

Research Article

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EMI Lecturers' Beliefs on Teacher Collaboration between Content and Language Lecturers

Sam Xuan Au, Yen Hoang Phuong, Lan Thi Huong Nguyen

Abstract

Background. English-medium instruction (EMI) programs in Vietnamese higher education have expanded rapidly, creating urgent needs for collaboration between content and language lecturers to ensure quality instruction. Understanding content lecturers' views on the collaboration between content and language lecturers, one of the factors influencing on the successful of such collaboration, remains underexplored. This study investigates EMI lecturers' beliefs about content-language teacher collaboration and facilitating factors in Vietnamese medical university settings.

Methods. The study employed the explanatory sequential mixed methods design. Data were collected from 76 Vietnamese EMI lecturers through questionnaires and interviews with three content lecturers. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS 26.0, while qualitative data underwent thematic analysis.

Results. EMI lecturers strongly believe in the benefits of teacher collaboration. However, they also identify many obstacles hindering implementation and highlight institutional support. The preferred teacher collaboration form, according to EMI lecturers' beliefs, is characterized by flexibility in scheduling, mutual support for personal development, and constructive feedback exchange while maintaining individual autonomy and final decision-making authority.

Conclusion. EMI lecturers demonstrate positive attitudes toward content-language teacher collaboration. Successful teacher collaboration requires institutional support, flexible scheduling arrangements, clear guidance and policies, and a gradual implementation process.

1. Introduction

English-medium instruction (EMI) programs in Vietnam have gained increasing attention, driven by language policies promoting the teaching of academic subjects in English. These policies aim to strengthen students' English proficiency, promote collaboration between domestic and international educational institutions, attract international students to study in Vietnam, and encourage prestigious universities to establish branches in this country. As a result, a supportive environment for EMI development in higher education institutions in Vietnam was created (Nguyen, 2024).

Recent research consistently demonstrates that general and academic language proficiency play an important role in content success in EMI settings (Curle et al., 2020; Xie & Curle, 2022; Yuksel & Altay, 2024). Content and language teacher collaboration also becomes increasingly necessary and has in fact been a topic of interest (Alhassan et al., 2022). Such collaboration can provide essential support for content instructors, helping them overcome language-related challenges. These challenges, as Yuksel and Altay (2024, p.2) argue, “should not go unnoticed in EMI contexts”.

Despite widespread recognition of the importance of collaboration between language specialists and content instructors (Sahan, 2021), existing literature reveals a concerning gap between advocacy and practice. A bleak picture on this topic is mainly due to the inadequate level of collaboration (Jacobs, 2006) and limited dialogue between the two groups (Gustafsson et al., 2011). Most critically, while existing research has identified teacher beliefs and attitudes as key factors in the successful implementation of such collaboration (Lo, 2014), there is limited research examining content lecturers' views on the potential for collaboration with language lecturers – an area that urgently requires research attention.

Vietnam witnesses a significant rise in EMI programs at universities. However, implementing these programs effectively faces many challenges, especially the lack of collaboration between content and language lecturers. Also, the absence of studies examining EMI lecturers' views in Vietnam has created a significant gap in understanding barriers and opportunities for collaboration. This research is, therefore, timely and necessary.

To bridge this gap, this study investigates EMI lecturers' views on content and language teacher collaboration. This research aims to explore their beliefs about teacher collaboration among content and language lecturers as well as factors that facilitate this effective collaboration in EMI settings.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Definitions of teacher collaboration

There are various definitions of collaboration used in education.

Collaboration is “a style for direct interaction between at least two coequal parties voluntarily engaged in shared decision making as they work toward a common goal” (Friend et al., 2010, p.5). Teacher collaboration characterizes how people work together rather than what they do. It represents a dynamic interactive process through which equal partners aim to increase achievement for all learners.

Mazur and Doran (2010) define teacher collaboration as “a process by which stakeholders can come together for a common purpose to exchange information, listen to one another’s experiences and perspectives, and work together toward a common goal” (p.146). The participation of each person in the process is important to achieve the common objective.

Teacher collaboration is a “process of shared creation where two or more individuals with complementary skills interact to create a shared understanding that none had previously possessed

or could have formulated on their own. It is a commitment to share resources, power, and talent (Montiel-Overall, 2005, as cited in Ervin, 2011, p.18).

In this regard, Godemann (as cited in Howlett, 2011) states that teacher collaboration requires that participants contribute their expertise to the process, working to overcome the weaknesses and preconceptions resulting from their training and roles. Hesse et al. (2015) define teacher collaboration as “the activity of working together towards a common goal”.

Teacher collaboration can be as simple as two teachers informally discussing a student’s progress or as complex as long-term, regularly scheduled meetings, involving various school stakeholders discussing topics such as state standards, and research for curriculum revision (Chau, 2017).

All definitions emphasize key elements such as working toward a shared objective, deeper engagement, equal partnership, dynamic exchange involving direct interaction, resource sharing, and mutual respect or trust. Analyzing the above definitions, it becomes clear that teacher collaboration is a process of complementary skills and shared knowledge that extends beyond what individuals could achieve alone. Participants contribute different strengths to overcome individual limitations. Collaboration can be present throughout the teaching process – from planning to implementation and assessment. Participants contribute their expertise in setting goals, integrating curriculum, developing teaching strategies, arranging student groups, and identifying resources.

Although “collaboration has diverging meanings with regard to qualities of collaboration and learning outcomes” (Meirink et al., 2007, p.163), one consistent element found in any form of teacher collaboration is the intellectual effort invested by teachers to enhance their capabilities to benefit their students.

2.2. Form of Collaboration

The existing literature has shown a wide range of forms of teacher collaboration, which are known by different terms including team teaching, co-teaching, collaborative teaching, and partnership teaching (Carpenter et al., 2007; Friend et al., 2010).

Team teaching involves information exchange for mutual benefit with varying degrees of shared coordination and responsibility. Based on the students’ needs and the teachers’ strengths, Maroney (1995) classified collaborative teaching into five types: (1) Standard Teaching: Both teachers actively participate in instruction; (2) Collaborative Teaching: Teachers work together but may teach different students at different times; (3) Complementary /Supportive Teaching: One teacher focuses on content while others handle skill development; (4) Parallel Teaching: Students are randomly grouped with each teacher responsible for their assigned group; (5) Differentiated Teaching: It is similar to parallel teaching but groups are formed based on learning abilities.

In co-teaching, teachers “jointly deliver instruction to a diverse group of students in a general education setting and in a way that flexibly and deliberately meets their learning needs” (Friend et al., 2010, p. 11). Both teachers share the responsibility for every student’s academic development. This involves the planning and delivering of lessons, classroom management, and the evaluation of student progress.

Collaborative teaching involves two or more teachers jointly taking responsibility for planning, delivery, and assessment for the same student group (Carpenter et al., 2007). Similarly, partnership teaching necessitates a collaborative effort among teachers to design and implement instructional strategies. Both forms of teaching, whether collaborative or partnership teaching, highlight the importance of shared responsibility among teachers.

Teacher collaboration varies in intensity (Kilanowski-Press et al., 2010; Bettencourt & Weldon, 2011; Pancsofar & Petroff, 2016). Gräsel et al. (2006) categorize teacher collaboration into three

types: (1) information and material exchange - a "low-cost" approach with minimal conflict risk where teachers share resources while working independently; (2) shared work collaboration - teachers establish common goals and divide tasks; (3) co-construction - a "high-cost-form" of collaboration, where teachers collectively develop knowledge and solutions. These models demonstrate how collaborative practices vary in their demands for trust, communication, and willingness to compromise individual autonomy for shared goals.

In other studies, teacher collaboration takes three additional types: consultation, co-planning, and coaching. Teachers usually prefer face-to-face planning for collaboration discussions. When not possible, they use phones, emails, and electronic messages. Teachers can also engage in collaborative activities outside the classroom such as organizing extracurricular activities, facilitating professional development, and selecting teaching materials.

This study focuses on frameworks that provide a clear progression from low to high-intensity collaboration. The reality at the research site, where no formal collaboration currently exists between content and language teachers, necessitates gradual collaborative development. High-intensity collaboration cannot be implemented immediately.

2.3. Benefits of teacher collaboration

Many researchers emphasize the importance of collaboration with studies showing that collaborative practices benefit not only teachers but also students and educational institutions.

