

IMPACT OF SOCIO-EMOTIONAL SKILLS ON ENGLISH LEARNING IN STUDENTS OF THE TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF COTOPAXI

IMPACTO DE LAS HABILIDADES SOCIOEMOCIONALES EN EL APRENDIZAJE DEL INGLÉS EN ESTUDIANTES DE LA UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA DE COTOPAXI

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Abstract

This study analyzes the impact of socio-emotional skills on English learning in students of the Technical University of Cotopaxi, specifically in the first "B" and seventh "C" courses of the National and Foreign Language Pedagogy career. The main objective is to evaluate how socio-emotional competencies, such as self-confidence, motivation, and emotional self-regulation, influence students' academic performance and active participation. A quantitative methodology with a descriptive design was used, using a structured questionnaire of 30 questions distributed in three dimensions: academic competencies, socio-emotional experience, and relationship with the teacher, evaluated using a Likert scale. The results reveal that socio-emotional skills positively affect motivation, self-confidence, and the ability of students to function in English, highlighting the relevance of effective communication and a positive bond between teachers and students. It is concluded that integrating socio-emotional strategies into the educational curriculum improves English learning and promotes an inclusive and respectful environment that contributes to students' overall well-being.



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Keywords: *Socio-emotional skills; English learning; self-confidence*

Resumen

El presente estudio analiza el impacto de las habilidades socioemocionales en el aprendizaje del inglés en estudiantes de la Universidad Técnica de Cotopaxi, específicamente en los cursos de primero “B” y séptimo “C” de la carrera de Pedagogía de Lenguas Nacionales y Extranjeras. El objetivo principal es evaluar como las competencias socioemocionales, como la autoconfianza, la motivación y la autorregulación emocional, influyen en el rendimiento académico y la participación activa de los estudiantes. Se empleó una metodología cuantitativa con un diseño descriptivo, utilizando un cuestionario estructurado de 30 preguntas distribuidas en tres dimensiones: competencias académicas, experiencia socioemocional, relación con el docente, evaluadas mediante una escala de Likert. Los resultados revelan que las habilidades socioemocionales afectan positivamente la motivación, la autoconfianza y la capacidad de los estudiantes para desenvolverse en inglés, resaltando la relevancia de una comunicación efectiva y un vínculo positivo entre docentes y estudiantes. Se concluye que integrar estrategias socioemocionales en el currículo educativo no solo mejora el aprendizaje del inglés, sino que también promueve un entorno inclusivo y respetuoso que contribuye al bienestar general de los estudiantes.

Palabras clave: Habilidades socioemocionales; aprendizaje del inglés; autoconfianza

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Introduction

Learning English in higher education faces several challenges, and one of the most important is the impact of socio-emotional skills on academic performance. Globally, competencies such as empathy, assertive communication, and stress management have proven to be key factors in reducing anxiety, improving self-confidence, and facing the challenges associated with learning a new language. In Latin America, particularly in Ecuador, these skills are critical to overcoming students' emotional barriers and creating a positive classroom environment that favors learning.

In this context, the present study aims to analyze how socio-emotional skills, such as self-confidence, motivation, and emotional regulation, influence the learning of English in students of the English Language Pedagogy career of the Technical University of Cotopaxi, specifically in the First B and Seventh C courses. This work is based on theories such as Goleman's emotional intelligence and Bandura's models of social learning, which highlight the relationship between emotions, motivation, and academic performance.

For this research, a quantitative methodology with a descriptive design was used. The instrument used was a 30-question questionnaire that addresses three key dimensions: academic competencies, socio-emotional experiences, and the relationship with the teacher. The development of the manuscript includes a theoretical



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review that supports the research, a detailed description of the methodological design and procedure, and an analysis of the relevant findings.

Social-Emotional Skills

Social-emotional skills allow you to manage emotions, build positive relationships, make responsible decisions, and effectively manage various social and emotional situations in different environments. Cherniss (2020) defines these capacities as “The aggregate or global capacity of the individual to act purposefully, to think rationally, and to deal effectively with his environment” (p.5). These competencies are essential for personal and social development.

