

## Kinesthetic Learners in Online EFL Classes

Asst. Lect. Taybat Izat Dewali

English Language Department, College of Basic Education, University of Duhok, Iraq  
Email: taybat.dewali@uod.ac

### ABSTRACT

The spread of Corona virus in 2020 resulted in major changes in our lives on so many different levels. Education is one of the areas that witnessed a dramatic shift from in class lessons to online ones. This paper aims at investigating whether the kinesthetic learners are engaged in these online lessons, it also explores the challenges that English as a foreign language teachers' encounter when implementing strategies for engaging kinesthetic learners in the online lessons, and the procedures that English language teachers can take in order to engage the kinesthetic learners in their online classes. For this purpose, ten English language teachers from University of Duhok from two colleges (College of Languages and College of Basic Education) were interviewed and their online lectures were observed. The findings revealed that most teachers use methods that encourage the engagement of the kinesthetic learners. However, there are several challenges encountered including teachers' and students' lack of knowledge about online teaching and learning, bad internet connection, the difficulty of recognizing the learner's learning style in an online teaching and learning environment, teacher and students' lack of motivation and enthusiasm for online learning, students misleading their teachers by pretending to be present in the online lecture, students' resistance to participate in activities ...etc. The participants also provided some suggestions regarding the best ways for involving the kinesthetic learners in such classes. The study ends up with a few conclusions and recommendations.

**Keywords:** kinesthetic learners, online lessons, engagement, challenges.

## Introduction

Due to the emergence and spread of the COVID-19 virus in almost every country in the world, most governments have implemented a lockdown in almost every aspect of life including education. During this pandemic, social distancing became a must. Therefore, learning had to be carried out online in order to keep students distanced. The educational system in Kurdistan Region, like most other countries, shifted to an e-learning system. With online teaching, students are home, facing their laptop or mobile screens. They receive information visually and audibly with no physical movement which negatively affects the kinesthetic learners who learn by doing. This paper aims at finding ways to actively involve kinesthetic learners in the online English as a Foreign Language (henceforth EFL) lessons and highlight the obstacles which EFL teachers face when attempting to apply strategies to engage the kinesthetic learners in their lessons.

## The Problem of the Research

E-learning is new to most teachers in our community including EFL teachers. If, before this shift to online teaching, teachers attempted to engage kinesthetic learners in their lessons, online learning has made this more difficult. Now, in any class, teachers and students are facing their computer or smart phones screens with less interaction and communication. Often in online EFL classes, lessons are not designed in a way to meet the learning needs of kinesthetic learners. Most lessons address the learning preferences of visual and auditory learners; very few engage the kinesthetic ones.

## Research Questions

For the above mentioned reasons, this paper attempts to answer the following questions:

- 1- Do EFL teachers engage kinesthetic learners in their lessons? How?
- 2- What challenges do EFL teachers' encounter in implementing strategies for engaging kinesthetic learners in the online lessons?
- 3- What can EFL teachers do in order to engage kinesthetic learners in online classes?

## Aims of the Research

This study aims at exploring the challenges that teachers encounter when attempting to engage the kinesthetic learners and finding ways for engaging EFL students with kinesthetic learning style in online EFL classes.

## Scope of the Research

This paper is limited to online EFL learning context only. With this being said, it does not include other e-learning disciplines.

## Value of the Research

This research is expected to be of some value to the EFL teachers, students, Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in Kurdistan Region of Iraq, and applied linguists. For EFL teachers, this research is expected to: put forward the challenges

teachers face with engaging such learners, and present to the teachers some ways for engaging the kinesthetic learners in the online lectures. Regarding EFL learners, the findings of the current study can benefit the kinesthetic learners in such a way that it will shed light on: how they are different from other learners, how much they are neglected in online lessons, and will present solutions for engaging them. As for ministry of higher education in Kurdistan region, this study will present the difficulties the teachers encounter with such students in online lessons which can be a source for reconsidering the online teaching in the region and, hopefully, making the necessary reforms in the online teaching and learning process. Finally, this research can benefit applied linguists in such a way that it can be a reference for them to learn about the kinesthetic learners in online EFL classes in Kurdistan region. This, in turn, might help the applied linguists who attempt to conduct similar studies in other teaching and learning environments.

## Literature Review

The topic of kinesthetic learners in online classes is not researched enough which forms a difficulty for a researcher like me to find enough sources about the topic. This could be due to fact that in the past online learning was not as widely used as it is today especially after Covid-19. However, e-learning existed long before the spread of Covid-19 which was adopted by various universities over the world. This has made researchers to conduct research in this area. In this section, reference to the learning styles concept will be made and some literature regarding kinesthetic learners and online learning will be presented to have a clearer idea about the topic of this paper.

Over the years, plenty of research has been conducted in order to identify the factors that affect the learning process. Researchers were able to name a number of “learning-related concepts” that influence the way learners learn- one of which is ‘learning styles’ (Cassidy, 2004, p.419). The theory of learning styles has long been presented by Carl Jung in (1927). Sadler-Smith (1996) stated that learning styles refer to preferring one mode of teaching over another (as cited in Markovi´c & Jovanovi´c, 2011, p. 306). In the same way, Haswell (2017) defined learning styles as the “preferential way that a student is able to learn, retain, and apply the information that they are learning” (p.2).

