

Collaborative Learning in the Colombian Educational System: A Literature Review

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Abstract

The Ministry of Education (MEN) in Colombia has shown interest in improving the communicative competence in English, which is why they have selected English as the official foreign language to teach. This decision is because English is the third most spoken language in the world and is used as a second language by over 200 million people. The aim of the Colombian government is to implement a bilingualism program. Since 2004, the Colombian government has implemented a national educational policy and different bilingual initiatives. The goal of having a multilingual nation by 2025 is still being pursued.

English teachers have been interested in including new technologies and approaches that facilitate the teaching-learning processes at all the educational levels, as it is show in the systematic review that was done to develop this research. This paper provides a general overview of literature on this specific topic through these stages: scoping, planning, identification (searching), screening, and eligibility. This study shows that during the last decades, the implementation of collaborative learning has had successful results mainly in the development of communicative competencies in English, at the same time student improved their social, interpersonal and meta-cognitive skills.

Key words: Collaborative learning, Second language, Bilingualism in Colombia, educational system, approach.

Introduction

The educational system has changed and so have teachers' roles. Nowadays, second language teachers are guides and facilitators of the students' learning process rather than judges or evaluators. Therefore, one of the most important roles that teachers have, is to motivate students, making them aware of the capabilities and responsibilities they have in the learning process. Its emphasis establishes the effectiveness of collaborative learning (CL) in increasing student motivation on constructivist activities, metacognitive reflections, and student-professor partnerships to empower learners (Laurian-Fitzgerald and Fitzgerald, 2021).

Students must take control over their learning process and be attentive to new challenges that modern society demands. It is important to reflect on the responsibility students have in their learning process and the importance of their autonomy in achieving freedom as individuals. Students can work competitively to reach their own goals. Raya and Vieira (2020) define autonomy as both a group's desire to support a more democratic way of life and a person's capacity to oversee their education.

Sultan, Hussain & Kanwal (2020) state that students, through collaborative learning, are more engaged in a discussion with their peers and the teacher on the subject. At the end of the semester, they showed higher levels of academic confidence, as well as healthy social relations, social skills, and social competence, Sultan, Hussain & Kanwal (2020). Collaborative learning encourages students to have higher achievements instead of competitive or individualistic learning. Collaborative learning improves writing. Writing instruction is not only getting students to put pen to paper, but it also needs personal interaction to develop students' responses towards texts, Caicedo (2016). Writing engages deep cognitive processes because it promotes communication and opens thought for reflection. It fosters critical reflection and learning, according to Betancourt (2015).

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Implementing collaborative learning makes students be able to manage the other components of writing, such as vocabulary, spelling, purpose, target audience, and mechanics. Caicedo (2016) demonstrates that working together collaborative learning and writing skills can improve several academic and personal skills.

Although collaborative learning is not a novel approach, most teachers are unaware of this approach and its benefits. Most teachers think collaborative learning only refers to making students work in groups to carry out a task. In teacher preparation for collaborative classrooms, two essential components include facilitating student peer collaboration and encouraging instructor collaboration through co-teaching. Both, students and instructors, acquire essential abilities and change traditional teaching roles. It needs specialized training and experiential learning. Duran & Miquel (2019).

Classes in Colombia are usually large and heterogeneous; there usually consist of 35 students in primary school and 40 students in secondary school per group, which significantly affect students' communicative skills development, Betancourt & de Sarmiento (2024). Teachers prefer to ask students to work individually to have better class control. In addition, some teachers think collaborative learning contributes to bad behavior and class management becomes harder. Most teachers may not know the advantages of collaborative learning and the impact it plays on developing students' interpersonal skills. It seems most of the teachers prefer passive classes and they feel afraid of promoting activities in which students assume an active role because of discipline issues.

According to the findings in schools, universities, and groups of study in Colombian institutions where it was applied, collaborative learning (CL) offers many advantages. This is an approach that facilitates work in the classroom. It fosters students' motivation as students are involved in their own learning process. Learners work at their own pace on a topic of interest, interacting collaboratively with learners who are familiar with the theme or who are keen to know more about it. Collaborative learning fosters interactive and participatory strategies that promote teamwork, the assumption of roles, and personal involvement in developing a joint product, Petrescu, Gorghiu, & Drăghicescu, L.M. (2018).

