

# Teachers' Reflections on Utilizing Slido to Enhance Learner Engagement

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## Abstract

This paper was conducted to determine the reflections of teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in the application of Slido to enhance learners' engagement at EFL classrooms. It utilized a qualitative phenomenological research design in exploring and describing the practical experiences of the participants in using Slido through critical evaluative reflection and personal views. Participants in this study were EFL teachers teaching in one of the higher education institutions in Oman with more than 15 years of teaching experience. Guided by the CARL model of reflection, the participants' views and observations focused on the four areas of reflection such as context, action, result, and learning. Participants' reflections were gathered through focus group discussion (FGD) using open-ended interview guide questions. The results showed that Slido technology helped learners to actively participate in the teaching and learning process. The interactive features of Slido, such as quizzes, and open-text exercises, fostered speedy response and improved student engagement. The result of the evaluative reflection showed that Slido, as an IT solution tool, is a valuable instrument for increasing student engagement and active participation in the classroom especially in English language classes. It contains user-friendly features essential for the learning process, with a unique platform that can make learning enjoyable and enhances the quality of teaching and teacher-learner interaction.

**Keywords:** EFL teachers, EFL classroom, student engagement, Slido, interactive technology, reflection

## 1. Introduction

The emergence of modern technology in education, particularly in English language teaching (ELT), has progressively developed in providing learners with real and engaging language learning experiences. The conventional way of teaching has been criticized that it creates inability for learners to engage and participate in the learning process. Alongside learning EFL, many learners struggled in developing their English language skills. It is observed that many EFL learners are passive inside the classroom. Being silent and disengaged are alarming as it affects the expected desired learning outcomes. There are many reasons for EFL learners to behave that way. One of the common observations for disengaged learners is the difficulty in the use of L2. There are numerous linguistic errors committed by EFL learners that affect their active participation in the classroom which include grammar structure, vocabulary, spelling and proper use of punctuation. These linguistic errors are due to interlingual and intralingual interferences influenced by the EFL learners' mother tongue (Gilbang, Daniel & Ancheta, 2024). Also, the attitude of learners towards learning is another factor. Most EFL learners show disinterest in learning their target language. Language teachers believed that this issue can be traced from the learners' childhood and negative learning experience at school. This can also be due to lack of parental encouragement. Thus, language teachers assumed that the changing learners' attitudes remain beyond their control as they are related to their established belief and fixed general characters (Mystkowska-Wiertelak, 2020).

Given this classroom situation, the active learner's participation in the teaching and learning process is one of the common problems observed in the EFL classroom. Learners' activeness and involvement in the classroom are vital to ensure that the desired learning outcomes are met. An IT solution like Slido, a mobile-based technology, was explored and utilized in the EFL classes to increase the degree of learners' active involvement and interaction. It is an online interactive tool based on live responses during seminars, conferences, meetings and lectures (Ningsih, 2023). It is intended mainly with smart phones and tablets where learners have the chance to interact and ask questions about the topic discussed in real-time.

This study aimed to describe the lived experience of EFL teachers of using Slido, as an alternate tool for student engagement, in the EFL classroom. Specifically, this paper highlights the impact of using Slido application on the learning engagement and English language acquisition specifically in terms of **a)** the *context* of the problem in the EFL classroom; **b)** *action* taken by the EFL teachers to improve active participation of learners; **c)**, *results* of the action taken; and **d)** *learnings gained* from using this alternative tool.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 EFL Learner's Challenges in Learning and Participation

Learners of English as a foreign language face various challenges which significantly affect their active participation in the class. According to Misbah et al. (2017), sufficient vocabulary is required to produce the target language effectively. It is the learners' limited vocabulary range that hinders them from participating actively in various language learning situations. Hence, there is an inability to express their

thoughts and ideas clearly and understand others. Many of them feel shy to communicate ideas and opinions with peers or teachers due to the limited vocabulary as observed by Ashraf (2018) in the face-to-face classroom context. Using social media applications and e-learning have positively affected the learning environment so learners tend to become more active and participative. Shortage of the grammatical rules and sentence structure of a foreign language is also another challenge for learners. Widianingsih and Gulö (2016) claims that words pluralization, articles, verbs and tenses are the common errors frequently committed by L2 learners while Gilbang, Daniel & Ancheta (2024) affirms that Arab learners are experiencing difficulties in the syntactic and grammatical aspects of the foreign language. Learners who hardly master these aspects are hesitant and inactive in the classroom.

Learners who are reluctant to speak in front of other people in the class are also struggling with pronunciation and intonation. Issues in pronunciation and intonation affect the percentage of learners' interaction. Learners become hesitant to actively engage due to fear of being misunderstood. Active engagement is less if learners have inappropriate pronunciations (Islam, Ahmad & Islam, 2022). Awareness of the phonetic features of second language such as intonation, stress and rhythm are relevant to prevent transfer of mother tongue phonetic characteristics to the target language (Al-Sobhi & Preece, 2018). EFL learners show manifestations of anxiety or lack of self-confidence when they avoid engagement in class activities. They choose not to share their ideas or ask questions, and they avoid speaking L2 in the class. Melchor-Couto (2016) affirms that the use of technological applications reduces the foreign language anxiety level of the learners when given interactive oral activities. Therefore, it is necessary for teachers to adopt some effective interactive applications to ensure learners participation in the classroom context.

