Dynamic Learning Program on the Development of Critical Thinking Skills and Social Awareness Among Senior High School Students

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Abstract

This study aimed to determine the effect of the Dynamic Learning Program (DLP) on the development of critical thinking skills and social awareness of Senior High School students. This study used an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design. Quantitative data were collected through researcher-made surveys and summative tests, and qualitative data were collected through focus group discussions and classroom observations. Results indicated moderate student engagement with DLP strategies, with peer collaboration and reflection time being the strongest contributors to sustained interest. Quantitative results showed high levels of reflective thinking ($M = 3.51$) and average indicators of critical thinking. Social awareness (e.g., empathy, perspective taking, appreciation for diversity) was consistently high ($M = 3.46–3.58$). Correlation analysis showed significant relationships between engagement and critical thinking skills ($r = .828$, $p < .01$) and engagement and social awareness ($r = .710$, $p < .01$). Qualitative narratives supported these findings by emphasizing the importance of teacher facilitation, interactive strategies, and opportunities for reflection. The combination of quantitative and qualitative results validates that the DLP is an effective teaching methodology that promotes student balanced development. Students are engaged and positive results are achieved but further refinement of the program and institutional support could increase the effectiveness of the program and assist learners to reach their full potential.

Keywords:Dynamic Learning Program (DLP);Critical Thinking Skills;Social Awareness;Senior High School

Introduction

Education in the Philippines is faced with a dual challenge of developing higher order thinking and social awareness among the learners. Traditional methods emphasize rote memorization and exclude reflection and values-based learning. The Dynamic Learning Program (DLP) features an innovative framework focusing on autonomous learning, metacognitive regulation, and collaborative engagement. However, there is still a lack of empirical evidence on the impact of DLP on critical thinking and social awareness. This study attempts to fill the void by investigating the influence of DLP on the cognitive and socio-emotional development of Senior High School students. The aim is to examine the impact of DLP on critical thinking and social awareness through a mixed-methods triangulation approach.

Method

- This study employed a sequential explanatory mixed methods design. The quantitative phase established measurable relationships between students' engagement with Dynamic Learning Program (DLP) and their development of critical thinking and social awareness. The qualitative phase enriched the findings by exploring student and teacher experiences. The descriptive component

summarized the engagement levels with Dynamic Learning Program strategies while the correlational component will examine the relationship between students' DLP engagement and the development of critical thinking and social awareness. Quantitative data were collected through a researcher made survey instrument and a summative test that measured the indicators of critical thinking such as problem-solving, logical reasoning and reflective thinking. Qualitative data were gathered through focus group discussions and classroom observations to capture challenges, strategies and lived experiences in implementing DLP. Triangulation was employed by combining quantitative surveys and tests with qualitative focus group discussions and classroom observations to enhance validity and depth of findings.

- **Participants** Senior High School students at CARD-MRI Development Institute.
- **Instruments**
  - Standardized critical thinking scales (quantitative).
  - FGD transcripts coded using open, axial, and selective coding (qualitative).
  - Structured classroom observation checklists (observational).
- **Procedure** Data collection proceeded in phases: quantitative → qualitative → observational, with triangulation ensuring methodological rigor.
- **Analysis** Statistical tests for quantitative data; thematic coding for qualitative insights; convergence analysis for triangulation.