Various models for learning styles were presented by different scholars; the one that is adopted in this study is known as the VARK model. VARK is an acronym which stands for Visual, Auditory, Read/Write, and Kinesthetic (Fleming & Baume, 2006, p.5). The original version of the model was called VAK because it did not include ‘Read/Write’ style and it was put forward by psychologists in (1920); ‘Read/Write’ style was added by Neil Fleming in (1992) (Hussain, 2017, p.33). According to the VARK model, learners have different learning preferences. Some learners understand the information presented to them better when it is presented visually (visual learners), others learn best when information is presented verbally (auditory learners),

others prefer the written word (read/write learners), while others learn by doing (kinesthetic learners) (Fleming & Baume, 2006; Wood & Sereni-Massinger, 2016).

### **Kinesthetic Learners in E-Learning Context**

E-learning refers to electronic learning, it can be defined as the “intentional use of networked information and communication technology in teaching and learning” (Chitra & Raj, 2018, p.11). Furthermore, Chitra and Raj (2018) pointed out that e-learning “would incorporate all educational activities that are carried out by individuals or groups working online or offline, and synchronously or asynchronously via networked or standalone computers and other electronic devices” (p.11). This type of learning is also known as virtual learning, distributed learning, online learning, network, and web based learning. In an online learning class, lessons are provided via laptop or mobile screens which may reduce the active implementation of course content (Wood & Sereni-Massinger, 2016, p.116). This, in turn, negatively affects the kinesthetic learners who learn by doing.

It is important to point out that saying that a learner is kinesthetic does not mean that he/she has no other learning preferences it rather means that the kinesthetic preference is dominant. In this regard, Wood and Sereni-Massinger (2016, p.116) indicated that “learners are predominantly multimodal”\_ that is to say, they have more than one learning style but they are divided into visual, auditory, read-write and kinesthetic based on the dominant style.

As mentioned previously, kinesthetic learners learn by moving and doing. According to Bartlett and Bell (2018, para.4) and Pappas (2006, para.2), kinesthetic learners prefer to be “in motion”, their learning is demonstrated by “active participation” in the learning process. Online learning appeals more to visual and auditory learners and less to kinesthetic ones because online lessons are video and text heavy. As a result, this leads to the reduction of the kinesthetic learners’ involvement in the online lessons. This was also pointed out by Bartlett and Bell (2018) who mentioned that “often, we think of online learning as primarily engaging the eyes and maybe the ears, which leaves out kinesthetic learners’ strongest sense for retention (touch)” (para. 6). As a result, the learning needs of kinesthetic learners in online lessons might not be well addressed which can definitely affect their learning.

### **Procedure and Data Analysis**

The data was collected during March-April in 2021. The researcher conducted face-to-face interviews with the participants individually. The interview questions were seven and all of them were open-ended questions (see appendix 1). In order to get clearer and more reliable results, the researcher used observations. The academic year was coming to an end and most teachers had already finished their classes and exams had started. As a result, the EFL teachers were asked to send two of their recorded online Zoom lectures for the researcher to observe. The researcher created an observation checklist to analyze the lecture videos (see appendix 2).

## Population and Sample of the Study

The population of this study is the EFL teachers of University of Duhok (UoD). Ten English language teachers were chosen to participate in the current study. Five of the teachers were from College of Languages and the other five were from College of Basic Education. The participants taught different subjects of English language to university students of different academic levels (see appendix 3).

## The Research Instruments

This paper is qualitative in nature. The qualitative research instruments that were used were both interviews and observations. The interviews were conducted personally i.e. face to face. As for the observations, due to the fact that the academic year was coming to an end during the data collection process, the participants were asked to provide the researcher with at least two of their recorded online Zoom lectures for the purpose of observation. It is important to point out that teachers record their Zoom lectures to upload them later to Moodle for students to refer to when needed.

## Data Analysis and Findings

In this section, the findings from the interviews and observations shall be presented. The results of each research instrument shall be discussed in a separate section.

### Interviews

The interviewed teachers were asked seven questions which address the research questions and tackle different ideas about e-learning and learning styles especially the kinesthetic learners (see appendix 2). The results of each question will be laid out in this section independently.

To begin with, the first question which stated “which e-learning platforms do you use in your teaching and how do you use them?” presents the strategy adopted by the UoD regarding the applications to be used for giving lectures electronically. All of the teachers use Moodle and Zoom as the main e-learning platforms for delivering online lectures, these two applications were recommended by the university to be used for UoD students. All of the participants use Zoom for giving online lectures which demand all the students to be present and attend the lecture on time. The Moodle, on the other hand, is used to upload all the recorded Zoom lectures, videos, PDFs, Powerpoint presentations, announce assignments, create quizzes, etc... Teacher 10, however, pointed out that in addition to Moodle and Zoom she uses Google Classroom because she finds it to be easier to manage and more interesting.

