Journal of Innovative and Creativity
Journal Homepage: https://joecy.org/index.php/joecy
e-mail: journaljoecy@gmail.com

Faculty of Education
University of Pahlawan Tuanku Tambusai
ISSN 2775-771X (Online)
ISSN 2962-570X (Printed)
5 (2) 2025, Page: 19057-19065

The Learning Outcomes Of Collaborative Writing In Enhancing College Students' Skills In Writing Essay

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Published: Agust , 2025

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effect of collaborative writing on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students' writing apprehension. The research explores whether engaging in collaborative writing activities influences students' levels of anxiety towards writing tasks and their perceived confidence in their writing abilities. qualitative data collection methods were employed, including pre- and a phase of teaching, and writing samples. The findings reveal a significant reduction in writing apprehension among students who participated in collaborative writing activities compared to those who worked individually. Collaborative writing not only provided students with opportunities to receive peer support and feedback but also fostered a sense of shared responsibility and accountability, leading to increased confidence in their writing abilities.

Keywords: Collaborative writing, English as a Foreign Language (EFL), writing apprehension, writing proficiency, learning outcomes

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INTRODUCTION

The issue writing is one of the most difficult skills to master already happening since a long time ago. Sommers (2020) stated that Writing is a particularly difficult task for students because it necessitates critical thinking, clear organization of ideas, and effective self-expression. Mastering this skill requires years of practice and refinement.

Furthermore, relatively few educators who master writing. As stated by Alwasilah (2001) Although writing is widely regarded as the most prestigious language skill, it frequently lacks emphasis within our education system. This neglect results in high school and college students engaging with instructors and professors who may lack sufficient qualifications.

Hence, educators play an important role in enhancing students writing skills. It is in line with Emilia (2010) that highlights writing entails a cyclical process involving numerous revisions of texts. Considering the difficulties students encounter in acquiring writing skills, educators should meticulously evaluate the most efficient approaches to teaching writing. Emilia (2010) underscores that instructors' establishment of precise standards enhances student learning effectiveness.

Collaborative writing comes up as one of the approaches to teaching writing. Research examining the impact of collaborative writing among Thai students consistently demonstrates positive

outcomes. For instance, an experimental study utilizing Google Docs to assess students' collaborative writing abilities confirmed its effectiveness in enhancing students' attitudes, sense of responsibility, and performance (Suwantarathip & Wichadee, 2014).

Moreover, According to Biria and Jafari (2013), collaborative writing serves as a pedagogical strategy to promote increased classroom interaction among learners who typically engage in solitary work. Additionally, collaborative writing integrates all four English language skills, as English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners engage in discussing ideas, listening to each other, reading, and revising their jointly created text.

In the realm of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), collaborative writing extends beyond the creation of a shared text; it embodies collective cognition, allowing two or more individuals to attain insights beyond their individual capacities (Stahl, 2006; Storch, 2013). This collective cognition provides a platform for learning new vocabulary, refining methods of expressing ideas and exchanging thoughts with peers. Through collaboration, EFL learners receive feedback from their peers as they jointly compose and revise texts. Consequently, collaborative writing facilitates the enhancement of learners' cognitive skills and the expansion of their language proficiency.

This research centers on the outcomes of college students' essay writing through the use of collaborative writing as the methodology. This emphasis is considered a unique aspect of this study, as research specifically targeting essays within the realm of collaborative writing is infrequent. Coffin (2010) focuses on students' perspectives toward collaborative writing, followed by Ajmi (2014) on Collaborative Writing in Group Assignments in an EFL/ESL Classroom.

Literature Review

Collaborative writing (CW) is described as the collective creation of a written piece or the collaborative authorship of a text by two or more individuals, wherein these writers jointly claim ownership of the resulting text (Storch, 2011). Within the realm of writing education, the principles of collaborative learning have shaped the understanding of collaborative writing. At its core, collaborative learning advocates for a learner-centered approach and active participation, wherein individuals work together in unified groups or pairs to negotiate roles, tasks, and responsibilities, with the aim of problem-solving, task completion, or the creation of new works (Inglehart et al., 2002; Smith & Macgregor, 1992).