Teacher collaboration is generally regarded as "a positive condition for teacher learning", "a powerful learning environment" (Lohman, 2005). Teachers learn how to improve their instructional practice, build on combined knowledge and experience (Goddard et al., 2007), broaden their teaching pedagogies and class management (Jang, 2006), develop and discuss new materials, enhance course content, create more effective assignments, improve skills at critiquing student papers, and reinforce teaching styles (Johnson, 2003; Meirink et al., 2007; Lo, 2015). Khorsheed (2007) claims that "collective effort is better than autonomous and isolated arrangements" (p. 43). Even, self-development activities become more effective when done together with others (Bailey et al., 2001).

When teachers collaborate, each teacher brings different ideas to their interactions and gets feedback from colleagues. Through meaningful discussions, teachers can share and experiment with fresh ideas, gain opportunities to recognize and reevaluate their existing beliefs and understandings (Putnam & Borko, 2000). External perspectives help individuals develop greater self-awareness, create new knowledge and extend existing knowledge. Teachers can move beyond personal perspectives.

Teacher collaboration gives teachers greater chances to exchange instructional ideas for delivering content better and enables skill transfer across disciplines (DelliCarpini, 2009). Teachers are more motivated to implement new teaching methods (Lasagabaster, 2018) and improve their skills (Schlaack & Steele, 2018). Based on their own abilities and the objectives they hope to achieve, teachers can negotiate and choose a method to use in the classroom, improve material selection that meets the students' needs in both content and language (DelliCarpini, 2009), and promote cultural diversity recognition (Abrams & Ferguson, 2005).

Teacher collaboration is acknowledged for improving collegial relationships among teachers. From a social and psychological view, regular gatherings in a supportive environment develop strong interpersonal bonds that help build self-esteem. Through communication and support, teachers develop a sense of purpose and professional belonging (De Lay, 2009). Interdisciplinary collaboration can develop respect for each other's work (Gustafsson, 2020), bridge gaps between disciplines, and establish shared foundations for future development. Teacher collaboration also reduces teaching-

related stress (Shakenova, 2017) and helps teachers feel less isolated (Stewart & Perry, 2005), enhances self-efficacy (Shachar & Shmuelewitz, 1997), promotes more positive attitudes toward teaching (Brownell et al., 1997), and increases higher levels of trust (Tschannen-Moran, 2001).

Furthermore, collaboration is positively related to student achievement. It gives teachers ways to help students feel more confident (Chanock et al., 2012), encourages critical thinking, improves the ability to modify teaching methods (Stewart & Perry, 2005) and facilitates student learning (Lo, 2020). When teachers work together, they maintain better focus on academic outcomes and reduce classroom behavior issues compared to individual work.

In EMI settings, collaboration among language and content lecturers is very productive because subject lecturers know the knowledge of their specific field better than the language lecturers while language lecturers know more about language learning than the subject lecturers. Through collaboration, content lecturers can develop linguistic meta-knowledge (Zappa-Hollman, 2018; Jaidev & Chan, 2018) and gain insights into the discipline-specific language needs of students (Chanock, 2013). They can receive tailored language support, especially in speaking and writing skills, to enhance their lecture delivery. With support from language lecturers, subject lecturers who lack confidence in their language skills can improve their self-esteem (Nieto Moreno de Diezmas & Fernández Barrera, 2021). Teacher collaboration has proven successful in Japanese institutions since it enables language teachers to help content teachers with material preparation, monitor students' learning progress, address issues related to academic language use and improve student achievement (Brown & Bradford, 2018). Meanwhile, English lecturers can understand better the academic content and language demands in EMI courses. Language lecturers can also improve their discipline-specific knowledge by observing classes and co-planning with subject lecturers. Teacher collaboration, therefore, can contribute to the professional development of both language and content lecturers (Dearden & Akincioglu, 2016; Macaro et al. 2018). This two-way learning can lead to more effective teaching practices for both groups.

In short, teacher collaboration can benefit teachers in many ways. This collaborative environment transforms teaching from an isolated activity into a shared professional practice where knowledge and experience are developed together. By sharing the preparation and assessment workload, teachers reduce individual teaching burdens. By giving each other support, teachers have the energy, organizational skills and resources to manage daily work challenges that would exhaust an individual teacher. In EMI settings, collaboration among language and content lecturers offers mutual benefits since it offers them a great chance to grow, excel, support one another and develop EMI faculty competencies. This collaboration is one of the potential solutions to address the linguistic and pedagogical challenges commonly faced by content teachers while supporting their professional development, especially developing their language proficiency and teaching skills (Macaro & Tian, 2020; Rifiyanti & Dewi, 2023).

Research examining the benefits of content and language lecturer collaboration in Vietnamese EMI contexts, particularly in medical universities, remains limited, creating a gap this study aims to address.

2.4. Challenges of Teacher Collaboration

Teacher collaboration can be influenced by individual factors including teachers' beliefs, experiences, and personalities (Trent, 2010), discipline knowledge (Mousa, 2012), and willingness to collaborate. Practical barriers such as finding like-minded colleagues with mutual trust, and allocating sufficient planning time, alongside scheduling conflicts, individual work habits and openness to change significantly affect collaborative success (Lasagabaster, 2018).

One of the most significant challenges to teacher collaboration is differences in teachers' perceptions. When teachers share similar perspectives, they collaborate more effectively (Honigsfeld & Dove, 2016). Many teachers lack a clear understanding of what collaboration means and their specific role within it. Despite favoring collaborative work, teachers often do not know how to implement collaboration effectively, creating tensions between colleagues and affecting engagement (Jeon, 2010). Sharing the same view, Davison (2015) highlights that teacher collaboration among content and language teachers can be hindered by personality conflicts, differences in teaching philosophies, prioritization of subject content over language requirements and unclear definition of teachers' roles during the collaborative process. For example, language teachers might struggle to understand discipline-specific language demands while content teachers might overlook students' language needs.

Time constraints also hinder the collaboration process. Collaboration requires time investment. Teachers usually complain that their learning and sharing activities take place on holidays because they do not have enough free time during the teaching day (Cook & Collinson, 2013), which leads to irregular and informal collaborative exchanges (Bell & Baecher, 2012). Therefore, providing teachers with sufficient planning time is necessary (David, 2009). If teachers have common time, they can share and collaborate more (Cook & Collinson, 2013). Without enough planning time, lecturers might not discuss adequate objectives and responsibilities (Giles, 2018).

Teachers in many countries not only deal with a tight schedule at schools but also have to do additional work for financial support (Hiep, 2001). McDiarmid (1994) notes that public and policy perceptions remain unchanged: "They continue to think teachers are working only when they are with their students." This misconception results in inadequate support for the time and resources teachers need to change their teaching practices (p.2).

Besides the major barriers above, the success of collaboration depends heavily on teachers' attitudes and trust. Teachers' attitudes and efforts, especially levels of willingness, significantly affect collaboration and its outcomes (Davison, 2015). Supporting this finding, Luo (2014) confirms that a lot of challenges result from teachers' negative attitudes, including fear of experimentation and insufficient preparation for collaboration. Lecturers often demonstrate reluctance and doubt, preferring to work independently within their comfort zones to protect the field they teach and resist external influences on their teaching practices (DuFour & Burnette, 2002), especially when they fear losing their independence and self-determination. This situation is even more severe if teachers are not in the same department. Most offer advice only when asked, significantly limiting opportunities for meaningful collaboration among teachers in other departments. Respect is another important element (Silva & Morgado, 2005). Teachers may be reluctant to work together when they lack openness and respect for their partners (Shakenova, 2017).

Regarding institutional factors, school support, culture, and policies, especially lack of compensation affect collaboration practices (Lo, 2020). A survey by Leonard and Leonard (2003) in forty-five north Louisiana schools pointed out many reasons preventing teacher collaboration. The interviewed teachers admitted that without monetary reward, teachers are unwilling to take on additional responsibilities. Lack of monitoring and evaluation of collaborative practices can hinder the establishment of collaboration at all its stages. Without structure, collaboration is often perceived as unvalued and unproductive (Luo, 2014).

These aforementioned factors highlight the complexity of teacher collaboration, where many factors significantly influence its practices. The specific challenges in Vietnamese EMI contexts require investigation to develop contextually appropriate insights.

