

The Authors Reply

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■ We appreciate Rod Ellis's thoughtful comments and hope that this exchange will help to shed further light on the nature of motivated classroom behavior as a criterion measure in classroom-oriented motivation studies. As Ellis correctly summarizes, the three student variables selected for investigation in our study were attention, participation, and volunteering for teacher-fronted activity. These three components were then summed up in a composite measure that we labeled *learners' motivated behavior*. It seems to us that the issue concerning this measure is twofold: (a) Were the constituent variables appropriate to reflect motivated learner engagement in the observed language classrooms, and (b) was the labeling of the variables accurate and appropriate?

With regard to the first question—that is, the specific behavioral aspects measured—our selection was restricted by the observational methodology we applied. For the purpose of designing a structured classroom observation scheme (MOLT) we needed to identify salient and relatively low-inference aspects of the students' classroom activity. Because our study did not include any microanalysis of classroom discourse, we opted for using some obvious, almost unmistakable signs of student engagement. Ellis is right that a more finely tuned analysis could have targeted a number of other, more subtle aspects of the students' verbal behavior, which would have also made the three components of our appraisal more distinct. However, ours was a pioneering, exploratory study, and our main objective at this stage was to achieve a robust and commonsense criterion measure of the students' level of behavioral engagement in instructional events. This is why, although we measured three different aspects of student behavior, we decided not to report any subscores for the constituent components but only focus on their composite score.

Although definitions and operationalizations of engagement show some variation (see, e.g., Goodman, 1990; Spanjers, Burns, & Wagner, 2008), it is fair to say that its core concept involves attending behavior. In this respect, a useful distinction exists in the literature between *active* and *passive* academic responding. In Goodman's words (1990):

Active responding involves the child practicing the academic task, e.g., answering a question, doing a problem, reading the text, etc. Examples of passive responding include general attending behavior such as listening to another child reading, watching another child do a problem, etc. Research indicates that achievement gains are more highly related to active academic responding. (p. 24)

In our study, *attention* refers to passive academic responding and *participation* to active academic responding. We agree that our labels for these two dimensions were possibly confusing, particularly the term *attention*, which inevitably activated a whole spectrum of unintended cognitive meanings. We like Ellis’s suggestion of *alertness* and will consider using it in future studies in this vein.

In spite of the terminological issue, we feel that the composite student engagement measure did work well in actual observational practice. The highly significant correlation with the teacher’s motivational practice ($r = 0.61$) indicated a solid relationship, and it is reassuring that each of the three components displays a significant positive relationship with the criterion measure independently (see Table 1).

Ellis concludes his comment by stating that “What is really needed, then, is a theoretical and empirical basis for determining which aspects of students’ motivated behavior are predictive of L2 learning.” We could not agree more. This is why we listed this point as the first direction of recommended future investigations at the end of our article. However, establishing links between motivated behavior and achievement requires a different research design from our primarily motivational study because such investigations require a prominent focus on the cognitive impact of learning tasks. In other words, the overall research paradigm will need to be broadened to be able to integrate both motivational and instructional factors in order to specify the optimum conditions for any systematic motivational classroom intervention.

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TABLE 1

Correlations Among the Teacher’s Motivational Practice and the Three Separate Measures of Learners’ Motivated Behavior

	Learners’ motivated behavior	Attention	Participation	Volunteering for teacher-fronted activities
Teacher’s motivational practice	0.61***	0.55**	0.40**	0.39*

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

motivation and motivating foreign language learners, language teacher education, communicative and task-based language teaching. She also writes EFL materials.

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