

## **THE USE OF COLLABORATIVE WRITING TECHNIQUE IN IMPROVING STUDENTS' WRITING ACHIEVEMENT**

**By:**

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**Abstract:** Writing as the productive skill is needed to be master by the students so as to communicate and share the information in the written form. However, students still do not aware of the importance of writing skill. As a result, students face some problems in writing, such as have a lot mistakes in students' writing due to the limitation of the time, lack of idea and vocabulary, and less concentration. Therefore, the objective of this study was to find whether collaborative writing technique was effective or not to improve students' writing achievement. Quasi experimental method and nonrandomized pre-test post-test control group design were used. Study population was used as the samples and flip of cubic was used to determine the experimental and control groups. As a result, morning class was selected as the experimental group and afternoon class was selected as the control group. Content validity was used to check the validity of the test and tried out of the test was applied to find out the reliability of the test. Written test was used in which the students wrote one out of the topics provided. Then, the raters judged the students' writing based on the rubric containing the four components, namely organization, grammar, spelling, and vocabulary. To analyze the data, t-test was used. The results showed that the mean difference between post-test in the experimental and control groups was 19.166,  $t_{obtained}$  was 5.545 at the significant level of  $p < 0.05$ . It meant that collaborative writing technique was effective to improve students' writing achievement.

**Key words:** writing and collaborative writing technique

### **INTRODUCTION**

One of the most important skills in studying English is writing. According to Caroll (1990), writing is the most important invention in human history. Writing provides a relatively permanent record of information, opinions, beliefs, feelings, arguments, explanations, theories, and so on. It allows us to share our communication not only with our contemporaries, but also with future generations. Al-Jawi (2011, p.2) also explains that writing as a basic skill in

English language. In brief, writing is one of the means of communication and is used most widely in daily lives to show his or her thought through written words. By writing, students can communicate with others, can inform, and can share their idea or feeling to the others.

Furthermore, writing is important in higher education and in the work place. Walsh (2010) explains that much professional communication is done in writing, such as proposals, memos, reports, applications, preliminary interviews, e-mail, and more are part of the daily life of a college students or successful graduate. If students learn the material in their college classes without knowing how to write well, students will not be able to express their knowledge to the persons who make big decision. Without writing, there will be much information cannot be kept and will be lost. In short, writing is used extensively in higher education which leads to a future career and is important to be mastered in order to express and share the information obtained.

However, writing is considered as a complicated skill to master among the skills. It is due to the long process to produces a message (Colorado, 2007). It meant that the process of writing a good

paragraph or message needs much time. Richards (1999) also mentions the problems in writing, such as had a hard time to get started and overwhelmed by the task, struggled to organize and used mechanics of writing in order to keep track of their thoughts, and had to struggle to develop their ideas fluently. In addition, based on research conducted by Ghufon and Hawa (2015), it was found that many students still made errors and mistakes and, then, they were fossilized. Their interest become less and less and students began to create negative stimuli about learning to write. This condition drove the students to assume that writing was a very difficult task to do. The problem emerges as students were not familiar yet with the types of written discourse in English due to lack of exposure. Consequently, they were not able or willing to think directly in English and tended to formulate their ideas in Indonesian language when expressing ideas in writing. Then, students tried to translate them in English which was not an easy task. It could be concluded that students had problems in writing because students needed long process to write in which the students should think and write the information in the written form using the Indonesian language to English language. In addition, the errors made by students in writing were

difficult to change because they were fossilized.

To solve students' problem in writing, therefore, collaborative writing technique could be applied in the classroom. Sherman (1998, p.1) explains that in collaborative writing, the students are relying on peers for learning. It meant that students work together to teach one another and alternate between the roles of student and teacher. This technique combines elements of both motivational and cognitive approaches to collaboration. Besides, this technique promotes cognitive processing by using a structured approach to teaching and learning within a tutoring context. This technique also promotes active processing of material using activities that are strongly linked to achievement. Based on research conducted by Ghufroon and Hawa (2015), it was found that collaborative writing technique was more effective to improve students' ability in writing argumentative essay.

Moreover, collaborative writing has some advantages for students. According to Elbow (2000, p.372-373), the process of working in a group fosters relationships among a community of writers describes this as taking away the "loneliness" of the writing act. It also encourages students to

become more conscious and articulate about rhetorical decision making". In short, the process of writing collaboratively forces the writer to put "tacit" decisions about his/her writing process into words. Howard (2000, p.10) also explains that co-authorship allows students to work on complex projects, which may otherwise be too large in scope for an individual author to tackle over the course of the semester.

In this study, the students focused on writing the story by using collaborative writing technique. Story is the telling of a happening or a series of connected events. In addition, a short story is a narrative designed to interest, amuse, or inform the hearer or reader. Story is a kind that derives its power from characters, actions, and plot; that has a beginning, a middle, and an end. An advantage of the short story form is that its brevity allows variations and experiments that would be difficult to sustain throughout the much longer course of a novel (Lucke, 1999, p.2).

Based on the previous explanation, therefore, the objective of this study was to find out whether collaborative technique was effective to improve students' writing achievement or not.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Related to this study, quasi experimental method was used and nonrandomized pre-test post-test control group design was used. The two variables were involved in this study. The first variable was an independent variable that was collaborative writing technique. The second variable was a dependent variable that was students' writing achievement.

