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Tracing the Trajectory of Teacher Engagement in the Case of a CPD: Does Fake Engagement Really Exist?

Büşra Görkemoğlu[1]* & *Ayşe Semra Akyel*[2]

Abstract

Teachers' engagement in continuing professional development activities plays an essential role in the design, implementation, and effectiveness of in-service teacher training (INSET) programs. Understanding multidimensional orientations of teacher engagement in continuing professional development (CPD) activities, albeit fluctuations and deceptive images, may provide implications for the rate and pace of their professional development. To address this issue, the present study aims to understand teachers' engagement orientations, namely cognitive, behavioral, and affective; as well as the levels, i.e. authenticity or fakeness of their engagement. In doing so, this study further aims to analyze how the participants with different engagement orientations revealed signs of fake and/or genuine engagement. The data collected from the observations of a six-week-long CPD course and semi-structured interviews conducted after the completion of the course indicated that teachers with different engagement orientations demonstrated various ways of genuine and/or fake participation in the CPD course. Pedagogical implications highlight an assortment of courses of action to maximize authentic teacher engagement.

Keywords: Teacher engagement, CPD courses, fake engagement, authentic engagement

[1]Corresponding Author: PhD Candidate, Department of English Language Education, Faculty of Education, Yeditepe University, Istanbul, Turkey, *Email: busraunsalca@gmail.com*, ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0393-1244

[2] Professor, Department of English Language Education, Faculty of Education, Yeditepe University, Istanbul, Turkey, ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7174-1266

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1. Introduction

Engagement has been recognized as an important factor in educational settings. It can be defined as the interest and active involvement of learners in certain topics (Axelson & Flick, 2010; Fredricks et al., 2004; Phan & Ngu, 2014). As an extensive phenomenon that encompasses both academic and non-academic features of individuals' experiences (Wimpenny & Savin-Baden, 2013), engagement is regarded as a strong predictor of learners' success (Al-Obaydi et al., 2023; Jiang & Peng, 2023; Shakki, 2022; 2023), and a promoter for professional development among teachers in educational settings (Li et al., 2022).

The precondition of engagement consists of a sustained connection (Fletcher, 2015), which manifests itself in cognitive, behavioral, and emotional dimensions (Fredricks et al., 2014). Cognitive engagement refers to "the mental energy exerted towards productive involvement with learning activities" (Borup et al., 2020, p. 813). Behavioral engagement stands for observable behaviors associated with active participation in learning activities (Gregory et al., 2014). Affective or emotional engagement is related to learner interest and positive responses and emotions in relation to the teaching task (Lin, 2021; Pourgharib & Shakki, 2024). Until recently, various engagement models have been proposed (Bond & Bedenlier, 2019; Finn & Zimmer, 2012; Fredricks, 2011; Groccia, 2018; Svalberg, 2009). Finn and Zimmer (2012) define it as a psychological and behavioral construct that develops within a period of time, and they emphasize the importance of educational policies to prevent disengagement across students. Svalberg's model (2009) pinpoints cognitive, affective, and social aspects of engagement with particular emphasis on learner attention, autonomy, and agency. More recently, Bond and Bedenlier (2019) have proposed a bioecological engagement framework that involves technology as an integrative component in building learner engagement. Fredricks's conceptual framework of engagement consists of behavioral, cognitive, and affective dimensions with a particular attention to contextual factors determining the intensity of each aspect separately (2011), hence serving the purposes of the present study more comprehensively.

1.1. Student Engagement in EFL Contexts

In EFL contexts, although students may intertwine various engagement orientations depending on certain conditions during courses, they can develop a

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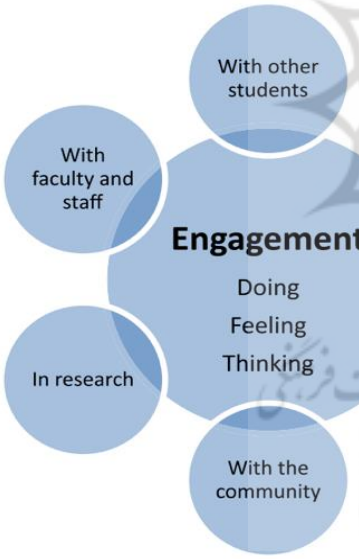
specific dimension of engagement more intensely based on their participation goals and learning objectives (Camburn & Han, 2017), i.e. more cognitive, more behavioral, and more affective engagement. From a different standpoint, the changing nature of engagement may result in the emergence of different orientations of engagement in the same student depending on the learning context. In other words, the nature of engagement developed specifically for a course gains or loses strength due to various contextual and individual factors. As indicated below, Groccia (2018) presents a model of the ways of increasing student engagement through various actions. These include interaction with the participants, the nature of the instruction, the course flow, and individual implementation of the newly learned information.

Figure 1

A Model of Student Engagement (Taken from Groccia, 2018; adapted from Burns et al., 2004; Groccia & Hunter, 2012)



On the other hand, students, due to a number of individual or contextual factors, may become emotionally disconnected during the course time and be engaged with other activities or they might act as if they are engaged. The situation when students pretend to be engaged in lessons is defined as fake engagement (Mercer et al., 2021). Fake engagement might create a deceptive image of students who hide their mental absenteeism by pretending to be present

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throughout the course.

1.2. Authentic and Fake Engagement of Students in EFL Classes

As in the case of engagement in general, researchers focused on authentic and fake engagement within the framework of learning and teaching in classroom settings. Schlechty (2011), in his note-worthy book "Engaging Students", emphasizes the importance of the critical attention, dedication, and value attached to a learning task by the learner. He names this state as authentic engagement. Within this framework, learners genuinely engaged in a learning activity maintain their effort on the task in deference to task challenges. Engagement, as a motivational state of involvement that is beyond physical participation merely, requires psychological presence in a learning activity (Kahn, 1990). In his prior discussions, Schlechty (2001) argues that genuinely engaged learners direct their own learning and feel the pleasure of being involved in tasks that facilitate their development. Hence, following his arguments, Ryan and Deci (2000, 2017) point out the remarkable relationship between intrinsically motivated learners and their increased self-regulated behaviors along with genuine and authentic engagement. Similarly, in a qualitative study conducted by Saeed and Zyngier (2012), it was found that intrinsic motivation serves a primary role in activating authentic student engagement.

