

# Benefits of Collaborative Writing for ESL Advanced Diploma Students in the Production of Reports

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This study analyzes the collaborative writing sessions of two groups of advanced diploma economics students with mixed proficiency. Although studies in collaborative writing usually highlight the mixed results of students' collaboration ranging from promoting peer learning to having unresolved conflict, the findings of this paper only provide the advantages gained by the students in this study. It is attributed to the use of a group learning contract which the students signed before collaborating with their friends. The students' collaborative writing sessions of long reports were video-taped and they were followed by the production of student diary entries and interviews in order to understand the experience gained during the sessions. Furthermore, the instructor's reflections were analyzed to increase the understanding of the group dynamics which had occurred. The findings show that all students had mutually benefited from the collaborative writing sessions. The benefits gained are heightening their sense of responsibility towards the task, promoting the sharing of new information, allowing the sharing of expertise, helping narrow down information, and negotiating successfully by using Facebook as a means to continue their discussion on matters which they had difficulty in resolving through face-to-face interactions.

*Keywords:* collaborative writing, advanced diploma students, mixed proficiency, long report writing, reflections, experience

## Introduction

Collaborative writing has its origin from collaborative learning. Collaborative learning was given much importance, when Abercrombie (1961; 1970) found out that student interactions among the medical students at University Hospital in London helped them to learn diagnosis successfully. In addition, Treisman (1985) observed that Asian-American students outperformed African-American and Hispanic students in science and mathematics, because they engaged in discussing their studies with one another.

Collaborative learning was actually used during the 1960s in grammar and comprehensive schools (Bruffee, 1993). Its use was later extended to composition theory. Furthermore, collaborative learning was given much prominence in the 1980s due to the differing approaches in writing. The cognitive approach which was linked to Flower and Hayes (1977; 1981) was not accepted by Bizzell (1994) and Bartholomae (1997), who are social constructivists and regarded the social aspects of writing as significant. They were influenced by the Vygotskian's (1978; 1986) theory that interaction was crucial in the learning process.

Many instructors of writing then became advocators of student collaboration in the classroom due to the importance placed on interactions in learning. The importance of collaborative writing is further boosted by its

wide use at the workplace (Howard, 2001). Other advantages of collaborative writing are reducing anxiety (Clement, Dornyei, & Noels, 1994; Dornyei, 2001), helping to form cohesive and mature groups (Dornyei & Murphy, 2003), promoting critical thinking (Cheng & Warren 1996; Daiute, 1989; Gokhale, 1995), fostering excellence (Hepzibah, 2002), staying on task (Gere & Stevens, 1985), and promoting motivation (Brown, 2001).

The objective of this study is to observe the collaborative writing sessions of two groups of advanced diploma economics students with mixed proficiency when producing a long report. In addition, a group learning contract is used to gauge its effectiveness among the students.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is grounded in the Social Cognitive Theory by Vygotsky (1978; 1986). This theory focuses on the significance of human interactions through mediators in the learning process. The extension of the theory is further explained through the mediated learning experience provided by Feuerstein (1980; 1990).

Cognitive development is produced through the internalization of knowledge made possible by social interactions (Vygotsky, 1986). The mediation process which is defined as “the need for someone other than the learner to translate knowledge about the society and culture so that it can be internalized” (Ashman & Gillies, 2003, p. 199) occurs through the assistance provided by from more capable peers to less able peers in their communication with each other. It is also a means to empower learners and assist them in the course of gaining knowledge and skills (Williams & Burden, 1997).

Detailed explanations of the role of the human mediator have been provided by Feuerstein (1990). When a learner is unable to master certain concepts, scaffolding provided by peers is crucial. Scaffolding has been described as having functions, such as recruiting interests in the task, simplifying the task, maintaining pursuit of the goal, marking critical features and discrepancies between what has been produced and the ideal solution, controlling frustration during problem-solving and demonstrating an idealized version of the act to be performed (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976). Appropriate reciprocation, in turn, from the less capable learner is required to complete the process of learning. Once the knowledge has been internalized, the scaffolding is then removed for the learner who is now able to function independently.

### **Methodology**

Case study was used in this qualitative study. The participants are eight advanced diploma economics students in an institution of higher learning in Malaysia. All of them are from Chinese ethnic group. They had to take a mandatory English language course (English IV) as part of their programme requirements. The coursework involved group writing of a 2,000-word long report of any business topic and a group oral presentation of it. The production of the former is the focus of this study.

