

Perceived Impact of Collaborative Learning on Communication Skills among Education and History Students, Babcock University: A Comparative Reading Approach

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Abstract: The educational system is at a point where creation of opportunities within the classroom is essential, ensuring student needs are met, while moving students towards mastering communication skills they need to succeed in the developing world. This study assesses the impact of collaborative learning on communication skill of Babcock University students. The descriptive survey research design was used. The population of the study was drawn from the departments of Education and History, Babcock University. The sample size of the study comprised of one hundred and eighty-nine (189) respondents randomly selected from the two departments. A standard questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. The results were analyzed using the descriptive statistics, and the simple regression analysis was used to test the hypothesis. The results revealed that collaborative learning exerts a significant but negative influence on students' writing skills ($B = -0.280$; $B = -0.243$; $t = -3.405$; $p < 0.05$), and have negative impact on students' verbal communication skills ($B = -0.734$; $B = -0.412$; $t = -6.156$; $p < 0.05$). However, collaborative learning was found to play a significant role in enhancing students' vocabulary building abilities ($B = 0.377$; $B = 0.359$; $t = 5.231$; $p < 0.05$), and students' speech presentation skills ($B = 0.573$; $B = 0.374$; $t = 5.48$; $p < 0.05$). The study thereby established the importance of formation and monitoring of group activities for an enhanced performance in language skill development by the students. The study also provided some recommendations to the Government agencies, the school administrators, and the instructors on enhancing communication skills.

Keywords: Collaborative learning, Writing skills, Verbal communication, Vocabulary building, Speech presentation.

INTRODUCTION

Collaborative learning is a learning strategy that exposes learners to joint efforts on tasks thereby, enabling them to gain more knowledge, skills and ideas needed for them to become better versions of themselves in their academic pursuits. Collaborative learning assists in ensuring that learning process is enjoyable and equally serves as an effective avenue for developing skills. In today's world, building interpersonal connections among learners or socializing with others with basic communicative skills is necessary. Students require more opportunities to engage in collaborative learning and practice their communication skill such as speaking, reading, engaging in classroom general and group discussions to achieve mastery and fluency in language usage (Cardenas & Naranjo, 2021). According to Harmer (2007) and Pourhosein (2016), human communication is a complex process. Humans need communication when they intend to say something and transmit information.

Communication skills include verbal and non-verbal communication, message processing, listening, and responding effectively (van der Vleuten et al., 2019). Communication skills are the essential skills that individuals ought to master during physical development and human mental growth, and students can convey all their thoughts to others through communication, both orally and in writing (Ayu, 2018). A good communication skill go a long way in increasing the enthusiasm of students for learning and discipline, and promotes easy understanding of students' spoken and written language. Understanding mathematical symbols, graphs, tables, and images efficiently in a study also requires understanding which is part of communication skills. This implies that to possess good communication skills, students have to train themselves to transfer information to others using various forms of oral and written communication (Rochmawati et al., 2019). Communication skills have also been implicated as one of the soft skills components that determine a person's success, which makes it to be learned at all levels of education (Mustikawati et al., 2018). Communication skills are equally vital in developing superior and character human resources. It can not only lead students in their capability in academic aspects, but will affect various aspects of student development of which acceptance by the social environment in which they are located is one of them (Ahmad et al., 2021).

Collaborative learning has evolved as an essential concept in education (Al-Besher, 2012). Collaborative learning is conceptualized by different scholars to essentialize the objectives of learning. Umar et al (2020) had explained that collaborative learning entails the arrangement of students in heterogeneously small groups to work together in achieving a common goal. This author presents the individual differences in the competence of students. Collaborative learning is not just about grouping students to work together, but involves shared meaning, negotiations and elaboration of conceptually practical knowledge (Van Boxtel et al., 2000).