However, in a recent study, Mercer et al., (2021) investigated student engagement in the classroom context and found that what seems to be authentic engagement might be deceptive in nature, as many teachers experience with their students. They define this kind of engagement as fake engagement. The state of "fake engagement" can be seen in student behaviors such as the inconsistency in carrying out assignments, or vice versa, in their perceptions such as completing the assignments as part of mandated concerns. Findings in this study based on in-depth interviews with the fake-engaged students also showed that they were not authentically engaged due to various reasons: a) teaching style inappropriate for them, b) content matter that does not interest them, c) their psychological states such as sadness or boredom (Mercer et al., 2021, p. 127). Moreover, they pointed out that as these behaviors and feelings might appear without students' awareness, it would not be ethical to state that they would consciously fake their engagement.

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1.3. Teacher Work Engagement

Teacher engagement, which is defined as the degree of being actively involved in the teaching profession (Klassen et al., 2013; Wang, 2023; Zare et al., 2014; Zhi et al., 2024), or the amount of attention teachers show in particular professional development activities (McMillan et al., 2016; Zare & Derakhshan, 2024) closely pertains to teachers' mental well-being and emotion regulation (Greenier et al., 2021), self-efficacy (Shu, 2022), and job resilience (Li et al., 2022). In an earlier investigation, a number of factors were reported that could be associated with teacher engagement such as school atmosphere, teaching tasks, the roles of teachers in decision-making process, cooperation with colleagues, and student success (Rutter & Jacobson, 1986). Within this regard, teachers might exhibit different engagement orientations depending on these variables, which could eventually lead to a wide range of opportunities for professional experiences in teaching. Teacher engagement, as a multifaceted psychological construct, has been extensively researched in EFL settings over the last decade (Deng et al., 2022; Granziera & Perera, 2019; Greenier et al., 2021). While a growing body of literature emphasized the positive relationship between teacher work engagement and resilience (Xie, 2021), well-being (Wang et al., 2022), and self-efficacy (Han & Wang, 2021), a number of studies investigated factors contributing to engagement in teaching profession such as gender, age, or years of teaching experience (Topchyan & Woehler, 2021).

With the purpose of facilitating teacher engagement and professional development (Opfer & Pedder, 2010), many in-service teacher trainers design continuing professional development (CPD hereafter) programs, which mean "any activities aimed at enhancing the knowledge and skills of teachers by means of orientation, training and support" (Coetzer, 2001, p. 78). In this respect, teachers who receive CPD training on a regular basis experience higher levels of academic achievement among their students (Nyaaba et al., 2023), increase their pedagogical, content, and technological knowledge (Nkundabakura et al., 2023), and enhance their professional beliefs and self-efficacy (Wang et al., 2022). Throughout a CPD program, teachers are expected to be engaged in a variety of interactive activities that foster their theoretical and practical understanding of the target concept (Khan, 2012). However, teacher engagement, similar to student engagement, can demonstrate a single orientation of an engagement or include two or more dimensions at the same time (Yang et al., 2022), viz., a teacher whose engagement

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is purely affective might not be cognitively engaged in a CPD activity, or she might demonstrate cognitive and behavioral engagement at the same time with varying degrees such as more cognitive, more behavioral, and more affective engagement. However, considering the adverse effects of the pandemic on teacher engagement such as lower voluntariness to participate in CPD courses (Lo & To, 2023), many teachers feel compelled to attend CPD courses required by the organizations they work for. Precisely at this juncture, although teachers seemingly participate in the CPD, they might go for a mind stroll, be engaged with other activities, or become emotionally disconnected during the course time. They might feign engagement in the course with the help of these kinds of behaviors, which share common features with those of students (Mercer et al., 2021). This fallacious type of engagement is defined as fake engagement in the literature, a set of behaviors performed by learners "to achieve an outside appearance of being attentive and on-task; however, in reality, their internal states, are not congruent and, for diverse motives, they may be complying or just merely pretending compliance" (Mercer et al., 2021, p. 123). Fake engagement could help teachers shape a misleading portrayal, akin to students, who obscure their insufficient level of engagement by maintaining a presence throughout the course procedure. While more affectively engaged teachers might fake their engagement due to the insufficient satisfaction of their emotional needs, more cognitively engaged teachers could feign to be engaged in the CPD courses in case they are not required to make a cognitive investment in the learning activities. At the same time, more behaviorally engaged teachers might pretend to be engaged if they are not professionally involved in CPD tasks. Therefore, the distinction between participation and engagement should be examined carefully in the case of teachers as learners. In this case, it becomes essential to understand the genuineness of teacher engagement in a CPD course, so that the effectiveness of a CPD could be evaluated more precisely. Hence, extending the study of Mercer et al. (2021) on student fake engagement, it becomes necessary to probe the authenticity of teacher engagement shaped by various orientations specifically in CPD courses.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Studies on Teacher Engagement

Studies on teacher engagement focused on three areas: a) how teachers were engaged in their teaching practice, including the interconnection between teacher

