

Collaborative Learning Experiences Influencing the Students' Emotional Intelligence and Language Learning: Basis for Instructional Development Plan

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between collaborative learning experiences, emotional intelligence, and language learning among students enrolled in GEC 5: Purposive Communication at Universidad de Zamboanga. Grounded in a conceptual framework linking collaborative learning dimensions with emotional and linguistic outcomes, the study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational design. Data were collected using a structured, researcher-made questionnaire administered to students across various academic programs during the academic year 2024–2025. The instrument measured collaborative learning experiences, emotional intelligence, and language learning using a Likert-scale format, and data were analyzed using weighted mean, independent samples t-test, and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation. The findings revealed that students reported high levels of collaborative learning experiences, emotional intelligence, and language learning, with academic performance showing particularly strong outcomes. No significant differences were found in these variables when grouped by sex and ethnicity, while a significant difference was observed in collaborative learning experiences across schools. Furthermore, the study identified statistically significant but weak positive relationships between collaborative learning experiences and both emotional intelligence and language learning. These results indicate that collaborative learning contributes to both emotional and academic development, although it is not the sole influencing factor. Based on the findings, the study supports the implementation of structured collaborative strategies and instructional enhancement plans to strengthen both linguistic and emotional competencies. The study aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education) by promoting effective and inclusive teaching strategies that support holistic student development, and with SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) through the development of communication and socio-emotional skills essential for employability. The findings contribute to educational and institutional sustainability by informing curriculum design, faculty development, and the integration of collaborative and emotionally responsive learning environments.

Keywords: Collaborative learning, Emotional intelligence, GEC 5 students, Language learning, Purposive communication, Second language education

1. Introduction

Collaborative learning has become an essential instructional approach that promotes active engagement, shared knowledge construction, and social interaction among learners. In second language classrooms, it fosters both cognitive and affective development by enabling students to work collectively in solving problems and accomplishing tasks beyond individual capacity. This study examines the relationship between collaborative learning experiences, emotional intelligence, and language learning among students enrolled in GEC 5: Purposive Communication at Universidad de Zamboanga, aiming to generate empirical insights that can enhance second language teaching practices and student development.

1.1 Background of Collaborative Learning, Emotional Intelligence, and Language Learning in GEC 5 Students

Collaborative learning places students in situations that require cooperation to accomplish complex tasks, promoting deeper knowledge construction and exposure to diverse perspectives. This approach supports emotional development by encouraging interaction and shared experiences. Despite its increasing use, concerns remain regarding students' social and emotional growth in such environments. The present study investigates how collaborative learning experiences relate to emotional intelligence and language learning in second language classrooms. Effective peer cooperation has been shown to facilitate both emotional intelligence and language acquisition, as emotional intelligence creates a supportive context for active participation in learning. The integration of structured group work with intentional emotional development has been identified as an effective educational strategy. Furthermore, emotional intelligence plays a critical role in helping students adapt to academic environments, particularly among freshman learners, by fostering better interpersonal relationships and communication skills.

1.2 Themes and Insights on Collaborative Learning, Emotional Intelligence, and Language Acquisition

Existing literature highlights that collaborative learning enhances both intellectual and social development by enabling students to learn from one another. Xu (2022) found that cooperation in emotionally supportive environments improves language learning outcomes. Similarly, Zisopoulou (2019) emphasized the growing adoption of collaborative learning in early education due to its cognitive and social benefits. The role of emotional intelligence in education has gained increased attention, particularly in relation to collaboration. Emotional intelligence supports group interaction by fostering empathy, self-awareness, and social skills, which are essential for effective communication. Thao et al. (2023) noted that participation in group activities strengthens key emotional competencies, including self-regulation and motivation, which are fundamental to language learning. Additionally, technology-enhanced learning environments have expanded opportunities for collaboration. The shift toward digital platforms, particularly during the pandemic, has emphasized the need for flexible and responsive learning contexts that support interaction and emotional engagement (Vindača & Ľubkina, 2021).

1.3 Local, National, and Global Context of Collaborative Learning in Second Language Education

Globally, collaborative learning has become a widely adopted approach in language education, particularly with the integration of digital tools that facilitate interaction. The pandemic accelerated the transition to online and blended learning environments, highlighting the importance of emotional intelligence in sustaining engagement and collaboration. Locally, at Universidad de Zamboanga, collaborative learning is actively implemented in GEC 5: Purposive Communication courses. Faculty observations indicate that structured group activities are used to enhance both students' emotional intelligence and language learning. However, there remains a need for empirical evidence to validate these practices and determine their effectiveness within the specific institutional context.