#### **Participants**

Group 1 consisted of two male and two female students. The male students are Cheng (C) and Lawrence (L), while the female students are Yan (Y) and Jane (J). All of them have medium proficiency in English except for Yan who has low proficiency in English.

Group 2 consisted of a male and three female students. The male student is Sylvester (S) while the female students are Ang (A), Chow (C) and Jackie (J). Sylvester and Chow have medium proficiency, while Ang and Jackie have low proficiency in English.

### **Writing Task**

The task involved the participants forming groups to produce a 2,000-word long report on a business topic of their own choice. Each group started meeting outside their class hours to work on their assignment from the first week of the semester to the tenth week of the semester. Each collaborative writing session lasted one and a half hours. The subtasks they had to perform during the sessions were: selecting topic, dividing reference work, preparing and analyzing questionnaire, interview or observation; sharing, filtering and integrating information from articles; producing a mind-map to summaries information; drafting, editing and proofreading the long report.

### **Data Collection**

The participants were taught by their instructor on how to write long reports during their regular English lessons, so that they could carry out their collaborative writing sessions successfully. The sessions which lasted 10 weeks were audio- and video- taped. Group 1 decided to write a long report on Buckman Laboratories (after deliberating between it and Walt Disney Company), while Group 2 wrote a long report on AirAsia (after considering between two national carriers which were AirAsia and Malaysia Airlines or better known as MAS (Malaysian Airlines System)). Before the students started their discussions, they signed a group learning contract to indicate their commitment towards the project.

The students were individually interviewed after each collaborative writing session. It was followed by the writing personal diary entries for them to describe and reflect on their experiences during the collaboration. All of the audio recordings and interviews were transcribed verbatim.

### **Findings**

Data obtained from the spoken transcripts, diary entries and interviews were triangulated. The findings showed that the students were generally satisfied with the collaborative writing sessions. The following data were selected to explain how advantageous the sessions were to the students in heightening their sense of responsibility towards the task, promoting the sharing of new information, allowing the sharing of expertise, helping narrow down information, and negotiating their stand successfully by using Facebook as a means of communication.

#### **Sense of Responsibility Towards the Task**

The spoken transcripts overall showed that the students were active in all of their collaborative writing sessions. The students from Groups 1 and 2 stated that they had developed a sense of responsibility towards their writing task from the interviews and diary entries. In addition, the students became more conscious of their contributions. They discovered that they did not participate effectively when they reflected on their sessions. Cheng, Jane, and Yan admitted that they did not have enough information to present during the discussions. Cheng elaborated further by stating that he did not prepare well for the group's assignment. Lawrence, too, realized that he had shared the wrong information with his group during the session.

They further illustrated that they were motivated to work harder when they were in group than when doing it alone, due to the influence of their friends in the group. Furthermore, Lawrence from Group 1 felt that he was more committed to the writing task due to his friends and the influence of the learning contract. In addition, Chow and Sylvester from Group 2 realized that they did not want to disappoint their friends who seriously cared about their writing task, while the former was alerted to the promise they made to work together through

their learning contract. This resulted in Sylvester's planning to make preparation by downloading information from the Internet to be read before the next session.

#### Interviews

All students: Ahh... more responsible. Do more work.

Lawrence: Yes. More committed to work. Like what contract say.

Chow: I think us all serious. Do not want to make friend unhappy. We promise to work together in contract.

Sylvester: I do not prepare. Must do more next week. Go home use PC (personal computer) to download information then read. So can discuss. Yes. Push us to do work.

#### Diary Entries

Cheng: This week I not having enough information for the assignment and like not prepared well for the group assignment.

Jane: I have not providing information on the selected topic of our group assignment.

Yan: I know that my information is not enough.

Lawrence: I gave the wrong information to my group members.

### Sharing of New Information

Students from both groups stated that they mutually benefited from the new information shared by their friends. The information was obtained when the students researched on their topics and discussed them during their collaborative writing sessions. Group 1 was discussing on their topic on Walt Disney in Table 1, while Group 2 was providing ideas on the aspects of information to be covered for their topic on AirAsia in Table 2.