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and student engagement (Derakhshan et al., 2023; Greenier et al., 2021; Pan et al., 2023; Perera et al., 2018; Stobaugh & Everson, 2019; Topchyan & Woehler, 2021), b) how teachers are involved in EFL curriculum design (Jiang et al., 2021), or c) in teacher research and professional development activities (Salter & Tett, 2022). For the purposes of the present study, we will be focusing on studies investigating teacher engagement orientation as well as fake and authentic engagement in CPD courses. Until recently, very little research has probed into teacher engagement in continuing professional development activities (Ji, 2021; Li et al., 2022), whereby teachers attend particular forms of training courses in order to expand their knowledge and experience as part of their continuous and planned learning journey. Prior studies conducted on the role of teacher engagement in CPD reported that teachers who were actively engaged in teaching had both higher levels of self-efficacy, and were more involved in collaborative tasks during CPD (Li et al., 2022). Related to teachers who attend the PD courses as in the role of students to invest in their career development, fake engagement could insidiously take place even without teachers being aware of the situation. Li et al. (2022) examined the moderating effect of participation in CPD courses on the relationship between 615 Chinese teachers' self-efficacy and work engagement. Results revealed that young teachers who were actively engaged in teaching had both higher levels of self-efficacy, and were more involved in collaborative tasks during CPD. In another study, Ji (2021) investigated the relationship between teacher engagement in professional development (PD) and teaching practice. Employing a mixed method design, she conducted a survey and semi-structured interviews with 124 Chinese EFL teachers from primary and secondary schools. The results demonstrated a complementary relationship between teacher engagement in PD and targeted teaching practice. In other words, the findings of the study indicated that, based on teachers' individual PD needs, four types of teacher engagement were observed: cognitive, behavioral, emotional, and social. According to Ji (2021), social engagement refers to the values attributed to the teaching profession and building social relations with students as part of professional commitment. In the face of the importance of teacher engagement in CPD courses, there is insufficient research on the level and orientation of teacher engagement in these courses.

2.2. Authentic and Fake Teacher Engagement in CPD

As Ji (2021) asserted, the distinction between participation and engagement

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should be examined carefully in the case of teachers as learners as well. One of her recent studies indicates that teachers in the Chinese context participate in PD yet they are disengaged due to the deficiencies in dedication to PD. To the knowledge of the researchers, there are few studies conducted in the context of authentic or fake teacher engagement in PD settings. This gives rise to the need for more consideration in examining whether and how teachers fake their engagement in CPD (Noonan, 2022). Until recently, only a small body of research has investigated how teachers experienced engagement and disengagement during CPD courses (Bernardo et al., 2020; Choi & Kang, 2019; Noonan, 2022; Sachs, 2007). For example, Bernardo et al. (2020) probed into the relationship between 289 Philippine high school teachers' attitudes and perceptions of joining CPD and job commitment, satisfaction, and expectations. Despite the absence of an association between job demands and attitudes towards CPD, findings indicate that teachers who showed negative attitudes towards CPD demonstrated signs of disengagement. Another study examined the engagement levels of 2565 Korean teachers in CPD. Results suggest that a considerable number of teachers stated to be disengaged in CPD due to the insufficiency of collaborative professional settings and reflective sessions related to ways of improving their teaching practice. In his recent study, Noonan (2022) investigated teachers' perceptions of engagement in CPD. The results revealed that teachers felt disengaged in CPD as their needs for developing autonomy, competence, and relatedness were not satisfied. Moreover, Sachs (2007, p.18) developed a CPD grid in which he divided a successful and engaging CPD program into four metaphorical categories: retooling (improving teacher skills), remodeling (modifying teacher practices), revitalizing (thinking over and upgrading teacher practices), re-imagining (transformative practices).

The abovementioned studies demonstrated that disengaged teachers "who showed negative attitudes towards CPD might reflect disengagement" (Bernardo et al., 2020, p. 66), and develop a "tendency not to engage in professional learning activities" (Choi & Kang, 2019, p. 8). According to Noonan (2022), in such cases, these teachers were unlikely to learn. Moreover, as highlighted by Noonan (2022), one reason why teachers are disengaged can be the must-attend nature of CPD courses which in fact cannot appeal to the teachers' individual needs, interests, and goals. Most probably because teachers cannot openly express their disengagement, they might fake their engagement as they do not have an alternative option. Hence, it is essential to understand whether teachers reveal

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signs of fake engagement during CPD courses, and how and why it manifests itself in individuals with different engagement orientations. To our knowledge, there is no study that has investigated how teachers of different engagement orientations might show possible signs of fake engagement in the context of a must-attend CPD course. In other words, the present study aims to probe how cognitively, behaviorally, and affectively engaged teachers maintain their motivation to be engaged in a must-attend CPD course or demonstrate symptoms of fake engagement. Specifically speaking, we pose the following research questions:

RQ1: Do the participating EFL teachers demonstrate different engagement orientations in a "must-attend" CPD course?

RQ2: Can signs of fake engagement of teachers with different engagement orientations be observed? If so, how?

3. Method

3.1. Study Design and Participants

The present study adopts hermeneutical phenomenology approach with the purpose of exploring a phenomenon based on the interpretation of the lived experiences of a specific group of people (Kafle, 2011). Another reason to employ this method is that the main purpose of the study is to reach an in-depth understanding of the nature of engagement by examining the written comments and conversational interviews (van Manen, 2016). By this means, 10 EFL teachers (7 female, male) who participated in the DigCompEdu course, a CPD program, were first observed. For the purposes of the study, 3 teachers from among them were selected on a voluntary basis. The selection process will be explained in the data collection and analysis part of the study. All the teachers were informed about the purposes and the procedures of the study, and they all gave their consent before the primary observations. Accordingly, each participant confirmed their willingness to participate voluntarily in the study by a written consent form. Table 1 displays information regarding gender, age, and teaching experience profiles of the participants attending a compulsory CPD course, the first three as being the focal teachers for the present study.