1.4 Theoretical and Conceptual Basis of Collaborative Learning, Emotional Intelligence, and Language Learning

This study is grounded in the conceptual relationship between collaborative learning experiences as the independent variable and emotional intelligence and language learning as dependent variables. Collaborative learning is characterized by learner interaction, task structure, roles and responsibilities, learning environment, learning outcomes, emotional dynamics, and teacher facilitation. Emotional intelligence is defined through components such as self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, social skills, motivation, and emotional management. Language learning is examined in terms of motivation and attitude, learning strategies, emotional experiences, and academic performance. The framework assumes that structured collaborative experiences influence both emotional and linguistic development, ultimately contributing to improved academic outcomes.

1.5 Research Gaps and Rationale in Studying GEC 5 Students

Although prior studies have established the benefits of collaborative learning and emotional intelligence in education, there is limited empirical research examining their combined influence on language learning in specific institutional contexts. In particular, there is a lack of localized evidence within second language classrooms at Universidad de Zamboanga. This study addresses this gap by analyzing how different dimensions of collaborative learning experiences relate to emotional intelligence and language learning outcomes among GEC 5 students. The findings aim to inform instructional strategies and support the development of an intervention plan that enhances both linguistic and emotional competencies.

1.6 Alignment with Relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

This study aligns with SDG 4 – Quality Education, as it promotes effective teaching strategies that enhance both cognitive and emotional learning outcomes. By examining collaborative learning and emotional intelligence, the research supports inclusive and equitable education that fosters holistic student development. It also contributes to SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth, as improved communication skills, emotional intelligence, and collaboration are essential competencies for employability and workplace success. Furthermore, the integration of digital and collaborative learning approaches reflects aspects of SDG 9 – Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, particularly in advancing innovative educational practices.

1.7 Importance of the Study to Multidisciplinary Sustainability in Education

The study contributes to educational sustainability by promoting teaching practices that support long-term learning effectiveness and student engagement. It also supports socio-economic sustainability, as enhanced language proficiency and emotional intelligence prepare students for academic and professional success. Additionally, the research contributes to innovation and digital sustainability by recognizing the role of technology in facilitating collaborative learning environments. From a community and institutional sustainability perspective, the findings can guide curriculum development and faculty training, ensuring that educational practices remain responsive to the evolving needs of learners.

2. Material and methods

2.1 Research Design

The study employed a quantitative research design to investigate the influence of collaborative learning experiences on students' emotional intelligence and language learning. It utilized a descriptive-correlational approach to determine both the levels of the key variables and the relationships among them. This design allowed for systematic measurement and analysis of collaborative learning dimensions, emotional intelligence components, and language learning outcomes within a structured academic setting.

2.2 Locale of the Study

The research was conducted at Universidad de Zamboanga, a non-sectarian private institution located at Don Toribio Street, Tetuan, Zamboanga City. The university, established by the late Engr. Arturo Eustaquio Sr., has a long-standing commitment to academic excellence and community service, guided by its motto "Education es Libertad" (Education is Freedom). The institution provides a supportive academic environment with a strong community of educators and students, making it an appropriate setting for examining collaborative learning, emotional intelligence, and language development among enrolled learners during the academic year 2024–2025.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study consisted of students enrolled in GEC 5: Purposive Communication at Universidad de Zamboanga during the academic year 2024–2025. These students represented various academic programs within the university and were selected as participants due to their direct engagement in collaborative learning activities within language classes. The study considered demographic characteristics such as sex, ethnicity, and academic track to examine their potential influence on collaborative learning experiences, emotional intelligence, and language learning outcomes.

2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

The study targeted all students enrolled in GEC 5: Purposive Communication, forming the population of interest. Sampling procedures were designed to include participants from different programs to ensure representation across the university. The selection of respondents was based on their enrollment in the specified course during the academic year 2024–2025, allowing the researchers to capture relevant data on collaborative learning experiences within a shared instructional context.