The Theory of Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence (EI), popularized by Daniel Goleman in 1995, highlights a set of essential skills such as self-knowledge, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills, fundamental for personal and professional success. According to Llorens (2024). “EI involves recognizing and managing one's own emotions, as well as influencing those of others, skills that are learnable and improvable” (para.7). On the other hand, Bisquerra (2020), cited by Goleman (1995) indicates that “Emotional intelligence consists of 5 key skills: knowing and managing one's own emotions, self-motivating, empathizing and establishing effective relationships, all of which are vital for social-emotional development and interpersonal interaction” (para. 2).

CASEL Model

Benitez & Ramírez (2019), indicates that “SEL is the process by which youth and adults acquire skills and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions, achieve goals, show empathy, maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible decisions” (p.4). Social-emotional education is key to the development of young people, as it helps them manage emotions, strengthen their identity, and relate positively, preparing them to face challenges and contribute constructively. On the other hand, MINISTERIO DE EDUCACIÓN (2020), mentions that “Social-emotional education is a process where children and adolescents develop values, attitudes, and skills that allow them to manage their emotions, build an identity, and respect others” (p.4).

Awareness

Self-awareness encompasses our emotions, feelings, and decisions. This allows the identification of strengths and limits, the detection and persistence of emotions, and their influence on our actions. According to Goleman (1995), “Self-awareness is key to recognizing emotions and understanding their impact on our actions” (p.18).

Self-confidence

Krista (2009), mentioned that “The belief in one's self and his/her powers and abilities” (p. 104). Therefore, self-confidence is the ability to take on challenges, make decisions, and achieve your goals.

Confidence



Security in one's abilities and relationships with others is based on integrity and coherence of conduct, according to Heather E. Douglas, Mitchell L. Cunningham (2023) mentioned that “Confidence is defined as the feelings and thoughts people have during a task that result in judgments about their performance” (p.1).

Social Awareness

"Social awareness is the ability to understand and empathize with other people's emotions, thoughts, and perspectives, and to recognize how our actions affect others" (Straw, 2024, para. 8). Therefore, this skill allows us to increase our emotional intelligence, which contributes to personal and professional success.

Interpersonal relations

It consists of establishing and maintaining positive relationships with others through effective communication and conflict resolution. According to García (1995), “Man is himself, insofar as he is for others. Being oneself and being in communication are inseparable” (p. 4).

Empathy

Sanarai, (2023) mentioned that “Empathy is the ability to understand and experience another person's emotional state from their perspective, especially in difficult times” (para.5). It involves an authentic connection with the emotions of the other. Whereas “Empathy is the ability to understand the feelings and emotions of others, based on the recognition of the other as similar” (López, Arán, & María, 2014, p. 3). That is, it involves recognizing and understanding the emotions and experiences of others, which helps to generate stronger bonds and emotional support, therefore it is an essential component of emotional intelligence.

Self-regulation

"They refer to the initiation and maintenance of the emotional response, and not only, the modulation and cessation of said response, as had been traditionally considered" according to (Ato, González, & Carranza, 2024, p. 2). Developing this skill can improve the quality of our emotional lives, promote healthy relationships, increase productivity, and help us make more informed decisions. In education, self-regulation of learning links motivation with personal control, allowing students to solve problems, apply strategies, and monitor their progress.

Motivation

According to Bohórquez et al. (2020), manifest “Motivation is an inner impulse that activates an individual's predisposition to perform any goal-oriented activity or behavior, in the direction of achieving a certain objective” (p.2). This approach is valuable, as it highlights the critical role of internal factors in driving human actions. From my perspective, motivation not only drives initial action but sustains persistence over time. In the educational field, intrinsic motivation is key for students to maintain interest and commitment, even in the face of challenges. Being essential to achieve the objectives.

English Language Learning

It is the process by which students acquire the ability to understand, speak, read, and write in English. This process involves the development of linguistic, grammatical, and communicative skills, as well as the use of language in academic, social, and professional contexts. Merchan, Calero, & Albán (2016) claim “English as



a foreign language has become one of the most notable aspects of education in Ecuador, recognizing the importance of developing communicative skills to interact and open new opportunities around the world” (p. 2). The English language helps to find new horizons that facilitate communicative exchanges with countries and find better resources for survival.

