THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COLLABORATIVE LEARNING STRATEGIES IN ENHANCING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND SOCIAL SKILLS OF GRADE 6 STUDENTS IN ENGLISH AT BAHI ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the effectiveness of collaborative learning strategies in enhancing the academic performance and social skills of Grade 6 learners at Bahi Elementary School. Using a quasi-experimental pretest–posttest control group design, 45 students were assigned to an experimental group, which received instruction using collaborative learning strategies, and a control group, which underwent traditional instruction. Collaborative strategies implemented included think-pair-share, jigsaw learning, role-playing, and structured group discussions.

Results revealed substantial improvements among the experimental group, which moved from low proficiency levels in the diagnostic test to achieving a Mean Percentage Score (MPS) of 85.14% in the first-quarter examination, outperforming the control group's 75.16%. Significant gains were also recorded across six dimensions of social skills—basic social skills, advanced social skills, emotional skills, skills related to aggression, stress management, and planning skills. These findings affirm that collaborative learning promotes both cognitive and interpersonal development among elementary learners.

The study concludes that collaborative learning is a powerful pedagogical approach, particularly in rural contexts where opportunities for interactive English learning are limited. The results provide evidence for further institutional support, teacher training, and expanded implementation of collaborative strategies across basic education settings.

Keyword: - *Collaborative Learning Strategies, Academic Performance, Social Skills Development, English Instruction, Grade 6 Learners.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Collaborative learning has emerged as a powerful pedagogical approach aligned with 21st-century educational demands, emphasizing communication, critical thinking, and cooperation (Trilling & Fadel, 2009). Rooted in constructivist and sociocultural theories, this approach positions learners as active participants in constructing meaning through interaction (Constructivist Learning Theory, 1991). Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory underscores that cognitive development is mediated through social interaction within the Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky's Theory of Cognitive Development, 2024; Simply Psychology, 2025). Similarly, Piaget's Cognitive Development Theory emphasizes that children learn best through hands-on, meaningful interactions with peers and their environment (Pakpahan & Saragih, 2022).

Collaborative learning strategies operationalize these theories by engaging learners in cooperative tasks where they work interdependently and take shared responsibility for their learning. Johnson and Johnson (1999) assert that effective cooperative learning fosters promotive interaction, positive interdependence, and individual accountability—conditions that maximize academic and social outcomes. Slavin (2014) further explains that groupwork improves achievement by enhancing motivation, increasing time on task, and strengthening comprehension through peer explanation and discourse.

In the Philippine education context, the Department of Education recognizes collaborative learning as a key component of 21st-century learning, emphasizing its inclusion in curriculum implementation (DepEd, 2022). Despite this, rural schools often struggle to implement collaborative strategies due to limited resources, traditional teacher-centered pedagogies, and insufficient teacher training (Reyes & Bautista, 2022). These challenges frequently result in low academic proficiency, particularly in English subjects, where learners struggle with comprehension, vocabulary, and communication skills (Academic Performance of BEED Students, n.d.).

Several contemporary studies support the effectiveness of innovative, interaction-based strategies in improving academic performance. For example, gamified learning environments have demonstrated significant motivational and cognitive benefits (Camacho-Sánchez et al., 2023), while experiential and interdisciplinary approaches have shown promise in enhancing engagement and performance in various fields (Montesinos et al., 2023). In English instruction specifically, collaborative learning approaches have been shown to improve comprehension, participation, and higher-order thinking (Cruz & Padilla, 2021; Gillies, 2021).

Beyond cognitive gains, collaborative learning also enhances social skills, including cooperation, emotional regulation, conflict resolution, and stress management (Rodriguez-Macaya et al., 2021). These skills are essential for learner success and are embedded in the holistic framework of the Philippine K–12 curriculum (DepEd, 2022).

Given these theoretical foundations and empirical evidence, this study examines the effectiveness of collaborative learning strategies in improving academic performance and social skills of Grade 6 learners at Bahi Elementary School. The study contributes local empirical evidence on collaborative learning within a rural Philippine context—an area where research remains limited.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

A quasi-experimental pretest–posttest control group design was employed, consistent with Creswell's research design frameworks (Diaz, n.d.) and widely used in intervention studies where random assignment is not feasible. This design allows comparison between two non-randomized groups while measuring changes before and after an intervention (Bobbitt, 2021; DiscoverPhDs, 2020).