2.5 Research Instrument

The study utilized a structured, researcher-made questionnaire composed of four parts to assess collaborative learning experiences, emotional intelligence, and language learning. The first part collected demographic information, including sex, ethnicity, and academic track, to evaluate their potential moderating effects on the main variables. The second part measured collaborative learning experiences using 35 items distributed across seven dimensions: learner interaction, task structure, roles and responsibilities, learning environment, learning outcomes, emotional dynamics, and teacher facilitation. This section aimed to capture how students engage in and perceive collaborative academic activities. The third part focused on emotional intelligence, assessed through 30 items covering self-regulation, self-awareness, managing emotions, empathy, social skills, and motivation. The final part evaluated language learning through 20 items addressing motivation and attitude, language learning strategies, emotional experiences, and academic performance. All items in the instrument were measured using a 5-point Likert scale to generate quantitative data suitable for statistical analysis. This design ensured a comprehensive evaluation of how collaborative learning influences both emotional competence and language acquisition among students.

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

The data collection process began with securing ethical clearance from the University Research Ethics Office (UREO) of Universidad de Zamboanga, ensuring adherence to established ethical standards. Permission was subsequently obtained from the Deans of the participating colleges to access students enrolled in GEC 5: Purposive Communication. Participants were informed of the study's purpose, and informed consent was obtained prior to data collection. The administration of the questionnaire emphasized voluntary participation, anonymity, and confidentiality. Data were collected systematically and handled with strict security measures, including storage in password-protected devices and secure facilities. After data collection, responses were organized, tabulated, and analyzed to examine the relationships among collaborative learning experiences, emotional intelligence, and language learning. Upon completion of the study, all data were securely destroyed through deletion of electronic files and shredding of physical documents to ensure participant confidentiality and prevent unauthorized use.

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

The study employed several statistical tools to analyze the data. The weighted mean was used to determine the levels of collaborative learning experiences, emotional intelligence, and language learning among the respondents. Independent samples t-tests were conducted to identify significant differences in these variables when grouped according to

demographic profiles. Additionally, the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was utilized to examine the relationships between collaborative learning experiences and emotional intelligence, as well as between collaborative learning experiences and language learning. These statistical techniques provided a comprehensive analysis of both differences and relationships among the study variables.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Collaborative Learning Experiences, Emotional Intelligence, and Language Learning Levels

3.1.1 Collaborative Learning Experiences of GEC 5 Students

The findings revealed that students demonstrated a high level of agreement regarding their collaborative learning experiences across all dimensions. Learner interaction, task structure, roles and responsibilities, learning environment, learning outcomes, emotional dynamics, and teacher facilitation all received strong positive ratings, with learning outcomes obtaining the highest mean and roles and responsibilities showing the lowest, though still within a high range. Overall, the grand mean indicated that students generally perceived collaborative learning as highly effective in their classes. These results suggest that collaborative learning is a highly beneficial instructional approach that enhances students' engagement and academic development. The strong perception of learning outcomes indicates that students recognize tangible improvements in their skills through group-based activities. However, the slightly lower rating for roles and responsibilities highlights a need for clearer task distribution to ensure equitable participation. This aligns with existing research emphasizing that structured collaboration, clear task allocation, and supportive environments are essential in maximizing the effectiveness of collaborative learning and promoting deeper engagement and critical thinking among learners.

3.1.2 Emotional Intelligence of GEC 5 Students

The results showed that students possessed a high level of emotional intelligence across all measured components, including self-regulation, self-awareness, managing emotions, empathy, social skills, and motivation. Among these, empathy recorded the highest mean, while self-regulation and managing emotions had slightly lower but still high values. The overall grand mean confirmed that respondents consistently exhibited strong emotional intelligence. This indicates that students are generally capable of understanding and managing their emotions effectively while maintaining positive social interactions. The prominence of empathy suggests that students are well-equipped for collaborative environments that require interpersonal understanding. The slightly lower levels in self-regulation and emotional management imply opportunities for further development in controlling emotional responses under pressure. Supporting literature highlights that emotional intelligence significantly contributes to motivation and academic success, as students with higher emotional intelligence tend to demonstrate greater engagement and persistence in learning tasks (Nogaj, 2020).

3.1.3 Language Learning of GEC 5 Students

The findings indicated that students exhibited a high level of language learning across all dimensions, including motivation and attitude, language learning strategies, emotional experiences, and academic performance. Academic performance recorded the highest mean, reaching a very high level, while motivation and attitude and learning strategies showed slightly lower but still high values. The overall grand mean confirmed a generally high level of language learning among respondents. These results suggest that collaborative learning significantly contributes to students' academic success and overall language development. The high rating in academic performance reflects the effectiveness of group-based learning in improving outcomes, while the slightly lower ratings in motivation and strategies indicate areas that may benefit from further enhancement. Existing studies support these findings, showing that positive emotional experiences and motivation play a crucial role in language acquisition and academic achievement. For instance, Al-Jarrah et al. (2024) emphasized the importance of emotional factors in language learning, while Almusharraf and Bailey (2021) highlighted the role of engagement and motivation in improving academic outcomes.