Bandura's Theory of English Language Learning

According to Rodríguez & Cantero (2020) indicate that “Albert Bandura's theory of social learning explains that people acquire behaviors and knowledge by observing and imitating others, which highlights factors such as self-efficacy, effort, and expectations of outcome” (p.5). In other words, learning is a dynamic process where cognitive, behavioral, and environmental factors interact, in what Bandura calls reciprocal determinism. Likewise, Redip & Flores (2016) cited by Bandura (1984), mentioned: “Learning through modeling involves four fundamental processes: attention, retention, production, and motivation” (p.7). These processes are essential for a person to learn by observing others, starting with attention to the model, then storing the information, reproducing the behavior, and finally, being motivated to imitate the observed behavior

Krashen Model of English Learning

According to Ponga (2023) cited by Krashen (1983) says:

Five key assumptions for foreign language learning. The difference between learning and learning suggests that learning is a cognitive and natural process, while learning involves cognitive aspects of language. The natural order hypothesis states that grammatical structures occur in a predictable order. The teacher's hypothesis states that students will deliberately correct their language, but only if they have time and understand the rules. The input hypothesis states that learning occurs when information is understood, even with new elements, and the concept of “i+1” is integrating new words into familiar words. Finally, the affective filter hypothesis suggests that affective factors such as motivation and confidence influence learning (p.4). Therefore, these assumptions are crucial for teachers to improve the teaching of foreign languages

Oral production

Álvarez, May, Arias, & Morales (2022) indicate that “Oral production is the ability to negotiate meanings between two or more people that are related to the context where the conversation occurs” (para.8)”. This process allows you to understand and process information heard in English, including tone, accent, and vocabulary in different contexts.

Written production

Taco (2022) points out that “Written production is the process of forming letters or characters to communicate ideas. It involves mental operations like attention, memory, and creativity, and the use of linguistic knowledge through three stages: planning, writing, and evaluation” (p.20). This skill allows you to interpret and analyze a text in English, identifying main ideas, specific details, and hidden meanings.

Auditory compression



English language and information skills include intonation, accent, and vocabulary in different contexts. According to Molano (2016), as cited in Rost (2002), “Listening instruction has shifted from focusing on the product of comprehension (listening to learn) to focusing on the process (learning to listen) (p.20)”.

Reading Comprehension

According to Montes, Rangel, & Reyes (2014), “It is the process in which the reader uses cognitive skills such as prior knowledge, schemas, and strategies to understand the meanings of texts” (p. 4). It is the ability to interpret and analyze texts in English, identifying main ideas, specific details

Interpersonal skills

Social skills refer to the ability to manage relationships effectively, build good interpersonal connections, and resolve conflicts. According to Peñafiel & Serrano (2017). “Social skills comprise behaviors that allow interaction and positive relationships with both peers and adults, effectively and satisfactorily for both parties” (p. 4). Therefore, its great importance of social skills as indicated by Bances (2019), “The human being understands a series of behaviors, thoughts, and emotions since a person is socially skilled, however, he seeks to satisfy his requirements and interests, as well as those of others, always seeking to find solutions to the present conflicts” (p. 6).

Knowledge of grammar

“Grammar is essential and should be applied in the process of good effective communication, as it allows you to construct clear and correct sentences”, as they point out (Arumugam, Ambikapathy, & Verappan, 2023, p.645). This approach highlights the importance of understanding and applying the structural rules of English to ensure an accurate and coherent exchange of ideas.

Academic Competencies

Wade (2008) indicates, “Academic competence reflects the skills, attitudes, and behaviors that contribute to students’ academic success. These skills and attitudes fall within two broad domains academic skills and academic enablers” (para.1). Being a set of intellectual, practical, and behavioral skills necessary for the success of learning activities.

Emotional Experience

“The experiences deal with the emotions and feelings that students experience during the learning process, affecting their motivation and well-being” (Salomon, 2008, pág. 232). Emotional experience is determined by judgments, such as being aggrieved by anger, attracted to someone in love, or mourning the pain of sin.

Effective communication

Lynn (2004), highlights that “Effective risk management requires decision-making that addresses and integrates societal concerns” (p.6). This promotes mutual understanding through clear and precise communication.

Relationship with the teacher



MEC (2000) cited by Fabara (2004) prescribes “The teacher as a guide in the construction of learning: facilitating the application of current educational paradigms and models in the teaching-learning process, mediating the student's relationship with the learning contents, integrating knowledge on the part of the student and the mediator on the part of the teacher” (p.50). Student-teacher bonds, based on respect, trust, and mutual support, influence student learning and personal development.