2.5. Teacher' Belief and Teacher's Belief on Teacher Collaboration

2.5.1. Teacher' Belief

Borg (2003) interprets "teacher's belief" as teacher's perception. To a larger extent, it is regarded as the teachers' cognition, which encompasses what a teacher thinks, knows, and believes.

Teacher's belief is defined as the teacher's perspective or his viewpoint on teaching and learning (Khader, 2012). It reflects personal perspectives on teaching and learning processes.

According to Abdi and Asadi (2015), teacher's belief on teaching and learning is affected by his own learning experiences, which were established during his school time. These experiences serve as a lens through which he interprets new information and processes materials, significantly influencing teaching methods. Pitikornpuangpetch and Suwanarak (2021) note that these beliefs influence teaching approaches, classroom decisions, teacher development and student outcomes.

2.5.2. Teachers' Beliefs on Teacher Collaboration

Teachers generally view teacher collaboration positively. They acknowledge the value of collaboration such as improving learning outcomes, sharing responsibilities, influencing student academic development, helping teachers share teaching burdens, facilitating competent teaching teamwork (Austin, 2001), providing disciplinary connections (Stewart, 2001), reducing feelings of isolation among teachers, enhancing teachers' sense of effectiveness and satisfaction (Khalid et al., 2016) and benefiting both professional development and teaching quality (Guarda & Helm, 2017).

They also recognize the associated challenges. Some teachers may feel uneasy when they start to work together. Some authors view collaboration among language and content lecturers as stressful for both because they operate in "shadow structures" between disciplinary boundaries (Lemert, 1990, p. 6), where neither has status as a specialist (Oberg, 2009). In addition, Arkoudis (2006) identified power imbalances and status differences between language and content lecturers. In many cases, language teachers often find themselves in a less authoritative position due to their perceived lack of disciplinary knowledge (Creese, 2002). Reid and Null (2006) highlight divergent priorities, that is language teachers concentrate on the learning and teaching process while EMI teachers focus on content scope. Dearden (2018) notes that there is significant concern about language teachers' ability to understand complex subject matter outside their expertise area, as this is not their primary field of training. These factors contribute to skepticism about successful collaboration among language and content teachers, leading to content instructors' reluctance to engage in collaborative practices. As Yuksel and Altay (2024) stated, "the lack of collaboration seen in many EMI contexts can be explained via different factors, such as skepticism or resistance shown by the content instructors" (p.5).

The gap between theoretical benefits and practical implementation challenges suggests that teacher beliefs about collaboration may vary significantly based on various factors, which this study aims to investigate.

3. Methodology

This research aims at obtaining a deeper understanding of the participants' beliefs about language and content teacher collaboration. Data were collected through sources of information such as interviews and questionnaires.

The explanatory sequential mixed methods design is employed. The researchers "collect quantitative and qualitative information sequentially in two phases, with one form of data collection following and informing the other" (Creswell, 2018, p.553).

This sequential approach, which involves collecting and analyzing quantitative data before conducting qualitative data collection (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017), allows researchers to use the qualitative phase to elaborate on and explain the quantitative results, providing deeper insights into the initial findings. Combining quantitative and qualitative data helps improve the validity and reliability of data and produce more complete findings.

3.1. The context of the study and participants

The current study was conducted at a medical university in the Mekong Delta (Vietnam) in the academic year 2024-2025. This university has academic units: Faculty of Medicine, Faculty of Pharmacy, Faculty of Odonto – Stomatology, Faculty of Public Health, Faculty of Nursing and Medical Technology, Faculty of Basic Sciences, and Skills Training Unit. While these faculties offer various programs, English as a medium of instruction has only been implemented at the Faculty of Medicine for Indian students since 2022. In other words, at this research site, EMI programs are in the beginning stages of implementation. The institution also represents a typical higher education setting where EMI is implemented for international students.

Complete sampling is employed for the quantitative phase. In the early phase of EMI implementation, the number of EMI lecturers is small and easily accessible. Therefore, the entire population of EMI lecturers at the medical university (89 lecturers) at the time of research was invited to participate. Of these, 76 Vietnamese university lecturers (36 female, 40 male) responded and participated in the study, constituting a response rate of 85.39%. All participants hold postgraduate degrees, have varied teaching experience and consent to participate in the research. Since all the participants and the researcher of the study work at the same institution, data collection is convenient. It also provides the researcher with more chances to gather reliable data.

Participants are divided into three age groups: 57.9% are between the ages of 25 and 35, 39.5% are between the ages of 36 and 45 and 2.6% are over the age of 46.

52.6% of teachers have 10 years or more of teaching experience. Most of them are relatively new to EMI programs, with 77.9% of lecturers having only taught for 1-3 semesters.

Their English proficiency levels are: C2 (3.9% of lecturers), C1 (22.4% of lecturers), and B2 (50% of lecturers), IELTS 5.5– 6.5 (6.6%), and Bachelor's degree in English (17.1%).

For the qualitative phase, in-depth interviews are employed to scaffold findings from the questionnaire and provide the richness of description (Dörnyei, 2007). Purposive sampling was used to select interviewees, which ensured rich and varied perspectives on collaboration beliefs.

Three content lecturers with diverse teaching experiences, age groups, levels of EMI involvement, and teaching backgrounds are representative of the specific institutional context being studied. The first lecturer interviewed is the department head, who provides the managerial perspective. The second lecturer serves as the department's academic affairs officer. He offers the perspective of someone with the most student contact, listening to student feedback and managing departmental training-related matters. The last lecturer is one who has taught more frequently in EMI classrooms compared to other lecturers. They provide valuable insights into lecturers' beliefs on teacher collaboration in a medical university at early implementation stages of EMI.

3.2. Research questions

The following research question was addressed: What are content lecturers' beliefs about teacher collaboration in an EMI setting?

3.3. Instruments and Data collection

Data were collected through questionnaires, which were administered to EMI lecturers via email, followed by qualitative data collected through individual interviews with three lecturers who teach different subjects.

The questionnaire was delivered to all participants to cover the participant demographics information (gender, age, teaching experience, English proficiency), to inquire what teachers understand about collaboration, their preferred collaboration types, willingness to collaborate, perceived benefits and barriers, support factors needed, and their personal feasibility beliefs for implementing language-content teacher collaboration in an EMI setting.

Three lecturers with different ages and teaching experiences were invited to individual interviews. Each interview lasted around 30 minutes to explore EMI lecturers' beliefs regarding collaboration with language lecturers. The participants' responses enriched the researchers' understanding of content lecturers' collaboration views and their perceived requirements for effective teacher collaboration implementation.

To administer the survey, consent was obtained from the lecturers at the research site. All interviews were conducted with permission. The language used was Vietnamese to avoid misunderstanding and to help the interviewees feel more comfortable expressing their opinions, and then the researcher translated the interviews into English. Moreover, the participants' real names were not mentioned. Pseudonyms like CL1 (content lecturer 1), CL2 (content lecturer 2) and CL3 (content lecturer 3) were used for individual lecturers in order to protect participant confidentiality.

3.4. Data analysis

Quantitative data from questionnaires were analyzed using SPSS 26.0 with descriptive statistics including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. Results were presented in charts. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize all data.

Interview data were processed qualitatively through thematic analysis. Responses of the participants were recorded, transcribed, coded, and analyzed to identify recurring patterns and themes. The researcher worked on the transcription, coded the data first and identified the major themes; then data were checked by a research assistant.

The procedure of qualitative analysis is as following: reading through the scripts, highlighting keywords, coding these keywords, putting the codes into categories, and grouping the categories into themes. Then, we discuss with each other to come to a consensus on the final themes that could help explain the quantitative data (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

The integration of both types of data where "the initial quantitative exploration leads to generalizable results through the second qualitative phase" (Creswell, 2018, p.555) helps increase the trustworthiness of the research.

4. Results and Discussion

Collected data were analyzed and results were presented under the categories of "EMI lecturers' understanding of teacher collaboration", "EMI lecturers' beliefs about the benefits of content-language teacher collaboration", "EMI lecturers' beliefs about barriers to content-language teacher collaboration" and "EMI lecturers' beliefs about supporting factors for teacher collaboration".