The second question of the interview which said “how do you often present and explain the subject of your lesson for your learners in terms of learning styles?” helps to understand and visualize the lesson format in terms of the inclusion of learning styles in the teaching and learning process. The majority of the teachers shares their screens and use Microsoft applications such as Word and Powerpoint. They also use pictures and Youtube to play videos related to the lecture’s topic. However, Teacher 4 mentioned that she does not use Powerpoint presentations, she simply “*show the book on the screen so that they do not get confused between the book and the Powerpoint.*”

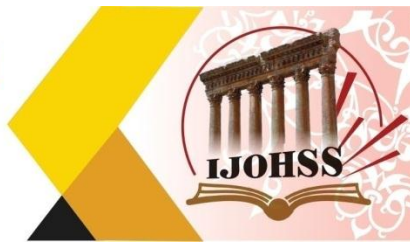
*It is just the book because it's very easy and very comprehensive*". Moreover, teacher 1,4, 6 and 8 divide the students into breakout rooms to make them be more active in the class. Teacher 3 pointed out that she makes students do presentations to get them participate and engage in the lesson. Some of the EFL teachers (teacher 3, 5, 6, 7, 10) mentioned that they use assignments and activities as well to enhance participation.

In response to the third question "do you engage your kinesthetic learners in your lectures? If yes, how?", the majority said that they do their best to engage the kinesthetic learners in the online lectures. Around six teachers mentioned that the main method they use to involve the kinesthetic learner is by making students work in groups via the 'breakout rooms' option in Zoom e-learning platform. The second dominant strategy (mentioned by five teachers) used for the better engagement of all learners is oral presentations. Finally, the other strategies used by the EFL teachers involve exercises, activities and assignments depending on the nature of the subject and the topic of the lesson. For example, teacher 5 said *"I had a puzzle and then I asked them all to solve the puzzle like at home and then send it to me and then we made a nice video I put it on Youtube."* In the same fashion, teacher 10 mentioned that she asks students to create videos of them *"performing a task related to the course materials"*. The easier way mentioned by some teachers is to ask learners to give examples or to answer questions. On the other hand, one teacher (teacher 9) complained that students do not participate in her lectures.

Moreover, the fourth interview question stated "when planning for your lessons, do you take into consideration students' learning styles? If yes, how?". The majority of the teachers think and plan to address all the learning styles but they find difficulty in finding ways for involving the kinesthetic learners in the online lessons. However, they try to engage this type of learners by using a variety of activities and exercises to make them talk and participate. Teacher 6 stated that students complain about online learning *"so they don't try and there's nothing I can do about that. But I try to do, you know, different forms of activities like individual work, group work, and pair work"*. In addition, teacher 7 supported the use of activities for the purpose of engaging the kinesthetic learner by saying *"if you give them exercises and assignments they will be more engaged in your class"*. The use of activities and assignments is a need because applications such as Zoom and Moodle, as teacher 7 explained, *target "the visual learners more but of course it's also for the auditory because they listen and watch"*. Furthermore, teacher 8 stressed that teachers need to use different tasks and activities to get students to work because kinesthetic learners need *"to use their motor skills, their hands I mean when they discuss it's a way that they get engaged"*. Others use different techniques to involve the kinesthetic learner such as the use of imagination due to the nature of the subject they teach. In this regard, teacher 2 teaches grammar and she mentioned that she does attempt to engage the kinesthetic learner in the online lesson, but her *"class mostly addresses the visual and auditory learners. For the kinesthetic ones, I ask them to use their imagination"*. Similarly, teacher 9, who also teaches grammar, pointed out that she sometimes uses *"tables to make it more clear*

for them or I will bring some pictures to make the situation clear to them.” Finally, teacher 10 clarified that all teachers do their best in delivering their lectures but *“online lectures are not the same as face-to-face lectures. So we may have some challenges concerning this point”*.

In response to the fifth question from the interview which states “in your opinion, what should EFL teachers do for the purpose of better engagement of kinesthetic learners in the online classes?” teacher 1 mentioned that teachers need to identify their learners’ learning styles first in a way or another. And due to the fact that kinesthetic learners learn by doing, teachers need to create activities where students are asked to do something or ask them to *“bring something with them like realia”*. However, he ends his reply by expressing concern about the ability to engage kinesthetic learners by saying *“but I don’t know how much students, kinesthetic students, can be involved in online lessons in fact”*. Furthermore, teacher 2 suggested a few ideas concerning this question. She mentioned that teachers can use Youtube, create videos, use role plays, make students’ do presentations, give the kinesthetic learners a lot of peer teaching role, and give them the role of the leader when working in groups. She also stressed the importance of providing training and platforms for teachers to learn using online learning in the best way possible. In addition, teacher 3 explained that teachers can engage the kinesthetic learner by planning *“lessons that are more practical; that have, for example, that would give them some opportunity to talk, a three or two minutes presentation, a video (they might, for example, record themselves and make small videos of themselves talking or explaining something)”*. Teacher 4 mentioned the idea of asking students questions and they answer in the chat box and give examples. As for teacher 6, she mentioned activities, group work, presentations, and games to be good methods for engaging kinesthetic learners. Teacher 7 mentioned tasks and assignments. In the same fashion, teacher 8 referred to tasks and activities, and videos made by students. She also mentioned that teachers can use *“different online activities... it’s not necessary to be counted to assess them but for them to learn more because they are kinesthetic you see they do not only learn while listening to the teacher. For example, to search out for the content, I give them a task to find out issues in first language acquisition”*. In relation to teacher 9, she pointed out that *“the basic and main point, in my opinion, is that students should turn their cameras on. This is a very important point in that case students will be more engaged”*. Teacher 10 argued that *“engaging kinesthetic learners in online classes actually needs them to take actions to the information they are learning; as I said by doing different video blogs or making videos of themselves as they are natural doers actually. So, they learn best when they process information while being physically active or engaged. So they tend to learn best when they are physically active or through learning activities that involve active participation”*. On the other hand, teacher 4 said *“I don’t think there is much to do for kinesthetic learners especially in online lessons”*. Teacher 5 put the blame on the teacher and mentioned that online learning platforms can facilitate a lot of things but *“teachers don’t put effort to learn*



*those things*". He further added "*these online platforms are really useful but if you have full knowledge how to use them*".

