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Exploring the Perspectives of Pre-University Students on Authentic Collaborative Writing Project

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Abstract

The goal of pre-university programs is to prepare students for undergraduate studies. Therefore, the courses offered in centres of pre-university studies should cultivate higher level of independence and critical thinking which are needed by a university student. This paper explores the usefulness of authentic collaborative writing project to bridge the gap between secondary and tertiary studies. This qualitative study aimed to look into the perspectives of 10 students on the benefits and challenges of their group writing project where they had to publish a mini magazine that explores current social issues. The responses were collected through semi-structured interviews with each student. Generally, it was found that the students regarded the project positively as they were given a high level of autonomy in developing their magazine, which encouraged them to conduct extensive research, group discussion and peer assessment. However, the students noted that they experienced technical difficulties in designing and printing the magazine as it was an unfamiliar genre to them. Some students also commented that they encountered typical problems in group projects such as conflicting ideas and irresponsible group members. The findings have several pedagogical and research implications in pre-university language classrooms.

Keywords: Authentic Task, Collaborative Writing, Pre-University Studies, Writing Assessment

Introduction

Collaborative writing refers to the activity of composing together and sharing decision-making power between multiple authors to create a single written text (Allen et al., 1987). Apart from the final written text, the intended outcomes of collaborative writing also include the collective cognition of writers where they arrive at insights that they could not have arrived at on their own such as the acquisition of new lexicon and improved ways of idea expression (Storch, 2013). Thus, the process of writing which includes steps such as generating ideas, researching for information, planning,