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Table 1
Background Information of the Participants

Participant (Pseudonym)	Gender	Age	Teaching Experience
Diana	Female	26	2
Emily	Female	31	9
Chloe	Female	41	17
Sam	Male	36	
Tom	Male	29	5
Sarah	Female	31	8
Jessica	Female	46	12
Karen	Female	24	1
Claire	Female	34	10
Harley	Male	28	6

3.2. Setting

The present study was conducted in a six-week-long synchronous CPD program, namely Teacher Digital Competence Training. The course was based on The European Framework for Digital Teaching Competence (DigCompEdu), proposed by Redecker (2017). Specifically, it was designed to improve and/or increase the theoretical and practical knowledge of 10 EFL in-service teachers and support them in a more competent integration of educational technology and digital tools into their teaching practice. Within this framework, the course handled six major competencies highlighted in the DigCompEdu model, namely, professional engagement, digital sources, teaching and learning, assessment, empowering learners, and facilitating learners. A week of two-hour sessions was devoted to each of these components (12 hours and 6 weeks in total). During this process, participants were involved in a content and task-intensive training course and assigned a wide array of digital tasks.

Based on the framework of experiential learning (Kolb, 1978), the course aimed to enable participants to find creative ways to construct their own meaning by active engagement in the implementations of newly learned information both during the sessions and in their own practice teaching. In addition, a considerable emphasis was laid on reflection time so that participants would have a chance to articulate their ideas and feelings about the course and their progress. Knowing that the teachers needed to be engaged in the course partially due to the must-attend nature of the course, they developed a genuine engagement to a certain extent. However, the instructor of the present CPD course started each session

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with a forty-minute-long lecture based on the presentation of new information. However, adequate time was not allotted to the practice of the new information, or to the reflection on how the information was implemented in the classes. Furthermore, the participating teachers did not have enough time to become familiar with each other due to the online mode of the CPD.

3.3. Data Collection Instruments

Data were collected through three instruments: 1) the researchers' field notes on the course observations, 2) the comments and questions that the participants wrote in the chat box during the course, and 3) the semi-structured interviews after the course. One of the researchers attended the six-week-long synchronous CPD to observe and take notes about any point that could be related to the engagement of the participating teachers in the natural flow of the training. In the meantime, all the participants left instant comments in the chat box about the course content that could provide information about their engagement orientations. In order to expand on the interpretations of the data coming from field notes and participants' comments, semi-structured interviews were conducted. In other words, the interview questions were shaped with the aim of clarifying certain vague points, as well as probing further participants' development and maintenance of their engagement through six weeks, as well as looking for any signs of fake engagement. The interview process comprised two stages: (1) questions related to the development and maintenance of possible engagement orientations throughout six weeks, (2) questions related to the revelation of signs of fake engagement during CPD.

3.4. Data Analysis

Data were analyzed in two stages. The first stage of the analysis was conducted mainly to answer the first research question, namely whether teachers would display different engagement orientations in a must-attend CPD course. Accordingly, a fair copy was made of the researchers' field notes and participant comments in the chat box to classify teachers' orientations as behavioral, cognitive, and affective engagement. Based on the theoretical engagement framework of Fredricks et al., 2004 and Fredricks et al., 2014, the following criteria were adopted for assigning teachers to three different orientations

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categories:

a) Cognitive Engagement: The frequency of asking content-related questions posed by the participants, participation instances in the class discussion, and the number of comments made in relation to the content of the sessions, and others' ideas, opinions, and performance.

b) Behavioral Engagement: The number of completed tasks, the frequency of tryouts of the newly learned digital tools and applications inside and outside classes

c) Affective Engagement: The number of statements and reflections of their own and students' emotions in their own classes, the number of emotional responses to the ways of classroom interaction, and the flow or the nature of the course.

As indicated in the analyses, all participants displayed signs of different engagement orientations with varying degrees. However, from among 10 participants, only 3 teachers showed a specific engagement orientation more intensely. In other words, as can be seen in Table 2, in comparison to the remaining teachers, Emily, Diana, and Chloe revealed signs of one of the three orientations more intensely. Hence, these teachers were selected to take part in the study based on the intensity of their engagement orientations.

The second stage of the analysis was carried out to answer RQ2 (whether teachers with different orientations displayed particular signs of genuine and/or fake engagement). It consisted of a detailed analysis of the field notes and participant comments, along with three semi-structured interviews which were audio-recorded and transcribed in order to carry out a manual content analysis and draw interpretations of the statements to reach a clear understanding of the "genuine engagement" and "fake engagement" phenomena. Based on the findings that emerged from Mercer et al.'s (2021) study on the salient indicators of fake engagement, some criteria for detecting fake engagement were specified as a combination of the following: Eye contact (turning the eyes away or staring into space), continuous head movement (nodding), blank expression (neutral positioning of the face), thinking posture (pretending to be thinking but failing to answer the questions), fake note-taking (appearing to take notes but not fully focusing on the content), pretending to type up fake notes on laptop, fake reading (pretending to read the written material), surfing the Internet (checking the social media constantly), appearing to work on the material (seeming to be engaged in a task but failing to complete it successfully), and mind-wandering (insufficiency in

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providing answers for the questions and not engaging in the discussions).

For the purposes of the study, special attention was paid to the systematicity throughout the analysis of the data, observation of the participants and research context, scanning of the video recordings of the sessions multiple times, as well as selecting participants as representatives of information-rich cases. First, all sources of data were coded by both researchers independently in order to increase the trustworthiness of the analysis. At the same time, researchers reported to have coded the data consistently at multiple time points. Second, for the purposes of coding transparency, researchers discussed the similarities and differences in their interpretations and went over the data to negotiate on the themes. Basically, the member check method was used to increase the credibility of the interpretations. In doing so, the researchers shared a synopsis of findings with the participants and consulted their feedback on their interpretations to rule out potential misinterpretations. The analysis process was completed upon the convergence of data that overlapped similar themes.