In contrast to individual learning, students who participate in collaborative learning gain from other's resources and skills, discuss data founded, assess

ideas, and observe each other's work. These activities help them in working together in any part of learning activities to speak in classes (Tian& Zhou, 2020). Collaborative learning is fundamentally founded on the model that knowledge is frequently created within a group by sharing experiences. In the collaborative learning environment, the learners are challenged both socially and emotionally as they listen to different perspectives and must articulate and defend their ideas. In so doing, the learners begin to create their own unique conceptual frameworks and not rely solely on an expert's or a text's framework (Solhi&Eğinli, 2020). Thus, in a collaborative learning setting, learners have the opportunity to converse with peers, present and defend ideas, exchange diverse beliefs, question other conceptual frameworks, and be actively engaged (Srour et al., 2021). This study therefore, intends to explore the impact of collaborative learning on the communication skill of Education and History students in Babcock University.

Research Hypotheses

To further provide logical meaning to this research work, the following hypotheses are formulated.

H01: There will be no significant impact of collaborative learning on writing skills

H02: There will be no significant impact of collaborative learning on verbal communication skill

H03: There will be no significant impact of collaborative learning on vocabulary building and reading skill

H04: There will be no significant impact of collaborative learning on speech presentations

LITERATURE REVIEW

Collaborative Learning

Collaborative learning is a method of teaching and learning in which groups of students engage in reading together to attend to some educational issues, accomplish assignments, or produce a project (Cheng, 2021). Students are pushed both socially and emotionally in a collaborative learning context as they respond to multiple opinions and are forced to express and defend their beliefs. As a result, rather than relying solely on the structure of a specialist or a book, the students begin with their distinct conceptual frames. Students in a collaborative learning situation can communicate with their classmates, propose and advocate ideas, discuss varied viewpoints, challenge another theoretical model, and participate effectively (Srinivas, 2011). The developmental theories of Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky, which place a strong emphasis on peer interaction and group problem-solving, are the foundation for collaborative learning. However, other definitions of collaboration have been shown to be interpreted in other contexts rather than educational ones. These share different language components, concentrating the same. Slavin (2018), for example, defines collaborative learning as a pedagogical approach wherein learners study

an academic subject in small groups. The participants talk, dispute, and assist one another in achieving a certain objective; higher-lever learners assist lower-level learners in enhancing their comprehension of the issue.

The major elements of collaborative learning according to Ghufron and Ermawati (2018) include the following: Collaborative learning's positive interdependence, which means that everyone is mutually interdependent, that is one for all and all for one in a group; Individual accountability in collaborative learning, which means that every member in the group takes part in the group's achievement; Face-to-Face Interaction which refers to small groups of individuals supporting and helping each other's efforts, as well as accomplishing and creating activities to reach team objectives. As a result, learners' possibilities for achievement may be increased through face-to-face engagement; Social abilities, which entails acknowledgment and trust of one another which result in speaking clearly and decisively, accepting and encouraging each other, and settling disagreements constructively. This means mutual respect and constructive interaction.

Reading

Reading together and comparing texts read, according to Lee et al (2024), have positive impact in assisting learners discover new ideas and methods of handling their learning activities. Reading assist learners improves social interact, critical thinking, builds confidence, enhance communication skills, prepares learners for real-world challenges, fosters creativity and innovation, encourages active engagement among others (Allen, 2024). Encouraging learners to engage in reading will equip them with knowledge, skills and ideas needed to

Collaborative learning has both pros and cons. Huertas (2011) illustrates some of the advantages of group work. They indicate that they are students' desire to bring out a combined project and encounter the established goals; the liability borne by all participants in the group; elevated efficiency; and the creation of good interactions between group participants which include unity, dedication, regard, collaboration, etc., along with creating consciousness of collaboration with others. The prevalence of collaborative learning as an approach to education shows that collaborative learning is well aligned with evolving perspectives on education and the theory of science.