Tsui (2001) said that there are many factors that affect learner's class participation. This includes learning conditions, teacher-related factors, and learner-related factors. Learner conditions have something to do with the type of learning task given by the teacher and how this task is to be done. Group distribution on a collaborative task and the time frame can affect the learners' participation. In terms of teacher-related factors, these can include the teacher's art of questioning. Questions must promote critical thinking to ensure deep learning. Moreover, for the learner-related factors, these include the learners' language proficiency, learning style, and their cultural norms. It is observed that oftentimes, language proficiency is the main factor that affects a learner's participation. Despite clear instructions, learners are still unable to perform the task well due to the language barrier.

### *2.2 Learner Engagement: Why It Matters*

Learner engagement is one of the key elements in the teaching and learning process. The involvement of learners in the teaching and learning process is needed to measure the amount of learning gained. It reflects a learner's involvement and participation with classmates and teachers (Zhao & Kuh, 2004). Bulger, et al. (2008) describes learner's engagement as the amount of time consumed on a definite learning activity to understand fully the tasks with the guidance of the teacher. It is also the willingness of learners to consistently take part in the class activities, such as attending classes regularly, paying attention in class discussion, doing guided learning activities, and submission of required coursework (Chapman, 2003). Krause and Coates (2008) also define learner engagement as the level of energy learners spent in the quest of learning that positively led to the desired learning outcomes.

Learners must actively participate and engage in the class to increase their capability to become lifelong learners in a knowledge-based society (Taylor & Parsons, 2011). They must be active and energetic (body and mind) in all aspects of learning activities inside the four corners of the classroom. To be engaged, learners must perform actively on the structured activities prepared by the teacher and show eagerness to participate, willing to spend much effort, inspired and motivated to learn. It must be manifested on their participation and performance both verbally and non-verbally (Paramita & Indarwati, 2015). It is believed that learners' academic performance depends on how they took part in the class discussion. However, one of the main challenges faced by teachers nowadays is the disengaged learners. Teaching adult learners is really a battle. Most learners today are not the same as what their parents experienced during their time in terms of attitudes towards learning. This can be caused by the immergence of modern technology that affects the learners of new generations (Taylor & Parsons, 2011). Shaping adult learners to promote active participation needs to consider the course design, opportunity for learners to explore, relevance of the teaching and learning activities, and the convenience of the learners to take part in the learning process (Willms, 2003; Cothran & Ennis, 2000). Therefore, there is a need to revise our curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment methods so that learners' future will not be implicated or jeopardized (Robinson, 2009).

### *2.3 Technology Integration in Teaching and Learning*

Integrating technology into education means using various types of technological innovations in the teaching and learning process to enhance the educational experience of the learners. It refers to a diverse array of digital tools and resources which range from virtual classrooms, multi-media platforms, learning apps and online resources which facilitate the teaching and learning process. The earliest use of technology in education can be traced back to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when educators started to use visual aids such as pictures, films and lantern slides in classrooms (Reiser & Dempsey, 2007). Gnamb (2021) stated that the use of information and communication technology has changed the world for the better and its effects can be seen in the realm of education as well. New inventions and media like picture projectors, motion pictures, radio, television, video and audio recorders etc. changed the traditional concepts of teaching and learning in the due course of time. However, it was the onset of computers and the internet that revolutionized the realm of education. With the advent of internet facilities and personalized computers, teachers can easily impart knowledge to the students. The process of teaching and learning has become more meaningful. Teachers can make the students actively involved in the learning process through the utilization of technology in classrooms (Hew & Brush, 2007).

As technology has rapidly transformed every aspect of life, its huge impact can be seen in education as well. Personalized computers, internet facilities and teaching and learning software have made education accessible to everyone irrespective of geographical barriers. Teaching and learning have become more interactive and collaborative. Technological innovations like Artificial Intelligence and software to detect plagiarism have changed the way in which learners are taught and evaluated. According to Rajendran & Kaur (2023), during Covid 19, technology integration in teaching and learning, using different platforms, had been widely used to accommodate online learning and virtual classrooms. It became necessary to totally depend on technology integrated teaching and learning which resulted in having a flexible learning approach and providing easier learning opportunities instead of face-to-face classroom learning. Ghavifekr et al. (2023) pointed out that it is essential to use digital tools in classrooms so that the teachers can equip the learners with the necessary skills which they need in their future career.

Technology supported classroom environment is more effective than traditional classrooms. Dexter and Richardson (2019) observed that integrating technology into education is useful in saving time as tutors can upload the learning materials on online platforms like Moodle. It can also facilitate individual learning depending on the diverse learning needs of the students. Utilizing technological innovation in teaching and learning is the requirement of the current era. It is necessary to meet the learning requirements of the learners which will allow the tutors to align their teaching strategies and approaches with international standards. Emphasizing the significance of students' active participation in the classroom activities, Xu, Yuan & Liu (2021) recommends teachers to create collaborative activities using the computer-supported collaborative concept mapping technique to build a collaborative learning environment which motivates the students to actively be involved and interact in the classrooms.