According to Storch (2011), collaborative writing (CW) has become widespread in university education, particularly in native language (L1) writing contexts. Storch differentiates CW from peer feedback activities, arguing that peer feedback does not involve shared ownership of the written work. However, other scholars, including Mutwarasibo (2013), Widodo (2013), Al-Nafiseh (2013), and Kim &

Eklundh (2001), propose that peer learning or feedback constitutes a form of collaborative writing known as the "workshopping pattern." This approach involves students working in pairs or small groups to discuss concepts and solve problems. Peer feedback can be oral or written, and through this process, students revise and improve their writing skills. In L1 writing, numerous studies have highlighted the significant benefits of CW, such as enhancing reflective thinking, audience awareness, and understanding. Additionally, CW allows writers to take on various roles not typically assumed during individual writing, including critical readers, sounding boards, and co-authors (Weissberg, 2006).

Additionally, Swain (2000) highlighted that collaborative writing (CW) involves learners in problem-solving tasks. In the realm of second language (L2) writing, Dobao's study (2011) explored the advantages of CW activities by examining how the number of participants influences the fluency, complexity, and accuracy of written texts, as well as the oral interaction among pairs and groups during collaboration. The research revealed that texts produced by groups exhibited greater accuracy compared to those by pairs or individuals. Moreover, group writing generated more language-related interactions than pair or individual writing. In an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context, Al-Nafiseh (2013) investigated the impact of CW on students' written outputs and discovered that CW practice improved students' written outputs by enhancing their awareness of writers' choices and in-class interaction.

Collaborative writing practice involves both students and teachers actively, aligning with Vygotsky's constructivism theory that emphasizes social interaction. This approach necessitates cognitive and social activities, enabling students to share ideas, knowledge, and skills (Baria & Jafari, 2013; Zaky, 2018). Additionally, collaborative writing adheres to the process writing model, which includes brainstorming, outlining, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. It also incorporates collaborative learning principles, such as group formation and the delegation of roles and responsibilities among group members to manage collaborative tasks (Zaky, 2018). Effective execution of collaborative tasks and activities requires proper training for both students and teachers. Students must agree on their roles and strategies for approaching and completing their collaborative tasks and writings.

METHODS

Participants

This study was conducted at a university in Bandung within a regular class setting, which could affect the reliability of the results. The selected campus had already adopted a genre-based approach. The researcher, familiar with the environment and participants, aimed to conduct the study in a manner

that reflected the typical classroom dynamics. This approach was intended to minimize any unusual behavior from students, despite their awareness of the research being conducted in their class.

This study evaluates students' learning outcomes using collaborative writing approaches in writing activities. It also aims to provide resources for teachers to enhance their instructional delivery design through collaborative writing methods. The participants included the researcher, who served as the lecturer (participant-observer), and 20 college students who voluntarily agreed to participate after being informed about the study's purpose and requirements. The study was conducted over a one-month period.

Data Collection Techniques

A Phase of teaching

This study involved seven teaching sessions, with the researcher acting as the lecturer. The focus was on collaborative writing, utilizing its fundamental principles to teach essay writing. Scholars such as Storch (2011) and Swain (2000) emphasize that collaborative writing engages learners in problem-solving activities and shared ownership of the text, fostering both cognitive and social skills.

The first four sessions introduced the collaborative writing approach, while the remaining sessions concentrated on drafting essays. In the initial meeting, the lecturer shared his personal experiences with the students, drawing parallels between personal storytelling and essay writing. The structure and components of essay writing, including the introduction, body paragraphs, and conclusion, were discussed.