The main objective of this paper is to present the findings of CL reported by various foreign language researchers in Colombia and the benefits of CL in the English as a foreign language learning process, in different contexts and different levels of proficiency. The conclusions found in these research projects can help foreign language teachers to understand and implement this approach in their own context, since this literature review research papers from different educational areas in Colombia. This article focuses on collaborative learning in the second language teaching area. It shows mainly the results of some research in Colombia that has proven the success of this approach.

For this research, a systematic literature review of papers published from 2000 to 2020 in Colombia was done, to identify evidence based on rigorous research papers on the implementation of CL. Although collaborative learning is not a recent approach, researchers have implemented it during the last decades with successful results, considering the studies found and reviewed. Recent research demonstrates the benefits of the implementation of this approach, since it does not only improve cognitive skills but also social and interpersonal skills. One of the remarkable advantages of this approach is that learners could interact with other members of their class and carry out their tasks collaboratively while enhancing their relationships. It is well known that nowadays, children, teenagers and adults need to improve their social skills. It was also noticed that teachers' misconceptions, and lack of training, is a factor that make the implementation of successful collaborative learning and teaching of social skills difficult within the classroom, Page (2017).

Defining collaborative learning

Collaborative learning is an umbrella term that covers intellectual effort by teachers and students or students together, according to Mac Gregor (1990). In collaborative learning, students work in small groups; they reciprocally try to understand and find a solution to present a product at the end. This approach is mostly student centered rather than teacher centered. It implies material preparation and a lesson plan that fosters a suitable environment and makes all the members of the group work together collaboratively. According to Laal & Laal (2012), collaborative learning started in the middle of the eighteenth century in Britain because of the predominant authoritarian teaching style. It was noticed that students had problems with traditional methods; it was when researchers investigated the problem and suggested other alternatives to teach their classes.

Reviewing what some experts have stated about Collaborative Learning, most of them agree in defining it as an approach that involves intellectual capacities subjects develop to join efforts together to find a solution to a task. Researchers have considered it an umbrella term because there are varieties of this methodology. For instance, Dillenbourg (1999) states that CL

could be developed either face to face or computer mediated, in small groups or groups of 20 or 30 people. Group members' abilities and contributions help to prepare and solve a task. This is an important aspect experts mention, as well as the importance of the responsibility that each one has as a member of the group.

Analyzing the advantages, CL has proven to be a successful approach with different ages of foreign language students, especially with young learners. In this way, the teacher can teach them social skills to improve their relationship rather than simply transmitting concepts and ideas. Nowadays, people need to develop social skills to accept and respect ideas from others. They should value contributions and share their own ideas to establish thoughts, solve a problem, complete a task, or obtain a product. It is also important to mention that individuals should know that knowledge is constructed in the community (Vygotsky, 1978). CL is an approach that can be implemented with students of all ages, learning styles, and backgrounds because all of them can make contributions depending on their own previous experiences and knowledge. Gokhale (1995) declares CL is a proper approach because students improve their critical thinking, and they can accomplish higher levels of learning as they work in groups rather than individually. Also, they can retain more information when it is received by their peers. CL also promotes interaction, communication and active participation instead of the passive way of receiving information from the teacher.

Differences and implications in this approach

Different ways to carry out and implement this approach can be confusing; that is why it is important to clarify the differences among collaborative learning, peer-to-peer learning, and cooperative learning.

Table N. 1

Differences among collaborative learning, peer-to-peer learning, and cooperative learning.

Approach	Definition	Author
Peer to Peer Learning	It is where one student leads another through a concept, in which the first student is an 'expert' and the second is a novice. The peers do not necessarily need to be from the same class or age group.	Johnson, D.W., Johnson, R.T., & Holubec, E.J. (1993)
Collaborative Learning	Collaborative learning is learning with each other. Collaborative Learning increases student's awareness of other concepts	Vygotsky
Cooperative learning	Cooperative learning implies everyone takes responsibility for a specific part of the work and then coordinates with the others to join all the parts. In a cooperative learning model, the following 5 principles and elements should be included, according to Johnson (1993) 1. Positive interdependence 2. Individual accountability 3. Face-to-face promotive interaction. 4. Appropriate use of social, interpersonal, collaborative and small-group skills. 5. Group processing	Dillenbourgh, P., Baker, M., Blaye, A. & O'Malley, C. (1995).