4.1. EMI lecturers' understanding on teacher collaboration

Regarding the level of understanding about teacher collaboration, the collected data show that 34.2% view "teacher collaboration" as sharing ideas, 55.3% see it as collecting experiences and knowledge to enhance teaching, 42.1% consider it as an opportunity for professional development

through shared experiences, and 76.3% recognize it as gathering and sharing skills/knowledge for mutual professional development of teachers and students. The results show that lecturers do understand the nature of collaboration, as shown by the highest agreement of 76.3% selecting the most comprehensive definition, which acknowledges benefits for both teacher and student development.

When asked to define teacher collaboration in their own words according to how they perceive it, content lecturers defined it as a systematic and intentional process in which teachers work together to share knowledge, experience, and teaching strategies with the common goal of improving teaching quality and enhancing student learning outcomes. This collaborative approach involves continuous professional development, mutual support, and the exchange of expertise to create more effective educational practices and achieve better academic results for students.

The participants' responses revealed key common elements that consistently occurred, such as "work together", "share experience", "share knowledge", "improve teaching quality", "ongoing support", "resource exchange", and "enhance student learning". The keywords they used demonstrate the features of teacher collaboration and their understanding of its purpose. In other words, their answers showed that content lecturers are aware of the nature and importance of collaboration. Most participants understand that teacher collaboration is not only sharing but also a purposeful process. They understand it as a "systematic and intentional process", not a spontaneous activity.

The results also showed that 82.8% of lecturers support collaboration with English lecturers. Lecturers are willing to share their teaching concerns with colleagues (93.4%) and feel comfortable asking colleagues for assistance when facing challenges in teaching (85.5%). This aligns with previous research findings, in which Dimova and Kling (2018) found that lecturers teaching international students typically show more positive attitudes toward language-content collaboration than those with primarily local students.

The findings reveal a high level of lecturers' openness and high trust among colleagues. The willingness to share and comfort in seeking support reflect a supportive working environment. This indicates that lecturers have overcome psychological barriers and no longer view requiring assistance as a weakness. That lecturers feel comfortable asking colleagues for assistance when facing teaching difficulties signals that they actively accept criticism and feedback from colleagues. This psychological safety environment allows for the implementation of new approaches, especially in the context of interdisciplinary education, which requires extensive collaboration between staff from different faculties. The research findings showed a positive result, which promises the potential for establishing teacher collaboration. As Muckenthaler et al. (2020) state, "a positive, open fundamental attitude towards collaboration, therefore, is an important condition for team work" (p.16).

Regarding preferred forms of collaboration, the results show that lecturers are most interested in collaborative development of teaching materials (68%), observing each other and providing feedback (61.3%). They are also interested in participating in teacher networks established for teacher professional development (61.3%) and collaborative modification of instructional content (54.6%).

The statistics reveal that lecturers focus on long-term professional development, which reflects practical needs for appropriate EMI materials and desires to improve teaching skills through colleague feedback. This also reflects Vietnam's EMI context with the urgent needs for enhancing quality EMI staff and teaching materials. As Le (2012) notes, there is a lack of materials in Vietnam's EMI context. Many programs adopt foreign curricula unsuitable for local contexts, creating urgent needs for materials for EMI programs.

Another collaboration form that also receives considerable attention, that is collaborating online through digital platforms like Zoom and Google Meet (53.3%). This result reveals that lecturers prioritize collaboration forms that allow information sharing, enabling greater flexibility in time.

4.2. Lecturers' beliefs about the benefits of content and language lecturer collaboration in EMI settings

Lecturers generally hold positive beliefs about teacher collaboration. They recognize that teacher collaboration brings many benefits. Especially, the >46 age group showed the highest agreement with benefits (4.42), reflecting their experience and confidence in recognizing collaboration's practical value, sharing and learning. Their awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses allows them to view collaboration as an opportunity for knowledge enhancement rather than a threat.

Questions for this category focus on four main clusters: "Professional Development", "Knowledge Exchange & Resource Sharing", "Work Efficiency & Problem Solving" and "Collegiality & Well-being". Figure 1 below presents the results of participants' responses in terms of the mean for each item.

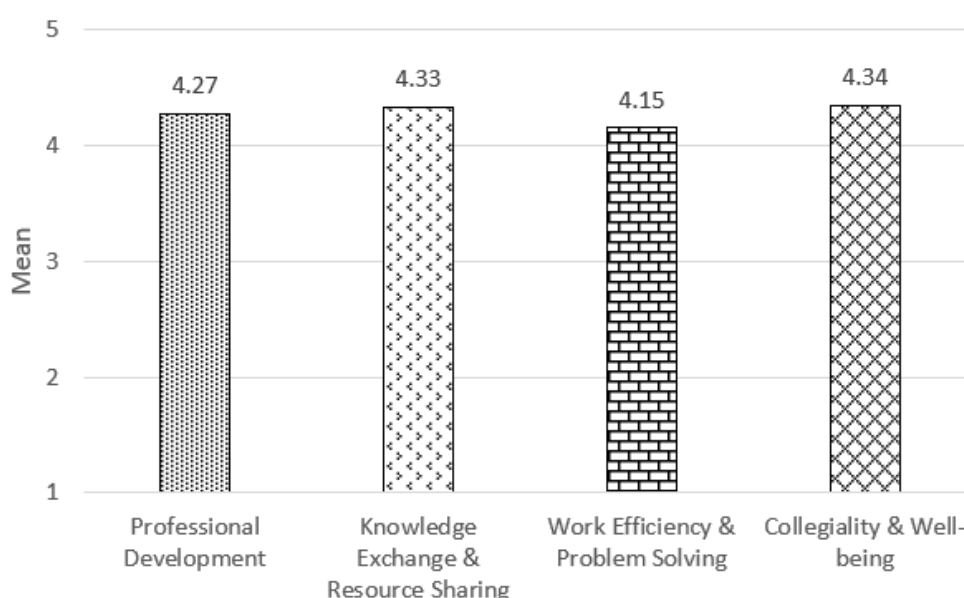


Figure 1. Lecturers' agreement with benefits of language-content teacher collaboration

All four clusters have high agreement rates (ranging from 4.15 to 4.34 on a 5-point scale), showing EMI lecturers highly appreciate what content – language lecturer collaboration can offer them. As evident in Figure 1, all the means reach values over 4.

The mean of "Collegiality & Well-being" is the highest (4.34), the mean of "Knowledge Exchange & Resource Sharing" is in the second position (4.33), the mean of "Professional Development" ranks third (4.27), and the mean of "Work Efficiency & Problem Solving" is the lowest (4.15). It is rare for participants to disagree with the statements concerning benefits of teacher collaboration. The gap between clusters is very small.

The factor "Collegiality & Well-being" receives the highest rating, which demonstrates that EMI lecturers highly value a positive working environment, and emotional support from colleagues is of great importance.

High scores with low variance reflect positive beliefs which may be based on previous experiences in daily work. As CL3 said:

I support teacher collaboration among language and content lecturers in EMI settings. Previously, when I published a textbook, I asked an English lecturer from another university to review and help edit it. Together, we produced a publication that received praise....

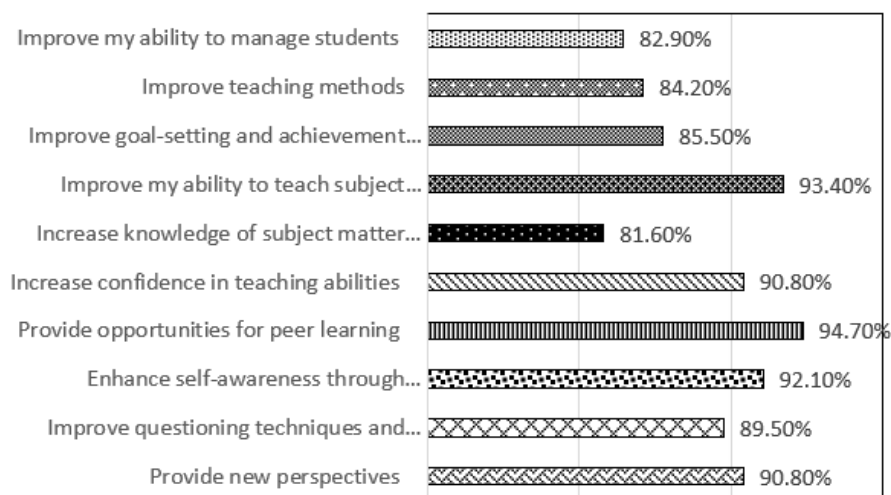


Figure 2. Benefits of teacher collaboration for Professional Development

First, the results obtained from the questionnaires reveal that the large majority of EMI lecturers recognize the benefits of teacher collaboration for their professional development. Collected data reveal high agreement levels, ranging from 81.6% to 94.7%. The research findings show that content lecturers believe teacher collaboration provides opportunities for peer learning (94.7%), improves their ability to teach subject content in English (93.4%) and enhances self-awareness through exposure to diverse viewpoints (92.1%). Overall, teachers clearly recognize the value of collaborating with language lecturers, particularly in gaining new perspectives from colleagues.