4. Results and Discussion

The findings of the present study will be reported and discussed in line with the research questions: In response to the re

RQ1: Do the participating EFL teachers demonstrate different engagement orientations in a "must-attend" CPD course?

In response to the RQ1, as indicated in Table I findings revealed that there was no participant belonging merely to a specific engagement category, instead, they all exhibited a combination of different engagement orientations. Like in the study of McMillan et al. (2016), teachers in this study might have developed different orientations of engagement due to personal, and contextual, i.e. school-related, and system-wide motivators. All of the 10 participants in the present study, as a result of a variety of motivators and, developed and maintained their personal engagement profiles in varying degrees throughout a six-week-long CPD course. However, three teachers revealed behavioral, cognitive, and affective engagement orientations considerably higher than the other participants, therefore they were selected as the focal teachers for the present study. Therefore, for the purposes of the present study, they were selected as focal teachers

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Table 2

Engagement Profiles of the Participants

Participant / Engagement Criteria	Diana	Emily	Chloe	Sam	Tom	Sarah	Jessica	Karen	Claire	Harley
Cognitive Engagement										
Asking content-related questions	27	9	6	4	3	2	0	2	1	3
Participation in class discussion	24	7	11	6	8	4	9	7	9	10
The number of comments related to the content of the sessions	18	7	9	4	4	2	1	1	6	4
The number of comments related to the ideas of the participants	6	3	4	0	0	0	1	0	2	0
The number of comments related to their own ideas	8	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Behavioral Engagement	7	10	7	5	6	8	9	8	7	6
The number of completed tasks (10 tasks at most)	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
The frequency of tryouts of the newly learned information during the session (6 times at most)	0	12	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
The frequency of tryouts of the newly learned information after the session as part of follow-up activities (12 times at most)	5	6	14	0	0	1	2	0	0	0
Affective Engagement	1	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
The number of statements and reflections of their emotions	1	2	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The number of statements and reflections on their students' emotions in their classes	1	2	4	0	0	0	2	0	2	0
The number of emotional responses to the ways of classroom interaction										
The number of emotional responses to the ways of the flow or nature										

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Diana, as a more cognitively engaged teacher, addressed more questions and critical comments related to the course content and she actively participated in the discussions. Her engagement revealed signs of particular attention, mental effort, and value for the learning objectives. In other words, like the participants in the study of Borup et al. (2020), Diana effectively invested on her mental resources in order to keep her motivation at a level to pursue her learning goals as she had expected. She, therefore, began engaging in the CPD by asking critical questions in relation to the theoretical information and practice in the chat box starting from the second session, as indicated in the below interview extract:

After a few sessions, I noticed that there were a lot of different perspectives applicable to those new technological devices or programs in different ways such as designing a warm-up session for students or creating exit tickets just to make your students have fun. I can say that I followed all the sessions by thinking thoroughly about how I could carry this process into my classroom practices and sometimes in my free time. (Diana, Interview)

Diana, especially after the second session, started to share considerably more critical comments than the other participants, which were related to the content of the sessions, the ideas of the participants, and her own ideas. As observation notes and interviews indicate, her awareness of self-actualization needs and her exertion of mental effort to explore the issues indicated more of cognitive engagement on her part. In other words, a critical mind was the determinant of her professional development journey. The following small chat extracts from the chat box display some of her comments during the CPD:

Diana: Podcasts are especially useful. I don't know if it is still used. I remember Vocaroo.

Diana: Students can prepare their own podcasts rather than using ready-made ones.

Diana: That's the focus of the task.

Instructor: VidCast , VLog are famous.

Diana: Thanks. (Session 5)

Emily, as a more behaviorally engaged teacher, was observed to exert more effort to try the digital tools and applications that she touched on during and after the sessions, and she completed more tasks than the other participating teachers. It

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was also observed that she paid strict attention to the assignments. She participated in the sessions actively by carrying out impressive digital tasks that attracted considerable attention from the other participants. Differently from the remaining participants, she made use of all the digital applications that were subject to the CPD. During the sessions, she shared with the others what she learned by experience. The fact that she wanted to reflect on what she learned through observable behaviors led her to be behaviorally engaged more saliently during the course, as indicated in her following comment:

I aimed to feel good enough at using digital teaching materials by creating new activities. I expected to learn to create and use various digital materials, and then to adapt them depending on the levels of young English language learners. I fit myself into the program by trying to understand the general data and finding different ways of using it. (Emily, Interview)

As stated by Gregory et al. (2014), behaviorally engaged teachers have a desire to actively engage in learning activities through improving observable behaviors. In this regard, it is highly important to analyze the learning needs of behaviorally engaged teachers, as well as others, in order to calibrate the number of tasks and opportunities for them to share what they practice with others. One of the characteristics of CPD courses is to expose teachers to practical experience and expect them to relate the incoming knowledge and tasks to their actual classroom practices effectively (Borg, 2015). Emily, in our case, explains how she connects what she learns with her practices as follows:

I believe that a teacher should not be afraid of making mistakes and learning from them. So, I felt responsible for myself and my trainer. I wanted to show him that he taught us really valuable things. (Emily, Interview)

Chloe, as a more affectively engaged teacher, stated more comments related to the reflections on her own emotions throughout the CPD. She also reacted more emotionally to the situations in the course such as developing a concern for the emotional needs of her students. Moreover, setting goals for personal growth increased the authenticity of her engagement observably; she always kept her camera and microphone open and participated in joyful conversations through the chat box. As stated in the study of Corcoran and Tormey (2012) affectively engaged teachers enjoy learning if they have a conscious desire to learn during the courses. Moreover, affective engagement, as directly related to the emotional

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connection of teachers to a specific professional development course, entails teachers developing positive attitudes towards learning objectives. Effectively engaged teachers, such as Chloe in the present study, can maintain their learning desire active as long as the issues are within their area of interest and they deeply feel what they learn is applicable to their follow-up classroom practices in support of more positive emotions among their students. Chloe further explained her situation as follows:

