

## **Exploring the Effects of Collaborative Writing on Palestinian Tenth Graders' Performance and Attitudes: Applied Study**

أثر الكتابة التعاونية على أداء ومواقف طلاب الصف العاشر في فلسطين:  
دراسة تطبيقية

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**Abstract:** This study aimed to examine how collaborative writing affects tenth-grade students' writing performance and attitudes toward writing in the context of the *English for Palestine* curriculum. The study addressed questions related to the effectiveness of collaborative writing in improving organization and accuracy, fostering motivation, building confidence and social relationships, promoting creativity, and supporting individual learning. Data were collected through peer observation, student feedback, analysis of written work, and semi-structured interviews. The findings indicated that the students viewed the collaborative approach as engaging and beneficial. The reciprocal teaching and jigsaw strategies employed for reading comprehension significantly improved students' writing outcomes. The results underscored the importance of teacher preparedness in grouping techniques and

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## **Exploring the Effects of Collaborative Writing on Palestinian Tenth Graders' Performance and Attitudes : An Applied Study**

facilitating socially interactive and independent learning environments. Future research should examine the long-term impact of collaborative writing on different age groups, proficiency levels, and contexts. This research should also explore the role of technology and teacher training in implementing collaborative writing.

**Key words:** Collaborative writing; Writing Performance; Reciprocal Teaching; Jigsaw Strategy.

### **Introduction:**

Writing is widely recognized as one of the most challenging skills for language learners, especially in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. As a productive skill, writing requires grammatical accuracy, organization, creativity, and thoughtful expression. Many students, especially those with lower proficiency levels, lack the confidence to freely explore and manipulate language in their writing (Hoang & Hoang, 2022). This raises a critical question for educators and supervisors : How can we effectively support students in developing their writing skills and overcoming their reluctance?

Collaborative writing has emerged as a promising approach to addressing these challenges. It enables students to work in pairs or groups and engage in a shared writing process that fosters mutual support, interaction, and language development. By working together, students can leverage each other's strengths to co-construct written texts, potentially enhancing their confidence and writing performance and the enhancement students' written work quality (Jiang & Kalyuga, 2022).

This study examined how collaborative writing affects the writing performance and attitudes toward writing of tenth-grade EFL students. The objective was to determine if working in pairs or small groups would foster students' confidence and improve the quality of their writing. The study was grounded in theoretical and pedagogical perspectives emphasizing student-centered learning, social constructivism, and interaction's role in second language acquisition.

The study was conducted within the context of the *English for Palestine curriculum*, focusing on the primary writing tasks in Units 7–10, with a particular emphasis on summary writing. The tenth grade was chosen because it is the final stage of basic education in Palestine, when students prepare to transition into academic or vocational programs (Salha & Falyounah, 2024). According to the curriculum's objectives, enhancing writing skills at this level is crucial, as students are expected to write summaries, essays, and both formal and personal letters.

This study focused on 24 male students in Section (B) at Ameen Al-Husseini Secondary Boys' School in Al-Bireh. Although these students have varying levels of writing proficiency, they have strong social bonds and are willing to collaborate. Meetings were held with the school principal, the English teacher, and the students to explain the rationale behind the study and prepare the participants for implementing collaborative strategies, such as the jigsaw method and reciprocal teaching. Initially introduced in reading tasks, these strategies served to build foundational skills that support collaborative writing.

This study examined the extent to which collaborative writing can serve as a pedagogical intervention to improve students' writing performance and change their negative perceptions. (Itmeizeh, Khalil, & Smith, 2022). To address this issue, the study employed classroom-based research involving eight lessons co-taught by the researcher and an English teacher. Students completed writing tasks both collaboratively and individually to track and compare their progress. Pre-action feedback was collected to assess students' initial attitudes toward writing. Post-action data were gathered to evaluate changes in performance and perception. This methodology provides practical insights into the effectiveness of collaborative writing in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms and paves the way for its broader adoption in similar educational settings.

# **Exploring the Effects of Collaborative Writing on Palestinian Tenth Graders' Performance and Attitudes : An Applied Study**

## **I. Research design**

Three preparatory meetings were conducted prior to implementing the writing tasks. The first meeting included the school principal and the tenth-grade English teacher. It aimed to introduce the collaborative writing strategy and identify key writing challenges students face. The second meeting focused on training the English teacher to incorporate collaborative strategies, specifically reciprocal teaching and the jigsaw technique, into reading comprehension instruction. This recognized the supportive role that collaborative reading plays in developing collaborative writing skills. The third meeting was held with tenth-grade students to introduce the concept of collaborative writing, alleviate anxiety related to grades or writing difficulties, and foster a positive, supportive learning environment. Students were assured that assistance would be available as needed.