Note: The table shows the differences among three different approaches that promote collaboration.

Collaborative and cooperative learning could be confused; but they are not alike. According to the experts and definitions given in the table above, CL implies the mutual engagement of participants and combines all efforts to figure out a task or a work. Cooperative learning implies individual accountability to contribute to the group's success; each student takes responsibility for a specific task that is part of a project or a product. On the other hand, some authors believe cooperative learning is used for primary education, to understand the basis of knowledge, while CL is used for college and university students because it is used to teach on foundations of learning. However, there are similarities, as both are group learning approaches, implying students take an active role in the class; and equally suggest social responsibility and social skill development.

Collaborative learning and information and communications technology, or technologies (ICTs)

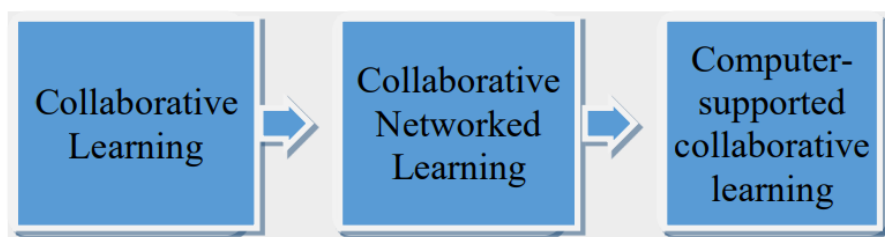
It is important to bear in mind that, given the rapid advances in technology, it is necessary to establish a permanent training programs for teacher trainers since nowadays, virtual environments are common, Cely Betancourt (2022), in this way teachers would be prepared to fulfill new generation's needs. New technology has become an important aspect in education, and it has had an important impact on students' learning process. The use of the internet, for example, allows for communication and interaction between individuals and groups. Researchers have conducted recent studies to investigate how new technology fosters

collaborative learning. Information and communication technology (ICT) has enabled collaborative learning, which has become a potent strategy in contemporary education. It improves students' capacity for responsibility, sense of self, and acquisition of skills (Sahija & Dela Cruz, 2022).

According to Quik (2013), the use of ICTs has increased in CL, and it is called Collaborative Networked Learning (CNL). This refers to the learning process that occurs through online interaction. In this process, each learner actively interacts in a group and exchanges knowledge with one another within a contextual framework. There is a new paradigm in education called Computer-supported collaborative learning (CSCL) which refers to the use of technology in learning environments to support group interactions in a collaborative learning context. CSCL provides new knowledge using technology to complete a task or product. Nowadays, CL has evolved, and teachers have started to take advantage of ICTs to promote communication and interaction in collaborative tasks. Even now, the use of 3D models facilitates and motivates students' participation in group activities. In this way, CL in virtual environments provides an excellent opportunity to promote the foreign language learning process.

Figure N. 1

Evolution of collaborative learning.



Note: This figure shows the evolution of collaborative learning.

Collaborative Learning Implications

Collaborative learning has some pedagogical implications that experts consider are vital to successfully observe its outcomes. For instance, Slavin (1997) suggests four key theoretical perspectives to explain the positive effects of collaborative learning: motivation, social cohesion, developmental, and cognitive elaboration perspectives.

Motivational perspectives. Students in CL should feel interested and motivated as group members. All must feel they are an active member of the group and know their responsibilities to make the group successful. All members of the group must help and encourage their mates to succeed.

Social Cohesion Perspectives. This refers to the cohesiveness of the group. This approach emphasizes team-building activities to prepare for collaborative learning instead of using external motivations and individual responsibilities. Students help their group mates learn because they care about the group's interest.

Developmental perspectives. The important assumption of this approach is that interaction among students increases their critical thinking, promoting personal and social growth. If students of similar ages have developmental differences, then the more advanced peers can contribute from their experiences to build new knowledge and scaffold the less advanced learners' learning process.

Cognitive elaboration perspectives. CL is effective because participants elaborate on new cognitive structures in a social context. They discover new knowledge and strengthen their own mental structures.

In the application of CL, it is important to consider all four perspectives instead of the empirical way in which some teachers carry out this approach. It is important to know its implications and its theoretical bases to better guide the development and implementation of CL.