Table 1

#### *Excerpt of Group 1's Sharing of New Information*

1	J:	I I never discuss in English before. (laughs)
2	L:	Let's do on Walt Disney.
3	Y:	Ok. Here's my article.
...		
7	L:	I've got advertising, cartoon character. Let us discuss the history. Introduction?
8	J:	In my laptop.
9	C:	History, management. I've got... (pauses)
10	J:	The name of people there. Directors... (refers to Cheng's article and pauses)

It can be observed from Table 1 that the students in Group 1 were sharing information they had found on their selected topic on Walt Disney. Jane complained that she was not used to discussing in English in line 1. Lawrence then suggested that they chose Walt Disney as their topic. Yan offered an article she had found for her group to refer to (line 3). As the discussion progressed, Lawrence, Cheng, and Jane stated that they had information on the advertising, cartoon characters, history, introduction and management of Walt Disney (lines 7 to 10).

Group 2 was unable to decide which one between MAS and AirAsia is their topic before the discussion. In Table 2, it can be seen that Sylvester, Jackie and the rest of the group members were in the process of selecting their topic and it turned out that AirAsia was finally chosen as the group's topic (lines 1 to 6). Then, they proceeded in sharing areas of information they had found, which were the history, management, promotions, marketing and reasons for the airline's promotions (lines 7 to 13).

Table 2

*Excerpt of Group 2's Sharing of New Information*

1	S:	Let us start.
2	J:	I have got information. MAS and AirAsia.
3	S:	Choose.
4	J:	AirAsia better. I like AirAsia.
5	S:	The rest?
6	Ss:	OK.
7	A:	Can include history.
8	C:	Ok on management? (looks at Sylvester)
9	S:	OK.
10	A:	Why not promotion? How they do it and promotion?
11	J:	Can include more.
12	S:	Marketing also need.
13	A:	Give reasons for promoting.

The students expressed their satisfaction with the collaborative writing sessions through the interviews and diary entries. Jane stated that through the division of work carried out, the group was able to finish their tasks quickly. In addition, Sylvester and Chow were of the opinion that the different ideas obtained from individuals helped them in the group task.

*Interviews*

Jane: Better to divide up work. Each person does one part, different info. Then finish early.

Sylvester: Yes. More ideas from friend.

Chow: Yes. Easy. Different ideas, got more mind to think.

*Diary Entries*

Jane: Can do work faster. Divide up work. Each person do one part, different info.

Sylvester: We get more ideas from friend.

Lawrence: Ahh, more people, got more ideas.

**Sharing of Expertise**

Sharing of expertise is an important function of collaborative writing (Dale, 1997; Ede & Lunsford, 1990; Ohta, 1995; 2001). Similarly, Groups 1 and 2 were found pooling their abilities in carrying out their group task. The exchanges could be observed in the following Tables 3, 4 and 5.

Group 1 was observed to be editing their writing in Table 3. The group decided to have individual group members writing on certain sections, and later met to comment on each other's writing. This is called hierarchical co-authoring (Ede & Lunsford, 1990) which involves individual writing during the collaborative process.

The editing work was carried out with much assistance from Cheng and Jane who have medium proficiency. They were providing much language input during the discussion.

Lawrence invited Cheng to start commenting in line 1. Cheng checked with his group whether it was acceptable to go through the history section first (line 2). However, Jane suggested that they started commenting on the introduction instead (line 3). Cheng stated that the writing was using proper English and was not produced in point form (line 4). Jane emphasized that they should not write in point form (line 5). Cheng realized that the writing section on the competitor was missing (line 6). Jane explained that she had not

written it yet and admitted that she needed to provide more examples for her writing on the organizational design in Buckman Lab (line 7). Furthermore, she sought her friends' help in understanding the meaning of the line "Buckman made his expectations clear" and circled the sentence by using a pen. Lawrence explained that it was an example (line 8) and Jane commented that more details were required (line 9). In addition, Cheng pointed out that the writing should not be in point form (line 10). Jane further elaborated that she could not understand the writing which was in point form and highlighted the need to include more details for the point on establishing criteria (line 11). Lawrence promised to make the changes and said that there were no mistakes in the next section followed by his observations that the section on the functions of Buckman's Lab was unclearly written (line 12). Cheng advised that more information from the article could be used in the writing (line 13). Jane enquired if it was acceptable to include a diagram in the writing (line 14) and Lawrence together with Cheng agreed that it was appropriate for it could increase the reader's understanding (lines 15 and 16). Yan further commented that the elaboration was clear but pointed out that "we" should not be used in the writing and there were a lot of information provided on the advantages (line 17). Their instructor had taught them that a formal style should be adopted in writing long reports and personal pronouns were discouraged from being used in their writing.