Technology is a subject that interests me and it is a great feeling to use what I have learned in the classroom. For this reason, I can say that I always feel more involved in the program because it is a work that is in my area of interest… because I have the opportunity to learn different new things and practice them with my students. They feel really motivated when I bring technology into the classroom. (Session 6)

It is really important for me to reflect on what I learned from here in the classroom. I know that my students are digital natives and they are really interested in technology. When I use technology in the classroom, I can understand that they feel happier during and after class. Their parents even thanked me because I used different digital tools… (Chloe, Interview)

Moreover, Chloe was observed to be encouraged more to take part in the activities in cases when she was able to share her emotional responses related to the ways of classroom interaction and the flow or the nature of the course. Additionally, Chloe stated to have adequate levels of interest and motivation, and positive relationships with the participating teachers and the CPD instructor which enhanced her engagement. The following statement converged with the observation notes confirmed these findings:

Following the theoretical content given during the 6-week program, examples related to the subject were given by our teacher, and then asking us for our opinions by reviewing our own experiences is one of the factors that made me feel always included in the program. (Chloe, Interview)

RQ2: Can signs of fake engagement of teachers with different engagement orientations be observed? If so, how?

In response to the RQ2, the findings emerging from the combination of observation notes, interviews, and chat-box analysis unveiled that teachers were genuinely engaged in the course as long as the conditions met their needs

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depending on their orientations. However, these teachers with different engagement orientations sometimes had to feign their engagement if their expectations were not met by the course conditions. As stated previously, the participating teachers mainly listened to the instructor's lecture in the first forty minutes of each session, which was built around the presentation of the new topic. Due to the large amount of information presented in a limited time, they did not have opportunities to ask questions or make comments during this time. Also, again during the lectures, they did not have time to practice the incoming information, and/or reflect on how they utilized the new information in their classes. Moreover, due to the nature of the course, teachers had no opportunities to gain face-to-face familiarity with one another. Table 3 shows how teachers with different engagement orientations revealed various signs of fake engagement throughout the CPD course, as much as could be observed:

Table 3

Signs of Fake Engagement

Participant / Fake Engagement Criteria	**Diana (More cognitively engaged participant)**	**Emily (More behaviorally engaged participant)**	**Chloe More affectively engaged participant)**
Eye contact	3	2	3
Continuous head movement	2	2	3
Blank expression	4	1	1
Thinking posture	1	2	0
Fake note-taking	0	0	0
Pretending to type up fake notes on a laptop	0	0	0
Fake reading	6	8	9
Surfing the Internet	2	2	1
Appearing to work on the material	1	2	1
Mind-wandering			

In general, fake engagement was observed in the case of the more cognitively oriented teacher, Diana, when there were not sufficient opportunities for discussions on the pros and cons of the ideas and issues presented in the lecture.

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The more behaviorally engaged teacher, on the other hand, showed signs of fake engagement in circumstances when there were excessive amounts of theoretical information and fewer opportunities to integrate the new information into practice through assignments. Finally, more affectively oriented teacher, Chloe, did not have much motivation in cases when there was a discussion of topics she was not personally interested in.

Fake Engagement Signs in Diana's Case

Diana, as a more cognitively engaged teacher, sought to satisfy her learning needs through interactive dialogues and critical thinking activities. She always tried to take an active role in the chat box to discuss hows and whys of issues with the others. However, during those sessions with limited discussion opportunities, she sometimes lost interest in the flow of the activities. For example, Diana asked a question about how one of her classmates created subtitles for her video assignment, yet she received no answer in one of the sessions. She pointed out that this condition made her feel as if she was talking to a couple of people instead of the whole classroom. The field notes revealed that the frequency of her questions decreased towards the end of some sessions as she was frankly affected by the silence of the classroom. Although she usually made comments and asked instant critical questions about her classmates' assignments at the end of the sessions. In cases of limited discussion opportunities, she started to address fewer questions and pretended to be engaged in the session by revealing various signs of fake engagement. For instance, Diana sometimes had a blank expression by staring into space which was followed by mind-wandering. When this symptom of fake engagement was interrupted by the instructor as he addressed a critical question, she recovered herself all of a sudden. Moreover, Diana checked her phone four times while the instructor was lecturing. Also, although Diana seemed to be working on the material at the end of the session, in the cases of disengagement, she closed her camera and did not open it again until critical discussions started. These findings concur with the study of Choi and Kang (2019) who posit that the tendency not to engage in professional learning activities results in failures in authentic engagement. As an essential component of learning activities on the side of cognitively oriented teachers, the absence or reduced amounts of interactive dialogues or discussion may deter them from engaging in the CPD genuinely. Hence, limited opportunities to exchange their ideas and knowledge with others may result in disengagement, and/or fake

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engagement.

As again indicated in the interviews, Diana stated that she felt isolated when she could not receive responses from the participating teachers, which prevented her and her classmates from engaging in a lively discussion. It was also observed that three of her questions were left unanswered by her classmates. In these cases, Diana started asking fewer questions and participating less despite staying online in the session. As signs of fake engagement, these behaviors discouraged Diana from benefiting from the course as much as she expected. As a result of the limited amount of conversation during the CPD, Diana decreased the number of her questions towards the end of some sessions, resulting in less investment in her cognitive competence. In a recent study (Ji, 2022), cognitive factors were reported as significant predictors of teacher engagement with CPD activities. In addition, as part of intellectual factors, it was revealed in the data that cognitive engagement was facilitated when teachers felt motivated to complete the CPD activities that they thought fulfilled their cognitive competency needs. Hence, Ji (2023) lends support to this finding by asserting that teachers who give priority to their cognitive competency decide to spend time and energy and exert effort for an activity, which has an impact on their engagement. Our findings, in a similar vein, highlight the importance of addressing the cognitive needs of the participating teachers in a CPD course by designing tailor-made content followed by a needs analysis session. The following statement demonstrates how Diana suggests a more genuine interaction among participating teachers to overcome the lack of communication.