Materiales y métodos

Research Approach and Design

The present study follows a quantitative approach. According to López & Fachelli, (2015) mentions "Quantitative methodology uses data collection and analysis to answer research questions and test previously established hypotheses" (p.21). This approach allows us to examine how socio-emotional skills affect English learning among students of the Pedagogy in National and Foreign Languages career at the Technical University of Cotopaxi. This approach allows the analysis of the variables of interest through the collection and analysis of numerical data, which facilitates the validation of hypotheses about the relationship between socio-emotional competencies, academic performance, and motivation in learning English.

Instruments and Techniques

A descriptive design was used for data collection. According to García, Alfaro, Hernández, & Molina, (2006), "The questionnaire is a structured instrument that organizes indicators of the variables related to the study objective, adapted to the profile of the population and the application system to guarantee its efficiency" (p.3). In this study, a structured questionnaire was applied with 30 questions distributed in three dimensions: academic competencies, socio-emotional experience, and relationship with the teacher. The instrument uses a Likert scale with values: always, sometimes, rarely, never. According to Matas (2018), "A Likert scale is a psychometric tool used in market research to understand a consumer's opinions and attitudes towards a brand, product or target market" (p.2). The data obtained were analyzed using statistical tools to identify patterns and relationships between the variables studied

Study Unit

The unit of study consists of students enrolled in the first parallel semester "B" and in the seventh parallel semester "C" of the Pedagogy career National and Foreign Languages with a mention in English. The sample was selected based on their active participation in the courses and their availability to answer the questionnaire. Depending on the resources and time available, the study could be extended in other semesters and parallel to obtain a broader vision.

Results and discussion

Table. Age of respondents

Alternative	Frequency	Percentage
18 - 20 years	30	71%
21 - 23 years	9	21%
24 - 26 years	3	7%
27 years or more	0	0%



TOTAL	42	100%
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Analysis and interpretation

Based on age, it reveals that 71% are in the range of 18 to 20 years old. This would be represented by the blue color that represents most of the population. It is followed by 21% of the age range of 21 to 23 years old, which is viewed by a significant part of students, and finally, the ranges of 24 to 26 years old and 27 years old or older have much lower representations with 7% and 0% respectively. Therefore, it reflects a concentration of the sample in younger students.

Academic Competencies

Table.1 Academic Competencies

Nº	Question	Always	Sometimes	Seldom	Never	Total
1	¿Participas activamente en actividades de clase en inglés para mejorar tus habilidades?	19%	74%	7%	0%	100%
2	¿Trabajas en grupo durante las clases de inglés para mejorar tus habilidades?	52%	36%	12%	0%	100%
3	¿Dedicas tiempo fuera del horario de clase para estudiar o practicar inglés?	33%	64%	2%	0%	100%
4	¿Consideras que tus habilidades de lectura en inglés te permiten comprender los textos asignados en clase?	43%	52%	5%	0%	100%
5	¿Te esfuerzas por mejorar tus habilidades de escritura en inglés?	57%	40%	2%	0%	100%
6	¿La relación que tienes con el profesor/a contribuye a tu aprendizaje del inglés?	55%	38%	2%	5%	100%
7	¿Realizas presentaciones o exposiciones en inglés en clase?	38%	62%	0%	0%	100%
8	¿Dedicas tiempo fuera del horario de clase para estudiar o practicar inglés?	52%	40%	5%	2%	100%
9	¿Consideras que tus habilidades de lectura en inglés te permiten comprender los textos asignados en clase?	74%	24%	2%	0%	100%
10	¿Te esfuerzas por mejorar tus habilidades de escritura en inglés?	50%	43%	5%	2%	100%

Analysis and interpretation

The results show that students have a predominantly positive attitude towards learning English. Most of them actively participate in class activities (74%), and group work 52%, while 33% dedicate time outside school hours to study. In terms of their skills, 74% consider that their reading level allows them to understand the assigned texts and 57% strive to improve their writing skills. The relationship with teachers is also seen as a favorable factor since 55% of students consider that it contributes to their learning. However, presentations



in English in class are less frequent, as only 38% of students make them. In general, students show remarkable engagement, but dedication outside of class and participation in oral activities could be improved.

