



Nadia Akter¹, Dr. Radhega² & Nurul Nabila³

¹English Department, Lincoln University College, Malaysia, Email: nadiaakter9857@gmail.com,
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0009-1350-1780>, LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/nadia-akter-6153b8426>

²English Department, Lincoln University College, Malaysia

³English Department, Lincoln University College, Malaysia

KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
collaborative writing, ESL learners, peer feedback, secondary education, Bangladesh	The purpose of this study is to explore the attitudes of secondary school students, and English teachers towards collaborative writing in the ESL classrooms in Munshiganj District, Bangladesh. Questionnaires and open-ended responses were used to gather data from 80 students and 18 teachers. Collaborative writing practices, perceived benefits, classroom support, challenges, and preferred writing arrangements were explored. The results indicate that the writing process experience of collaborative writing is familiar to most of the students, as 78.7% indicated that they sometimes used the writing process experience that involved the collaboration of classmates. Students' preference was group or pair writing and the advantages teachers reported were those of idea generation, peer support, language development, confidence and engagement. But not enough training, not enough time, not enough participation, shyness and noise in the classroom were listed as significant challenges. In general, the results indicate that collaborative writing can be used as a help for secondary ESL learners if the writing tasks are structured, the roles are determined, the teacher is able to provide monitoring and guidance, and the learners can see the difference between their own and the other group's contributions.
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Corresponding Author	Nadia Akter
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Introduction

Students must master the coordination of ideas, word selection, grammar, organization, and audience awareness when learning to write in a second language. Limited language resources

and confidence can pose a challenge for secondary ESL learners to meet these demands. Opportunities for discussing meaning, experimenting with language, and learning from other writers are limited with individual writing. An alternative is collaborative writing which involves planning, drafting and editing in pairs or small groups. Storch (2005) concluded that collaborative writing resulted in discussion of language and decision making, and Fernández Dobao (2012) demonstrated that pair and group writing structures were good for interacting and for language-related discussions. To collaborate effectively, the writing task must be shared. The benefits of collaborative writing on content, coherence, fluency, motivation and self-efficacy have been studied. Anshu & Yesuf (2022) found that paragraph content and coherence improved, and Pham (2021) found that a collaborative writing system was linked to writing fluency. Other research highlighted that students' attitude towards collaborative learning was positive and that they became confident when they were given responsibility to collaborate with others (Anggraini et al., 2020; Sitompul & Anditasari, 2022). Some research has been conducted on online collaborative writing that has reported positive results on writing performance, motivation and self-efficacy, but the conditions do not match those of face-to-face classrooms (Li, 2023). Another study of large online groups also revealed the possibility of varying participation in public forums vs. private conversations (Mei et al., 2025).

Good results are not guaranteed. Cognitive and social demands on the learner can be enhanced through working in groups. Students will need to adopt an understanding of the task, organize ideas, handle disagreements, and determine who will do what. Collaboration can be a way to decrease the task load for each individual by dividing up the information among a group, but it can also increase the coordination demands. (Janssen and Kirschner 2020) This can then diminish the educational benefits of a collaborative activity if participation is unequal, roles are not clear, the time is short, or there is inadequate teacher support. In younger L2 writers, the quality of scaffolding is particularly significant as the student might need assistance with the writing task as well as the communication by which the task is accomplished. The concerns are applicable to Bangladesh where English writing is a significant component of school assessment and there might be restricted time and resources allocated for English instruction. While collaborative writing may help students to develop ideas, there is little evidence that has been gathered locally about the experiences of secondary students and teachers with writing collaboratively. Knowing what their perceptions are can help identify effective team collaboration from ineffective team work. This article attempts to analyze the responses of a secondary school study in Munshiganj District based on the questionnaire and open-ended responses. It emphasizes the practices that have been observed in the classroom, which do not necessarily lead to the achievement results discussed. The Study Question is: What collaborative writing practices do students and teachers report? What benefits do they see to these practices? What are some of the issues and decisions involved in applying them in the context of a secondary ESL classroom?