> We could have interacted more with the other participants by turning on our cameras. I felt the interaction was very limited among the speakers, even if there were a lot of teachers in the sessions I felt like I was just talking to the trainer and a few others… Their participation could encourage us to communicate more and exchange some information. (Diana, Interview)

Fake Engagement Signs in Emily's Case

Emily, as a more behaviorally engaged teacher, highly preferred implementing what she learned in her own practice. In other words, Emily expected to be involved in a continuous and interactive flow of tasks to practice what she learned. However, when some of Emily's expectations from the CPD were not fulfilled due to the intensity of theoretical information and the occasional paucity

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of teaching practice assignments. She stated that she pretended to be engaged in the sessions on these occasions. Some initial instances from the field notes revealed that she asked for more assignments for the following weeks. From the blue light of her phone reflected on her face, it was also observed that Emily furtively looked at her phone constantly and maintained eye contact defectively, especially when the instructor gave long lectures. She did not look elsewhere when the class members worked on tasks or discussed a point. Furthermore, when she did not meet her expectations she started to fake her engagement such as staring at the screen as if she was listening. Similar findings were echoed in the study of Mercer et al. (2021), in which fake engaged students sometimes remained nonreactive to the others as despite being physically present they were mentally absent. Aligned with these findings, as the participants of Wyatt and Ončevska Ager (2015) asserted, teachers desired to attend the CPD courses that would offer active involvement in the tasks and collaboration rather than excessive theoretical focus on information. The following quotes from the interviews support this finding:

When there was too much information or details unfamiliar to me, I got bored. I just looked at the screen as if I was listening to it or thinking about the question. (Emily, Interview)

I was acting as if I was thinking and tapping my fingers on the table when I got bored, I realized I forgot the mic. "on" while I was doing this. I think it was because of too much detail given on the subject. (Emily, Interview)

I looked at my phone from time to time during each session, particularly during the lecture times when we could not practice what we freshly learned. (Emily, Interview)

Fake Engagement Signs in Chloe's Case

Chloe, as a more affectively engaged teacher, focused more intensively on topics that aligned with her personal interests because she thought that she could learn more efficiently if the course appealed to her personal needs. This finding concurs with Lin's (2021) study, where learners can keep an active interest in learning as long as they are offered effective learning environments that address their affective states positively. However, in certain circumstances, Chloe acted as if she was engaged in the sessions when the discussion topics did not appeal to her personal beliefs. Specifically speaking, unlike the majority of the teachers, as

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an elementary school teacher, she thought there was not a sufficient number of topics related to the elementary school students. For instance, because she personally did not believe in the benefits of AI in her classes, she made comments on the disadvantages of AI only and did not ask questions although the remaining teachers were quite excited about the topic. As discussed previously, the teachers were supposed to participate in the sessions regularly even if they were not interested in the topics. Therefore, Chloe stayed present and kept her camera always open, which revealed more visual symptoms of her fake engagement such as continuous head movement without participation. Although she appeared to be keeping up with the discussion by nodding, she was preoccupied with her phone. Moreover, another reason why Chloe could not genuinely participate in the sessions was the inadequately established interpersonal relationships among the participants. A considerable number of studies highlight that affectively oriented teachers attach great importance to developing good relationships with the participants in the CPD and creating a collaborative learning environment through a positive atmosphere (Corcoran & Tormey, 2012; Lin, 2021). As an example from our case which aligns with this view, in cases when the other teachers shared their concerns about using technology for specific purposes in their classes, Chloe did not join the discussions to find practical solutions to their problems. Instead, she just nodded and maintained eye contact by pretending to be listening to the others. Also, as could be seen through her camera, Chloe took care of her kid when another teacher started to share one of her memories about using podcasts in her class.

As pointed out in two studies conducted by Zhang et al. (2021) and Tavakoli (2023), teachers might experience emotional pressure in the obligatory short-term courses and therefore demonstrate a decrease in their motivation to participate in CPD (Zhang et al., 2021). Similarly to this claim, Chloe was occasionally challenged by certain factors that deterred her from genuinely engaging in the course. For example, she stated that she might have developed fake engagement as she could not develop sufficient connectedness with the participating teachers, which prevented her from developing a sense of solidarity and empathy for the others who needed more than her to integrate technology into their classes for a variety of reasons. Moreover, Chloe, thinking that she was the only elementary school EFL teacher in the CPD course and therefore she was different from the other teachers in terms of her needs as an elementary teacher in applying technology among young EFL learners felt that experienced instances of

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emotional barriers that prevented her from being emotionally engaged in the sessions. In other words, it was observed that Chloe could not maintain her emotional engagement and due to the must-attend nature of the course, and she deceptively seemed to maintain her participation throughout the lessons. As indicated in the following excerpts, she stated that she was occasionally challenged to engage in the tasks, which inevitably resulted in fake engagement:

I teach kids and this is a very important process in terms of language development. If I integrate AI into my class, my students might rely on it for the following years in terms of doing their homework, using it as a source of translation, etc. Therefore, I can say that I could not concentrate much on the topic because its benefits are questionable. (Chloe, Interview)