In relation to the sixth question which states "What obstacles do you face when implementing or attempting to implement strategies for involving kinesthetic learners in your online lectures?" the interviewed teachers mentioned several challenges. The most mentioned obstacles were: a) the difficulty of recognizing the learner's learning style in an online teaching and learning environment, b) teacher and students' lack of motivation and enthusiasm for online learning, c) the lack of information and knowledge by both teachers and students about computer learning, d) the terrible internet connection, e) students misleading their teachers by pretending to be present in the online lecture. It's important to mention that the students are not forced to open their cameras in their online lectures, so what happens is that some students join the lecture, keep their phones or laptops on and leave. In this regard, teacher 9 said that "*you feel like you are talking to yourself, you don't see anybody and you are not sure if they are listening or not*". Moreover, teacher 3 referred to some other interesting difficulties such as: the difficulty of doing practical things online, the load on the Zoom sessions, students do not have the culture of knowing that the online lecture is a proper classroom situation. Lastly, teacher 10 also mentioned that because kinesthetic learners are "*movers*", it's difficult to keep them sitting still and make them pay attention.

Finally, the seventh and last question from the interview stated "in your opinion, is online learning suitable for EFL kinesthetic learners? Why?". The teachers' answers were divided between agreement and disagreement. Teachers 1, 2, 3, 6, 7 believe that online learning is suitable for the kinesthetic learner if certain things are done. For example, teacher 1 said that "*if the teacher is skillful, he can use online lessons in the best way to engage the kinesthetic learner*". Teacher 2 stated that "*if the teacher knows how to manage them, but needs a lot of effort from the teacher*". Teacher 3 commented "*online classes are suitable for all types of learners. What I'm saying is that modifications can be made*". As for teacher 6, she clarified "*for the kinesthetic I don't find a difference because students who are active and willing, they're active and willing for both- online and face-to-face.*" Finally, teacher 7 pointed out that "*yeah it can be but it would be way better if they are taking their classes in campus. If we do classes in campus, you will see them when they do stuff but when they do online classes they do not turn on their cameras so you can't actually see if they are really engaged or not*". On the other hand, the remaining five interviewees argue that online learning is not adequate for the kinesthetic learner for some reasons. In this regard, teacher 4 said "*it's not that suitable unless we have better technology and internet*". Teacher 5 stated "*I would say it is suitable for a very limited extent because kinesthetic means doing, acting so you don't have that online*". Moreover, teacher 8 argued that "*for this type of learners specifically I don't believe it's suitable. Kinesthetic learners, I believe, prefer to work in a physical environment with their group mates, with their friends. They need to see the teacher; they need to touch*

*things you see. So, I think they learn better that way”. Teacher 9 said that “not only for them but for all the students. As much as I see them, online learning is not that much suitable. Learning in campus is better because students are used to that first and it is easier for them because you don’t need to have a very good internet connection, or like good laptops, or they don’t need to let the whole house quiet”. Lastly, teacher 10 said “I think it’s somehow difficult actually. As you know, kinesthetic learning focus on active participation in the learning experience so it’s completely unlike learners who are comfortable watching videos or reading textbooks. Kinesthetic learners prefer to be in motion and engage all their senses. That’s why this might seem difficult to achieve in online classes.”*

## Observations

In relation to observations, two of the interviewed teachers (teacher 5 and 10) did not keep records of their online lectures. Therefore, the researcher could not observe their classes.

Teacher 1 teaches methods of teaching to fourth year students (see appendix 3). Two of his video recorded lectures were observed, each lecture lasted for almost one hour. In one of his lectures, teacher 1 mostly read and explained the Power point slides he has already prepared. This teacher also played a video about the subject of the lesson. He continuously asked students questions to check their understanding and to get their opinion about the topic. Regarding the kinesthetic learners and whether they were engaged or not. In the second lecture, this teacher attempted to engage this type of learners; he divided them into groups via the use of ‘breakout rooms’ in the Zoom application. Each group had a leader who led the group’s discussion concerning the given topic. After the end of the discussion, a member from each group shared the group’s opinions and ideas. Also, a few students did presentations about the lecture’s subject which they were asked to prepare before and the presenters also prepared a Powerpoint presentation. Shared their screen with the whole group and explained the subject. Concerning the question of whether the teacher faced any challenges when attempting to engage the kinesthetic learners, teacher 1 didn’t face any obstacles when he used grouping or presentations. Overall, the three learning styles (visual, auditory and kinesthetic) were addressed in these two lectures. It was also observed that the teacher opens his camera in his lectures but the students do not.