Table 3

*Excerpt of Group 1's Pooling of Expertise During Editing*

1	L:	Cheng, start commenting, first.
2	C:	Ok. History, ok?
3	J:	Why not Introduction, first?
4	C:	English also okay. Not use point form.
5	J:	Do not use point form.
6	C:	What about competitor part?
7	J:	Not written yet. Okay, my turn. My part on organization design in Buckman Lab. More examples to be given. What do you mean by, "Buckman made his expectations clear"? (circles sentence with pen) I do not understand.
8	L:	It's an example.
9	J:	More details needed.
10	C:	Not point form (points at paper)
11	J:	I guess you have to elaborate points. All in bullets. I do not understand what you have written, "establish criteria". What criteria? Can include more.
12	L:	I will add more details. Everything very complete. No grammar mistake. So, for this part, no comments. But this part on Buckman Lab's functions, not very clear.
13	C:	Give more information. Refer to article.
14	J:	Okay to draw diagram? (looks at chart)
15	L:	Okay, what.
16	C:	Reader can understand.
17	Y:	Elaboration clear. Except do not use "we" when write. A lot of information on advantages.

Group 2, on the other hand, was observed to be sharing their expertise while attempting two subtasks. They were planning their interview questions (see Table 4), and editing their writing (see Table 5). Surprisingly, Jackie who has low proficiency initiated and maintained the process of preparing the interview questions. However, Jackie was passive, allowed Sylvester and Chow who have medium proficiency together with Ang who have low proficiency to contribute their ideas during the editing stage.

In Table 4, Jackie informed her friends that they would have to conduct interviews on the national carriers and proceeded to instruct Chow to interview their friends on their views of MAS, while she would interview

their friends to obtain their opinions on AirAsia (line 1). Chow disagreed and felt that Jackie would need his help in interviewing for AirAsia (line 2). Sylvester then offered to take over Chow's initial task (line 3) and Jackie agreed with the change in plan (line 4). Ang suggested a question on when the interviewees travelled last time (line 5) and Jackie repeated the question and even requested that they could ask one of their friends, William, the question (line 6). Ang agreed with her and requested her friend to write down his name (line 7). Jackie added another question on the services provided (line 8) and Ang also agreed with her (line 9). Later, Jackie suggested another question on the prices of the tickets (line 10). Sylvester responded by proposing that a comparison of the services should be carried out (line 11). Jackie elaborated that they could also compare the flying experiences of MAS' passengers with AirAsia's passengers (line 12). Ang concurred and explained that they could firstly ask William questions on MAS followed by questions on AirAsia (line 13). Jackie repeated and wrote down the question on the services of the carriers (line 14). Sylvester proposed a question on the problems faced by AirAsia which could be frequent delayed flights (line 15). Ang commented that the interviewee would be able to understand it (line 16).

Table 4

*Excerpt of Group 2's Pooling of Expertise When Planning Interview Questions*

1	J:	So, we do interview. You take MAS (looks at Chow). I take AirAsia.
2	C:	AirAsia enough? I take.
3	S:	I take MAS.
4	J:	Ok.
5	A:	Interview questions. Ask them the last time they travelled.
6	J:	When did you last fly? Can ask William.
7	A:	Write his name.
8	J:	What do you think of service?
9	A:	OK.
10	J:	What do you think of the price?
11	S:	Compare services.
12	J:	Compare experience with MAS and AirAsia.
13	A:	One person can do that. Example, ask William about MAS then last, ask AirAsia.
14	J:	(writes) What's your opinion of the service? (A long silence)
15	S:	Can we ask, AirAsia problems always late, delayed flights.
16	C:	Reader can understand.

During the editing stage, Chow suggested that the Findings section be arranged (line 1). It was followed by Sylvester who felt that new points could be added to the writing and editing that would have to be carried out due to language errors (line 2). Ang commented that there were information errors, too (line 3).

Table 5

*Excerpt of Group 2's Pooling of Expertise During Editing*

1	C:	Let us arrange our findings.
2	S:	Add new points, too. Editing to be done. Language errors.
3	A:	Information errors.