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Writing as a Socially Supported Process

Collaborative writing is grounded in Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, which focuses on the importance of learning through interactions with others. Peers and teachers can facilitate learning in writing classrooms by providing explanations of ideas, comments on their work, and assistance in the completion of a task, which may be challenging to accomplish without help. Peer scaffolding behaviours were described by Chairinkam and Yawiloeng (2021) and collaborative writing was related to the relationship between writing process and writing product by Storch (2005). Fernández Dobao (2012) also demonstrated that the size of the group affects language related interaction. The results of this research demonstrate that interaction and decision making are important to effective collaboration.

Cooperative Structure and Individual Accountability

The key components of cooperative learning include shared goals, individual accountability, positive interaction, social skills, and self-evaluation and reflection on group processes (Johnson & Johnson, 1989). Collaborative writing can be used to create a single text with individual responsibilities. Explicit roles can facilitate the sharing of vocabulary, comparison of interpretations and error detection, while implicit roles can create opportunities for dominating students to speak loudly. The ability to plan, monitor, and evaluate their work is part of metacognitive guidance, indicating that students should be taught to work effectively collaboratively (Wang et al., 2025).

Collaborative Writing Outcomes and Learner Perceptions

The benefits of collaborative writing in previous research have been seen in terms of content, coherence, writing skills, fluency, and learner attitudes (Anshu & Yesuf, 2022; Bhandari, 2022; Lopres et al., 2023; Anggraini et al., 2020). There are also reports that the students benefit along with their challenges in collaborative writing (Sitompul & Anditasari, 2022). Positive impacts of online collaborative writing on writing performance, motivation and self-efficacy have also been reported (Li, 2023); and the teacher assisted peer assessment can help improve writing self-efficacy (Abo et al., 2025). In general, the ability to write collaboratively relies on the proper direction, manageable tasks, and opportunities for meaningful interaction. In the present study, a school level perspective is provided by studying these conditions in a secondary ESL context in Bangladesh. New research also suggests large group and technology mediated collaborative writing, but scale is a challenge in design. Mei et al.'s (2025) study found that mutual engagement was more apparent in private chats than in the public forum in the case of large group online writing. While there are a number of different restrictions with face-to-face classroom, the key thing to remember here is that students need to have suitable environments and guidelines when it comes to planning, composing and giving feedback. This study brings a school-level perspective

that focuses on students' and teachers' descriptions of these conditions in a secondary ESL setting in Bangladesh.

Methodology

Research Design

The study was a descriptive mixed method. The survey and open-response results of a larger classroom study are presented in this article. The quantitative items focused on how often they used collaborative writing, its perceived usefulness, problems, and appeal, whereas the open-ended items gathered data on students' and teachers' classroom experiences.

Setting and Participants

The data were gathered in Munshiganj District of secondary school in first semester 2026. The subjects were 80 secondary students and 18 experienced teachers of English or writing. Participation was voluntary. Multiple-response items may sum to more than 100% when combined and some aggregate items may not have as many valid responses as the entire student sample.

Research Instruments

The questionnaire was structured, one for students, and another for teachers. The student questionnaire addressed four areas of classroom experience, collaborative activities, teacher guidance, perceived improvement on writing, and obstacles to writing, as well as preferred writing arrangements. The teacher questionnaire focused on collaborative strategies, desired writing and language outcomes, participation, barriers faced in implementing the project, and the teacher's need for support. Questions related to the stages of writing, such as idea generation, planning, drafting, peer review, and editing. Open-ended questions were used to gather opinions, issues and solutions for improvements.

Data Collection and Ethical Procedures

The study and what the responses would be used for academically were made known to the participants. Minors were asked for parental/guardian consent and student assent and teachers gave consent. Participants were assured of confidentiality and they had the option of not answering certain questions

Data Analysis

Closed responses were summarized using frequencies and percentages. Open responses were coded thematically after Braun and Clarke (2006) who outlined six stages in the process of thematic analysis: familiarization, coding, development of themes, review, definition and naming,

and reporting. The students' and teachers' responses were compared to highlight similarities and differences.