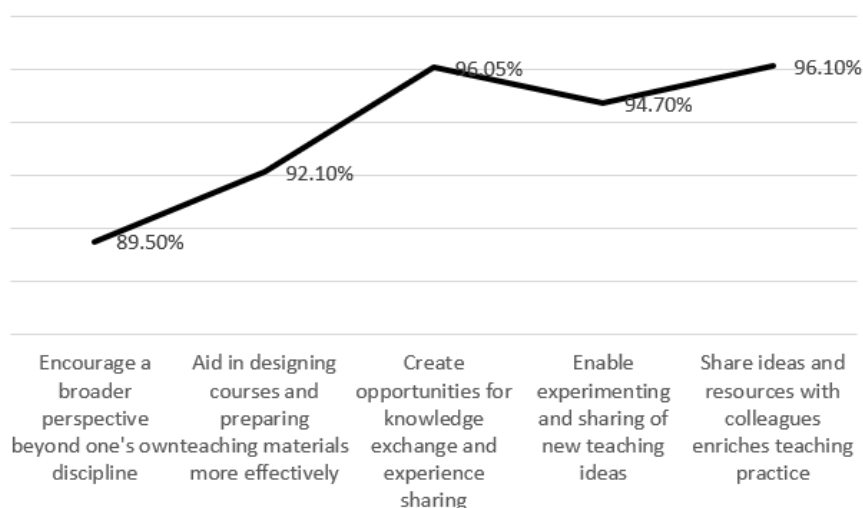


Figure 3. Benefits of teacher collaboration on Knowledge Exchange & Resource Sharing

Second, the research findings on knowledge exchange and resource sharing show a high level of agreement, ranging from 89.5% to 96.1%, which demonstrates practical needs for connection, mutual learning and belief in the ability to develop oneself through sharing with colleagues. High support (>94%) for the idea that teacher collaboration enables experimenting with new ideas proves that the educational environment is encouraging innovation.

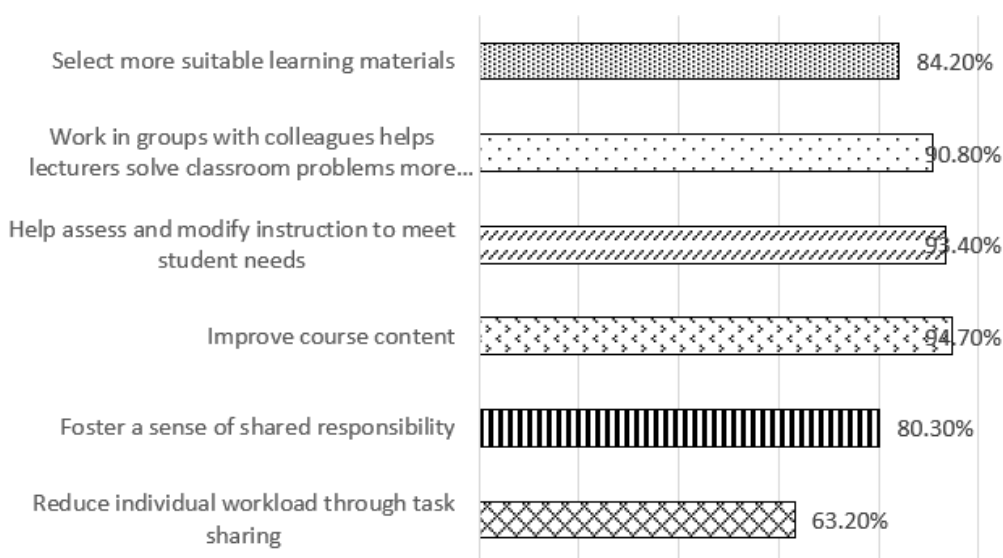


Figure 4. Benefits of teacher collaboration on Work Efficiency & Problem Solving

Third, regarding work efficiency and problem-solving, the item "Improve course content" achieved the highest positive rate. The item "Reduce individual workload through task sharing" had the lowest rate. It can be concluded that EMI lecturers recognize the value of collaboration in enhancing teaching quality and addressing classroom challenges. However, they have lower expectations for reducing personal workload, indicating that collaboration motivation is primarily driven by improving teaching effectiveness rather than personal benefits.

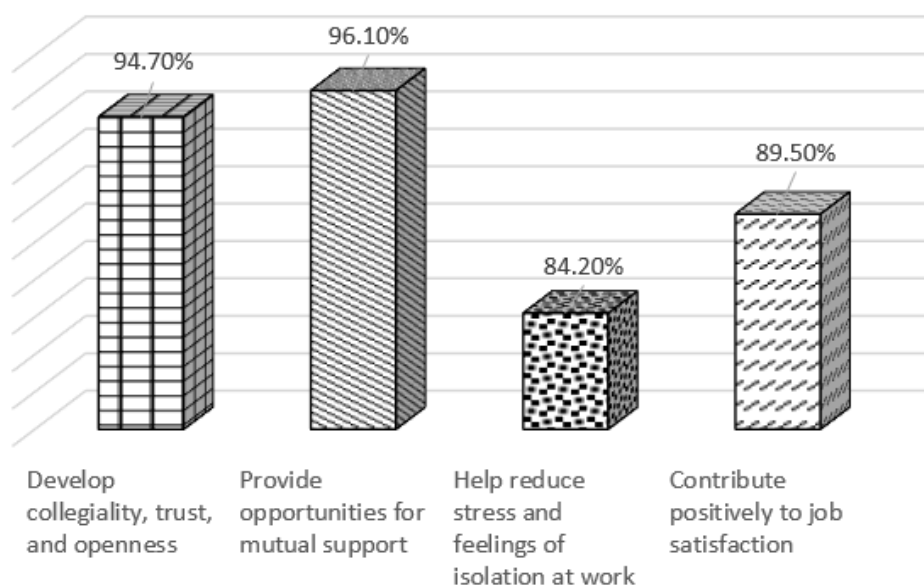


Figure 5. Benefits of teacher collaboration on Collegiality & Well-being

Finally, regarding collegiality and well-being, EMI lecturers highly value collaboration's role in building collegial relationships and well-being. This shows EMI lecturers believe collaboration will bring more collective benefits (mutual support, collegiality) than individual benefits (stress reduction, job satisfaction).

The findings correlate well with the results from studies conducted both internationally and domestically, in which EMI lecturers have a strong belief in the benefits of teacher collaboration. Goddard et al. (2007) found that teacher collaboration enhances instructors' professional development. Many studies have reported positive outcomes of collaboration for teachers, including

improved efficacy, more positive attitudes toward teaching, and higher levels of trust. In Amina's study (2021), 70% of ESP teachers stated that collaboration impacts positively on their professional development since they can be continuously involved in developing their teaching skills, knowledge and competencies to optimize their students' learning. This finding was supported by Chau (2017), who conducted a study at Hue University. In his study, he shows that 55.2% of participants report that teacher collaboration enhances teacher knowledge and skills.

At this research site, responses to the question about the benefits of teacher collaboration from the interviews correlate well with the results from the questionnaire. All interviewed content lecturers agreed that collaborating with English lecturers is very necessary and beneficial. They also gave various reasons to support their ideas. CL1 said:

In teaching, to teach my subject effectively, I need to explain my lessons clearly and help students understand the lessons. I need to have my grammar, pronunciation and word choice corrected... We need feedback to improve our instruction, and make it clearer and easier to understand for our students... I believe that thanks to teacher collaboration the lessons will be of higher quality.

