Why Can't We All Just Get Along?: Focusing on Socioemotional Climates to Understand Emotions in Collaborative Learning

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Abstract: This study aims at identifying and understanding the socioemotional processes that groups of students use while engaging in collaborative learning. I will also compare the processes of two extreme groups (one with high and one with low meta-emotional judgments).

Vision

In this study, I aim to address gaps in the social regulation of learning literature and improve collaborative learning practice by better understanding the phenomena of socioemotional climates. These are a group's collective emotional state, defined by the overwhelming presence of either positive or negative emotions (Bakhtiar, Webster, & Hadwin, 2017). Currently, most of the literature focuses on socioemotional interactions and tensions; research is still lacking regarding the emotion regulation strategies students use and the types of talk they engage in while working together. The goal of this research is to determine what regulation strategies and talk types groups use and how each of these differ between groups that rated their socioemotional climate as more positive and less positive.

Measuring socioemotional climates remains a challenge in the current literature. Meta-emotions are feelings, or perceptions, about feelings and are primarily studied at the individual level (Pekrun, Goetz, Titz, & Perry, 2002). Therefore, a group's collective meta-emotional judgments about their emotions can be used to represent their socioemotional climate (Bakhtiar et al., 2017). Importantly, socioemotional climates evolve over time; the group members become more interdependent, with individuals' states influencing others in a reciprocal manner. For this reason, short-term studies on socioemotional climates may not accurately depict development of the social processes.

The purpose of this study is to understand the different social processes of socioemotional climates. Specifically, I intend to investigate two research questions: **RQ1)** What socioemotional regulation processes and talk types did groups use in a project-based learning environment? **RQ2)** How do these strategies and talk types differ between groups who rated their meta-emotional judgments as low and high?

Participants are second-year graduate pharmacy students ($n = 150$) completing a required project-based learning course on problem solving and innovative solutions in pharmacy at a university in the southeastern United States. During this course, we piloted an app that another student and I created, *Collabucate,* with six groups of student volunteers ($n = 29$), recording their two-hour weekly meetings (i.e., two per week for seven weeks). Using log data from the app (i.e., weekly ratings of their feelings about collaboration), I calculated the groups' average meta-emotional judgments to serve as their ranking for their socioemotional climate. After identifying the groups with the overall highest and lowest ratings for comparison purposes, I will code both verbal and non-verbal data during each of the group meetings for socioemotional regulation strategies, interactions, and talk types. I will primarily use deductive coding, but for those topics less prevalent in the research, I will use inductive coding.

To answer RQ1, I will conduct a code mapping analysis (Saldaña, 2016) for socioemotional regulation and talk types. For each social process, I will map codes using a three-step iterative process in which I will place codes into categories, categories into themes, and finally themes into theory. In the last step, I will look for patterns in the strategies and talk types used by students. To better understand the data and answer RQ2, I will conduct a thematic analysis using the analytic memos (Saldaña, 2016) from our coding to compare the qualitative differences between the types of codes used in these two groups.

Preliminary findings have shown that the group with the lowest meta-emotional judgments began the course with average ratings, decreasing to the lowest overall scores. Conversely, the group with the highest meta-emotional judgments maintained a high rating over time. Notably, these groups differed in the strategies and types of talk they used (e.g., the high self-rated group engaged in talk types that resulted in more positive responses). Although the high self-rated group identified slightly fewer tensions, both groups identified *progressing despite different personalities and working styles* as a tension most frequently.

References

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