In the following sessions, the lecturer elaborated on the purpose and structure of each essay component. Students analyzed a sample essay, identifying its thesis statement, supporting arguments, and conclusion. During the joint creation phase, the lecturer and students collaboratively wrote an essay to enhance their understanding of constructing a cohesive argument. They brainstormed ideas, created an outline, and drafted paragraphs together.

In the final stages, students wrote their own essays based on topics of personal or academic interest. They began by drafting the introduction, formulating a clear thesis statement, and then proceeded to write the body paragraphs, each supporting the thesis with evidence and analysis. Finally, they crafted a conclusion that summarized their arguments and provided a final perspective.

At the conclusion of the sessions, students' writings were collected to evaluate the learning outcomes of using collaborative writing in teaching. Otter (1992) defines learning outcomes as "what a learner knows or can do as a result of learning."

The researcher also took detailed notes after each session to capture fresh observations (Van Lier, 1998). These observational notes focused on the interactions between the researcher and students

(Manion and Morrison, 2000), aiming to "increase the researcher's awareness of classroom behavior and its effect on students" (Allwright, 1998).

Written Text

Throughout the research program, successive stages included the collection of student essays. These essays served as the primary data for assessing students' development in writing proficiency. According to Kress (1985), the essays reflected the students' struggles to meet the demands of essay writing, including the effects and meanings of various discourses and the forms of written language, as well as their successes in these areas. This aligns with Freebody's (2003) assertion that "in most cases, students' actual achievements can be gauged through the writing of various kinds of texts." Consequently, analyzing student essays is a crucial source of data for evaluating the learning outcomes of employing collaborative writing in teaching essay writing.

Data Analysis

A phase of teaching

In this study, the phases of teaching essay writing were carefully analyzed. The researcher evaluated each stage of the essay writing instruction at the end of every session. This involved examining what students learned in each meeting of the learning activities.

Written text

To analyze the students' learning outcomes from the essay writing phase, several steps were undertaken. Multiple drafts from students were examined, focusing on various aspects such as essay structure and language features. The students' written works were analyzed to determine their proficiency in essay writing, considering grammatical structure, coherence, and organization. These drafts were assessed based on their use of schematic conjunctions, overall structure, and adherence to systemic functional grammar.

The data gathered from the students' essays were used to address the research question. Students for text analysis were selected randomly. A single student's texts were analyzed in depth, aligning with Creswell's (2013) assertion that, in qualitative research, the quality of the data collected is more important than the sample size. A small, well-chosen sample can provide rich, detailed data that generates new insights and understandings.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

A Phase of Teaching

Integrating collaborative writing techniques into the pedagogy of teaching essay composition offers significant advantages, particularly when focusing on college students as the primary cohort. In

the collegiate setting, where students are often grappling with complex ideas and developing their academic voices, collaborative writing serves as a powerful tool for enhancing learning outcomes. By encouraging students to collaborate on essay assignments, instructors provide them with opportunities to engage in meaningful dialogue, exchange diverse perspectives, and collectively navigate the intricacies of argumentation and analysis. It is in line with Al-Nafiseh (2013) that investigated the effect of CW on students' written outputs and found that the practice of CW enhanced student's written outputs by raising students' awareness of writers' choices and in-class interaction.

Within this framework, college students not only refine their writing skills but also deepen their understanding of course material through active discussion and collaboration. Collaborative writing cultivates critical thinking abilities as students learn to evaluate, synthesize, and integrate various viewpoints into their essays. Moreover, it fosters communication skills essential for academic and professional success, as students learn to articulate their ideas effectively and negotiate meaning within a collaborative context. According to Bruce McComiskey (2015), collaborative writing facilitates critical thinking skills by encouraging students to engage in dialogue and integrate diverse perspectives into their writing. McComiskey emphasizes that collaborative writing assignments prompt students to evaluate and synthesize various viewpoints, fostering deeper understanding and critical analysis of course material.

