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Impact of Collaborative Writing on Individual Writing: A Data Analysis

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This paper is an analysis of the data of a study done in a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree, Masters of Arts in TESL. The purpose of the study was to ascertain the impact of collaboration on individual composing of essays and informal letters and the attitude of the students to collaborative writing. Most of the studies done on the effectiveness of collaborative writing on individual composing compared collaboratively produced texts with those of individually produced to determine the impact caused by the collaboration. The study was done at J/Jaffna Central College, Jaffna, involving 64 students of Grade-10 assigned to control and experimental groups. The research is a mixed method approach, involving pre and post tests, pre and post focus group interviews, the audio recording of the interaction of collaborative groups and journal writing. This study investigates the effect of collaborative writing (CW), based on evidence, and argues that collaboration can have a potentially significant impact in ESL writing. The findings from pre and post test marks of individual composition and letter writing by the experimental group were statistically insignificant. Nevertheless, the difference in scores between pre and post tests of individual informal letter-writing proved to be statistically significant. The responses given in the journals and interviews suggest the participants prefer to do the writing tasks collaboratively. The findings of the study confirm that CW is a useful method which can enhance individual composition and letter-writing, and is particularly effective with informal letter-writing.

Key words: analysis, collaboration, composing, effectivity, individual writing