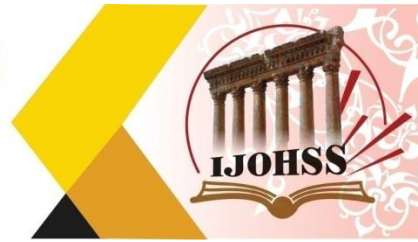
Teacher 2 teaches syntax to fourth year. The two observed lectures (which were about prepositions) of this teacher followed the same pattern. The teacher began by reviewing what was covered in the previous lecture. Then the teacher shared her Powerpoint slides and began explaining the subject. She continuously asked students questions and the students responded. Teacher 2 used the Microsoft Word as a board; she asked students for example sentences and typed them in the Word for all to see and she provided her comments on their examples. She also prepared exercises such as fill in blanks in a Word document and solved them with the students. After she was done with the Word, she would go back to the Powerpoint slides to continue explaining the subject. She also used Google to elaborate more on the topic. This teacher also played a video about the subject of the lesson for the students. Unfortunately, teacher 2 did not engage or use any strategy for engaging the kinesthetic learners. The two lectures mainly addressed the visual and auditory learners. Lastly, neither the teacher nor the students opened their cameras.

Teacher 3 teaches American literature to third year students. The first observed lecture was 25 minutes long and the topic was “American independence”; in this lecture, the teacher began by reviewing the previous lesson and then shared her screen to display a Powerpoint document which contained headlines of the things to be covered about American independence. After finishing explaining the Powerpoint content, she shared a Word document containing the details and explanation about the lesson’s topic. It was a 20 pages long word document to be covered in several lectures. In this lecture, she only showed the students the document i.e. handout and explained how the information is organized in it. At the end, the teacher told the students what they will study next lecture. The students did not engage in any way! The second lecture lasted for half an hour and it was about “democratic origins and revolutionary writers 1776-1820”. The teacher displayed the Word document, she reviewed what she explained in the previous lecture and then began with the lesson’s topic. Throughout the whole lecture the teacher was only reading from and explaining the Word document; the students never asked questions or interrupted despite the fact that the teacher told them to ask questions whenever they had any. The last 5 minutes, the teacher showed the students a Powerpoint presentation which was a shorter, briefed explanation of the word document content and told the students that she will upload it for them to Moodle. The teacher ended the lecture by asking students if they had any questions but they had none. This teacher opened her camera throughout the entire lecture. However, students were passive and the kinesthetic learners were not engaged. This lecture was mainly for the visual and auditory learners.

Teacher 4 teaches grammar to first year students. The two observed lectures lasted for around 40 minutes and the subject was ‘the present perfect simple’. The teacher began the lecture by asking the students to write down in the chat box a few sentences in any tense they have covered so far. The students wrote down their sentence examples in

the chat box and the teacher commented on them. Afterwards, the teacher shared a video with the students, which was about the perfect aspect. Once the video was over, the teacher asked a student to summarize what was mentioned in the video. Next, the teacher shared her screen, she shared the grammar book this class studies and moved to the page that contains the topic 'present perfect simple' and started explaining the lecture. The teacher used the mouse pointer to point to the lines she was explaining. After finishing explaining the subject matter, she asked the students to write as many sentences as they can in the chat box in the present perfect simple. She provided her feedback on the given examples. The lesson ended by giving the students homework. In this lecture, the teacher tried to engage the kinesthetic learners by making them use the chat box but this lasted for only a few minutes. And no difficulties were faced as the students used the chat box. The learning styles that were mainly addressed in the first lecture, however, were visual and auditory learning styles. Nevertheless, the second lecture was mostly devoted to the kinesthetic learners because it was full of action and physical engagement. The second lecture began the same way the first one did which is by asking students to write examples in the chat box. Afterwards, the students played a game. The teacher used a website called 'Kahoot' which is a game-based learning platform. There were around eleven questions about the present perfect simple some were true and false questions and others were multiple options questions. The teacher shared the link with the students and they began joining the game. At the end the ranking of the students was revealed. Most of the class period was devoted to this game. After it was over, the teacher went back to the PDF and continued her explanation concerning the topic of the lesson. The last six minutes of the lesson, the students did two exercises; one was a list of incomplete sentences and the students had to complete them using the present perfect simple and the other was a matching exercise. Thus, one can say that, in the second lecture, the teacher engaged the kinesthetic learners by making them use the chat box and also playing the game 'Kahoot'. However, some students were not able to play the game because they couldn't open the link so they were only watching the other students playing. Another challenge was that it took the teacher and students too much time to join the game and play. The three learning styles were addressed in this lecture. It is worth mentioning that neither the teacher nor the students opened their cameras.

Teacher 6 teaches listening and speaking to second year students. The first lecture was one hour and thirty five minutes long and the topic was (bullying). The first ten minutes were wasted for the students to join the session. Then, the teacher began reviewing the previous lecture. Afterwards, the teacher asked the students a few questions about the lesson's topic (bullying) and students began answering the questions and sharing opinion and experiences in relation to the topic. Then, they did several exercises from the book. This whole time neither the teacher nor the students opened their cameras and the teacher did not display any document (i.e., PDF, PPT or Word) for the students; everything was done verbally. The last half an hour from the lecture was devoted to doing an activity; the teacher used Breakout rooms and divided



the students into groups. She asked each group a different question about the topic and told them to discuss their opinion with their group. Here the teacher shared a Word document that contained the questions addressed to each group. As the students were discussing, the teacher entered each group separately to see how they were going on with this task. At the end, the group time ended and all the students came back to their main class and began sharing ideas and opinions. In relation to the second observed lecture which lasted for one hour, similar pattern was followed; the only difference was the type of the activity used. Here, the activity was think-pair-share where the students were asked a question and were given a few minutes to think about their answers, then they were divided into pairs via the Breakout Rooms option, and at the end every pair shared their answers with the whole class. It can be seen that in these lessons both kinesthetic and auditory learners were mainly engaged and no difficulties were faced while attempting to engage the kinesthetic learners.