CL3 strongly believes teacher collaboration brings benefits for both content and language lecturers. He claimed that:

In the context of teaching in English, collaboration with language lecturers and learning to improve language proficiency is necessary. And, we, content lecturers, can recommend valuable resources for language lecturers to read. We help them expand their professional knowledge. We help them understand more about the medical field and our majors. I believe language and content lecturer collaboration helps content lecturers teach better in the EMI context and language lecturers teach better in the ESP context.

CL2 further explained:

Each individual has their own strengths and weaknesses. Collaboration helps us have partners to learn from and work together to make teaching more effective.

Clearly, medical education is particularly suitable for implementing language-content teacher collaboration because the discipline involves complex terminology and clinical situations, where content lecturers have to explain complex medical procedures and diagnoses. EMI lecturers greatly benefit from collaborating with language lecturers who can assist with and discuss linguistic challenges, especially with their pronunciation. This collaboration is necessary in EMI settings, especially when Vietnamese lecturers have to teach foreign students. Thorough lesson preparation will result in increased content lecturers' confidence in teaching in English. The collaborative process also provides language lecturers with an opportunity to expand their medical knowledge.

Moreover, pressures to increase institutional rankings and international publication also contribute to content lecturers' preference for supportive networks and collaboration. All interviewed lecturers emphasized the importance of collaborating with language lecturers during the process of writing for publication. They share a common viewpoint. For example, CL1 revealed:

To ensure that English teaching materials, when published and widely distributed, are of high quality, they need to be checked grammatically and require feedback from English lecturers. Similarly, a research paper that is carefully reviewed and edited linguistically will increase the chances of international publication.

In my previous research when investigating EMI lecturers' needs for professional development and teaching quality enhancement, they mentioned their desire to seek language support from language lecturers. This can be explained by the fact that when teaching international students, lecturers are forced to use English. The requirement for using English at work increases their need and motivation to improve English. This is a common desire among many EMI lecturers, as they admit that "when not using our mother tongue, we have certain limitations. Having the possibility to be assisted by a language specialist seems essential to me in order to contribute to carrying out quality teaching." (Bienzobas et al., 2019, p.164)

This is consistent with Khalid et al. (2016), who highlighted teachers' strong belief in their colleagues' capabilities. Participants in their study reported, "When observing, I can reflect on myself, I got to know my weaknesses and strengths...I can compare my teaching with the other teachers and think of my own teaching... consider my weak points and strong points...I developed my communication skills; I'm more open and accepting to other teachers' ideas. In terms of teaching, I improved the way I give instructions..." (p.8). In another study, participants also emphasize benefits of teacher collaboration as follows, "Collaborating with my colleagues has been incredibly beneficial for my professional growth. I have learned so much from their diverse perspectives and experiences" (Khasawneh et al., 2023, p.449).

Such viewpoints allow us to conclude that the investigated teachers have a strong belief in how teacher collaboration can benefit them. The collaboration between content and language lecturers is highly appreciated.

4.3. EMI lecturers' beliefs on barriers of content-language teacher collaboration in EMI settings

Despite recognizing the benefits, teacher collaboration in practice would be limited due to time constraints and workload barriers, lack of willingness, structural and administrative barriers, teachers' personal issues and professional differences and loss of autonomy.

These barriers create a complex picture of interconnected challenges that require solutions addressing both individual and institutional factors.

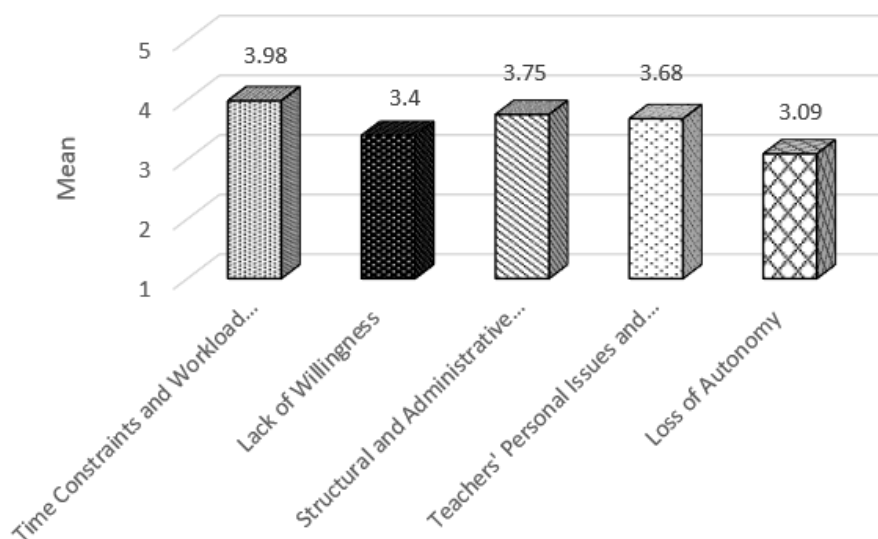


Figure 6. Lecturers' agreement with barriers of language & content teacher collaboration

The mean of "Time constraints and workload barriers" is the highest (3.98), the mean of "Structural and administrative barriers" is in the second position (3.75), the mean of "Teachers' personal issues and professional differences" ranks third (3.68), followed by "Lack of willingness" (3.4) and the mean of "Loss of autonomy" is the lowest (3.09). The relatively high variance in responses suggests that lecturers' beliefs about these barriers are highly individualized, reflecting diverse experiences in the same institution.

First, regarding time constraints and workload barriers, 77.6% of lecturers agreed on the lack of time to collaborate. They believed scheduling difficulties, especially for teachers from different departments which might negatively impact collaboration (81.6%).

Clearly, "Collaboration takes time" is a common saying, frequently mentioned in previous research. Teachers always complain of heavy workloads, so they cannot afford extra time to

collaborate with each other. Participants' complaints in Khalid et al.'s (2016) study were that "I'm in favour...but it was kind of time consuming...sometimes we have other work to think about..." (p.15)... In Chau's (2017) study, "Besides schoolwork, they have to do housework, take care of children, and do a lot of unnamed work. They are too busy to take part in collaborative activities. Even teachers teaching in the same schools have classes in different time slots, so it is hard to find common time to work together" (p.18). Khasawneh et al. (2023) also found "One of the main challenges to teacher collaboration is a lack of time. We are all so busy with our responsibilities that finding time to collaborate becomes challenging" (p.449).

Time constraints are particularly severe in medical schools, where clinical responsibilities often compete with teaching duties. Content lecturers often operate on unpredictable clinical schedules, creating temporal misalignment with language lecturers who typically follow more structured academic timetables. Content lecturers must constantly switch between different professional identities - clinician, lecturer, and researcher - each with distinct time demands and priorities. CL1 reported,

Currently, staff members at this university have to handle multiple tasks, sometimes having to work at both the hospital and handle administrative duties. In a context where staff members do not have much time, I have concerns about the effectiveness as well as the success of this activity. However, if they want to, they can arrange everything. They just need the collaboration implementation to be effective, showing them that the time invested is worthwhile.

CL3 shared the same idea with CL1 and added:

As long as they want to, they will do very well. As long as they want to, they can arrange the time.

This aligns with Hiep's (2001) view: "all teachers can find some time in their busy schedules to engage in professional improvement activities [if] teachers want to do" (p.41), which highlights the importance of addressing motivational factors.

The second obstacle comes from the lecturers' unwillingness to participate in teacher collaboration activities (57.9%). Teachers believed in the benefits of teacher collaboration but they were hesitant to work overtime (48.7%), especially to perform unpaid overtime work (52.6%). The two barriers related to overtime and unpaid work show that lecturers view EMI collaboration as additional work, not a core responsibility. In addition, this reflects that there is a lack of financial support policies from institutions for teacher collaboration and the current workload is already overwhelming.

Another serious issue is structural and administrative barriers. According to Burton (2015), some collaborative practices are unstructured which may lead to the perception that collaboration is unproductive and undervalued compared to other school activities. At this research site, 72.3% of lecturers believe structural and administrative barriers will hinder the implementation of collaboration. Results are listed in order as follows: lack of administrative support for collaboration (72.3%), absence of praise or rewards for collaboration (69.7%), lack of appropriate conditions or resources for collaborative activities, such as meeting rooms for discussion and equipment (60.6%) and insufficient monitoring of collaboration (59.2%). This reflects the view that clear policies from leadership regarding content-language teacher collaboration, establishment of administrative procedures to support collaborative activities and proper allocation of time, resources and rewards are needed, which helps ensure collaboration is systematic rather than spontaneous.