Students from both groups stated that they had mutually benefited from the sharing of expertise through their interviews and diary entries. Firstly, Lawrence realized that the expertise from each group member helped him to work well and he, in turn, could identify and correct their errors. In addition, he was satisfied that they

could work together to fulfill their learning contract. Chow, Cheng and Jane admitted that their groups were able to produce their reports successfully through careful planning and organization, despite of their initial reservations. Cheng, similar with Lawrence realized the importance of working well as a group, since they had pledged to do so through the learning contract. In addition, Ang was happy that they could discuss and solve problems through their concerted efforts. Yan and Jane were appreciative of the corrections made on their grammar mistakes, typing errors and informal style of writing, too.

#### Interviews

Lawrence: Each one got specialty. So can do work well? So can follow our contract to work well.

Chow: No. Not really have enough ideas to write. We not sure. How to write and gather information. Finally, we can.

Ang: Yes. Can discuss, solve the problem. No need do myself.

#### Diary Entries

Cheng: I learned how to plan for a report and how to communicate with my group members. Must work together after sign contract.

Lawrence: This week I learned how to communicate more effectively by finding out of my group members' mistake and correcting it.

Yan: I learn the method of writing and communication of my team members. I make mistakes is more on writing part, such as typing error and grammar word. I always use the wrong grammar to write my report.

Jane: My friends teach on how to arrange my long report structure. I also learn on how to spot informal writing in a long report. This week I made mistakes such as using informal words in long report and not speaking English during my English class.

### Narrowing Down of Information

Another benefit of collaborative writing experienced by the students was narrowing down their information during the writing process. It was crucial for them to summarize their ideas, so that they could produce reports which abided by the word length required by their instructor. The narrowing down of information exchanges can be viewed in Tables 6, 7 and 8.

Table 6

#### *Excerpt of Group 1's Narrowing Down of Information to be Used for Writing*

11	L:	But so wide topic. Let us choose one.
12	J:	Why not the management? Why so successful?
13	L:	Which part? Everything so successful.
14	J:	Movies?
15	C:	Can include history.
16	J:	OK on management? (looks at Yan)
17	Y:	OK.
18	L:	Why not animation? How they do it and promotion?
19	J:	Can include more.
20	L:	Marketing also need.
21	J:	Give reasons for promoting.

Group 1 was observed to be narrowing down their information in Tables 6 and 7. In Table 6, Lawrence who has medium proficiency commented that they had a wide range of subtopics for their topic and suggested that they choose one from them (line 11). Jane chose the management and reasons of its success (line 12). Lawrence insisted that Jane should be specific on her choice, because there were many areas on the success of the company (line 13). Jane stated that she chose the area of movies (line 14). Cheng suggested that it should



include the information on the history (line 15). Jane was unsure with her choice on the management and checked with Yan (line 16). Yan agreed with her (line 17). Later, Lawrence proposed including animation, how they were produced and the promotion of them (line 18). Jane mentioned that they could include more information (line 19). Therefore, Lawrence suggested that information on marketing also should be used (line 20). Finally, Jane recommended that the reasons for promoting their products should also be included (line 21).

Group 1 was also observed to be narrowing down their information during another collaborative writing session (see Table 7). Jane who has medium proficiency suggested drawing a diagram to summarize the large amount of information they had obtained (line 14). Lawrence agreed with her (line 15). Cheng explained that it would aid the reader in understanding their writing (line 16).

Table 7

*Excerpt of Group 1's Narrowing Down of Information for Establishing Clarity in Writing*

14	J:	Okay to draw diagram? (looks at chart)
15	L:	Okay, what.
16	C:	Reader can understand.

Group 2 was also involved in narrowing down their information (see Table 8). Ang who has low proficiency complained that she had a lot of information on AirAsia and it made her uncertain on how to choose suitable points to write about (line 1). Jackie who has low proficiency suggested focusing on the founder and reasons of its success (line 2). Sylvester mentioned that he could add his information on the history of the company (line 3). Jackie agreed and stated that they could use information on different flight packages and the design of aeroplanes (line 4). Chow commented that the information on the designs of aeroplanes was too detailed (line 5). Jackie offered to remove the information on it (line 6). Ang suggested including information on the uniform of the cabin crew and the menu of meals (line 7). Sylvester advised her to summarize the information due to the large amount of information they had (line 8).