Communication

Communication is the bedrock of every academic activity be it virtual or physical. It enables teachers to dispense knowledge, skills and ideas to learners for them to grow in knowledge. It fosters understanding, engagement and positive relationship among learners and teachers as well. Without effective communication, educational goals and objectives will be difficult to achieve. It enhances academic performance, encourages teamwork, assists those who are struggling to measure up and assists learners build confidence in self-expressions. Communication is a process of transmission of information from one person to another person or to a group of people. Elendu (2010) in Ajala explains that communication is an act of inducing other to interpret an idea in the manner intended by the speaker or writer. Lawal (2001) also defines communication as

the process by which information, news, ideas, facts and feelings are shared to people for the purpose of bringing them to a common understanding. Communication skills have to do with strategies or methods of sending information from one person who is usually the sender, to another person who is the receiver. It includes verbal, non-verbal, and para-verbal means of passing information.

Verbal communication

Verbal communication is the ability to explain and present ideas in simple English to diverse audiences, using appropriate styles and approaches, and understanding of the importance of the non-verbal clues in oral communication (Gitterman, 2004). Oral communication requires the background skills of presenting, audience awareness, personal presentation and body language. Communication skills for effective verbal communication include the following: organization of thoughts; having key points; eliminating unnecessary information; speaking directly to the person's concerned; keeping eye contact; making statements personal; owning your feelings: Don't guess others feelings or opinion; and practice listening checks (Shaniga et al., 2020).

Written Form of Communication

This is a means of passing information from one person to another by putting it into writing. It involves emails, books, magazine or internet. It can also be done in form of hand book and textbooks (Solhi&Eğinli, 2020). This form of communication skills can also contribute to curriculum delivery due to its advantages. Ajala (2012) listed the following advantages of written communication form. It can be referred to from time to time for use. It provides permanent record for both its sender and receiver i.e. teacher and student. Important information and guidelines are better expressed. It is precise in nature.

Non-verbal communication

This is the ability to enhance the expression of ideas and concepts through the use of body language, gestures, facial expressions and tones of voice and also the use of pictures, icons and symbols. Non-verbal communication requires background skills like audience awareness, personnel presentation and body language (Kasia, 2015). Communication is a two-way process of talking and listening of which listening is more essential and important. Listening is a type of non-verbal communication with the following advantages. Listening allows you to make and keep healthy relationships

Social Constructivism Theory

This theory was postulated by Vygotsky's (1978). Amineh and Asl (2015) define social constructivism as a theory of knowledge and communication that examines the knowledge and understandings of the world that are developed jointly by individuals. Additionally, Akpan et al. (2020) identified that social constructivism is a collaborative form of learning based on interaction, discussion and knowledge sharing among students. In other words, social constructivism focusses on interaction, collaboration and group work for learning to occur.

Albert Mehrabian's Communication Model

Albert Mehrabian's communication model, developed in the 1960s, is often referenced to highlight the importance of non-verbal communication in the overall communication process (Darn, 2005). It is of importance to note that Mehrabian's model specifically applies to communication of feelings and attitudes, and not the entirety of communication. The model suggests that communication is composed of three components: Verbal Component (7%) which relates to the actual words spoken. According to Mehrabian's model, only 7% of the meaning in a communication is derived from the verbal content. The relevance of this theory to the present research work is the importance placed on the different forms of communications such as verbal and non-verbal, and how their use can have a positive or negative effect on the audience. This therefore, enhances the need to acquire better communication skill through processes such as collaborative learning as stipulated in this present study to avoid poor communication.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

To achieve the objective of the present study, the descriptive survey research design was used.

Population of the Study

The population of this study consisted of all undergraduate students in two departments in the School/Faculty of Education and Humanities. The departments of Education and History, Babcock University were used. The total population of the undergraduate students of the two departments was 360.

Table 1: Population size determination

S/N	DEPARTMENT	POPULATION SIZE
1	Education	48
2	History	312
	Total	360

Sample and Sampling Technique

A sample size of 189 was determined using Taro Yamane. The participants were selected using random sampling techniques. The table below showed how the sample was distributed proportionally within the two departments.

The Taro Yamane method of sample size determination was used for determination of the sample size of the study.