5. Conclusions and Implications

This study investigated whether teachers displayed signs of different engagement orientations as well as the authenticity of their engagement level shaped by their different orientations, namely cognitively, behaviorally, and affectively. The findings indicated that only three of the 10 participating teachers revealed more of one of the engagement orientations than others. Moreover, these 3 teachers displayed different signs of fake engagement shaped by the degree of dissatisfaction with their needs and expectations from the course, as well as their different orientations. Considering the variations and fluctuations across engagement orientation and levels of teachers, the findings highlight the need for more emphasis on the role of teacher engagement in the success of CPD courses. Our results suggest a number of pedagogical implications for future INSET designs, as well. First, teachers with any orientation of engagement might be disconnected from the training at any time, depending on the degree of their dissatisfaction with the course. In other words, teachers' individual engagement orientations might act as moderators to the effectiveness of any course as was the case in our study. Hence, the designers of the PD courses should take individual differences into account based on the engagement orientations and levels of the participants that could be understood through an initially conducted need analysis. Specifically speaking, since it is essential for the effectiveness of the course the following measures could be taken. For more cognitively oriented teachers, the CPD should offer genuine critical thinking discussions in relation to their teaching

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practices, i.e. Q-A sessions, and continuous interaction among the participants. For more behaviorally engaged teachers, there could be an intensive task loop that engages them in interactive work. As for more affectively engaged teachers, they should be provided with the necessary conditions that help them feel that they are connected and supported by a positive learning atmosphere, healthy interpersonal relationships, and enjoyment in the learning activities.

From a different perspective, concerning the long-term negative impact of the pandemic process on teacher voluntariness to attend CPD courses (Lo & To, 2023), it becomes more necessary to cater to the emotional states and practical needs of teachers and design effective online CPD courses that attract their interests and make practical promises. In cases when teachers are not cognitively, behaviorally, and emotionally supported to join in must-attend CPD courses, they might fake their engagement in order not to be observed as disconnected from others and CPD. The signs of fake engagement could be executed simply in their behaviors as they cannot maintain their concentration equally dichotomously. As Lin (2021) pointed out, teachers as learners can keep an active interest in learning as long as they are offered effective learning environments that address their mental and affective states positively. Therefore, it is considerably important to become familiar with the needs of the participating teachers before starting a CPD course in order to present them with an individualized, needs-oriented, and appealing CPD experience. By designing an equally balanced array of activities that address teachers with different engagement orientations, and if possible by encouraging voluntary attendance rather than must-attend conditions, teacher educators can cultivate the substance of professional development.

6. Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

The present study, to the knowledge of the authors, represents the first qualitative inquiry into teacher engagement orientations in CPD courses with a special focus on the genuineness level of engagement. The findings provide solid evidence that teachers with different engagement orientations benefit from the CPD courses in varying ways, as well as revealing different signs of fake engagement in cases of dissatisfaction with a must-attend CPD course. However, the present study provides only a preliminary step to understanding the nature of fake engagement, and how it is manifested by different engagement orientations of teachers in a

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specific CPD context. Therefore, the complexity of the nature of teacher engagement should be traced in deeper investigations in a rich variety of contexts. Therefore, there are several limitations of the study. First, the present study was conducted with a limited number of participants which prevents findings from being generalized. Further inquiry is necessary with a larger sample that could present various engagement profiles at different densities through quantitative analyses. Additionally, although the participating teachers willingly attended the courses at regular intervals and completed assignments successfully to receive certificates at the end of the course, they occasionally demonstrated signs of fake engagement. Prospective research should be conducted in contexts where teachers are required by their organizations to attend CPD courses, which could increase the opportunity to observe fake engagement from a closer perspective. As discussed previously, the role of the duration of the training should also be taken into consideration as engagement orientations may not be comprehensively observed in a short-term CPD course. Therefore, long-term projects could be designed to observe how teachers with different eng orientations demonstrate signs of fake engagement. Also, the current study only used a qualitative approach to investigate the engagement orientations of the teachers, which could have potentially limited the ability to understand the authenticity of their engagement. Future research should consider comparing the perceived engagement levels and actual performance of teachers in CPD courses, which could reveal more about the nature of fake engagement. Finally, a long-term project could be designed to examine the degree of effectiveness of a CPD, by observing how teachers with different fake engagement levels benefitted from the CPD in actual classroom practice. This study serves as a stepping stone for future studies of teacher fake engagement.

Declaration of Interest Statement

The authors report there are no competing interests to declare.

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Appendices

Appendix A. Interview Questions

1. What was your primary motivation and goal to apply for the program?

2. What were your expectations and how did you fit yourself into the program?

3. Throughout 6 weeks:

For the more behaviorally engaged participant: you kept doing your homework on a regular basis. You tried to reflect on what you learned from your actions.

For the more cognitively engaged participant: you kept developing deep learning strategies by self-regulating and understanding the issues in great depth, which helped you develop this attitude.

For the more effectively engaged participant: you kept reflecting on your and your students' emotions, beliefs, and attitudes. Also, you actively participated in the CPD activities in line with your positive emotional responses to specific ways of classroom interaction.

What helped you develop this attitude?

4. What factors fed your engagement in this program for 6 weeks?

5. What would increase your engagement in the program?

6. Did you sometimes just pretend you were concentrating in class?

7. Were there any other times when you did not want to pay attention to the class?

8. What conditions or factors made it harder for you to pay attention in class?

9. Do you think your interests also affected how you engaged in the class?

10. Can you think of any specific instances you have been distracted, or not engaged while you pretend you were, but you were doing something completely different?

11. If you have not completed one of your assignments such as LUMI and final assignments, could you specify the reason?

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About the Authors

Büşra Görkemoğlu is an English instructor at the School of Foreign Languages, Istanbul University- Cerrrahpaşa, Turkey. She is currently studying for a PhD in TEFL at Yeditepe University. Her research interests focus on educational psychology, teacher education, and teaching skills in second/foreign language education.

Ayşe Semra Akyel is a Professor of Foreign Language Education at Yeditepe University, Faculty of Education. She has published articles in international journals on EFL writing, teacher education, and the use of literature in the EFL context. Dr. Akyel may be contacted via email at aakyel@yeditepe.edu.tr

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