Technological tools have become inevitable in all educational institutions for conducive learning. A variety of hardware and software programs can be used to make the classroom atmosphere more interactive and versatile. Teachers can use apps like Kahoot and Slido to launch quizzes and exercises after teaching a particular topic to measure the amount of learning gained and to ensure students' engagement. Learning platforms like Moodle and Blackboard are also useful to access study material and submit the assignments. Tutors will be able to access the assignments and the homework submitted by the learners and they can be assessed as well. Even though digital tools can be highly beneficial in carrying out class activities and assessments, it is important to identify and select the right tools to be incorporated in the learning process as these tools are different in their features and capabilities.

#### *2.4 Slido and Its Interactive Features*

Slido signifies a classy and interactive digital platform fastidiously designed to increase the levels of audience involvement and engagement during the entire academic lectures, and several kinds of presentation intended to transfer information. Within the setting of educational environment, it has reliably confirmed its efficiency as a helpful instrument for stimulating active learning and for promoting an interactive classroom atmosphere that is evidently more dynamic and engaging for students (Ningsih, 2023). It empowers teachers to design and implement live polls, quizzes, and question-and-answer sessions that can be smoothly accessed by students using their mobile devices or personal computers (Mula, 2017). This ability for real-time interface aids to effectively eliminate the traditional model of one-way communication that has historically controlled classroom dynamics, thereby promoting and easing a model shift towards more active and engaged participation from students (Stowell, 2015).

One of the distinct features that defines the functionality of Slido is its amazing capability to facilitate the process of anonymous questioning, which helps as a substantial mechanism for enhancing engagement. This feature can particularly increase the levels of participation from students who may display shyness or hesitation in articulating their opinions during the lecture discussion (Moorhouse and Kohnke, 2020). The power of Slido can be used in the EFL classes to engage learners to actively participate in the classroom discussion to enhance their communication skills. It is an alternative tool for student engagement that can be utilized in the classroom in assessing student's opinions through a poll survey to gather their feedback in real time; question and answer sessions to measure the amount of learning and provide immediate feedback; word clouds to visualize their answers in words or phrases to quickly analyze their responses, interactive quizzes to assess learners' amount of knowledge gained in a fun and interactive way; and open-ended questions to foster learners' critical thinking and creativity skills (Stowell, 2015; Moorhouse & Kohnke, 2020). It allows learners to ask questions from their own device and actively respond to the teacher as their names are not shown on screen (Hart et al., 2004).

Moreover, the use of Slido can be an effective tool in the EFL classroom to increase communication skills of EFL learners in terms of vocabulary building. Employing the innovative word cloud feature offered by Slido, ELT teachers can enable a collaborative brainstorming session focused on producing vocabulary that is needed to a particular theme or topic of the lesson. It can also facilitate checking the grammar points by creating a multiple-choice question to test learner's understanding of grammar rules. It can also be used to check learner's comprehension in a reading and listening activity to ensure that comprehension takes place during the listening and reading exercises. In addition, Slido can also be used to facilitate teaching and learning that requires open-ended polls to gather initial thoughts on a topic before a class discussion. This can help learners for the conversation exercise to ensure that everyone has a chance to contribute, even if they're hesitant to speak up in class (Moorhouse & Kohnke, 2020). Lastly, Slido can be used to correct grammar errors committed by EFL learners in writing activities. EFL teachers can present sentences with common language errors and use multiple-choice polls to identify and correct the mistakes. This interactive approach makes error correction more engaging (Stowell, 2015).

### **3. Methodology**

This investigation used qualitative phenomenological research methods in describing the lived experiences of EFL teachers in using Slido

in the EFL classes. Phenomenology deals with the structures of consciousness based on the point of view of the participants that reflects their own experience (Gallagher, 2012). Descriptive type of phenomenology was specifically used to access the participants' experiences of the phenomenon pre-reflectively. This is to set aside biases and preconceived assumptions about their responses to a particular situation.

### 3.1 Research Design

This study used phenomenological research design. A Focused Group Discussion (FGD) was used to ascertain the EFL teachers' personal views on the impact of using Slido in attaining learners' engagement in the EFL classroom. A thematic analysis was utilized to evaluate the evidence gathered from the participants. It is appropriate in this investigation to emphasize, pinpoint, examine, and record the participants' range of responses. It is the process of organizing themes found in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

### 3.2 Research Model

The CARL model of reflection published by the University of Edinburgh (2018) was used to ascertain the personal views of the participants on the effect of using Slido in the EFL classrooms to attain student's engagement. CARL stands for: *context*- concisely describes the situation and the experiences of participants; *action*- explains the action taken by the participants; *results*- explains the results of the action taken; and *learning*- identifies what the participants have from their experiences. Below is the research model used in this study.