Implementing Cooperative Learning

It is important to bear in mind that there are several criteria to implement CL. It is necessary to specify roles and duties for students to fulfill their task. Teachers need to ensure that all members of the groups are chosen at random or use specific criteria. Rau and Heyl (1990) state that smaller groups may lack divergent thinking styles because they contain less diversity. However, larger groups might make it difficult to ensure all members participate, so according to Salvin (1989) it is important to keep groups smaller. He suggests that:

- Teachers should create a positive environment and have students become acquainted with each other. It is also important to encourage politeness, respect and good behavior towards others.
- Assign academic tasks that develop a collaborative spirit and engage students in important team-building activities in which they support and learn from each other.
- Agree how long the group will work together, starting with one task, then a semester, to an entire year, an entire project.
- Material is important to be prepared to distribute to the group. Instructions must be clear for students to work together. Salvin (1989) states that for effective collaborative learning, there must be group goals and individual responsibility.
- Clarify roles for each member of the group. The teacher may have to explain and demonstrate/practice these roles before, and during, the activity.

It can be concluded that collaborative learning is an approach that has positive effects on participants as it is based on a social structure that facilitates students' interaction and improves their social skills. CL facilitates teaching since students can discover new knowledge through interaction. It means students learn from each other. It also has a positive impact to produce a level of engagement, better than other forms of learning. On the other hand, students can explain things better to another student than a teacher to a class. CL develops teaching competences since students learn how to teach one another. CL creates a positive interdependency because students feel that they cannot succeed unless everyone in their group succeeds. Other positive benefits are that CL develops the ability to lead an activity and create responsibilities.

Method

This study used George's (2008) library research design. It included prior expert opinions and conclusions from related papers on the same subject as the one under investigation. Selecting a broad topic for discussion was the first step, followed by drafting and revision. The following steps were developed: 1). Scoping, think about the audience, formulate one or more research questions as to clarify whether the planned systematic review has already been done. 2). Planning, find as many potentially relevant articles as possible to include, make an exhaustive search of the most representative studies that have been conducted on the topic of interest. 3). Identification, (searching) search at least two different (relevant) electronic databases. 4). Inspect the results and conduct additional searches to ensure you have located all relevant publications. 5). Screening, export references to a citation manager to collate the search results. Read the Title and/or abstract of identified work. 6). Eligibility, sift the full-text version of potentially eligible articles and extract relevant information to be included, (Baumeister & Leary, 1997; and Cooper, 2008).

Fifty articles were found by using databases: EBSCO, PUBLINDEX, SCOPUS, Scielo, Latindex, RedALyC, Dialnet ResearchGate, DOAJ. The keywords about the topic, collaborative learning second language, bilingualism in the Colombia educational system and approach, were introduced. According to the following criteria, finally twenty-five articles were analyzed: 1) Articles that show results of research in Collaborative Learning; 2) Foreign language learning context; 3) Research conducted in Colombia 3) Articles that show a close relationship to the topic; 4) Research question closely to find response to some troubles in education; 5) Studies carried out during the last two decades. Finding patterns, themes, and interpretations in textual, visual, and audiovisual data was easier with the help of ATLAS Ti.

Finding

This paper focused on analyzing collaborative learning in the Colombian Educational System from 25 related studies. In Colombia, collaborative learning has been applied in a range of contexts and at all educational levels. Researchers conducted eight studies involving students of different ages in public and private elementary and secondary schools. Eight research studies were carried out in face-to-face undergraduate programs. Fourth studies were implemented in remote and virtual learning. Five researchers were carried out with master's degree students. This suggests that CL is an approach that can be used with students of all ages and socioeconomic statuses in all educational settings. Collaborative learning has been implemented by numerous

colleges and institutions, including young adults and adults, through in-person, online, and remote courses. For each of these sessions, students were encouraged to work in groups rather than alone.