The population of this study was the fourth semester of English Study Program students of Islamic University of OKI in academic year of 2014/2015. The total number of the population was 42 students which were divided into two classes. Since there were two students who rarely came, therefore, only 40 students were involved in this study. The two classes were used as the sample which was named study population. To determine the samples, flip of cubic was used. The class who got even number would be the experimental group, while the class who got odd number would be the control group. As a result, morning class was selected as the experimental group and afternoon class was selected as the control group.

The written test was used so as to collect the data. In this case, the students wrote a story based on the 5 topics given

on a piece of paper given. Then, students' writing were judged by the two raters who had qualification of master degree (S2) and had experienced in teaching writing for three years. The two raters judged the students' composition based on the writing scoring rubric consisted of four components, namely organization of the text, grammar, spelling, and vocabulary.

To find out the reliability of the test, the test was tried out to non sample students. It was found that the reliability of the written test (0.82) was higher than reliability coefficient (0.70). It meant that the written test was reliable. To estimate the validity of the test, content validity was used in which the table of specification test was made based on the writing syllabus.

In teaching writing by using collaborative technique, there are seven guidelines that lecturer applied. The guidelines are adapted as suggested by Barkley, *et al* (2006, p.256) as follows: (1) students in groups consisted of three or four students read the story book given by the lecturer; (2) after reading, students organize their ideas and decide the endings of the story using the outline consisting of the plot of the story (beginning, middle, and ending); (3)

students write initial draft of each part the plot the story individually; (4) in groups, students discuss, and resolve any significant disparities in voice, content, and style of the part of the plot; (5) in groups, students combine individual sections/plot into a single document; (6) teams revise and edit their work, check the content and clarity grammar, spelling, and punctuation; and (7) after the final edit, teams submit their papers to the lecturer for assessment and evaluation.

After having been judged by the two raters, the pre-test and post-test were analyzed by using t-test, namely paired samples t-test and independent samples t-test used to find the mean difference within the groups and find the mean difference between the experimental and control groups.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the result of the pre-test and post-test in the experimental group, it was found that the students' mean difference between the post-test and pre-test was 24.998, t-test was 14.622, standard deviation was 7.646 with degree of freedom (df) was 19 at the significant level of  $p < 0.05$  in two tailed testing. It could be concluded that the students who were taught using collaborative writing

technique had an improvement. See table 1. The students in the experimental group had an improvement because the students work together in writing the draft, edit, and revise it becoming a good story. By doing the writing collaboratively, the students could share their knowledge so that students could write and elaborate the plot of the story.

**Table 1**  
**The Statistical Analysis of**  
**Experimental Group**

T	df	Sig. (2 tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Deviation
14.622	19	.000	24.998	7.646

While, the result of the pre-test and post-test in the control group showed that the students' mean difference between the post-test and pre-test was 6.251,  $t_{\text{obtained}}$  was 8.109, standard deviation was 3.477, degree of freedom (df) was 19 at the significant level of  $p < 0.05$  in two tailed testing. It could be concluded that the students who were taught using conventional method (lecturing) had an improvement. See table 2. The students in the control group had a progress because they accustomed to learning writing by using lecturing especially for some students who had good scores, whereas the lazy students still had bad scores.

**Table 2**  
**The Statistical Analysis of Control Group**

t	df	Sig. (2 tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Deviation
8.109	19	.000	6.251	3.447

Based on the independent samples test, it was found that the mean difference between post-test and pres-test in the experimental and control group was 19.166,  $t_{\text{obtained}}$  was 5.545, standard error difference was 3.456 with degree of freedom (df) as 38. See table 3.

**Table 3**  
**The Comparison of Statistical Analysis between Experimental and Control Groups**

t	df	Sig. (2 tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
5.545	38	.000	19.166	3.456

The students who used collaborative writing technique had better writing achievement than the students who used lecturing method because collaborative writing technique demands reflective thinking, helps learners to focus on grammatical accuracy, lexis and discourse, and encourages a pooling of knowledge about the language.

The students who were taught using collaborative writing technique had improvement in their writing achievement. It was happened because the students were exposed to do the

collaboration in writing composition so that they could work together in order to write, check, and revise their work. In addition, the students worked in group so they could share their knowledge to the other. In addition, through collaboration, the students had the chance to know their weaknesses and at the same time transferred their knowledge by correcting their peers' work. The teaching atmosphere using collaborative technique was supportive for the students to develop their ideas. In addition, they were not afraid if they made mistakes, since the lecturer was only the facilitator (Lee Ernest, 2008 and Alwasilah, 2000).

## CONCLUSION

The result of experimental study showed that the two groups of students who received two different techniques of teaching writing were all making significant progress in their writing skill, while the control group who used lecturing technique made progress in their writing skill except for some good students who scored almost as high. It could be concluded that the use of collaborative writing technique could be ideally applied to the students who studied writing narrative text especially story. By using collaborative writing

technique, the students who were lazy to write were forced to check, revise, and edit their friends' work together. Therefore, they could write their story becoming a good writing.

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