2.2 Respondents of the Study

The respondents were 45 Grade 6 learners from Bahi Elementary School, divided into:

- Experimental Group (Grade 6 Rizal): 21 learners
- Control Group (Grade 6 Lapu-Lapu): 24 learners

Both groups were comparable in baseline proficiency, as indicated by diagnostic test results showing low mastery levels.

The following instruments were used:

1. **English Diagnostic Test** – assessed baseline mastery of Grade 6 English competencies.

2. **First-Quarter Examination** – measured academic performance after the intervention.
3. **Social Skills Questionnaire** – assessed six dimensions of social skills:
    - Basic social skills
    - Advanced social skills
    - Emotional skills
    - Skills related to aggression
    - Stress management skills
    - Planning skills

Instruments underwent content validation and pilot testing prior to administration.

2.4 Intervention

The experimental group received instruction using:

- Think-Pair-Share
- Jigsaw Learning
- Peer-assisted Learning
- Role-playing
- Group discussions

These strategies are well-supported by cooperative learning literature (Johnson & Johnson, 1999; Slavin, 2014). They operationalize constructivism by enabling learners to co-construct knowledge through dialogue, exploration, and shared problem solving (Constructivist Learning Theory, 1991).

In contrast, the control group received traditional teacher-centered instruction.

2.5Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using:

- Mean and Mean Percentage Scores (MPS)
- Paired and independent t-tests
- Descriptive analysis for social skills domains

These statistical procedures follow standard quantitative educational research protocols (DiscoverPhDs, 2020).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Academic Performance

Both groups began with low proficiency during the diagnostic assessment:

Group	Diagnostic MPS	Posttest MPS
Experimental	40.95%	**85.14%**
Control	42.08%	**75.16%**

The experimental group demonstrated a larger improvement (+44.19 percentage points) compared to the control group (+33.08 percentage points). These findings align with studies showing that collaborative strategies outperform traditional instruction in promoting comprehension and performance (Cruz & Padilla, 2021; Camacho-Sánchez et al., 2023).

Social Skills Development

Significant improvements were recorded across all six social skills dimensions in the experimental group. Learners displayed:

- Improved cooperation and communication (basic & advanced skills)
- Better emotional regulation (emotional skills)
- Lower aggression responses (aggression-related skills)
- Enhanced coping strategies (stress management)
- Increased capacity for planning and organizing group tasks (planning skills)

These align with the findings of Rodriguez-Macaya et al. (2021), indicating that collaborative environments naturally foster social and emotional learning.

The effectiveness of collaborative learning strategies observed in this study is strongly anchored in major learning theories. Vygotsky's sociocultural framework explains that the scaffolded interactions within peer groups help learners reach higher cognitive functioning (Vygotsky's Theory of Cognitive Development, 2024; Simply

Psychology, 2025). Piaget's constructivist principles affirm that learners build understanding through active engagement with peers (Pakpahan & Saragih, 2022). The significant social skills improvement mirrors findings from international studies on experiential and cooperative learning (Montesinos et al., 2023; Rodriguez-Macaya et al., 2021).

Cooperative learning research consistently indicates that groupwork improves achievement through increased motivation, time on task, and feedback-rich environments (Slavin, 2014; Johnson & Johnson, 1999). This was evident in the experimental group, whose posttest performance substantially exceeded that of the control group.

Furthermore, the study's findings support claims that collaborative learning enhances communication, reduces stress, encourages inclusion, and cultivates interpersonal competencies (Gillies, 2021; Cruz & Padilla, 2021). These are particularly beneficial in rural contexts where learners have fewer academic resources and opportunities to interact using English (Reyes & Bautista, 2022).

4. CONCLUSIONS

Collaborative learning strategies significantly improved both academic performance and social skills among Grade 6 learners at Bahi Elementary School. These findings affirm the strong theoretical foundation and empirical support for collaborative learning in improving comprehension, participation, and interpersonal development.

The study demonstrates that collaborative learning is both feasible and effective in rural public schools and should be further integrated into English instruction to promote equitable, interactive, and learner-centered education.

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