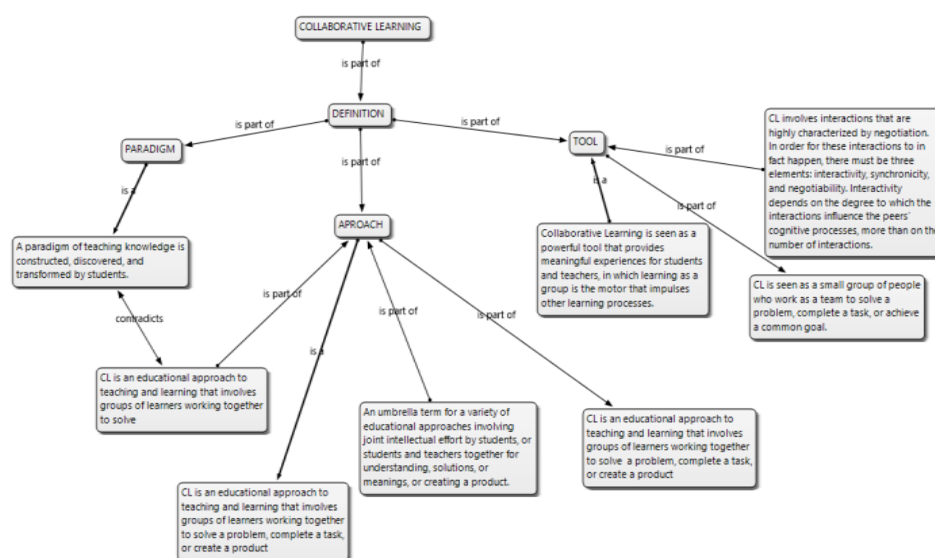
The first step was to identify the definitions of collaborative work included in the reviewed articles. This allowed us to get a general idea of the concept of collaborative work held by the teachers and researchers who carried out their research. The second part was to analyze the impact of collaborative learning on the development of students' skills. It was reviewed the population, study dates, education sector, aims and findings.

General definition of this approach according to the literature review

After reviewing the definitions included in the articles selected, CL is defined as an instructional approach that requires small groups of learners working together to achieve a common goal (Laal & Ghodsi, 2012). A definition from Forsyth (2006), states that CL refers to working in groups of two or more individuals who are linked to one another by social relationships. All the articles were based on this definition and researchers agreed that CL is an approach with valuable advantages, such as the improvement of social and cognitive skills and self-confidence, as it has been mentioned previously. Besides, the articles reported CL to be an active process in which all the participants provided meaningful ideas for projects or tasks to be carried out. According to the 25 articles that were reviewed, the following definitions about collaborative learning were found. The documents were analyzed using Atlas Ti. The results of this analysis were as follows

Figure N. 2

Definitions of Collaborative Learning.



Note: The figure shows the analysis of the definitions of collaborative learning found in the 25 metrics analyzed by the Atlas Ti software.

The articles reviewed contain different definitions of collaborative learning. Two articles mention that collaborative learning is a teaching paradigm. Fifteen articles mention that it is a useful pedagogical approach to teaching and learning that promotes group work. Finally, eight articles include the definition of collaborative learning as a tool that promotes group work to enhance the learning process. The concept of collaborative learning (CL) can be defined in a variety of ways. For example, it can be viewed as a broad framework consisting of a set of beliefs, values, and practices that guide the way teaching and learning are understood and carried out. Alternatively, it can be defined more narrowly as an overall strategy or plan for teaching and learning, or as a useful and tangible tool intended to support tasks or processes within the selected approach.

Collaborative learning and the development of students' skills.

According to experts and previous research, studies showed that students changed their attitude toward English as they could reduce their anxiety and felt confident to express their fears, doubts and questions. CL helped to create a supportive

environment in which students were less stressed and felt more confident in class, students improved communicative, cognitive, social and interpersonal skills. The following figure shows the categories and subcategories obtained from the Atlas Ti analysis.

Figure N. 3. CL and students' skills, categories and sub-categories



Note: the figure shows categories and subcategories reported by Atlas Ti analysis.

Communicative skills

The findings showed that CL was more frequently utilized for improving writing and reading skills. The researchers list several advantages in this regard. Six studies show enhanced proficiency in writing, underscoring the advantages of CL in English language instruction. Students collaborated to promote understanding of a certain topic by supporting one another and exchanging learning ideas. Through group projects, students created written work and shown an effortless ability to discuss and come to unique and original conclusions on a given subject. Students' writing and speaking language abilities both increased, according to Caicedo (2016). As they worked on the assignment, students gained knowledge regarding peer review and correction, Yate González et al. (2013).