In relation to Teacher 7 who teaches reading and writing the second year students, the two observed lectures show a similar pattern. The first lecture was about transition words. The teacher began by sharing a screen of a Powerpoint slides. The first slide contained definition of transition words with examples. Then, the teacher asked students to give more examples of transition words so students started giving examples of the transitions they know. Afterwards, a bunch of exercises began. The first exercise which lasted for 8 minutes was a paragraph with missing sequence transitions and the students had to fill in blanks with the correct transition. The second exercise was about sentences that were not in order and students had to reorder them to end up with a well formed process paragraph with the correct sequence transition words. This exercise lasted for 12 minutes. The students were then given an assignment where they needed to write a process paragraph and submit it via Moodle. The last exercise which lasted for 20 minutes was about descriptive paragraph. The descriptive paragraph lacked descriptive details and students had to rewrite the paragraph adding such details. The students were given 5 minutes to think of the solution and they did this individually. Afterwards, students began sharing their versions of the rewritten paragraph with the necessary descriptive details. As for the second lecture, the first 6 minutes were wasted waiting for students to join the session. The teacher shared a Powerpoint presentation. The topic was connectors of cause and effect. A student was chosen to read the first slide which contained an explanation of cause and effect and their transition words with examples. The teacher then began asking students questions regarding the topic and students were sharing their answers; this lasted for around 10 minutes. The following 7 minutes students did an exercise about cause and effect connectors. There were 5 cause and effect sentences and the students had to identify which sentence is the cause and which is the effect and also identify the connector used. Then for 5 minutes the teacher also explained the punctuation marks used with the cause and effect transition words. Finally, the last 13 minutes were devoted to another exercise. The exercise was about a paragraph that missed transition words of cause and effect and students had to put the correct

transition in the blanks. In the two lectures the students' participation was in the form of answering questions only. Also, neither the teacher nor the students opened their cameras. In only one of the exercises (rewriting a paragraph) the kinesthetic learners were involved; therefore, no challenges were witnessed. The visual and auditory learning styles are the ones mostly addressed in this class.

Teacher 8 teaches textbook analysis to fourth year students. The two observed lectures followed a very similar pattern. In the two lectures, the students were divided into groups via the 'breakout rooms' option available in Zoom platform. The students were given a task, for the first lecture it was a speaking activity; the students had to write an activity to teach a speaking topic to secondary school students. While the second lecture the activity was a reading activity where the students were given a reading passage and were told to think of an activity to teach the passage to secondary school students as well. The instructions were explained by the teacher and the groups were made. The discussion period lasted for around 10-15 minutes. As the students were discussing in their groups, the teacher was joining each group to see how they were doing. After the groups finished their discussions and came up with activities, they all rejoined the main session to share their ideas with the whole class. When a group was explaining their activity, the other groups were given the chance to comment and give feedback and suggestions. It is worth mentioning that neither the teacher nor the students opened their cameras. The learning styles mainly addressed in this class is both the auditory and kinesthetic. No challenges were faced when attempting to engage the kinesthetic learners.

Teacher 9 teaches grammar to second year learners. In the two observed lectures, the teacher used the same style; she would begin the lecture by explaining the topic which was "the passive voice" and in the second lecture she continued with the passive voice since it did not finish in one lecture but this time it was about the passive voice perfect tense. During the explanation phase, the teacher shared a screen with the class that showed a blank page which she used as a board to write down the roles and examples. She constantly asked students questions and asked them to give her examples as she was explaining in order to engage them. The students were cooperative and answered her questions. After explaining the subject, the teacher divided the students into groups via the 'breakout rooms' option. The students were required to do an exercise in groups, they were asked to convert a few sentences from the active voice to the passive. As the students were working in groups, the teacher entered each group to check their progress and answer any questions they might have. After the allotted time for group discussions was over, all the students rejoined the main session and began sharing their responses with the whole class. As can be seen, all the learning styles were addressed in this class; however, there was a challenge witnessed in this class! After the group discussions were over and everyone rejoined the main session in the first observed lecture, a student raised a complaint. The student complained about her group members not being cooperative; she said that no one from her group unmuted their microphones to help solve the exercise. She said that she did the exercise on her

own. She also mentioned that this wasn't the first time they do that, they have done that several times before! Some other groups also complained about the same thing saying that some group members never participate in solving the exercises. Therefore, the teacher asked them to send her the names of those who keep doing that to talk to them later and try to solve this issue. Similar to some previous observed classes, neither the teacher nor the students opened their cameras in this class too.