Table.2. Social-Emotional Experience

Nº	Question	Always	Sometimes	Seldom	Never	Total
1	¿Sientes ansiedad al tener que hablar en inglés frente a la clase?	38%	52%	10%	0%	100%
2	¿Tus emociones influyen en tu capacidad para aprender inglés?	40%	48%	12%	0%	100%
3	¿Te frustras cuando no logras expresarte bien en inglés?	57%	38%	5%	0%	100%
4	¿Experimentas satisfacción al comunicarte en inglés durante la clase?	67%	24%	10%	0%	100%
5	¿Ha mejorado tu autorregulación emocional en tus estudios de inglés?	29%	60%	10%	2%	100%
6	¿Recibes apoyo emocional de tus compañeros en el aprendizaje de inglés?	33%	48%	7%	12%	100%
7	¿Te resulta fácil controlar tus emociones al cometer errores en inglés?	10%	52%	29%	10%	100%
8	¿Te sientes en un ambiente seguro y positivo para aprender inglés en clase?	43%	45%	10%	2%	100%
9	¿Te sientes valorado/a por tus profesores cuando participas en clase de inglés?	40%	48%	5%	7%	100%
10	¿Consideras que tus emociones positivas influyen en tu progreso al aprender inglés?	74%	24%	2%	0%	100%

Analysis and interpretation

The results show that students experience various emotions that influence their English learning. 38% of students feel anxiety when speaking in English in front of class, which could hinder their performance. In addition, 57% get frustrated when they are unable to express themselves correctly, indicating that mistakes generate negative emotions. However, the majority of students (67%) experience satisfaction when communicating in English, suggesting that, despite the difficulties, they find motivation in their moments of success. Regarding emotional control, 52% of students report difficulties in managing their emotions when making mistakes, although 29% indicate that they have improved their emotional self-regulation in English studies, 33% receive emotional support from their peers, which could be a positive factor in their learning. In addition, most feel in a safe and positive environment to learn 43% and are valued by their teachers 40%, which contributes to a favorable learning environment. Finally, 74% of students consider that their positive emotions positively influence their progress, highlighting the importance of an emotionally positive approach to advancing language learning. In general, students show a willingness to learn, although they face certain emotional challenges that could be addressed to enhance their educational experience.

Table. 4. Relationship with the teacher

Nº	Questions	Always	Sometimes	Seldom	Never	Total
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1	¿Sientes que tu docente está disponible para resolver tus dudas sobre el contenido de la clase?	64%	33%	2%	0%	100%
2	¿Tu docente fomenta un ambiente de respeto y confianza en el aula?	69%	29%	2%	0%	100%
3	¿Recibes comentarios constructivos de tu docente que te ayudan a mejorar tus habilidades en inglés?	57%	31%	12%	0%	100%
4	¿Te sientes cómodo/a al compartir tus inquietudes o problemas académicos con tu docente?	33%	48%	14%	5%	100%
5	¿Tu docente muestra interés por tu progreso académico y emocional?	38%	45%	14%	2%	100%
6	¿Consideras que la comunicación con tu docente es clara y efectiva?	31%	57%	10%	2%	100%
7	¿Tu docente utiliza diferentes métodos de enseñanza para adaptarse a las necesidades de los estudiantes?	57%	29%	14%	0%	100%
8	¿Te sientes motivado/a a participar en clase gracias a la actitud de tu docente?	48%	40%	10%	2%	100%
9	¿Tu docente te anima a expresar tus ideas y opiniones durante las clases?	67%	19%	14%	0%	100%
10	¿Tu docente respeta las diferencias individuales de cada estudiante?	69%	29%	2%	0%	100%

Analysis and interpretation

The results reflect a mostly positive perception of the student's relationship with their teacher. 64% of these students feel that the teacher is available to answer questions about the content of the class, which demonstrates good accessibility. In addition, 69% highlight that the teacher fosters an environment of respect and trust in the classroom, which is essential for effective learning. The majority of students 57% also receive constructive feedback that helps them improve their English skills, which reinforces teacher support towards academic progress. However, although 33% of students feel comfortable sharing academic concerns or problems, 14% have some reservations in this regard. Regarding the teacher's interest in the academic and emotional progress of students, 38% feel supported, although 14% consider that this interest could be greater. In terms of communication, 57% that it is clear and effective, which favors content comprehension. In addition, 57% of students value that the teacher uses different teaching methods, adapting to the individual needs of the students. 48% feel motivated to participate in class thanks to the teacher's attitude, and 67% mention that the teacher encourages them to express their ideas and opinions. Finally, 69% say that the teacher respects the individual differences of each student, promoting inclusion in the classroom. In general, students perceive an environment of respect, support, and motivation from their teacher, which favors a climate conducive to learning.