According to these findings, collaborative writing was associated with a social environment that engaged and encouraged students to link. Students demonstrated an improvement in their writing skills process and achieved the final purpose of creating a good piece of writing with the appropriate structure and usage of language, use of adequate lexis and correct grammatical structures as part of the grammar competence and speaking sub-skill, Suarez Rodriguez (2015).

The researchers also noted that students have the chance to evaluate their performance during group projects when they were working together. It was possible for students to exchange ideas with one another as well as with their partners. Furthermore, they demonstrated the ability to collaborate to achieve common objectives, such as completing the assignments cooperatively as opposed to competitively. One of the most crucial objectives, according to Carvajal et al. (2014), was to get better at reading and writing, since they were given the opportunity to seek for assistance and received it from their partners and could overcome their shortcomings. In that way, they could work as a team to achieve a specific task and reach a goal. The students could improve their writing skills during the collaborative work and develop their motivation to write, Carvajal et al. (2014), state that because of their internal motivation, the electrical engineering students could accomplish their main objective, which was to create a research article.

According to Dyson (2000), when students are fully engaged in a work, writing becomes both, a peer-collaborative task and a social discussion in the classroom. These results showed that collaborative writing was linked to a social setting that involved students and motivated them to make connections between what they learned in class and their everyday lives. The study participants demonstrated an enhancement in their writing abilities and succeeded in producing a well-crafted composition that adhered to proper grammar and structure.

Meta-cognitive skills development

Another important outcome that the studies mentioned was the development of meta-cognitive skills. It seems when students interact with each other; they develop metacognitive skills. Carrell (1998) states that in CL, meta-cognition is a very important factor that affects learning. Carrel (1998, p. 4) defines metacognition as "cognition of cognition... thinking about thinking... and learning about learning". When students interact in groups, they develop autonomy and are more aware of the

way they learn. Golombek (2014) explains that cognitive development occurs in the movement from social mediation to internal mediation; that is called internalization. According to the studies, CL facilitates the acquisition of meta-cognitive skills.

The application of collaborative learning, sharing levels and jumping tasks has been found to have a significant effect on students' metacognitive thinking ability and understanding of biology concepts. Suratno, Sari, & Hana (2023). Students showed better performance in the activities that require abstract thinking, such as problem solving based on situations of physiological adaptations, Rodríguez-Triviño et al. (2022). Students have a far greater awareness of their own learning process since they were allowed to assess the outcomes of their language objectives after completing the prearranged language learning process. Santana (2013).

Through Collaborative Learning, students might support one another in creating knowledge and meaning. To assess their ability to collaborate with others and their contributions to group projects, they completed tasks that required them to analyze, plan, act, and reflect on their work. Espitia (2014).

There is strong evidence, according to Johnson and Johnson (2003), that students who work in collaborative teams think more deeply and retain material longer than those who work alone. Students could become critical thinkers, participate in discussions, share their opinions, and take ownership of their education (Totten et al., 1991). Since CL improves students' pleasure with their education and the classroom environment, it is more effective than traditional approaches. Because it lessens the aggravation that comes with working alone, it is also a useful strategy for online classes. When students realize they can rely on their classmates, they are more likely to complete an assignment. Research studies have demonstrated that great outcomes were achieved while adopting CL in virtual environments. Students accomplished the specific task though collaboration and group work.

Social skills development

According to the research studies, CL promotes social interaction when students share ideas with their partners, as they have the chance to listening to one another and express their own ideas. Students take advantage of this interaction and reinforce social skills, demonstrating that this approach is more than a matter of group activity. Students participated in the wikis and helped each other to make contributions, Prieto (2013). The characteristics already mentioned create the perfect environment for learning under agreed parameters, receiving useful and friendly feedback, sharing and respecting ideas. It has been proven that learners feel more confident when they receive feedback from their friends than from the teacher. In research done by Céline Buchs and Fabrizio Butera in the University of Geneva, (2015), it was proven that CL allows to identify that social skills development is crucial for group work to be efficient in terms of cognitive/academic results and have an important impact on the development of social skills.