The collaborative writing intervention consisted of eight lessons that were implemented and observed jointly by the researcher and the English teacher. The lessons included four summary-writing tasks and four main writing assignments from Units 7 to 10 of the *English for Palestine* curriculum. Students completed these tasks either collaboratively or individually to enable a comparison of their performance and development. The researcher prepared the lesson plans in advance and collaborated with the teacher to ensure consistency and clarity. Students worked in pairs or triads, which was a novel approach for them and provided opportunities for idea sharing and creating joint written products. Each student was also given the chance to write individually to assess their independent performance. Writing tasks were conducted in both the classroom and the computer lab to enhance engagement and digital literacy. All written work was collected and assessed after each lesson, and students received individualized feedback to raise awareness of recurring errors and areas of improvement. A pre-action feedback survey was administered

to gauge students' initial attitudes toward writing in general and collaborative writing specifically.

### **I.I Tools for gathering data**

This study used qualitative and quantitative methods to gather comprehensive data on students' writing performance and attitudes. Data were gathered through pre- and post-action feedback questionnaires, student interviews, peer observations, reflections from learners, and analyses of written work. These diverse tools enabled triangulation, providing a well-rounded understanding of the impact of collaborative writing on each participant.

To establish a baseline, the researcher and the English teacher reviewed the students' first-semester writing grades and examined samples of their independent written work. The teacher had previously classified students using a rubric ranging from Level One ("Very Weak") to Level Five ("Excellent"). These classifications helped create clear profiles for each student prior to the intervention and enabled an accurate assessment of the change that occurred after implementing collaborative writing.

A pre-action feedback form consisting of seven questions was given to all participants before the intervention. The purpose was to explore students' general attitudes toward writing and their perceptions of collaborative writing. The same instrument was later re-administered as a post-action feedback form to track changes in attitude over time. Comparing responses before and after the intervention contributed directly to answering the research questions.

In addition to the written surveys, semi-structured interviews were conducted with students of different proficiency levels. These interviews provided valuable insights into the students' learning experiences, perceived progress, and ongoing challenges. Hearing students' reflections helped identify the benefits of collaborative writing and the remaining obstacles, which informed further instructional planning.

The students' written work, produced both collaboratively and independently, served as tangible evidence of their development. Writing samples were collected from classroom- and computer lab-based tasks, enabling a comparative analysis across different contexts and modes of collaboration.

## **Exploring the Effects of Collaborative Writing on Palestinian Tenth Graders' Performance and Attitudes : An Applied Study**

Peer observation was also employed as part of the study's reflective practice. In a collegial, non-hierarchical manner, the researcher and the English teacher observed each other's teaching and student interactions. They focused on ensuring equal participation within groups and identifying signs of dominance or disengagement. Post-lesson reflections were conducted collaboratively to evaluate the effectiveness of lessons and inform ongoing adjustments.

Overall, the multifaceted data collection approach yielded valuable insights into students' writing abilities and engagement levels, as well as the impact of collaborative writing practices.

### **I.II. Tools for analyzing data**

The study used a rubric to analyze the students' written work. There are five levels. Level one is the lowest and level five is the highest. The rubric covers five important areas of writing. The first area focuses on how carefully students write. This area ranges from an inability to write structured sentences to the ability to write clearly and specifically. The second area assesses students' ability to use structure and vocabulary effectively to convey an accepted meaning. The third area assesses students' ability to correct errors while working in groups. The fourth area focuses on writing accuracy, covering spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Students were classified according to the levels on the rubric. The fifth area focuses on the level of cooperation between students working in pairs or groups. All students' written work was assessed using this rubric. Additionally, we analyzed the interviews in terms of positive and negative attitudes toward collaborative learning. Students' feedback was examined and categorized as positive or negative before and after implementation.

### **II. Results**

An analysis of students' written work, along with data from pre- and post-intervention surveys and interviews, revealed a clear outcome: the implemented writing strategy

supported students in viewing writing as a creative and engaging process rather than a burdensome task.