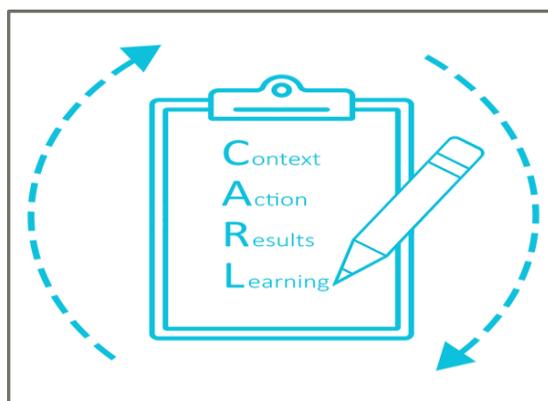


Figure 1. The CARL Framework of Reflection

**Source:** University of Edinburgh (2018)

Each aspect of the CARL model was used operationally in the process of analysis to ensure that participants' reflections are categorized accordingly. The response of the participants in terms of **context (C)** in the model provides researchers with a clear narrative as to what challenges they have encountered and why the challenges happened. Each response was categorized accordingly as basis for interpretation. **Results (R)** provides the researchers with the details of the action taken in terms of strategies and methodologies used to address the issue. It served as a concrete source of information in interpreting the data collected to ascertain if the action taken is met. It also helped to facilitate the evaluation and the implication of their action. **Learning (L)**, on the other hand, is the insight of the participants based on what has been learned because of their actions. This helped the researchers to categorize their suggestions and came up with analysis and interpretation for improvement of the teaching technique used.

### 3.3 Participants

The participants were the 12 EFL teachers who handle English courses in one of the higher education institutions (HEIs) in Oman selected purposively. The selection of respondents aligns with the purpose of the study to investigate the effectiveness of Slido application tool in the EFL classroom. The participants were two males, and ten females composed of different nationalities and educational attainment from diverse colleges and universities. All of them are seasoned and qualified EFL teachers with more than 15 years of teaching experience. They are all equipped with computer skills and proficient in using digital tools and various types of digital technology innovative applications to enhance teaching and learning. The age of the participants was not elicited in this study. The sampling technique employed by the researchers was based on the accessibility of the participants. The same participants took part in the focused group discussion (FGD) during their free time. FGD took place to get participants' experiences on the use of Slido in the EFL classroom.

### 3.4 Procedure

#### 3.4.1 Data Collection

The data for this study was gathered from the participants through an FGD using an open-ended question (See appendix A) to get their live experience on the use of Slido. FGD was used to solicit shared narratives from the participants and identify any similarities and differences in their opinions and experiences during the open discussion rounds. The discussion lasted for one hour and all personal

responses, views, feedback, and reflection were noted and listed to find out how learners engaged in the classroom using the mobile-based application. Prior to the session, the participants received an email stating the details of the session including the venue, time, and the agenda to be discussed during the session.

3.4.2 Data Analysis

The data collected from the FGD were recorded and transcribed to provide an evidence-based analysis of the participants’ observation with Slido technology. Responses were transcribed deductively (based on the response from the specific questions) and inductively (based on additional narratives emerged from the analyzed text). The feedback and reflections gathered from the participants was analyzed using thematic analysis based on the repetition of their feedback using: a) common, b) typical, and c) variant responses. The theme includes *General* - if the occurrence of the responses was 50% and more; *Typical* - if the responses occurred 21-49%; and *Variant* - if the responses occurred 20% and less. The researchers also used six steps and processes in using thematic analysis, according to Caulfield (2019) which include: 1) familiarization of data, 2) coding of responses, 3) generating themes, 4) reviewing themes, 5) defining and naming themes, and 6) writing up.

4. Results

4.1 Reflection of EFL Teachers on the Use of Slido

Presented in Table 1 is the thematic analysis of the personal views and reflection obtained from EFL teachers on the use of mobile-based Slido as an alternative tool to involve learners in the EFL classroom. Following the CARL model of reflection, the participants’ views are presented in themes, core ideas and pattern of responses. The researchers considered the responses into *variant*, *typical*, and *general*. Moreover, the findings of the study were described and important literatures related to the results were also included.

Table 1. EFL Teachers’ Reflection on the Use of Slido as an Alternate Tool in Learner Engagement

Theme	Core Ideas	Pattern of Response
1. The Lived Experience of ELT Teachers in <u>Context</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of student interaction</li> <li>• Lack of interest in learning</li> <li>• Refused to participate</li> <li>• Fear of making mistakes</li> </ul>	General
2. <u>Action</u> Taken by EFL Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Used real- time interactive technologies like Slido and Kahoot</li> <li>• Utilized IT tools to engage students in grammar quizzes, multiple-choice question (MCQ) seatwork, and open text exercises</li> <li>• Remained to use the lecture method</li> </ul>	Typical
3. <u>Results</u> of the Action Taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lively discussion and engaging</li> <li>• Increased student participation</li> <li>• Boosted student confidence</li> <li>• Lowers student nervousness</li> </ul>	General
4. <u>Learnings</u> Gained from the Course of Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective platform in teaching and learning</li> <li>• Very effective to engage students’ participation</li> <li>• Enhance the art of questioning for EFL teachers</li> <li>• Effective tool to get student’s response in real- time</li> <li>• Enhance student’s critical thinking skills</li> </ul>	General

