (1991), Christensen (1995), Garvin (2003), Greer and Heaney (2004), Smith et al. (2005) McCredden and Baldock (2009) and Healey (2015). The empirical findings are in green and the authors-stakeholder's perceptions are flagged in yellow. The functionality of the inclusive and tripartite model, referred to as the ETM, begins on the first week tagged the "beginning". Here, the unit is introduced, students' expectations set, and the skills set required to be gained outlined for discussion and confirmed. All the necessary resources for the units investigated are the unit handbook, lecture notes, sample of recommended texts, university's online (virtual) learning environment and the ground rules on conduct and attendance. During the second and third weeks, the students are reminded of the existing rules, particularly on attendance, in order to remind those absent in the first session and reinforce compliance. Other approaches at this stage include sensitising learners on the use of simulation to enhance teaching and learning, introducing individual and group activities, case teaching, research and collaborative problem solving.

At the "lower middle" stage, the rigour of teaching and learning is increased through the introduction of new techniques and increase in the use of existing approaches from weeks 2 and 3. In this stage, the students critically reflect on contemporary business practices globally, and address misconceptions and misunderstandings. The methods considered include self/home study activities, more exercise, update online resources and simulation. Also, contemporary activities that generate learning and reflection such as blended learning, flipped classroom and in-class experiential learning are used. Others are periodic group discussions, business video reviews, focused discussions, interspersed turn-to-your partner discussions and in-class peer assessments in order to develop learners' understanding of assessments in the UK (especially for international business students). However, at the "upper middle" stage, the teaching and learning is more extensive, rigorous and

stabilises the approaches adopted from the lower middle. However, appraisal of learning is highly significant at this stage. This includes the use of formative and summative assessments.

In week 9 towards the “end” stage, the focus is on more extensive engagement, reflection on assessments and wider scope activities. The remaining weeks aim at reflection and review of the entire unit as well as assessments revision. However, with the intensity of the model, the researchers assume that students would be extensively equipped to critically review and apply the knowledge and skills gained on their respective business units. However, all the approaches within ETM may not be applicable to every business or management-related unit. Therefore, tutors should endeavour to choose the ones that are appropriate to their students as suggested by Kuh (2009), who stated that:

...given the increasing diversity of college students today, it is erroneous to presume that what works in one setting for certain students will have the same effects in other settings for different types of students. Because institutional contexts differ, students’ experiences will differ, as will what they get out of college. (Kuh, 2009, p. 314)

## 7. Conclusion

This study addresses an important issue that is relevant to education policy-makers and early career tutors in HE. It epitomises a step towards understanding the reasons for students’ non-attendance and the impact of an engaging teaching model in improving student attendance. In this study, diverse categories of students establish that the ETM approach would help improve the attendance.

The study found that most academic literature in higher education pays limited attention to attendance in contrast to wider literature on teaching and learning. Amongst, the limited literature on attendance, there still remains a gap in the provision of contemporary measures to engagement as a possible remedy to the low attendance by students, which this study has now unravelled.

As indicated from the study, students miss classes for various reasons. What is clear is that a considerable amount of students regard “ETM” as a useful approach to increase students’ attendance. ETM addresses the issues that are related to engagement and student–tutor interaction. Learning activities become more engaging and meaningful. It establishes connection between attendance and performance through inclusive nature of assessment guidance throughout, which will in-turn motivate students to attend lectures. Empirically, the ETM enhanced student attendance resulting in average attendance rate of 67 and 82% for UG and PG, respectively. The average result attained was between higher C and B range. These results indicate significant improvements in the way students engaged with the UG and PG units, their attendance and result attained. Therefore, this study postulates the use of ETM in the development of influential pedagogy that would greatly improve attendance. Thus, confirming the works of Zepke (2011), which imply that student engagement is a complex “dynamic and non-hierarchical network” in which the factors are distinct and yet connected.

The use of a significant number of the respondents who are international students and are mandated by the UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) to attend classes can be considered as a limitation. This is because non-attendance cannot be fully established in this situation compared to UK home students who are not mandated to attend classes by external bodies. Another limitation is the use of survey questions as more of qualitative than quantitative data collection. Probably the use of other data collection tools like interviews, focused group, ethnography could have helped to reveal more specific contexts from students’ experiences. Also, a wider sample size and repetitive surveys could have been considered to provide more in-depth contribution from students.

The implication of this action research is that it serves as a call for academics and members of the academic planning team to consider not only the content and topics that make up a degree but also how students engage with these resources, which consequently facilitate student attendance to F2F learning sessions. ETM serves as a useful approach for HE planners, policy-makers and particularly

new HE tutors to adopt impactful and engaging learning to students. Finally, the inclusive nature of the study from different categories of students and development of an ETM that consider students' attendance issue is a new area that adds to the body of knowledge in the field of education. This conforms to the work of Edgerton (2001) on the "pedagogies of engagement". Further research involving wider participants could consider more practical and engaging approaches to tackle students' non-attendance, particularly in other fields.

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