The formula is given below:

Where: n = Sample Size

N = Population

1 = Constant

e = Acceptable margin of error

Given that:

$N = 360$

$e = 5\% (0.05)$

$$\begin{aligned}
 n &=? \\
 n &= N/1+N (e^2) \\
 N &= 360 \\
 e &= 5\%
 \end{aligned}$$

Therefore:

$$\begin{aligned}
 n &= 360 / 1+360(0.052) \\
 n &= 360 / 1+360(0.0025) \\
 n &= 360 / 1+0.9 \\
 n &= 360 / 1.9 \\
 n &= 189.47 \text{ respondents } \approx 189 \text{ respondents}
 \end{aligned}$$

Sample size = 189

Table 2: Sample size distribution

S/N	Department	Population	Proportion	Sample size of each department
1	Education	48	$48 \times 189 / 360$	25.2
2	History	312	$312 \times 189 / 360$	163.8
	Total	360		189

Research Instrument

The research instrument was a self-constructed questionnaire that comprise of five sections which are sections A-E.

Section A: Measure of Socio-Demographic Characteristics: This section elicited responses on the demographic characteristics of the students.

Section B: Impact of collaborative learning on writing skills: This section addressed the impact of collaborative learning on writing skills among Education and History students in Babcock University. The respondents responded by either ticking Yes which is interpreted as 1, No interpreted as 0 or I don't know interpreted as 0.

Section C: Impact of collaborative learning on verbal communication: This section elicited responses on the impact of collaborative learning on verbal communication among Education and History students in Babcock University. The respondents were asked to respond to a 4-point modified Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). Where Strongly Agree was interpreted as 3, Agree as 2, Disagree as 1 and Strongly Disagree as 0.

Section D: The impact of collaborative learning on vocabulary building and reading: This section addressed the impact of collaborative learning on vocabulary building among Education and History students in Babcock University. The respondents responded by either ticking Yes which is interpreted as 1, No interpreted as 0 or I don't know interpreted as 0.

Section E: Impact of collaborative learning on speech presentations: This section addressed the impact of collaborative learning on speech presentations among Education and History students in Babcock University. The respondents responded by either ticking Yes which is interpreted as 1, No interpreted as 0 or I don't know interpreted as 0.

Methods of Data Analysis

Data collected for this study was analysed using descriptive statistics to describe the demographic variables and answer some of the research questions while regression analysis was used to test the hypothesis formulated.

Data Presentation, Analysis, and Interpretation

Presentation of Data

A total of 189 questionnaires were distributed, out of which 187 valid questionnaires were successfully returned, representing a 98.9% response rate. This high response rate suggests a strong level of participation and interest among respondents, making the findings reliable and representative.

Demographic Presentation

Table 1: Frequency Distribution of Participant's Demographic Data

S/No.	Variable	Category N=187	Frequency	Percentage
1	Gender	Male	115	61.5
		Female	72	38.5
2	Department	History	163	87.2
		Education	24	12.8
3	Level	100level	103	55.1
		200level	59	31.6
		300level	7	3.7
		400level	18	9.6
4	Native language	Yoruba	90	48.1
		Igbo	67	35.8
		Hausa	12	6.4
		Others	18	9.6

The demographic characteristics of the participants reveal that 61.5 percent of the respondents were male, while 38.5 percent were female. The majority of the respondents, precisely 87.2 percent, were from the Department of History, whereas the remaining 12.8 percent were from the Department of Education. The data further indicate that the respondents were primarily first-year students, with 55.1 percent belonging to the 100-level category. This was followed by 31.6 percent from the 200 level, 9.6 percent from the 400 level, and 3.7 percent from the 300 level.

An analysis of the participants' native languages shows that 48.1 percent of the respondents were Yoruba speakers, while 35.8 percent identified as Igbo speakers. A smaller proportion of 6.4 percent were native Hausa speakers, while the remaining 9.6 percent belonged to other ethnic groups. The diversity in linguistic backgrounds suggests that the study encompassed individuals from various cultural and linguistic identities, which could have influenced their engagement with collaborative learning techniques.