*The Lived Experience of EFL Teachers in Context*

Generally, the participants cited that there were different scenarios in the four corners of the EFL classroom. They believed that despite several English language teaching approaches implemented in the class, it has been repetitively observed that *most learners remain passive especially when the teaching strategy is shifted to communicative approach (T1- P1, 2, 4, 5 and 6)*. Since English courses require communicative approach, learners are expected to participate and interact with teachers. The participants revealed that learners have lack of interaction and participation in the teaching and learning process, lack of interest in learning, refuse to participate and interact with the teacher, and fear of making mistakes.

*\*The letters and numbers indicate the participants’ code in the FGD*

*\*T refers to theme and \*P refers to participant*

As reflected by the participants, there were numerous reasons for less interaction between EFL learners in the teaching and learning process.

One of the considerable reasons for learners to be hesitant to reply to the teacher and continued to be silent is *due to the low level of English proficiency (T1-P1, 5, 7, and 9-12)*. Students *show lack of interest in the English classes (T1- P1-2, and 4-8)* due to language struggle in internalizing the lesson delivered in English. When they are called to recite to express their views, they tend to *refuse with fear of speaking in front of their classmates (T1- P1-9)* using L2. Inefficiency in the use of the target language makes learners feel shy and fear of committing mistakes which led them to be passive and remain silent. Since class participation and engagement require students to interact with the teachers, it implies that their less involvement in the teaching and learning process can't be judged by not paying attention. There is a need to investigate the key factor why they are not engaging. This is aligned with the study of Fassinger (1995) and Gomez, Arai & Lowe (1995) who claimed that the inability of learners to engage in the class is due to similar traits like: less confidence due to language barrier, unpreparedness, fear of being judged by their peers or teachers, and feeling scared tend to become less motivated to interact in the class.

**Action Taken by EFL Teachers**

Regarding the action taken by EFL teachers to improve the issue of learner's less engagement, the participants typically have different approaches and used alternative tools to engage learners. Most participants said that they *used real-time interactive technology applications like Slido (T2- P1-5 and 12)* in guided learning activities to facilitate quizzes, multiple-choice seat works, and even open text exercises for writing activity to ensure active engagement of students. Ningsih (2023) pointed out that the use of Slido can be a helpful tool to increase learner's participation and engagement in the class discussions, particularly for English language learning. Muthmainnah (2019), concluded that using real-time tools increases the number of learners who are confident to respond to the short questions delivered by the teacher while the discussion is ongoing.

Few participants pointed out that Kahoot was used in the multiple-choice question exercises to ensure real-time responses from learners. They said *that it also removes the adverse effects of giving traditional quizzes which put pressure on the learners (T2- P7 and 9)*. Using this app contains gaming which makes learning more enjoyable. Baltazar et al (2019) claimed that the key features of Kahoot motivate learners to be active and responsive in answering multiple-choice questions. However, Kahoot application tools have several limitations. It can only be used as a post-activity when giving formative assessments like quizzes. It couldn't be integrated as an integral part of the whole teaching and learning activity. Lofti, Pratolo & Dahlan (2021) highlighted that Kahoot is good to administer formative tests, quizzes and other activities to spend the learning time. They added that learners have no chance to be clarified of the right and wrong responses they provided at the end of the learning session. Bhuaana (2022) similarly concluded in his study that the drawbacks of using Kahoot is the lack of discussion and clarification of the wrong answer provided by the learners. It can only be used for getting responses in one activity (Monaghan, Cain & Malone, 2011).

Other participants seemed to *remain using the traditional lecture methodology (T1- P6, 8, and 10-11)*, as a domineering method, in delivering the lesson. However, a lecture is just one choice in a lecturer's variety of methods as using this for the entire class will tend to make learners inactive and that will result in undesirable outputs. It may only be used when they are most suitable. Hart et al (2002) asserted that lecture method remains a prominent method in teaching of most disciplines at universities. This is despite persistent and extensive criticism of the lecture as a common teaching method.

Between Kahoot and Slido, it was noted that the participants typically preferred the use of Slido in the English classes as *it gives them everything, they need to engage their learners and makes everyone feels connected (T2- P1-5 and 12)*. The apps can also be integrated in any of the technological tools used in the teaching and learning session like PowerPoint slides, and Google slides. The participants opined that it can also *be integrated in the use of educational platforms like Zoom and MS teams (T2- P1- 5 and 12)* when classes are called online for some reason. Kahoot, on the other hand, is also an interactive tool that creates engaging learning contents that enables learners to take part using their mobile device. But this app often provides gamified learning experiences which are applicable to high school learners to ensure active participation in the class. This tool merely aims to make learning enjoyable and fun which can be used in conducting quizzes in real time (Diahyleva et al (2024). Thus, the participants chose specifically Slido over Kahoot due to its numerous advantages and user-friendly features applicable to higher education students. It can be used anytime and can be integrated into the teacher's PowerPoint slides to facilitate teaching and learning. It is useful in English classes where communication is the main concern. This tool can also be beneficial to EFL teachers to ensure that EFL classes will be interactive. Currie (2016) demonstrated that the use of IT tools in the classroom can possibly help learners and teachers meet the desired learning outcomes. It was also claimed that Slido application tool technology creates a more interactive and engaging learning environment if used in the EFL classes (Eiland & Todd, 2019). It can be inferred that Slido is an effective tool for learners' participation in the English class like grammar lesson and writing exercise to emphasize the correct structure, spelling, vocabulary, and proper punctuations.

