# **CHAPTER I**

# **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter provides the background of the study, the scope of the study, the research question, the objective of this research, the research methodology, the significance of the study, and the definition of terminologies.

## **Background of the Study**

Student engagement becomes a crucial thing in the learning activity. This is supported by Fredricks, Filsecker, & Lawson (2016, p. 1) that engagement is an essential factor in the development of learning and academic performance. Student engagement is very important because this behavior supports the learning process so that it can take place well, and students with high student engagement have the behavior to always be active and diligent in participating in learning activities both inside and outside the classroom (Sa’adah & Ariati, 2018). On the other hand, student engagement is important because student engagement demonstrate levels of attention, effort, persistence, positive emotions, and commitment of a student in the learning process (Handelsman, Briggs, Sullivan, & Towler, 2005)). How well students do in school, including how much progress they make or do not make in school, is linked to how engaged they are (Ladd & Dinella in (Reeve, 2012, p. 62)). In addition, student engagement in schools should be an important concern because it may help improve the student experience by enhancing student learning outcomes and accomplishment in school, as well as the institution's reputation (Trowler, 2010, p. 3).

Student engagement can be interpreted as the active role of students as participants in the teaching and learning process. Chapman (2003) conveys that student engagement as a construct to depict “students’ willingness to participate in routine school activities, such as attending classed, submitting required work, and following teacher’s directions in class”. As in line with that, Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris (2004) define, student engagement as a meta-construct that includes behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement.

Fredricks & McColskey (2012) state that behavioral engagement, namely doing school work and following school rules, including: (a) behavior that positive, which illustrates effort, perseverance, concentration, attention, asking questions, contributing to class discussions, following rules, study, complete homework, participate in activities related schools. (b) Absence of disruptive behavior, such as not being absent school and not making lists in class. Emotional engagement at school, which shows their interests, values, and emotions towards school, for example: feelings in class, feelings towards school and teachers, feelings on treatment, discipline and motivation, feelings of belonging, positive feelings, and appreciation of academic achievement in school. Cognitive engagement of students towards schools, namely perceptions of motivation, effort and use of strategies. This includes psychological investment in learning, hard work in learning, seriousness desire, willingness to work beyond what is required, challenging choices, discipline, planning and learning strategies, flexibility in solving problems problems, choosing to work hard.

In learning activities there are demands for teachers to plan learning strategies by prioritizing student engagement because student activity can be encouraged by the teacher's role. Berry (2020, p. 3) said that one of the main reasons for the increasing interest in the concept of student engagement is the aspect that is under the control of the classroom teacher. In this case the teachers tries to give opportunities for students to be active, both actively seeking, processing and managing learning gain which may include acquiring and retaining content knowledge and developing a wide range of critical thinking, writing, speaking, and teamwork skills with effective active learning techniques, teachers improve the likelihood that they will fully engage their students (William Buskist, 2018, p. 60). As a result, in order to boost student engagement, it is necessary to take into consideration the teacher's personal experience and prior knowledge.

Many studies have been carried out related to student engagement, which has had pros and cons. Some of them focus on student engagement on learning achievement that has been carried out by Reyes, Brackett, Rivers, White, & Salovey (2012) that highlights the role of classroom-based, emotion-related interactions in promoting academic achievement and the data was collected from 63 teachers and 2,000 students in 90 fifth and sixth-grade ELA classrooms from 44 schools in a diverse school district in the Northeastern United States; Gunuc (2014) determined the extent to which student engagement explains or predicts academic achievement, and the research sample was made up of 304 students; Lei, Cui, Zhou (2018) resolved disagreements between student engagement positively predicts academic achievement and several opinions against this view, involved 196,473 participants; Northey (2018) investigated the effects of “here and now” learning on student engagement and academic achievement, and he examined 400 undergraduate students, who were allocated into 13 smaller classes; Almotairi, Abdullah, & Meccawy (2020) investigated the effect of the gamification element on student behavioral engagement in an online course, this research used 48 students. The results of the research showed that there is an influence of student engagement on student achievement.

The next was research conducted by Berry (2020) which examined teachers' perspectives on student engagement. Participants in this research were 15 upper-primary teachers from six Victorian (Australia) primary schools. The result of this study was students' engagement in terms of their impact on their teaching and the learning experiences they planned for their students.

Based on the research results of the previous research, it shows that research on "student engagement" has been conducted by several researchers. However, the studies discussing the challenges faced by teachers in student engagement is still very few, while student engagement teaching learning activity is still problematic at this time. Thus, this research aims to undertake an investigation of student engagement from a new perspective, namely, Teachers' Challenges: Students' Engagement in EFL Class.

## **Reason for Choosing the Topic**

The researcher conducted this research because of the challenges of readjustment for online learning, which is turning into face-to-face learning. These difficulties are also used as a challenge for teachers to overcome. The goal of these difficulties and challenges is to increase student interest and motivation to readjust the learning process challenges in order to build student engagement in behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement.

## **Research Question**

Based on the explanation above, this study formulates the problem as follow;

*"What are the teachers’ challenges to build students’ engagement in EFL class?"*

## **Research Objective**

As in line with the research question above, the purpose of this study is to know the teachers’ challenges in building students’ engagement in EFL class.

## **Research Method**

This research method is qualitative. This study uses qualitative methods for data collection. Qualitative research is primarily concerned understanding human beings' experiences in a humanistic, interpretive approach (Jackson, Drummond, & Camara, 2007). It was chosen because this study examines the problems that arise among teachers in improving student engagement.

## **Significance of the Study**

The researcher hopes this study can contribute theoretically, practically, and professionally to the researcher, teachers, students, and readers. Theoretically and professionally, this study is expected to increase the readers' knowledge, including the teachers who know how to build student engagement, especially on the challenges faced. Moreover, the researcher hopes this study may be used for the next researcher who is interested in analyzing student engagement. Practically, this study can be practised for teachers when they know what challenges are faced, and they must prepare materials and lessons better and are not hampered by these challenges.

## **Scope of the Study**

There are many challenges on students’ engagement that are the potential to be studied. The focus discussed in this study is only about the teachers’ challenges in improving students’ engagement based on the dimension of behavioral engagement, emotional engagement, and cognitive engagement. Then, the participants of this study are three English teachers of a Junior High School in Garut.

## **Definition of Terminology**

To avoid the controversial or ambiguous terminology which is used in this research, the researcher presents several specialized terms. Those are:

* + 1. Student Engagement

Student engagement was correlated with how students participated in effective educational practices and activities both inside and outside the classroom (Barkley, 2010). Student engagement in this study refers to form of positive emotions, enthusiastic, optimistic and caring behavior during the online learning process.

* + 1. EFL Teachers

EFL stands for English as Foreign Language. It is mainly used to talk students (whose first language is not English) that’s learning English in their own country. The teacher teaches English to students in a country where English is not the native language.