Discussion of results



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Age of students

The majority of the students surveyed, 71%, are in the 18-20 age range, reflecting a concentration of the sample in young students. This finding coincides with what has been mentioned by several studies that highlight that most university students tend to be in this age range, which may imply less experience in managing emotions and making critical decisions during their training. Pinargote and Caicedo, (2019) state that "most university students are in the first years of their career, which implies a greater vulnerability in the management of emotions" (p.45). In addition, the lower percentage in the upper ranks could indicate that older students may have dropped out of the education system or are already at a more advanced level of their studies.

Most students belong to this young age group, meaning they are still developing their social-emotional skills, which are key to their academic success. According to Goleman (1995) "Emotional competencies, such as self-knowledge and self-regulation, are fundamental to face the emotional demands of the university environment" (p.23). On the other hand, Llorens (2024) highlights that "strengthening emotional intelligence during the university years allows students to manage better the stress and pressures associated with their training" (p.6). This directly impacts their academic performance and well-being.

Academic Competencies

The results show a positive attitude of students towards learning English, with 74% actively participating in classes. This is consistent with the research of Sánchez, Ordóñez, and Toledo (2018), who point out that "active participation in academic activities improves student performance, as it fosters collaborative and practical learning" (p.12). This active participation reinforces the importance of classroom interaction as a key strategy to improve academic competencies. However, 33% of students spend time outside of school hours studying, which could suggest that time away from class is still a challenge for some. As Pérez and Ricoy (2016) indicate, "Dedication outside the classroom is crucial to consolidate what has been learned and improve the mastery of a second language" (p.56).

Social-Emotional Experience

38% of students mention feeling anxiety when speaking in English, which could hinder their performance, a finding that aligns with the argument of Damián, Castillo, and Flores (2023), who states that "language anxiety is one of the main factors that negatively affect students' confidence and performance in a second language" (p.6). The presence of this anxiety highlights an emotional obstacle that can limit the development of communicative skills, particularly in contexts where oral interaction is required. However, despite this challenge, 67% experience satisfaction when communicating in English, which highlights the motivation they still feel in the face of challenges. In this sense, Auquilla, Hidalgo, Garzón, & Fajardo (2020) mention that "personal satisfaction and achievements are important motivational factors in the process of learning a foreign language" (p.4). Taken together, these results indicate the importance of addressing socio-emotional emotions in English learning. Anxiety can be a limiting factor, but satisfaction and motivation can act as a catalyst for progress

Teacher-student relationship





Regarding the relationship with teachers, 64% of students feel supported and have access to resolve doubts. This perception of accessibility and support is in line with what Vásquez (2010) states, who suggests that "a close relationship with teachers favors better academic performance since emotional and academic support increases students' self-esteem" (p.112). However, 38% of students mention that the teacher's interest in their academic and emotional progress could improve, which points to the need for greater teacher involvement in the emotional and academic dimensions of students. Ramos and Roque (2021) highlight that "the constant support of teachers is essential to create an environment of trust that allows students to develop their academic and emotional competencies" (p.7). Therefore, the teacher-student relationship emerges as a key factor in the teaching-learning process, where the strengthening of emotional and academic support can enhance both student performance and well-being.

Conclusion

Social-emotional skills have a significant impact on learning English, as they improve students' motivation, self-confidence, and willingness to actively participate in the learning process.

The integration of socio-emotional competencies not only favors the academic development of students, but also contributes to their general well-being, promoting a more positive, inclusive, and collaborative educational environment.

Students who develop social-emotional skills are better able to manage the stress, frustrations, and challenges of learning, resulting in higher academic achievement and a more fulfilling educational experience.

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