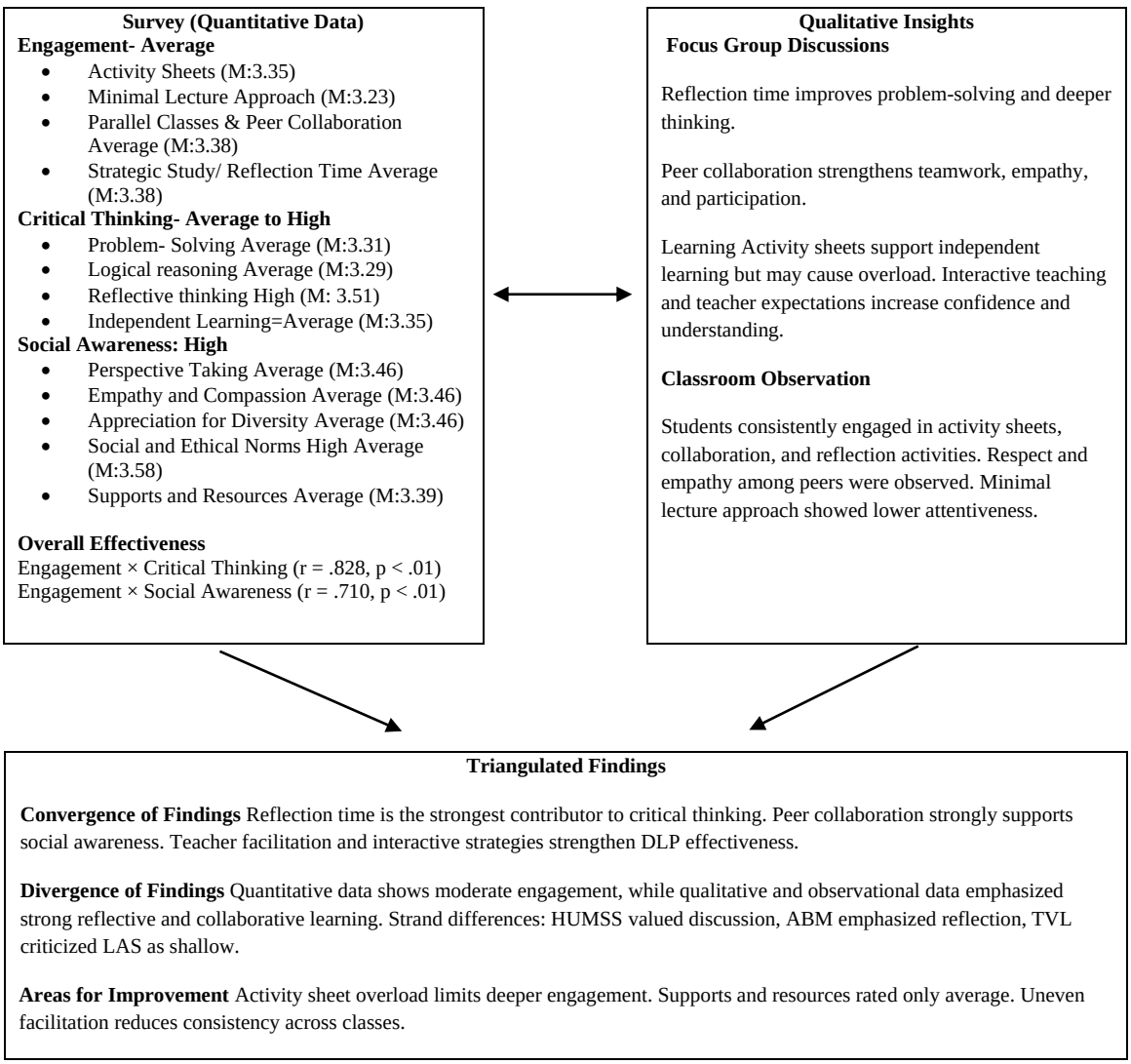
RESULTS

1.1. Triangulation Framework of Dynamic Learning Program Results

Reflective Thinking obtained highest overall mean (3.51, High). Students consistently value reflection, connecting lessons to real-life, and considering social responsibility. Focus Group Discussions affirm reflection as transformative, while observations show active engagement during reflection time. Peer Collaboration was Moderate but consistent ratings (3.38, Average). Students affirm teamwork and cooperation skills; observations confirm active group participation. Activity Sheets are valued as structured learning tools (3.55, High for completion). Students recognize their importance, aligning with constructivist scaffolding. Minimal Lecture Approach Students appreciate concise lectures (3.40, Average) but FGDs reveal hesitation in fully embracing independent learning. Observations show reliance on teacher scaffolding. Problem-Solving Learners generate multiple solutions (3.40, Average) but lack confidence in unfamiliar problems (3.15, Average). Focus Group Discussions highlight reliance on familiar contexts. Logical Reasoning Students ask questions (3.39, Average) but struggle with evaluating multiple perspectives (3.21, Average). Observations confirm curiosity but limited higher-order reasoning.

Areas needing improvement are Independent Learning (3.35, Average) Students seek resources but still depend on teachers. Focus Group Discussion emphasized difficulty in self-regulation; observations show uneven autonomy. Perspective-Taking (3.46, Average) Learners listen to peers (3.55, High) but struggle with sensitivity to diverse backgrounds (3.38, Average). Observations reveal empathy in peer context but limited intercultural awareness. Reflection Documentation (3.22, Average) Students reflect verbally but resist writing reflections. Focus Group Discussions confirm difficulty in articulating metacognition; observations show stronger oral than written reflection.

Figure 2. *Triangulation Results Framework of Dynamic Learning Program (DLP)*



Bezanilla et al. (2021) noted that when teachers provide guidance it helps students regulate their learning and use resources better. Teachers do not help with academic work but also provide motivation and emotional support which is crucial for learner engagement in DLP.