3.2 Differences in Collaborative Learning, Emotional Intelligence, and Language Learning

The results showed that there were no significant differences in collaborative learning experiences, emotional intelligence, and language learning when respondents were grouped according to sex and ethnicity. Both male and female students, as well as students from different ethnic groups, demonstrated similar levels across all variables, indicating consistent perceptions and outcomes regardless of these demographic factors. However, a significant difference was observed in collaborative learning experiences when grouped according to school, while emotional intelligence and language learning remained not significantly different across schools. These findings suggest that collaborative learning, emotional intelligence, and language learning are generally universal experiences among students, unaffected by sex or ethnicity. This supports the idea that collaborative learning strategies can be applied broadly without the need for demographic-specific adjustments. However, the variation across schools in collaborative learning experiences indicates that institutional practices and teaching approaches may influence how students perceive and engage in collaboration. This aligns with literature emphasizing the importance of learning environments and instructional design in shaping collaborative experiences and student engagement (Thao et al., 2023; Han et al., 2022).

3.3 Relationship Between Collaborative Learning, Emotional Intelligence, and Language Learning

The results revealed a statistically significant relationship between collaborative learning experiences and emotional intelligence, with a weak positive correlation. This indicates that students who reported more positive collaborative learning experiences also tended to exhibit higher emotional intelligence. Similarly, a significant but weak positive relationship was found between collaborative learning experiences and language learning, suggesting that improved collaboration is associated with better language learning outcomes. These findings imply that while collaborative learning contributes to both emotional intelligence and language development, it is not the sole determining factor. The weak correlations suggest that other variables also influence these outcomes. Nevertheless, the significant relationships confirm that collaborative learning plays a meaningful role in enhancing both emotional and academic competencies. Supporting studies indicate that emotionally supportive interactions within collaborative environments strengthen engagement and learning outcomes, as highlighted by Wang et al. (2024). This reinforces the importance of integrating emotional and collaborative strategies in language education to maximize student development.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings indicate that collaborative learning experiences among students are consistently positive, demonstrating effectiveness in enhancing learning outcomes across multiple dimensions. Students exhibit high levels of emotional intelligence, reflecting strong abilities in self-regulation, self-awareness, empathy, and social interaction, which support their academic engagement. Language learning is also rated highly, with academic performance showing particularly strong outcomes, indicating that collaborative approaches contribute significantly to language acquisition. The results further reveal no significant differences in collaborative learning experiences when grouped by profile, while significant relationships exist between collaborative learning experiences and both emotional intelligence and language learning. These findings collectively affirm the value of collaborative learning as a meaningful contributor to both emotional and academic development, supporting the implementation of an instructional enhancement plan based on the study results.

It is recommended that school administration provide funding, training, and technological resources to strengthen collaborative learning practices and ensure consistency across schools. Academic leaders should implement standardized frameworks and promote faculty development focused on effective task design and integration of emotional intelligence. Program leaders are encouraged to align collaborative activities with learning outcomes and ensure clear roles and responsibilities in group work. Faculty members should enhance instructional practices by fostering structured collaboration, active engagement, and supportive classroom environments. Students should actively participate in collaborative learning by applying emotional intelligence skills to improve group dynamics. Future researchers are encouraged to conduct further studies, including qualitative and longitudinal approaches, to deepen understanding and evaluate the long-term impact of collaborative learning on emotional intelligence and language learning.

The study is limited to students enrolled in GEC 5: Purposive Communication at Universidad de Zamboanga during the academic year 2024–2025, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other contexts or populations. The reliance on self-reported data may also introduce bias in responses, particularly in measuring perceptions of collaborative learning, emotional intelligence, and language learning. Additionally, the study utilized a quantitative approach, which may not fully capture the depth of students' experiences and the underlying factors influencing the observed relationships.

Compliance with ethical standards

The authors declare no conflict of interest and report that this study received no external funding. The research was conducted at Universidad de Zamboanga with the voluntary participation of students enrolled in GEC 5: Purposive Communication, and informed consent was obtained prior to data collection using non-invasive survey methods. All responses were treated with strict confidentiality, with no identifying information disclosed, and the researchers acknowledge the cooperation of the participants and the institution in facilitating the study.

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