The Importance of Collaborative Writing in Writing Classroom

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Abstract: This Synthesis essay aims to support the application of collaborative writing in the process of teaching writing, arguing that collaborative writing can be beneficial for L2 learners to improve their writing skills. It also makes suggestions at the teacher level for developing learners' ability to improve their interaction and conflict resolution in the process of collaborative writing, as well as affirming that digital platforms provide technical support for collaborative writing.

1. Introduction

Collaborative writing is defined as a collaborative or team process in which two or more people work together to decide how the writing will function and all team members contribute to the content. In contrast to individual writing, team writing requires joint planning, negotiation and frequent interaction and communication between team members; collaborative writing is a combination of process and product. As collaborative writing is not only about writing, but also about the interpersonal interactions between group members, some language teachers have suggested that collaborative writing can reduce the effectiveness of writing because learners need to spend time resolving unexpected situations during the collaborative process or ignoring parts of the process that are not their responsibility. As a result, collaborative writing is often neglected in some EFL classrooms, particularly in East Asian writing classrooms, and writing tests are predominantly individual.

The main resource for this essay is "Are two heads really better than one? A meta-analysis of the L2 learning benefits of collaborative writing "The author of this essay is Rima Elabdali, published in 2021, who is currently working at Georgetown University. She studied master of arts in Tesol at Portland State University, so I think her researches in linguistics are as professional and informative as a language expert.[2]

Based on my personal learning experience, the first time I encountered collaborative writing was in my undergraduate studies, although it was an assignment in the field of business, but in the process of completing the collaborative writing, I felt for the first time that the strength of the team was indeed greater than the individual. I began to think about the importance of collaborative writing in writing and why collaborative writing is rarely used by language teachers in my home country. After I entered the TESOL field, I became more interested in the study and application of collaborative writing. In my past teaching experiences, I tried to have my students work together on

writing tasks, but the learners did not perform as well as expected. The learners felt that writing independently was more effective because each learner had his or her own point of view and in writing as a group, they always disagreed and therefore wrote less effectively. Furthermore, in my home country, language teachers rarely use digital technology to assist in collaborative writing, which is an issue that deserves attention and consideration in the teaching of collaborative writing.

In summary, this essay makes the following arguments: the current EFL and ESL writing classrooms still lack a combination of research theory and classroom practice on collaborative writing. This article will first demonstrate the importance of collaborative writing in the writing classroom and how the use of collaborative writing can address some of the potential problems in current writing instruction, such as stimulating learners' interest in writing and improving students' writing skills. The second point discusses potential problems and strategies for solving them in the process of collaborative writing from a teacher-led perspective. The third point discusses the positive effects of digital tools such as digital websites on collaborative writing and their practical application by teachers from the perspective of traditional and digital classrooms. Recommendations are also made for future language teachers in collaborative writing. The essay will be concluded with a discussion and summary.

2. The importance of Collaborative writing

This section focuses on the importance of collaborative writing, and by analysing and identifying two sources, I have come up with my own thesis. The main finding of the primary resource 'Are two heads really better than one? A meta-analysis of the L2 learning benefits of collaborative writing' is that collaborative writing does benefit learners' writing. Elaborating on the findings, the authors state that "the combined results show that texts written collaboratively are more accurate than texts written individually. In addition, after experiencing collaborative writing, individually written texts scored higher on the grading scale, indicating higher quality writing." found significant differences in complexity/accuracy/fluency scores for individual texts written in the experimental collaborative writing condition compared to texts written in the controlled individual writing condition.

The second resource "The effectiveness of incorporating metacognitive prompts in collaborative writing on academic English writing skills. Applied Cognitive Psychology" focuses on 160 students studying English as a Foreign Language (EFL) at a university in participants in a study on the incorporation of metacognitive instruction in collaborative writing and concludes that the incorporation of metacognitive strategies in collaborative writing is necessary to develop academic writing skills in university EFL students. Collaborative writing is necessary.[5]

Although these two resources focused on different areas, both concluded that collaborative writing is beneficial in developing learners' writing skills. I argue that collaborative writing values the writing process as a dynamic and evolving collaborative learning process that emphasises collaboration and discussion between teacher and student, and student and student, and that, according to Vygotsky's (1978) 'Zone of proximal development' theory, learners are of similar ages but have individual differences in their writing levels. In my collaborative writing learning process, not only is the content aspect of my writing more enriched and critical, but as English is my second language, the process of collaborative writing in small groups has also contributed to the accuracy of my writing vocabulary and grammar from a linguistic perspective through the correction of my language by native speakers. The two studies above argue from different perspectives that collaborative writing produces better results than individual writing. Although both the data and the findings of the studies have limitations, as language teachers we can draw some inspiration from them to use collaborative writing in a more diverse way in the writing classroom.

3. Positive guidance by teachers in collaborative writing in socio-emotional aspect

In this section, I will discuss the role of teachers in actively guiding students in collaborative writing, a topic that many teachers overlook. In the process of collaborative writing, participants inevitably have conflicts and disagreements, yet teachers can play an active role in guiding learners to resolve socio-emotional conflicts in collaborative writing. Teachers should therefore learn how to regulate conflict and guide students in dealing with socio-emotional conflicts in collaborative writing.