Students improved group cohesiveness, responsible behavior during group projects, enhanced accountability and commitment, and each student and group member was able to adapt to the individual availability of the other members of the group, Barragan et al. (2022). Students enjoyed working in groups and had a positive attitude throughout the development of each session, Carvajal & Flórez(2014). On the other hand, working collaboratively allowed participants to develop values such as empathy, respect, tolerance, and responsibility. Carvajal & Flórez (2014).

Interpersonal skills developmen

One of the positive aspects found and cited in the research studies was interpersonal skills development. CL helped students be more confident in reaching their goals. It turned up into a better behavior and better interpersonal conditions that facilitated their learning process, (Da Luz, 2015). CL can be considered as an opportunity to build up a safe learning environment for students because they can collaborate, interact and communicate effectively, among them by developing interpersonal skills (Gillies, 2007). CL encouraged the participants to take on different work roles, such as leaders, harmonizers, facilitators, compromisers, among others, Carvajal & Flórez (2014). Students had greater autonomy in deciding what they wanted to accomplish when working in groups and as individuals. Yate et al. (2013).

Working collaboratively promoted greater interaction, information exchange, and accountability while supporting learners, teachers, and monitors in overcoming the isolation caused by distance in virtual environments. However, depending on the requirements and dynamics within teams, teachers and monitors needed to play many roles for collaborative learning to be effective in a virtual setting, Salinas (2014).

Awareness development

Three of the studies concluded that students were more aware of their mistakes in their writing process and were more decisive when doing writing activities. Therefore, CL had an important impact on students' language learning process. Students could evaluate their own learning process using reflection to make self-comparisons, Neugebauer (2016). It can be stated that awareness helped students to overcome their weakness and create better and successful knowledge. Students also developed positive interdependence, since they improved their individual responsibility for their learning when they performed a collaborative learning task. In addition, they respected the opinions of others. It could be concluded that CL strengthens students' efforts to overcome their learning language barriers, co-constructing and transforming their knowledge to guide them into a deeper understanding (Hurd, 2005).

Self-confidence

Another positive aspect mentioned was that students gained self-confidence, which is considered one of the major sources of motivation that regulates students' behavior. Students eventually overcame their anxiety of speaking, and they took the chance of engaging in conversation and participation in the target language, Molina (2013). Gardner (2001) claims that "the higher the level of confidence students have about their own skills, the more frequent contact with the target language and higher achievement can be expected" (p.7). Self-confidence is one of the most important factors contributing to the increase and enhancement of students' motivations.

These results showed that the use of CL has a direct influence on self-confidence. It reduces the anxiety that students experienced as the result of learning and practicing a foreign language. Therefore, students felt more confident about their process, demonstrating the benefits of students' languages learning process. The ability to decide their own roles empowered students to feel more confident, comfortable, and accepting of their responsibilities. Contreras & Chapetón (2017). Students gradually began to reduce their fear of speaking and took the risk of participating and interacting in the target language. Working together, students could express their fears, ideas, prejudices, or lack of understanding. Centeno et al. (2013).

One of the study's most important conclusions was that students no longer experienced anxiety or panic over their blunders. They felt comfortable approaching their peers with questions they had. At the conclusion, there was a discernible improvement in these communication abilities.

Discussion and conclusion

Due to the changes in education and the necessity to create more active methodologies for teaching English as a foreign language in Colombia, it has been necessary that teachers know about different student-centered methodologies, their implications, and their teaching principles. The collaborative learning approach can help teachers address new challenges because society is constantly changing, just as education is as well. Students have other necessities, interests and ways of learning; therefore, it is important that teachers change their traditional methodologies and start using different methods, to accomplish more active classes. It is expected that the English language teacher will demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the methodologies, strategies and activities employed in English language teaching, as well as the use and appropriation of a metalanguage specific to their profession. Cely Betancourt (2020).

According to the studies found in Colombia, CL promotes students' communicative competencies in English, critical thinking, social and cognitive skills, and self-confidence. It is crucial to note that one of the most significant discoveries in terms of communication skills is the growth of writing abilities. Betancourt (2015) claims that teachers may neglect writing skills activities in the EFL classroom because they take too much time because of students' lack of language resources needed to write. However, research from collaborative learning demonstrates that students are driven to write brief articles and may produce quality writings by paying attention to proper usage of vocabulary and syntax.