### Discussion of Results

Reviewing the results obtained from both interviews and observations reveal that the majority (60%) of the participants engage their kinesthetic learners in their online lectures. Six out of ten teachers (60%) said that the best way to engage this group of learners in the online lectures is to by making them conduct group work via the use of 'breakout rooms' in Zoom platform. This was actually confirmed in the observations where four out of eight (50%) of the EFL teachers used breakout rooms in both of their observed lectures or at least one. Researchers and educational specialists often recommend the use of activities such as group work in class to promote collaboration and active learning. In online lessons and especially in the Zoom learning platform this can be best achieved via 'breakout rooms' option. According to Stanford University (2020), breakout rooms are a great option for group and pair discussions. It can help to reduce students' feeling of isolation in e-learning environment and get them more interactive with each other. Stanford University (2020) further provided tips for teachers for successful pedagogical implementation of breakout rooms, which include: clarifying how students need to spend their time in the breakout rooms, randomly assigning roles to students within the group to help start conversations and "support equitable participation", avoiding too much change in group composition, monitoring group discussions which can be done by joining each group as they work on the task, giving learners the option to withdraw from the group whenever they need to (Stanford University, 2020, p.1).

Another activity that promotes active participation and can, thus, enhance the involvement of kinesthetic learners is oral presentations. This activity was the second most recommended by the interviewed teachers. Also, it was used in some of the observed classes in different ways. For example, teacher 1 had already, in the previous lecture, assigned a few topics to certain students and in the class time the students did their presentations and had prepared Powerpoint slides which they displayed during their presentations. Another form for using this activity was when students did group work via breakout rooms. After the groups finished their discussions and rejoined the main session, each group chose a group member to be the presenter and present their ideas to the whole class. Sweeny, O'Toole, Simmie, Kelly, O'Leary and Jeffers (2000) pointed out that oral presentations can promote active learning by enhancing students' thinking, speaking, listening, questioning, debating, organizational and planning, time management, and creative skills (p.5).

The other mostly mentioned and observed method for involving kinesthetic learners is the use of exercises. Exercises were prevalent in almost half of the observed lectures. Four teachers (50%) used exercises to involve students in the lecture. One of the exercises was when teacher 7 asked students to rewrite a paragraph and after that students shared their own versions with the whole class. Other types of exercises used by the participants were: fill in blanks, completing sentences, re-ordering words or sentences, matching words or sentences.

Regarding what more can be done by teachers to address the learning needs of the kinesthetic learners? The participants provided some suggestions: using realia, displaying Youtube videos, asking students to make videos of themselves presenting or acting out a situation, peer teaching, students using the chat box to give examples or ask questions, and using learning based games. The later was actually implemented by one of the teachers when she used a game called ‘Kahoot’ where students were competing to answer all the assigned questions in a limited time to be winners eventually (see p.11). Gachkova and Somova (2016) argued that e-learning based games (i.e., gamification) are not for mere entertainment, they have goals. Such games aim at “achieving educational, training and informational goals” (p.144). There are many more types of online learning games but teachers need to be trained about how to use them.

Role-playing was one of the techniques suggested by two teachers. This type of activity can be used in some of the EFL classes such as literature and grammar. The two teachers who recommended it were in fact teaching these two subjects. However, role-playing was not seen in any of the observed lectures. Role-playing can be a good assignment for students. According to Wood and Sereni-Massinger (2016), assignments in online lessons should have a real-life connection and the best way to replicate real-life experiences is through the use of role-playing.

Furthermore, Bartlett and Bell (2018) provided some tips for better engagement of kinesthetic learners in online lessons. They pointed out that kinesthetic learners can be involved in the online learning process by: continuously reminding the learners to take breaks and walk around, encouraging exploration and experimentation by “allowing them to experiment and figure out a new assignment or assessment themselves rather than dictating to them how to do it”, using interactive elements such as drag –and- drop activities and flash cards (Bartlett & Bell, 2018, para.9-18).

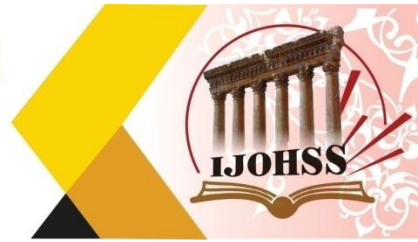
Finally, concerning the challenges that prevent teachers from using any methods for engaging the kinesthetic learners or while implementing methods for engaging this group of learners, the teachers mentioned some obstacles in the interviews which were: a) the difficulty of recognizing the learner’s learning style in an online teaching and learning environment, b) teacher and students’ lack of motivation and enthusiasm for online learning, c) the lack of information and knowledge by both teachers and students about computer learning, d) the terrible internet connection, e) students misleading their teachers by pretending to be present in the online lecture. The later happens mostly because students are not required to turn on their cameras; this gives

them the freedom to manipulate their teachers. However, it was observed in most lectures that teachers too (60%) do not open their cameras. This act creates a great gap between the teachers and the students. Not seeing each other increases isolation, distracts attention, and reduces motivation of both teachers and students as was mentioned by one of the teachers who said that not seeing the students make the teacher feel like he/she is talking to him/herself. Therefore, it is recommended to open cameras to make the lesson sound livelier. Another challenge that was actually witnessed in one of the observed lectures is students' unwillingness to participate in activities and tasks. This was seen in the lecture of teacher 9 when some students, after being divided into groups via breakout rooms, complained about their group members not participating in accomplishing the given task. It is, perhaps, such challenges that made half of the teachers (50%) believe that online learning is not suitable for kinesthetic learners.