**II.1 RQ1: To what extent does collaborative writing enhance the ability of tenth-grade students to produce well-organized and accurate summaries or writing tasks based on the required texts in the English for Palestine syllabus?**

Tenth-grade students significantly improved their ability to produce well-organized and accurate summaries based on the *English for Palestine curriculum* through collaborative writing. After the intervention, 91% of students (22 out of 24) reported enjoying writing in pairs, compared to 58% who previously disliked it. Writing proficiency improved as well : based on teacher-assessed rubrics, 22 students improved their writing level, with several advancing from levels 1–2.5 to 3.5–4.5. Notably, 83% of students expressed enjoyment, citing benefits such as exchanging ideas, improving their vocabulary and grammar, and building confidence. These results align with previous studies indicating that collaborative writing increases motivation, facilitates peer scaffolding, and improves text quality through shared knowledge construction (Lipstein & Renninger, 2007; Harris et al., 2006). Not only did collaborative writing boost task completion rates and writing quality, it also transformed writing from a solitary, disliked task into a cooperative and engaging experience (Chisholm, 1990).

**II.2 RQ2: How does collaborative writing influence students' motivation, confidence, and social interaction within the classroom?**

Collaborative writing significantly impacted students' motivation, self-confidence, and classroom interaction. Before the intervention, only 37% of students reported enjoying writing. After the intervention, however, 70% of students reported enjoying writing, indicating a positive shift in attitudes. When asked about their experiences, 22 out of 24 students said they enjoyed working with their peers. They cited increased cooperation, laughter, shared ideas, and encouragement as reasons for their enjoyment. Notably, even previously reluctant or weaker students began participating actively, demonstrating increased engagement and a greater

## **Exploring the Effects of Collaborative Writing on Palestinian Tenth Graders' Performance and Attitudes : An Applied Study**

willingness to contribute. Students mentioned feeling more confident expressing themselves, correcting each other, and learning from their peers. These findings align with research showing that peer collaboration fosters a supportive environment where learners feel safe taking risks and where motivation grows through social interaction and mutual accountability (Storch, 2005; Lipstein & Renninger, 2007). Additionally, shared responsibility in collaborative tasks promotes social bonding and reduces anxiety related to making errors (Zeng, 2021). Students also extended these relationships outside of class and produced collaborative writing projects on their own, indicating intrinsic motivation and growing academic self-efficacy (Graham et al., 2012).

### **II.3 RQ3: In what ways can collaborative learning practices contribute to individual language development?**

Collaborative learning practices significantly contribute to language development by creating an environment in which learners negotiate meaning, engage in scaffolded learning, and actively use language. In this study, students who participated in collaborative writing activities demonstrated improvement in vocabulary, grammar, spelling, and overall sentence structure. For instance, 20 out of 24 students noted that collaborative writing improved their independent writing. Many also said that collaborating with peers helped them learn new vocabulary, correct grammatical errors, and become more confident in writing coherent paragraphs.

Furthermore, students who initially struggled with writing demonstrated higher levels of accuracy and fluency after participating in group activities that promoted peer correction, idea sharing, and metacognitive reflection. These results align with research indicating that collaborative writing promotes individual linguistic development by facilitating the co-construction of texts and prompting learners to articulate and refine their language skills (Donato, 1994; Storch, 2013).

Additionally, collaborative tasks that took place in digital environments (e.g., writing in a computer lab) were particularly beneficial for enhancing editing skills and writing fluency. This reinforces the idea that technology-enhanced collaboration can

support learner autonomy and sustained language development (Kessler, 2009; Li & Kim, 2021). Thus, the interactional nature of collaborative learning provides rich opportunities for language input, output, and feedback, all of which are essential for second language acquisition.

**Conclusion:**

This study revealed that collaborative writing significantly improved the attitudes of tenth-grade students toward writing and enhanced their overall performance. Despite their initial reluctance, students became more motivated, confident, and responsible through paired and group work. The supportive, interactive learning environment enabled students to exchange ideas, write more effectively, and enjoy the writing process. While the gains in writing proficiency were modest due to the brief intervention period, the shift in the classroom atmosphere and learner engagement was substantial. This study underscored the importance of teacher training, administrative support, and adequate resources for long-term success. Future research should explore the long-term effects, the impact on different student groups, and the role of digital and technological collaborative tools in promoting engagement and skill development. Overall, collaborative writing emerges as a promising strategy for improving English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction and fostering a positive, student-centered learning environment.

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## Ahmad Abhari

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