In resource one 'Conflicts in peer interaction of collaborative writing - A case study in an EFL context.' Journal of Second Language Writing, 58, 100910 Language Writing, 58, 100910 (online ahead of print)." The authors of Chen & Lee suggest that in order to avoid socio-emotional conflict during the negotiation of meaning in collaborative writing in the first place, teachers should teach students how to offer criticism in a polite and respectful manner.[1]

Communication and negotiation skills between group members should be developed during collaborative writing in order to avoid socio-emotional conflict, and teachers should provide better ways for students to comment on individual group members' failures or disruptions to the team's progress so that conflict can be reduced and avoided. Such training is particularly important in China, where students have little experience of engaging in collaborative activities in the classroom due to the teacher-led model of education.

To reduce process conflict, teachers can have students clarify issues such as the writing process, team cohesion and responsibilities before writing so that they can focus on substantive issues throughout the writing process. In resource 2, 'Relationships formed in dyadic interaction and opportunity for learning', a case study approach is used to examine two models: the collaborative model and the dominant/dominated model. [4] The case study approach is used to examine two models: the collaborative model and the dominant/dominated model. The dyadic interaction model, in which appropriate grouping promotes mutuality and fairness, is also considered in relation to the handling of language in the writing process, such as the use of request language and the number of intonation words. Collaborative groups should be allocated a similar and appropriate amount of tasks to avoid uneven task loads or large differences in difficulty. At the same time the gap between group members should not be too large, as this would otherwise produce unequal contributions. The authors suggest that it makes sense to assign appropriate groupings, taking into account the language skills and leadership levels of the different participants.

Both resources suggest similar conclusions. In my own writing teaching classroom, through my classroom observations, teachers usually focus on assigning writing tasks without clarifying the required division of labour among team members, so based on the results of these two resources, a clear division of labour is also necessary for effective collaboration. In collaborative writing, due to individual differences, one is bound to face socio-emotional conflicts and uneven distribution of tasks. Proper guidance from the teacher is essential, not just by taking the initiative to help students assign tasks, but I believe that students should be guided to a reasonable distribution within the group, which should be student-led, as they are more aware of the areas they are good at and what they want to be responsible for. Participants can decide on the allocation of tasks through group meetings.

I believe that teachers should still provide guidance and support to students in collaborative writing, which is an indispensable pedagogical tool for teaching writing as a language specialist. Through collaborative writing, learners interact dynamically with each other and add to their existing writing experience and team writing skills, provided that teachers provide active guidance and assistance.

4. Facilitation of collaborative writing by digital technology

Digital technology is indispensable in the task of collaborative writing and facilitates learners to write collaboratively more effectively and more quickly through digital technology platforms than in traditional writing classrooms where pen and paper are used for writing. Resource 1 "The Role of Digital Technologies to Promote Collaborative Creativity in Language Education." shows that digital tools such as mobile devices and digital websites contribute to the collaborative creative process.[3] The findings show that digital technologies provide learning opportunities for language education and that digital technologies can be used as tutorial devices for language teaching and learning, as well as tools to enable collaborative creative thinking skills; and as a medium for creating rich outputs and creative processes. Students should therefore be encouraged to engage in collaborative writing experiences and learners should be equipped to operate the appropriate platforms. As a result, learners can use these digital tools to more effectively complete L2 writing in collaboration.

Resource 2, 'Interactional practices for online collaborative writing. The analysis showed that learners' ability to manage the time spent in online conversations and the time spent interacting affected the outcome of the interaction, and that a computer-mediated approach could provide more opportunities for learners.

I am acutely aware that the use of online writing platforms can increase the efficiency of collaboration, especially when supported by the use of some advanced county platforms. This also requires language teachers to recommend these platforms to learners and assist them with basic usage. In conclusion, the use of digital technology platforms can help learners to write collaboratively and efficiently in an EFL context and to understand the contribution of each group member through the 'edit history'. Inevitably, when using the e-technology platform, problems such as data loss and failed saves are encountered. This requires learners to be emotionally stable, to keep backups and to solve problems with a positive attitude when they occur.

5. Discussion

Based on the above studies, I will further discuss the ideas of this Synthesis Essay. Through the analysis of different studies, we can find that collaborative writing plays a role in teaching writing and promotes learners to improve the language form and content of their writing. Although there are some problems encountered in the process of collaborative writing, such as social and emotional conflicts, and technical limitations, so teachers need to play an active role in guiding the process of teaching collaborative writing by organizing learners ' activities before the start of teachers need to play an active role in guiding teaching collaborative writing by organizing learners ' grouping and planning before the start of writing activities, checking the progress and contribution of team members to complete the process of collaborative writing, and guiding learners ' contribution and group feedback at the end of writing tasks. To evaluate the results in a fair and comprehensive manner. In some collaborative writing tasks, inaccurate judgements are often made because of the unequal contributions of group members, so teachers must monitor the performance of participants in real time and provide positive guidance in this process. In terms of digital platforms, teachers should be adept at using technology to teach collaborative writing. I believe that google docs is a very good platform to use, however, due to internet limitations, I cannot access google docs in my home country. Note, teachers should keep up to date with technological developments, especially in the post-epidemic era, and the use of electronic platforms is becoming increasingly important in language teaching. The language teacher should continue to learn and be trained in the use of technology to keep up to date, and to teach these tools to language learners to help them solve the technical problems they face in collaborative writing.

6. Conclusion

Overall, in this Synthesis Essay, I, as an emerging linguistics practitioner, present some ideas and research that I think are important in the process of language teaching and learning, and discuss the existing research in relation to my practical experience, which will also be instructive for my future teaching practice, my goal is to become a writing teacher, therefore in my future teaching I will draw on the findings and experiences of this study to use collaborative writing as one of the teaching tools, to stop making the task of writing just an individual task and to improve the effectiveness of teaching writing from all angles. Therefore, I think this essay is meaningful.

References

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