Table 2 displayed the steps on how Slido application is used by teachers and learners:

Table 2. Steps on how to use Slido as a tool in Learner Engagement

Step	EFL Teacher	EFL Learners
1	Go to slido.com website, create an account, and enter the Slido code.	Join through their phone using the QR Code
2	Manage Slido on screen	Embed Slido into the website
3	Integrate Slido with PowerPoint Slides	Type or encode responses on quizzes, exercise and other relevant activities in real time.
4	Switch between Slido and PowerPoint Slides	Get immediate feedback from teacher in real time

The steps indicate that the teacher needs to create an account to manage the application on screen. Once an account is created, the teacher then can integrate the Slido application to his or her PowerPoint slides to display the lessons and activities for interaction purposes. The participants claimed that *the teacher can easily switch between Slido and PowerPoint slides for interactive activities like quizzes, seat work and exercises (P1-5 and P12)*. On the other hand, learners can join interactive activities by scanning the QR code through their mobile devices. Once joined, they can already participate in the class discussion by sending their responses that automatically appear on screen without reflecting the learners' identity. It implies that using the real-time application as expressed by the participants on the steps display indicates that Slido enhances students' participation. This finding is supported by Garrison et al, (2021) which says that interactive features of Slido such as quizzes and word clouds, when incorporated to as educational tools can increase learner engagement and enjoyment of learning (Muthmainnah, 2019).

To have a clear view of the tool on how EFL teachers and learners utilized the application, the figures below show the appearance of the Slido website.

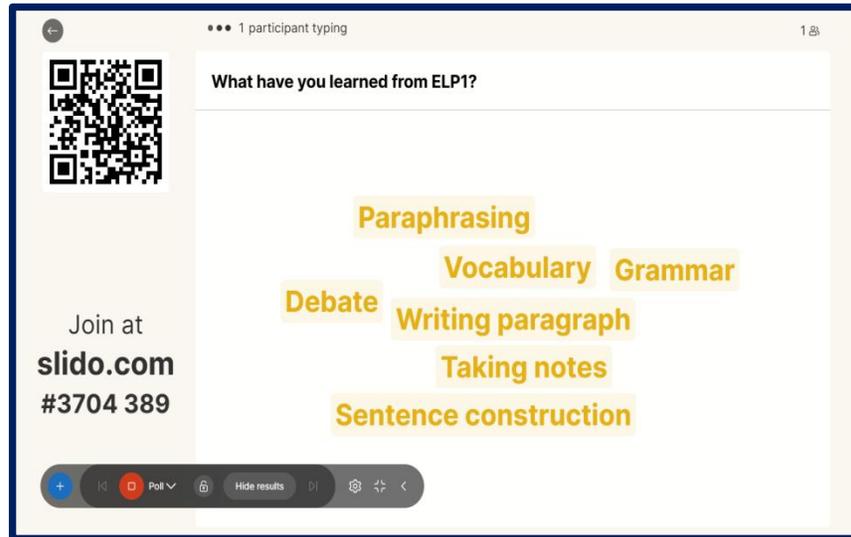


Figure 2a. Slido Features that appears on the screen of EFL Teacher

**Source:** EFL Teacher's Live interaction with Learners

Figure 2a shows the appearance of Slido application tool. The application is easy to use following the steps reflected in table 2 for both teachers and learners. The app is free, and the features are user friendly that can be embedded to the teacher's lesson through PowerPoint slide which can be shown on screen live. It can be used to interact with learners through questions and answers, quizzes, and other writing exercises.

### **Results of the Action Taken**

Based on the personal views and reflection of the participants, the use of Slido in the EFL classes was worthwhile. Participants generally found it useful, engaging, and fun. They firmly expressed their positive thoughts about how Slido helped learners become interactive and engaging. As observed by the participants, when a lecture is aided with Slido, it *helped students easily grasp the lesson and actively partake in class activities in real time (T3- P1-5 and 12)*. In terms of learner engagement, more learners are engaged, increasing their confidence, and motivated to participate even if their answers are incorrect. It implies that Slido has a positive effect on the teaching and learning process as it facilitates active involvement of learners. This is in line with the survey findings of Wassalwa and Iffah (2022) that Slido was observed as an effective tool on learner engagement in terms of conducting quizzes and exercises using word clouds is found to be effective that made students engaged. Zulfa and Laras (2020) highlighted that Slido application, with all its features, can make learning interactive, enjoyable and improves the quality of teaching and learner interaction. Similarly, Bernacki, Greene, & Crompton (2020), suggested that it can be a valuable tool to increase student's participation and engagement especially in English language classes to create interactive learning environment that nurture a deeper understanding and engagement with the material taught.

