

Collaborative Writing to Motivate and Support Text Production: A Challenge to Propose for Beginner Writers?

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Abstract

Writing is a difficult task and it is important not to leave the student alone with it. The scientific literature highlights the many benefits of teaching practices that promote social interactions, where students share their knowledge and ideas with their peers and highlights students' motivation to work with a peer. However, collaborative writing seems to be little used with young writers. Our study aimed to: 1- describe the content of interactions when writing in a dyad and 2 - evaluate and compare the motivation to write alone and in dyad. Twenty-eight pairs of students (7-8 years old) participated in the study (n= 56). The pupils wrote a story individually and in pairs, and responded to a motivation questionnaire. They were filmed to capture their interactions. They were given one sheet of paper to write on to encourage discussion and they were also each given a different coloured pencil, making it possible to determine who had written which part of the story. A coding grid was used to record the number of interactions and their content. For the motivation, T-tests for matched groups were performed. The results show, among other things, that during the planning the pupils concentrated on the development of the story and during the correction, they discussed a lot about the lexical spelling. For the motivation, writing in pairs is neither more nor less interesting for students than individual writing. Those results will be discussed and different actions to properly frame collaborative writing in class will be presented.

Keywords: interest; social interactions; teaching practices; writing; young writers