The triangulated results affirm that the Dynamic Learning Program (DLP) is strongest in reflective thinking and social responsibility, moderately effective in problem-solving, logical reasoning, and independent learning, and weakest in deep autonomous engagement and perspective-taking. Reflection and

collaboration are consistently valued. Students appreciate structured tools but hesitate in independent, higher-order tasks. Pozo and Zayas (2019) have said that when we think about what we have learned and we hear about what others have to say we become more empathetic and we start to understand more about the world. There were gaps in confidence, autonomy, and intercultural sensitivity that require scaffolding. This framework demonstrates that DLP is transformative when reflection and collaboration are emphasized, but its full potential depends on teacher facilitation, scaffolding, and authentic tasks that push learners beyond structured compliance into deeper experiential learning. The results align with constructivist pedagogy and Bandura's self-efficacy theory, emphasizing that confidence and deeper reasoning develop through guided practice, authentic tasks, and reflective opportunities. Dole et al (2015) emphasized that when teachers give help students need more support because they often struggle. Learners are good at setting goals, managing time and making decisions but they need more help. Overall, the findings imply the effectiveness of DLP not on having resources but also on how well these resources are integrated, communicated and linked to learners personal and social growth.

Discussion

This study examined how the Dynamic Learning Program (DLP) helps in developing critical thinking skills and social awareness among Senior High School students. A sequential explanatory mixed-methods design was employed, including surveys, focus group discussions (FGDs), and classroom observations to triangulate results.

Quantitative Results from survey and summative test, the students were engaged in activities like working on sheets, listening to lectures while working with peers and thinking about what they learned. The level of their engagement rated Average across activity sheets (M = 3.35), minimal lecture (M = 3.23), peer collaboration (M = 3.38), and reflection time (M = 3.38). The Dynamic Learning Program promotes consistent but moderate student engagement, indicating that while students are actively involved, their level of engagement has not reached its full potential. Fatkurochman (2018) noted that short, focused lectures encourage independent learning, but students may initially struggle with reduced teacher dependency. Gonzales and Villacruel (2024) found similar results, reporting that while students appreciated activity sheets and independent tasks, some struggled with the lesser focus on direct instruction.

The Dynamic Learning program contributed to the critical thinking skills rated Average to High, with reflective thinking scoring highest (M = 3.51). This is effective in developing critical thinking skills especially when they reflect on things and ask questions. However, when students must do many structured tasks, they might not think as deeply as they could. The students showed understanding of social awareness rated High, particularly in social norms (M = 3.58), empathy (M = 3.46), and perspective-taking (M = 3.46). This highly effective in fostering social awareness, especially when they work together and learn from each other. This helps promote empathy and respect for diversity.

The Dynamic Learning program was found to be effective because of the relationship between engagement and critical thinking ($r = .828$, $p < .01$), and engagement and social awareness ($r = .710$, $p < .01$), confirming the program's educational value. These results support the theoretical foundations of constructivism, critical pedagogy, and experiential learning, which emphasize active participation, social interaction, and reflective practice as essential to meaningful education.

Qualitative Results from discussions with students, teachers played a role in helping, guiding and encouraging the students to increase their understanding and feel confident by using interactive methods. When students had time to think about what they learned they were able to show problem-solving and deeper thinking. Working with peers helped students work together understand each other's feelings and participate more. Using the Learning Activity Sheets supported their independent learning but were overwhelming when overused. Classroom Observation revealed that students were doing their activity sheets and reflection, showing respect and empathy among peers were observed. The minimal lecture approach showed lower

attentiveness when the teacher just lectured students compared to interactive strategies though parallel classes show collaboration.

Triangulated Findings obtained that students were engaged in the Dynamic Learning Program and thinking about what they learned and working together were the important things that helped them learn. Students think critically, especially when they have time to think about what they have learned. Working with peers in the Dynamic Learning Program strongly supports social awareness and helps students understand issues be more empathetic and respect people who are different. Teachers are very important in making the Dynamic Learning Program effective guiding reflection, balancing tasks, and encouraging collaboration.

Overall, the integration of quantitative and qualitative evidence confirms that DLP promotes balanced student development. It bridges the gap between theoretical learning and practical application, equipping learners with both cognitive skills and socio-emotional competencies. With targeted refinements and stronger institutional backing, the program holds significant potential to transform classroom practice and contribute to the broader goal of nurturing critical, reflective, and socially aware citizens.

The findings confirm that the Dynamic Learning Program is effective in promoting both critical thinking and social awareness. But there were limitations to these strengths. Participation in logical reasoning activities was middling, suggesting the need for tighter scaffolding. Contextual challenges such as time management and availability of resources also impacted students' experiences. Such findings suggest that institutional support in the form of teacher training, provision of materials and curriculum alignment are needed to maximize the program effectiveness. Its success isn't about how its set up it's also how it is implemented. Reflection and collaboration serve as the strongest drivers of learning, while excessive reliance on activity sheets and less engaging lecture components that aren't engaging holds students back from fully participating. Therefore, teachers need to facilitate tasks, need to balanced student task and expanding reflective opportunities are essential to maximizing the program's impact.

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