Test of Hypotheses

The study tested four hypotheses using simple regression analysis to determine the relationship between collaborative learning and different language skills. The hypotheses sought to examine whether collaborative learning

significantly influenced writing skills, verbal communication skills, vocabulary building, and speech presentations.

Table 2: Simple regression on the impact of collaborative learning on writing skills

	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	7.827	.507		15.431	.000
Collaborative learning	-.280	.082	-.243	-3.405	.001

Dependent Variable: writing skills

The first hypothesis states that collaborative reading and learning has no significant impact on writing skills. To test this hypothesis, a simple linear regression analysis was conducted, with collaborative learning as the independent variable and writing skills as the dependent variable. The results of the regression analysis, as presented in Table 2 indicate a statistically significant negative relationship between collaborative learning and writing skills. The unstandardized coefficient for collaborative learning was $B = -0.280$, with a standard error of 0.082, and the standardized beta coefficient was $B = -0.243$. The t-statistic was $t = -3.405$, and the associated significance value was $p = 0.001$. These results demonstrate that collaborative learning significantly predicts writing skills, but in a negative direction. The negative beta value suggests that increased engagement in collaborative learning corresponds to a decline in writing skills. Given the statistical significance ($p < 0.05$), the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, it can be concluded that collaborative learning exerts a significant but negative influence on students' writing skills.

Table 3: Simple regression on the impact of collaborative learning on verbal communication skill

	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig
(Constant)	19.370	.736		26.336	.000
Collaborative learning	-.734	.119	-.412	-6.156	.000

Dependent Variable: verbal communication skill

The second hypothesis states that collaborative reading and learning has no significant impact on verbal communication skills. A simple linear regression analysis was conducted to test this hypothesis, with collaborative learning as the independent variable and verbal communication skills as the dependent variable. The regression analysis results, as shown in Table 3, reveal a statistically significant negative relationship between collaborative learning and verbal communication skills. The unstandardized coefficient for collaborative learning was $B = -0.734$, with a standard error of 0.119, and the standardized beta coefficient was $B = -0.412$. The t-statistic was $t = -6.156$, and the significance value was $p = 0.000$. These findings suggest that collaborative learning significantly predicts verbal communication skills, but in a negative manner. The negative beta value indicates that as students engage more in collaborative learning, their verbal communication skills tend to decline. Since the statistical

significance is below the threshold ($p < 0.05$), the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, it can be concluded that collaborative learning negatively affects students' verbal communication skills.

Table 4: Simple regression on the impact of collaborative learning on vocabulary building and reading skill

	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig
(Constant)	6.297	.445		14.161	.000
Collaborative learning	.377	.072	.359	5.231	.000

Dependent Variable: Vocabulary building

The third hypothesis proposes that collaborative learning has no significant impact on vocabulary building. To examine this hypothesis, a simple linear regression analysis was performed, where collaborative reading and learning was treated as the independent variable and vocabulary building as the dependent variable. The results of the regression analysis, as displayed in Table 4, indicate a statistically significant positive relationship between collaborative learning and vocabulary building. The unstandardized coefficient for collaborative learning was $B = 0.377$, with a standard error of 0.072, and the standardized beta coefficient was $B = 0.359$. The t-statistic was $t = 5.231$, and the significance value was $p = 0.000$. These findings suggest that collaborative reading and learning significantly predicts vocabulary building. The positive beta value indicates that higher levels of collaborative learning leads to an increase in vocabulary acquisition. Since the statistical significance is below 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, it can be concluded that collaborative reading and learning plays a significant role in enhancing students' vocabulary building abilities.