From a teaching perspective, incorporating collaborative writing into essay instruction enables educators to create a dynamic and inclusive learning environment that promotes student-centered learning. By embracing collaborative approaches, instructors can harness the collective intelligence of the classroom, facilitating peer learning and knowledge construction. This not only enriches the learning experience but also empowers students to take ownership of their learning process and develop the collaborative skills necessary for success in today's interconnected world. These findings in line with McComiskey (2015) emphasize the role of collaborative writing in facilitating peer learning and knowledge construction. McComiskey asserts that collaborative writing activities allow students to leverage the collective intelligence of the classroom, promoting collaborative problem-solving and co-construction of knowledge. By embracing collaborative approaches to writing instruction, educators empower students to develop the collaborative skills necessary for success in today's interconnected world.

Ultimately, by emphasizing collaborative writing in teaching essay composition, educators not only enhance students' writing proficiency but also nurture a culture of collaboration, critical inquiry, and intellectual engagement within the college classroom.

Written Text

Research on the implementation of collaborative writing among college students consistently demonstrates its positive impact on the quality of written texts. Collaborative writing not only enhances the clarity and coherence of students' compositions but also fosters deeper engagement with course material and critical thinking skills. Studies have shown that when students collaborate on writing assignments, they are able to draw upon a diverse range of perspectives, leading to more comprehensive and well-rounded analyses within their texts. Furthermore, the collaborative process often results in richer and more nuanced arguments, as students learn to synthesize and integrate multiple viewpoints into their writing.

Expanding on this, collaborative writing provides an avenue for students to actively participate in knowledge construction, highlighted by Bruffee (1993), argues that collaborative writing environments enable students to engage in dialogue and negotiation, allowing them to co-construct meaning and deepen their understanding of course concepts. Through collaborative discussions and exchanges of ideas, students not only refine their writing but also develop a deeper appreciation for the subject matter.

Moreover, collaborative writing encourages students to take ownership of their learning process, as emphasized by McComiskey (2015), which suggests that collaborative writing assignments empower students to actively engage with course material, fostering a sense of responsibility for their academic growth. By working collaboratively, students become more invested in the writing process, leading to greater effort and commitment towards producing high-quality written texts.

Additionally, collaborative writing promotes the development of essential communication and teamwork skills, as noted by Sommers (1982), who argues that collaborative writing activities provide students with opportunities to practice articulating their ideas effectively and engaging in constructive dialogue with their peers. These communication skills are not only valuable in academic settings but also transferable to various professional contexts where collaboration and effective communication are essential for success.

Overall, the body of research on collaborative writing among college students underscores its multifaceted benefits, ranging from enhancing the quality of written texts to fostering deeper engagement with course material and developing critical communication and teamwork skills. Through collaborative writing activities, students not only improve their writing proficiency but also cultivate valuable competencies that prepare them for academic and professional success.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the implementation of collaborative writing in teaching essay composition offers numerous benefits for both students and educators. Through collaborative writing activities, students have the opportunity to engage in meaningful dialogue, exchange diverse perspectives, and collectively navigate the intricacies of argumentation and analysis. This collaborative process not only enhances the clarity and coherence of students' compositions but also fosters deeper engagement with course material and critical thinking skills. Furthermore, collaborative writing promotes active participation in knowledge construction, encourages students to take ownership of their learning process, and cultivates essential communication and teamwork skills.

From a teaching perspective, incorporating collaborative writing into essay instruction enables educators to create dynamic and inclusive learning environments that promote student-centered learning. By embracing collaborative approaches, instructors can harness the collective intelligence of the classroom, facilitate peer learning and knowledge construction, and empower students to develop the collaborative skills necessary for success in today's interconnected world.

Overall, the research and scholarly findings support the effectiveness of collaborative writing in teaching essay composition. By integrating collaborative writing practices into instruction, educators can enhance students' writing proficiency, foster critical thinking and communication skills, and nurture a culture of collaboration and intellectual engagement within the college classroom. Collaborative writing not only improves the quality of written texts but also equips students with valuable competencies that are essential for academic and professional success.

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