Table 8

*Excerpt of Group 2's Narrowing Down of Information to Be Used for Writing*

1	A:	A lot. When write, do not know how to choose.
2	J:	(looks at Ang's articles) Why not the founder, first? Why a small company can make it?
3	S:	Can add my points also. I got history how AirAsia started.
4	J:	OK. Maybe different flight packages, design of aeroplane.
5	C:	Design of aeroplane very hard to write. So many numbers and details.
6	J:	(looks at Chow) Can take out.
7	A:	(refers to articles) Also got cabin crew uniform and food menu.
8	S:	Can summarize. If not, too many things to write.

The students explained through their interviews and diary entries that they were guided in narrowing down their information through their collaborative sessions. Cheng, Jane, Yan and Ang concurred that their friends helped them to choose suitable information to use in their writing. They were unable to select the information on their own due to the large amount of information presented. Sylvester added that he could also merge his information which was similar with his friends' points in their writing. Thus, repetition of ideas could be prevented.

## Interviews

Cheng: Yes. I know what topic to choose. Do not know at first.

Jane: Ah ... my group tells me what information to look for.

Yan: Yes. I got lot information. Do not know how to do. My friend teaches me how to write.

Ang: Good. I do not know how to choose point. My friends tell me what to choose.

Sylvester: My info same with my friend. Can combine points.

## Diary Entries

Cheng: My difficulties are cannot decide what topic I should take.

Yan: My difficulties are the information are too widely, cant specific.

Ang: My difficulties cannot choose point. So many points but my friend teaches me what to do.

Sylvester: This week I learned I can combine my point with my friends. Because we got same information.

### Negotiate Successfully by Using Facebook as a Means of Discussion

The researcher observed that there were some discrepancies during the students' collaborative writing sessions. There was no continuity in their flow of discussions from the previous sessions. It involved Group 1 deciding to change their topic from Walt Disney to Buckman Laboratories, even though there was no mention of their plan during their face-to-face discussion. In addition, Group 2 did not edit their work thoroughly during their collaborative writing sessions, but merely opted to edit certain sections before their final submission of work.

The students revealed through their interviews and diary entries that they had further interactions via their Facebook accounts after their collaborative writing sessions whenever it was necessary. When interviewed, Lawrence, Jane, Sylvester and Jackie admitted that they used Facebook to continue their discussions. It was a bid to have more time for discussions and make decisions effectively. In addition, they found the online interactions were interesting. Their comments on their diary entries, also, supported their views on the purpose for using Facebook as a means of interaction.

## Interviews

Lawrence: Ahh... we used Facebook. At first, we choose Walt Disney. Then we found different topic. So we discuss in Facebook. We all discuss and choose Buckman.

Jane: My friends tell me to use Facebook. Our discussion only next week. So when we use Facebook, we can discuss easily. More interesting. Also no need to wait.

Sylvester: I'm happy we communicate using Internet. Edit our report very long to discuss. So my group uses Facebook. Did not argue very long, too.

Jackie: Yes. My friend tells me to go to Facebook. We discuss there. So, can have more time to discuss.

## Diary Entries

Lawrence: This week I made these mistakes we choose the wrong topic for our report and we decided to change to another topic. But we discuss in Facebook so easy and did not waste time

Cheng: This week I learned that Facebook is easy to use. We change topic so we tell all our friends. Easy to discuss to choose topic we want.

Jackie: This week I learned use Facebook to discuss. My group say can discuss faster so we all go online.

Sylvester: This week I learned that communication over the internet is more effective. Take a lot of time to discuss our mistake. But in Facebook, we can discuss well.

### Conclusions

This study has shown the advantages of using collaborative writing in mixed proficiency groups. They range from heightening the students' sense of responsibility towards the task, promoting the sharing of new

information, allowing the sharing of expertise, helping narrow down the information, and negotiating their stand successfully by using Facebook as a means of communication. The success of the collaboration can also be attributed to the learning contract that the students signed collectively before embarking on the task. The students may have been alerted to the commitment and the appropriate behavior required during their collaborative writing sessions.

Instructors have to acknowledge the significance of online interactions in students' lives. In this modern age, many students have very active Facebook accounts. Therefore, they may not regard face-to-face classroom interactions with their peers as sufficing during collaborative writing, but feel that online interactions will help to complete the process. Collaborative blogs can also be created to aid students in adding, providing comments on their topic of discussion and reflecting on their thinking (Palloff & Pratt, 2005). The online interactions provide them with instantaneous responses, and can be an interesting platform of communication, for they can use colorful photographs and graphics to make their recipients understand them more clearly.

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