Table 5: simple regression on the impact of collaborative learning on speech presentations

	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig
(Constant)	6.469	.645		10.033	.000
Collaborative learning	.573	.105	.374	5.486	.000

Dependent Variable: speech presentation

The fourth hypothesis states that collaborative reading and learning has no significant impact on speech presentation. To test this hypothesis, a simple linear regression analysis was conducted, with collaborative reading and learning as the independent variable and speech presentation as the dependent variable. The results, as summarized in Table 5, demonstrate a statistically significant positive relationship between collaborative learning and speech presentation. The unstandardized coefficient for collaborative learning was $B = 0.573$, with a standard error of 0.105, and the standardized beta coefficient was $B = 0.374$. The t-statistic was $t = 5.486$, and the significance value was $p = 0.000$. These findings indicate that collaborative learning significantly predicts speech presentation skills. The positive beta value suggests that students who engage in collaborative learning are more likely to experience improvements in their

speech presentation abilities. Given the statistical significance ($p < 0.05$), the null hypothesis is rejected. Consequently, it can be concluded that collaborative learning has a significant and positive impact on students' speech presentation skills.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study investigated the impact of collaborative learning on various language skills, yielding mixed results. Hypothesis one which stated that there will be no significant impact of collaborative learning on writing skills was rejected. This implied that collaborative learning exerted a significant but negative influence on students' writing skills. This finding was in line with Esra (2022) who observed no significant difference between the written expression skills and writing motivation due to collaborative learning. The author noted that writing skills are not primarily influenced by collaborative learning, but more of a personal development. Helaluddin et al. (2023) in his study had also ascertained that collaborative writing strategies could improve students' writing skills, however, they noted that the difference was not significant.

However, some authors reported contradicting findings. Lulwa (2023) had reported a positive impact of collaborative learning method with the learners displaying a positive attitude towards writing and oral skills. Anggraini et al. (2020) had also found that collaborative writing strategies significantly enhanced EFL learners' writing skills and their perception of the strategy. Similarly, Albesher (2012) demonstrated that collaborative learning strategies improved the writing skills of ESL students. Bhim (2022) had also opined that those that were engaged in free writing in collaboration with each other created better written texts than those who wrote writing texts individually by themselves even though the difference between the average score of the students of experimental group and control group were not significant.

Hypothesis two which stated that there will be no significant impact of collaborative learning on verbal communication skill was rejected. Collaborative learning was discovered to have a negative significant effect on students' verbal communication skills. This was in line with the findings of Ali et al (2024) who reported that collaborative learning had no direct impact of developing verbal communication skill, however, he noted that it shaped their social interaction through group projects, discussion groups and debates. The findings in this present study is however in contrast with the findings of some authors. Lulwa (2024) had established in his study that collaborative learning has constructive role for developing students' language skills, social skills and personal skills.

The third hypothesis stated that there will be no significant impact of collaborative learning on vocabulary building and reading skill. However, this hypothesis was rejected. The findings stated that collaborative learning plays a significant role in enhancing students' vocabulary building and reading abilities. This could be attributed to social interactions and tasks that accompany group works and presentations. This is in line with reports from Masoumeh et al (2023) who indicated that engaging students in collaborative learning significantly improved their motivation and vocabulary scores.

The fourth hypothesis stated that there will be no significant impact of collaborative learning on speech presentations. This hypothesis was however rejected and was concluded that collaborative learning has a significant and positive impact on students' speech presentation skills. This could be attributed to factors such as self-development associated with group activities overtime and the competition that exists between group members. The findings of this present study are in line with the findings of authors such as Buse and Selami (2023) who showed that collaborative learning reduced speaking anxiety levels among students.

Collaborative learning often involves group discussions, presentations, and peer feedback, all of which can enhance public speaking abilities. Engaging in collaborative tasks provides students with opportunities to practice organizing their thoughts, articulating ideas clearly, and delivering presentations to an audience.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study has established how collaborative learning affects various language skills among undergraduate students. The study has shown divergent views on the impact of collaborative learning on these language skills. Collaborative learning has been shown to have no significant impact on writing skills and verbal communication skill against popular opinion. However, collaborative learning has shown to exert a significant impact in boosting vocabulary building, reading and speech presentations. These findings will influence how groups are formed and monitored to enhance maximum impact on the development of the participants.

It is recommended that the school administrators should encourage the practice of collaborative learning among students and conduct feedback assessments regularly. Additionally, the teachers and instructors should create a conducive environment for equal participation of students within learning groups by monitoring group activities and making sure each participant is active.

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