Finally, regarding loss of autonomy, through the questionnaire, we obtained equal results for agreement (>30%) and disagreement (>30%), with the remainder being neutral (>30%). This distribution suggests that autonomy concerns are highly context-dependent and may relate to individual differences in professional identity, career stage, personality traits and previous collaborative experiences. It also reveals that besides those who lack practical experience and thus

maintain a neutral attitude, there is a group of lecturers who value autonomy. They believe they will feel constrained and pressured to conform when working collaboratively. The fear of losing autonomy and self-determination can be explained by the fact that in collaborative contexts, people have to adjust their ideas to match those of colleagues, potentially sacrificing individual ideas to maintain group harmony (Johnson, 2003), while teachers are traditionally characterized by their desire for autonomy, with a proclivity for independent decision-making (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009). From a psychological perspective, this fear may stem from threats to professional identity. In the Vietnamese context, this is further complicated by cultural values around "face" and professional status, where seeking help or adjusting one's approach might be perceived as a sign of inadequacy in prestige or knowledge.

When implementing teacher collaboration in the future, there should be gradual implementation. We can start with the positive group, creating successful case studies and persuading the neutral group through training programs. This strategy helps demonstrate that teacher collaboration can enhance rather than diminish individual expertise. Also, it is important to maintain a flexible collaborative framework, allowing voluntary participation rather than force participation, which will be more effective than rigid mandatory forms of collaboration.

The fourth barrier to implementing language and content teacher collaboration relates to lecturers' personal issues and professional differences. These personal challenges often prove more difficult to address than structural barriers, as they involve participants' beliefs, personality traits, and professional identities that are resistant to change.

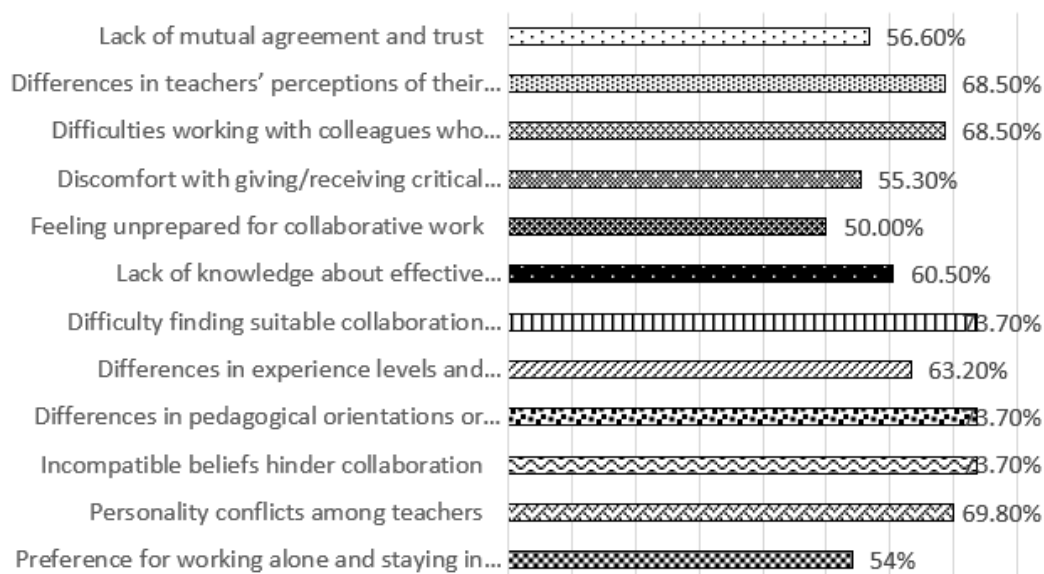


Figure 7. Teachers' Personal Issues and Professional Differences

Key findings are that 73.7% of lecturers believe it is difficult to find suitable collaboration partners. Incompatible beliefs and differences in teaching orientations or teaching philosophies will create challenges for collaboration between language and content teachers. The high percentage (69.8%) of agreement on the idea that "Personality conflicts among teachers are one of the factors that hinder effective teacher collaboration among content and language lecturers in EMI settings" indicates that lecturers believe that teacher collaboration requires compatibility in personal characteristics, not just professional expertise. This challenge may be rooted in limited experience with teacher collaborations and insufficient teamwork skills.

As collaborators, language and EMI teachers need to reach mutual understanding for collaboration to function optimally (Yuan, 2023). It is hard to work with someone whose teaching

style and philosophy differ. Although differences can be good when teachers are open and willing to share ideas to broaden their ways of teaching and try new styles (Johnson, 2003), the majority believe differences lead to friction and stress among staff members. In some previous studies, power struggles and dominance of some staff over others were reported. Even, some teachers were critical of colleagues who resisted change, labeling them as "dissenters", "resistors", "back stabbers" and "blockers" (Smith, 2009).

In the data from the questionnaire, one content lecturer suggests that there should be a rotation system where content teachers work with different English teachers periodically. This approach will not only help expose teachers to diverse teaching methods and perspectives and maximize learning opportunities but also reduce personality conflicts by limiting fixed interactions and allowing lecturers to find compatible partners naturally. This recommendation addresses the 73.7% concern about finding suitable partners by creating more collaboration opportunities rather than forming fixed partnerships.

Another interesting finding in this research is that lecturers show that they actively engage in professional networking and are especially open to criticism. This finding contradicts common assumptions about Vietnamese cultural reluctance to give and receive feedback. In Vietnamese culture, people usually avoid conflict. Some Vietnamese are reluctant to give feedback due to psychological barriers such as they do not want to be thought of as immodest; they avoid making others "lose face"; they are afraid of revealing their weaknesses or appearing foolish when expressing new ideas; they do not want to interfere in others' business. However, at this research site, content lecturers seem to overcome these inner obstacles. They are willing to accept others' different ideas. Only a very small percentage (5.3%) still feel uncomfortable giving and receiving critical feedback. One participant explained:

Discovering colleagues' mistakes but not daring to give feedback, feeling afraid of being criticized in front of a crowd are common. Therefore, successful collaboration requires cultural and psychological consideration. If feedback is given with an unfriendly attitude and manner, or in inappropriate space, time, or circumstances, it can directly affect how the recipient receives it, leading to anxiety and consequently affecting the relationship between both parties. However, I believe that since we work in the medical field and do a lot of scientific research that requires high critical thinking, we are accustomed to giving comments, receiving comments, and must be open-minded. For me, that's not a barrier. (CL1)

Personally, I always want to receive feedback and learn new things. (CL2)

I would like to have my mistakes pointed out to me, so I can know what I need to improve and I can do better. (CL3)

Participants' statements clearly convey their openness to constructive criticism, positive attitudes toward feedback and desire for improvement. This openness indicates that scientific culture in medical education and evidence-based practice can contribute greatly to successful teacher collaboration. Furthermore, this finding extends Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) by demonstrating how communities of practice can reshape cultural behaviors when there are strong motivations and clear objectives.

CL3 also shared an interesting idea:

In medical schools, content lecturers at medical schools are highly intelligent, academically excellent, with good educational backgrounds, and take pride in themselves. For effective teacher collaboration, content lecturers need skilled language lecturers with specialized knowledge to support English-medium instruction ... Someone they can trust and admire. Otherwise, it's very difficult for them to listen to others' feedback.

This statement reveals the crucial role of mutual respect in teacher collaboration. This is also a motivation that drives language lecturers to continuously improve their knowledge and expertise.

Furthermore, the need for collaboration drives professional development, ultimately benefiting the entire EMI program.

In short, all EMI lecturers believe that barriers exist in practice. Perceptions of teacher collaboration barriers show that successful implementation requires procedural changes and supportive conditions. However, moderate scores with high variance from the collected data reflect some uncertainty. There are many barriers that only emerge during practice. In other words, they cannot predict all challenges without practical experience.