Another relevant and interesting finding was that it promotes active exchange of ideas among students while promoting critical thinking; thus, increasing the interest and motivation of the group. According to Johnson and Johnson (1986), there is convincing evidence that collaborative teams achieve higher levels of thought and retain information longer than students who work quietly as individuals. Students could take part in a discussion, express ideas, be responsible for their learning and become critical thinkers (Totten, Sills, Digby, & Russ, 1991).

CL is more effective than traditional methods because it enhances student satisfaction with the learning and classroom experience. It is also an effective approach in virtual courses because it reduces the frustration one may experience of working

in isolation. Students feel more convinced doing a task when they know they can count on their classmates. Research projects have shown that, when implementing CL in virtual settings, excellent results were obtained. Students accomplished the specific task through collaboration and group work.

The studies chosen address aspects of CL implementation in educational settings. Therefore, there is evidence that shows the implementation of this approach in different contexts and with different levels of education in Colombia. There are also evidences that this approach has been implemented with young learners, teenagers, young adults, and adults. In those contexts, CL was an excellent approach to develop cognitive, social and interpersonal skills. Collaborative learning was applied in virtual classes. The approach was reported to be successful, as it enhanced students' performance. In addition, researchers mentioned that CL improves the students' intellectual level. Working in groups allows students to think more deeply and more quickly than they can when working alone, according to Vygotsky (1978).

Studies demonstrate that CL contributes positively in terms of knowledge and experiences to facilitate a better learning process. It was mentioned that CL improves problem-solving strategies because students are faced with new situations in which they must find a solution; they must confront different situations and interpretations; and finally, they must use their imaginations and creativity to solve a problem (Brown, 2008).

Although collaborative learning is not a current recent approach, it has been implemented during the last decades with successful results, considering the studies found and reviewed. Recent research demonstrates the benefits of the implementation of this approach, since it does not only improve cognitive skills but also social and interpersonal skills. One of the remarkable advantages of this approach is that learners could interact with other members of their class and carry out their tasks collaboratively while enhancing their relationships. It is well known that nowadays, children, teenagers and adults need to improve their social skills.

Teaching values in an educational context is relevant, but according to one's own experience and hearing other's experience. It is sometimes a neglected activity. During our experience as teachers, we noticed sometimes teachers focus more on developing cognitive skills on our students because we think if they demonstrate positive results in local or international tests; we qualify as outstanding teachers. Sometimes, institutions give more importance to improving cognitive skills to show excellent results about their educative process, to be competitive.

This systematic review points out that implementing CL indeed, helps students improve their social skills as they interact with peers by being respectful, tolerant and give a sense of a worth for others' opinions, ideas and contributions. Because social problems have increased today, it is important that educational institutions implement strategies, not only focused on teaching new knowledge and contents but also strategies that promote social skills development. Social skills are the connection among people. Without them, social problems persist. Help from schools is needed (Johnson & Johnson, 1998).

Teaching social skills is important not only to promote a good teaching environment in the class; but it is also necessary to prepare students for all aspects of life such as respect for diversity, acceptance of what is fair or unfair, showing concern for the common good by helping others. Teachers sometimes believe that the implementation of CL refers to the fact students work in a group together to solve a problem or develop a final product; but they rarely know the pedagogical and methodological implications of this approach. According to the results of the systematic review, CL helps students to improve their academic achievement, social attitudes, and behavior. Students can work together as a team, help each other and learn something of value from the collaborative activity.

Therefore, it has a positive social influence in their lives since humans must continually interact with others in actual situations to solve problems or get achievements as members of a community. On the other hand, CL has also been a successful strategy to be implemented in virtual classes. Nowadays, technology has had significant advances and online classes have increased. Internet in the present time is a worthy tool that allows communication among students and facilitates the work in long-distances groups. Research studies have demonstrated that CL can have an impact on students' development since it facilitates cognitive processes. That way, students feel part of a group despite the distance; and they could give and receive contributions from the group. This is reflected on the final goals students achieve.

Finally, it is important that teachers get involved with CL to possibly change misconceptions and get familiar with teaching by using CL and the positive aspects that this approach and other group approaches might have to facilitate students'

learning processes. Teachers can implement more dynamic strategies in their classes, considering students' needs and interests instead of being the traditionalist teacher, avoiding interaction and just transmitting mere knowledge.

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