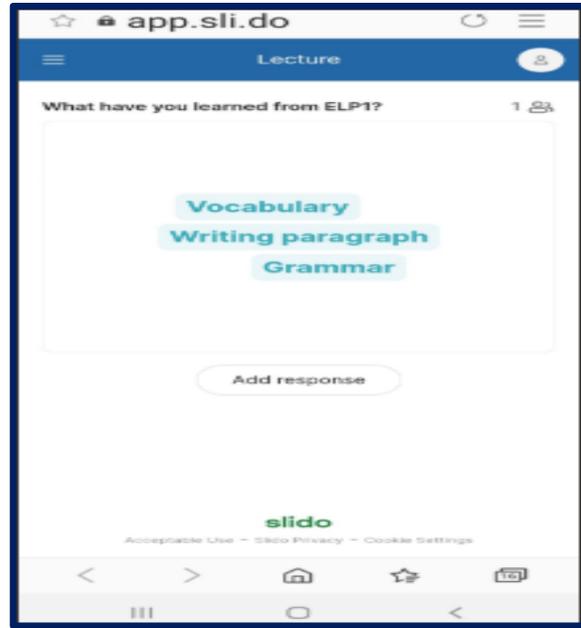


Figure 2b. Slido Screen that appears on the mobile device of Learners

**Source:** Learners' Response in one of the Guided Learning Activities in EFL Class

Figure 2b replicates the learners' response to the EFL class activity using Slido. The learners have an equal chance of participating in the seatwork which requires a write-in answer to test the students' comprehension, vocabulary, and spelling. As reflected by the participants, they found Slido to be an effective tool to get learner's response in real time. Learners' responses are also shown on screen where everyone can see their answers. On the spot feedback given to correct their answers gave opportunities for the learners to ask questions. It implies that the real time response of the learners is an avenue for EFL teachers to highlight the mistakes committed based on the discussion to support the feedback given. As emphasized by Garrison et al. (2021), EFL teachers should reflect the use of Slido application tools into their teaching and learning activities to initiate active participation, critical thinking, and knowledge retention among learners. Ancheta and Bocar (2024) also highlighted that learner's engagement is an important aspect of educational success. When learners are not participating or have less engagement in the class, it will affect the progress of their learning.

#### ***Learnings Gained from the Course of Action***

When it comes to the learnings gained, generally the participants gained additional skills on how to innovate their teaching strategies to improve students' involvement to meet the desired learning outcomes. When asked about their impression on the use of Slido application, they have one thing in common about their views and opinion. They discovered that the result of the guided learning activity is proven that *Slido is a valuable tool to increase learner engagement, and participation (T4-P1-5 and I2)*. Common to their views is the uniqueness of the platform and its unique features that help facilitate teaching and learning. It can be inferred that it is an alternative tool to engage students and enhances EFL teacher's skills on the art of questioning and develop learner's critical thinking skills. The findings are like TLozare et al. (2021) which highlighted that Slido is beneficial in the teaching and learning and enhances the quality of foreign language coaching and teacher-learner interaction (Zulfa & Laras, 2020). It can also improve learner's learning outcomes and satisfaction (Ningsih, 2023).

#### **5. Discussion**

The findings revealed that learner engagement is one of the major problems encountered by EFL teachers in the attainment of the course learning outcomes. Learners are passive when the teacher starts to elicit answers relevant to the lesson. The findings also indicated that there are several scenarios that are observed by the learners in the EFL classes. These include the lack of interaction and participation, lack of interest in learning, reluctance to participate and interact with teachers, and fear of making mistakes. It can be noted that in general, learners showed these behaviors due to low level or difficulty in the use of L2. This is associated with Lawrence-Brown (2004), who asserted that one of the challenges for teachers is to stimulate the learners to interact with tutors in the classroom, and to understand more about learners' behaviors that affect learning.

It is also viewed that the use of Slido contributed a lot to motivate learners to participate in the class discussion and guided learning activities. This manifests on the quick response of students in the class interaction particularly when quizzes, seatwork and exercises are conducted. Generally, it can be inferred that Slido is an effective interactive tool to engage students and participate in the EFL classes as it can be integrated into the module materials used by teachers in delivering the lecture especially the PowerPoint slides. It is like the conclusion of Muthmainnah (2019) which highlighted that the use of Slido application makes the class discussion livelier and more entertaining. It

allows learners to interact in real time by asking questions online and respond interactively. He also revealed that learners assumed that interacting online is advantageous to understand the lesson and increase class participation. It implies that Slido app can be a valuable mechanism to increase students' involvement and active participation particularly for English language classes.