The younger group (25-35 years old) are those who perceive the most collaboration challenges (3.69), reflecting important psychological and professional characteristics. Younger generations often have many responsibilities (teaching, research, pursuing further studies for academic promotion), making collaboration time an additional pressure. They are typically in the stage of developing their own teaching style and therefore face pressure to prove their competence and worry about their ability to contribute, share, and provide feedback with colleagues.

4.4. EMI lecturers' beliefs on supporting factors for teacher collaboration

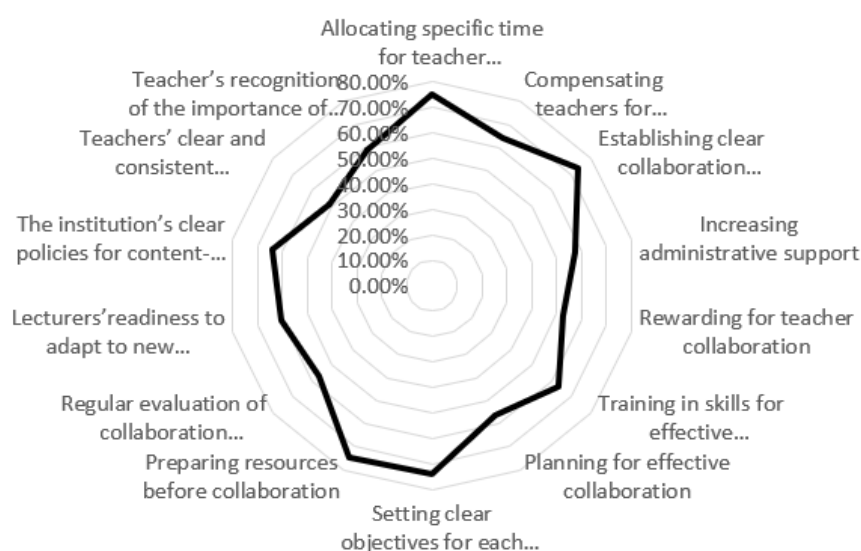


Figure 8. Supporting factors for teacher collaboration

Research results show that in EMI settings, effective implementation of teacher collaboration must come from the lecturers' willingness to participate. They especially need preparation and support. According to Leonard and Leonard (2003), to support teacher collaboration implementation, schools should make schedules that give teachers time to talk during the day, organize classrooms better, provide clear guidance and rewards and expect teachers to really work together in helpful ways. Sharing the same view, Bell and Baecher (2012) state, "Teachers require common meeting times for planning, clearly defined common instructional goals, and compatible working and personality styles" (p.490). Common goals, willingness, openness and trust are needed within the school (Muckenthaler et al., 2020).

At this research site, the research findings show that the two necessary factors for collaboration are "allocating specific time for teacher collaboration" and "preparing resources before collaboration" (75%). This indicates that lecturers prioritize having sufficient time and adequate teaching materials. This aligns with previous research, where researchers recommend organizing schedules that give teachers time to collaborate so that language and content teachers can develop consistent ways of working together (Peercy, Ditter, & DeStefano, 2017) and providing important resources to make their teamwork effective (DelliCarpini, 2018). Researchers in previous studies suggest having time for collaboration incorporated into the school day (Conoley & Conoley, 2010).

This is quite necessary because teacher collaboration is believed to be most beneficial when it is job-embedded and becomes part of teaching practice.

Establishing clear collaboration guidelines and setting clear objectives for each collaborative session (73.68%) were also highly prioritized, followed by the institution's clear policies for content-language teacher collaboration and compensating teachers for collaboration outside school hours (64.4%). These findings show the importance of guidance, policy and financial support.

Training in skills for effective collaboration techniques (63.1%), lecturers' readiness to adapt to new teaching methods through collaboration (60.5%) and teachers' recognition of the importance of teacher collaboration in their teaching (59.2%) are other supportive factors, demonstrating the need for developing collaborative competencies and awareness of collaboration's importance.

Increasing administrative support (57.8%), planning for effective collaboration and regular evaluation of collaboration effectiveness (56.5%) had lower percentages of agreement. Rewards for teacher collaboration (52.6%) and teachers' clear and consistent understanding of collaboration (51.3%) had the lowest rates. These results show EMI lecturers prioritize practical factors (time, resources, clear guidelines) over abstract ones (rewards, awareness). This reflects the need for practical support to facilitate effective collaboration. Therefore, to make teacher collaboration feasible, it is important to ensure that teachers have the support to participate in teacher collaboration. This aligns with previous research. As Chau noted, administrators should provide support for teachers to conduct teacher collaboration activities. Infrastructural support including arrangements, shared office spaces, and coordinated schedules proves critical in developing positive collaboration beliefs in EMI contexts (Wilkinson, 2017).

Finally, when asked whether collaborating with language lecturers is feasible within the current work schedule, 80.2% of lecturers believe collaboration is feasible. This is a positive signal which shows readiness to participate in teacher collaboration and potential for its success. No one can assess feasibility more accurately than the lecturers themselves. They understand their conditions and capabilities best.

9.21% of lecturers consider it feasible, but they require time arrangement, institutional support, etc. According to CL1:

The implementation needs a step-by-step process. Avoid rushed implementation

Sharing the same view, CL2 said:

There should be discussion sessions about the difficulties that each EMI lecturer is facing. From their challenges, we can find solutions to help them.

As Dove and Honigsfeld (2017) state, challenges of teacher collaboration can be overcome when teachers share similar goals. CL2 emphasized:

For effective collaboration, the most important thing is establishing a common objective. Content lecturers and language lecturers must work together toward shared goals with careful planning. Without clear common objectives and plans, teachers cannot know what to do or how to work together effectively. Only through shared purpose and planning can they collaborate successfully and achieve meaningful results.

All interviewed lecturers emphasized the important role of university and faculty leaders.

The collaboration of leaders is the prerequisite for collaboration between staff of the departments, which will then inspire a general trend for the whole faculty. (CL1)

As I am both a manager and an EMI lecturer, one of the most important things to encourage teacher collaboration is to have consensus, and this consensus must come from the leadership of both sides. (CL2)

If we want the collaboration to run smoothly, there must be support from the leaders. (CL3)

Their emphasis on leadership support indicates that top-down institutional facilitation and administrative coordination are essential for implementing and sustaining effective teacher collaboration.

5. Conclusion

The data for this study were collected in EMI settings where lecturers shared their beliefs about the collaboration among content and language lecturers. Our findings revealed that EMI lecturers have positive attitudes toward collaboration with language lecturers. EMI lecturers have a strong belief in how teacher collaboration can benefit them. However, they also point out many obstacles that hinder teachers from collaborating with their colleagues.

The demands of the current teaching situation have resulted in the need for a collaboration among content lecturers who are experts in their field and have the in-depth knowledge of the subject, with English language teachers who also bring their expertise to the process of teaching. The research findings contribute to the understanding of teacher collaboration and identify the factors supporting teacher collaboration, which provide contextually relevant references for implementing teacher collaboration among content and language lecturers in Vietnamese medical universities offering EMI programs.

The preferred teacher collaboration form, according to EMI lecturers' beliefs, is one that is flexible in time, provides mutual support for personal development, encourages constructive feedback while maintaining individual autonomy and final decision-making authority.

The study provides institutional leaders, policymakers, and lecturers with evidence to establish collaboration in productive forms to promote teacher professional growth, job satisfaction, and academic achievement. This study is also expected to help fill a research gap and pave the way for continued studies to contribute to EMI development in Vietnam.

6. Limitations of the study

The study has several limitations. The sample size is relatively small, which may limit the generalizability of findings. The study focuses on one medical university in the Mekong Delta region, so findings may not fully represent other institutional contexts or disciplines. In addition, the research examines beliefs rather than actual collaborative practices, so the beliefs may sometimes differ from implemented behaviors. As EMI implementation is still in its early stages at the research site, participants' limited experience with formal collaboration may influence their perspectives.

7. Recommendations for further research

As one of the few studies examining EMI lecturers' beliefs about teacher collaboration between content and language lecturers in Vietnamese EMI higher education settings, this research will provide a useful reference for future research on collaboration practices. The data will help researchers gain experiential knowledge based on insights from experienced collaborators, which enables them to analyze the gap between expectation and reality by tracking valuable information on collaboration processes. The research also provides suggestions for future studies to investigate language lecturers' views on collaboration between language and content lecturers in EMI settings.

Declarations

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