## Conclusions

Electronic learning is new to most of us. It is the use of networked information and communication technology in the teaching and learning process. E-learning (i.e., online learning) can be conducted online or offline. In the context of online learning, teachers and students face their computers' screens with no physical movement. This has led to the assumption that the kinesthetic learners' learning needs are not met in such a learning environment. This assumption made the researcher carry out this study, and the findings helped the researcher arrive at the following conclusions:

1. EFL teachers (60%) engage their kinesthetic learners in their online lectures.
2. The EFL teachers use a variety of techniques for the engagement of kinesthetic learners in online lessons and for enhancing active learning. These techniques involve the use of: group and pair work via breakout rooms, oral presentations, exercises, the chat box to provide answers. These two findings answer our first research question which states "*do EFL teachers engage kinesthetic learners in their lessons? How?*".
3. The EFL teachers can use realia, ask students to create videos of themselves performing a task, role-playing, and gamification as more techniques for engaging the kinesthetic learners in online classes. This finding answers our third research question which asks "*what can EFL teachers do in order to engage kinesthetic learners in online classes?*".
4. EFL teachers face many obstacles as they attempt to engage the kinesthetic learners in online classes. Some of these challenges are the difficulty of recognizing the learner's learning style in an online teaching and learning environment, teacher and students' lack of motivation and enthusiasm for online learning, the lack of information and knowledge by both teachers and students about computer learning, the terrible internet connection, students misleading their teachers by pretending to be present in the online lecture, and students' unwillingness to participate in activities and tasks. This finding gives an answer to our second research question "*what*



challenges do EFL teachers' encounter in implementing strategies for engaging kinesthetic learners in the online lessons?"

5. The visual and auditory learning styles are the ones mostly addressed in online classes.
6. The EFL teachers who used techniques to engage the kinesthetic learners do not necessarily use such techniques in every single lesson. In other words, they do not engage this group of learners in every lecture.
7. Not turning on cameras by both teachers and students participates greatly in reducing motivation and enhancing isolation. It helps make students believe that e-learning is not a real learning environment.
8. The mere action of writing in the chat box or dragging and dropping can help engage the kinesthetic learners because they involve some physical movement.

### Recommendations

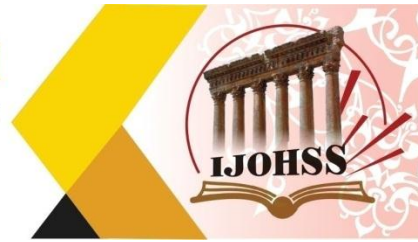
Based on the findings of this study, the researcher recommends the following:

1. Teachers need to receive proper training regarding online learning and ways for engaging all learning styles in such a learning environment.
2. University learners need to attend seminars and workshops about e-learning to get educated about it start considering it a real learning environment and also to learn how to use the e-learning platforms adopted by their own institutions.
3. Teachers and learners should be required to open their cameras in online classes.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1

#### Interview questions

- 1- Which e-learning platforms do you use in your teaching and how do you use them?
- 2- How do you often present and explain the subject of your lecture for your learners in terms of learning styles?
- 3- Do you engage your kinesthetic learners in your lectures? If yes, how?
- 4- When planning for your lessons, do you take into consideration students' learning styles? If yes, how?
- 5- In your opinion, what should EFL teachers do for the purpose of better engagement of kinesthetic learners in the online classes?
- 6- What obstacles do you face when implementing or attempting to implement strategies for involving kinesthetic learners in your online lecture?
- 7- In your opinion, is online learning suitable for EFL kinesthetic learners? Why?

### Appendix 2

#### Observation checklist

Observer:

Date:

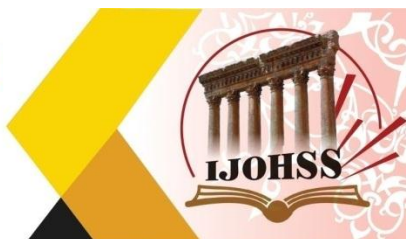
College:

Class:

Class period:

Department:

| TEACHER #   |     |    |     | Notes |
|---|-----|----|-----|-------|
|   | Yes | No | How |       |
| Does the teacher engage the kinesthetic learners in his/her lecture?  |     |    |     |       |
| Does the teacher face any challenge when attempting to engage the kinesthetic learners in the online lecture? |     |    |     |       |



|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| Which learning styles are mainly addressed in this class? |  |  |
|---|--|--|

**Appendix 3**  
**The participants' details**

| Code       | Specialty   | The subject he/she teaches                       | The academic level                | College         |
|------------|-------------|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Teacher 1  | TESOL       | Methods of Teaching                              | 4 <sup>th</sup>                   | Languages       |
| Teacher 2  | Linguistics | Syntax   | 4 <sup>th</sup>                   | Languages       |
| Teacher 3  | Literature  | American Literature                              | 3 <sup>rd</sup>                   | Languages       |
| Teacher 4  | TESOL       | Grammar  | 1 <sup>st</sup>                   | Languages       |
| Teacher 5  | TESOL       | Critical Thinking                                | 1 <sup>st</sup>                   | Languages       |
| Teacher 6  | TESOL       | Listening & Speaking                             | 2 <sup>nd</sup>                   | Basic Education |
| Teacher 7  | TESOL       | Reading & Writing                                | 2 <sup>nd</sup>                   | Basic Education |
| Teacher 8  | TESOL       | Language Learning Approaches & Textbook Analysis | 2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> | Basic Education |
| Teacher 9  | Linguistics | Grammar  | 2 <sup>nd</sup>                   | Basic Education |
| Teacher 10 | TESOL       | Educational Technology                           | 3 <sup>rd</sup>                   | Basic Education |