The use of Slido has a positive impact on different pedagogical approaches. Teachers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills must not only be creative but also technology literate. They should get away from the traditional approaches to learning since learners in the 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom focusses on a collaborative style to learning that needs learners to be engaged in the classroom activities and learning tasks. Slido, as a digital technology tool, helps teachers to ensure that learners will actively engage in any of the planned guided learning activities. It is highly effective that impact teachers teaching style. Compared to other active learning strategies in teaching English like gamification (Kahoot), flipped classroom, interactive classroom, and concept mapping, Slido is found to be effective that motivated learners to automatically involve in class discussion. Ha (2018) exclaimed that Slido is an online platform where teachers can get a voice from their students for effective management of foreign language classroom. Using its interactive features is an effective tool that leads learners to active participation and better comprehension.

The findings also show that learners' participation in the class discussion increased tremendously. It was observed that their confidence is boosted when using their mobile device for class discussion and exercises. It is manifested on the learners' response in the teaching and learning activity in which the class became lively and fun especially when asked to give their ideas about the topic discussed. Learners have no hesitation to answer as their answers appear on screen anonymously. It infers that when learners are obliged to share their opinions and ideas anonymously using the interactive tool, teachers expect to have more learners providing their responses interactively. It is like the study of Ningsih (2023) which says that exploring the use of Slido tool in ESP class generally enhances student's comprehension, provides entertaining learning experiences that make learners become flexible to participate including the option for anonymous and unidentified submission of their responses.

## 6. Conclusion

Based on the learnings gained by the participants the use of Slido was effective and recommendable to be used in the EFL classroom. The result indicated that the Slido app is a teacher's choice as an alternative tool for EFL teachers and learners to increase engagement and participation during the teaching and learning process. It is implied that the use of Slido helped EFL passive learners to boost their confidence and participation as well as boosting critical thinking abilities. The application promotes student engagement and enhances learning experiences. Its distinct features can improve the learning outcomes and ignite active participation and boost students' confidence. Notably, the study found that Slido is a valuable tool for student engagement in which the participants found it engaging, fun to use, and enables active interaction. It could be useful for teachers to consider using Slido as it has unique features that can be used effectively to improve classroom engagement and teacher-learner interaction. It also motivated teachers to innovate their teaching strategy and deviate from the traditional method of teaching (lecture method), which lead to disengagement of the learners. It is anticipated that the use of Slido, in comparison with other interactive tools like Kahoot as described in this study, will help EFL teachers to choose appropriate techniques and tools to facilitate teaching and learning and ensure active participation of the learners in the EFL classroom.

This study has potential limitations in terms of the sample size and the participants' exposure and familiarity in using Slido as a tool. A small number of participants might lead to higher variability, which may also affect the reliability of the results obtained from FGD. Also, the participants' exposure and familiarity on how to use the tool might affect their reflection. Since not all participants are using the same tool and techniques to engage learners, non-response arises during the FGD may lead to bias. Therefore, further study on the impact of using Slido on the academic performance of the learners needs to be conducted in a huge number of samples to validate the findings of this study and to examine its effectiveness among other interactive tools.

## 7. Recommendations

Based on the reflection of the participants, this research offers valuable insights for EFL teachers and learners, and institutions of higher learning. Thus, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. Active teaching and learning should be the foundation of any module inside the classroom.
2. Teachers must explore several innovative teaching techniques and strategies to ensure a two-way communication process to meet the desired learning outcomes.
3. EFL teachers must deviate from using traditional methods of teaching, in the form of lecture methods, to avoid disengagement of learners.
4. EFL teachers must update their teaching methodology to serve learners' needs, interests and abilities by adapting IT tools, like **Slido** application, to increase student engagement and ensure that teaching and learning is enjoyable, active and fun.
5. Both EFL teachers and learners should adapt new IT tools to make the teaching and learning process more interactive and enjoyable.
6. HEIs should provide training programs in integrating technology to align with the educational policies and frameworks.

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#### **Authors' contributions**

Dr. Ruel, Ms. Samya and Ms. Afrah made significant contributions to the conceptualization of the study. Dr. Ruel was responsible for the study design, drafting the manuscript, analysis and interpretation of data, and final revision based on the editor and reviewers' comments. Ms. Deny, Ms. Cherubim, Ms. Afrah, Ms. Samya, and Ms. Meenakshi collaborated in conducting the literature review and data collection, overall proofreading and approving the final version of the manuscript. All authors are accountable for all aspects of the work and its integrity.

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**Appendix**

**Appendix A**

Participants' Reflection in Utilizing Slido to Enhance Learner Engagement

(Guide Questions during Focus Group Discussion (FGD))

No.	Question	Response (s)				
		Pax 1	Pax 2	Pax 3	Pax 4	Pax 5
1	What problems you encountered in engaging students in the English class?					
2	Describe how teaching and learning happens in the EFL class.					
3	Do you think the use of SLIDO helped address the issues you mentioned in Question No. 1? Why?					
4	Which lesson in the teaching delivery plan SLIDO was used?					
5	How did you use it?					
6	What happened when SLIDO was used in the EFL class?					
7	How was the students' engagement?					
8	Was it effective? Why?					
9	What did you learn from using this tool (SLIDO)?					
10	Will you recommend it to be used as an alternative tool to engage students in the EFL class? Why?					