Results

Frequency and Forms of Collaboration

For most students, collaborative work was a familiar activity. Table 1 indicates that 78.7% indicated that they always, often or sometimes co-work with classmates in English writing lessons. Of these 1.3% said they never worked together. Sometimes was the highest single response, indicating that, while some collaboration may have taken place, it was not necessarily common practice in all lessons. As shown in Table 1, students reported that they collaborated with their peers as much as 30.0% of the time during lessons when writing English.

Table 1: Student Reported Frequency of Collaboration During English Writing Lessons

Response	Percentage	Estimated Count
Always	30.0%	24
Often	8.7%	7
Sometimes	40.0%	32
Rarely	20.0%	16
Never	1.3%	1

The most frequently reported collaborative activity was writing, with 32.5% of the students choosing this option. The other activities involved checking each other's writing (23.8%), group projects (21.3%), and discussing ideas for (18.8%). 6.3% reported games or related activities was the least common. These values refer to the relative importance of practices and multiple activities may have been identified. Similar band of practices was reported by teachers. The most frequent strategies chosen were pair work (31.7%), group writing (26.8%) and peer feedback (24.4%). Group discussion was used most often (14.6%) and project-based writing was used least often (7.3%). The pattern points to teachers' preference for short manageable arrangements over long projects. Pair and group writing can be incorporated into a normal lesson, and project writing will need more time, coordination, and assessment planning

Student Perceptions of Classroom Support

Overall, students were generally satisfied with the support provided in their classrooms. Of the 59 valid responses, 86.4% indicated that teachers gave clear directions prior to group writing, 91.5% indicated that group members actively engaged in group and shared ideas, and 79.6% indicated that teachers monitored and assisted groups. The results suggest that the role of collaboration was generally directive rather than autonomous.

Table 2: Selected Student Perceptions and Writing Preferences

Indicator	Reported Result	Valid Base
Teacher gives clear guidance before group writing	86.4% positive	59
Group members participate and share ideas	91.5% positive	59
Teacher monitors and helps during group work	79.6% positive	59
Prefers writing in groups	38.8%	80
Prefers writing in pairs	28.7%	80
Prefers a mixture of arrangements	21.3%	80
Prefers writing alone	11.3%	80

The open responses indicated that group writing facilitated idea generation, vocabulary, grammar checking, confidence, planning, and peer review. Students also appreciated brainstorming before writing, as some were more independent and focused during the writing process.

Teacher Perceptions of Benefits

The feedback from the teachers was positive yet mixed. However, teachers reported improvements for weaker students, in critical thinking, grammar, vocabulary, idea generation, and peer review; and there were more varied reports on changes in writing accuracy and creativity. The group discussion was reported to generate ideas for students and to bring attention to spelling, punctuation, sentence structure and organization; these were reported with open responses. These benefits were stressing by teachers as group work alone was insufficient to reap them. In addition, teachers also identified pair and small-group work as a way of increasing the involvement of the reluctant learner. But not all students participated equally, some students were silent, others made decisions.

Challenges Reported by Students and Teachers

The problems reported by students and teachers had noticeable differences but were also similar in nature. Students' most common problem was shyness (34.2 %), lack of time (32.9 %) and classroom noise (22.8 %). Insufficient training (35.1%), time constraints (32.4%), unequal participation (18.9%), and large classes (13.5%) were emphasized by teachers. Other open-ended responses included issues of ideas, inconsistent task responsibilities, time spent discussing and problems with monitoring groups. The two groups recommended more clear job descriptions, mixed classes, more time for discussion, and teacher monitoring.

Table 3: Reported Challenges in Collaborative Writing

Respondent Group	Challenge	Percentage of Selections
Students	Feeling shy	34.2%
Students	Not enough time	32.9%

Students	Excessive noise	22.8%
Students	Some members do not help	10.1%
Students	Difficulty understanding peers	8.9%
Teachers	Insufficient training	35.1%
Teachers	Time constraints	32.4%
Teachers	Unequal participation	18.9%
Teachers	Large class size	13.5%

Note. These were multiple-response items. Percentages describe selections and are not expected to sum to 100 percent across all rows.

The students showed a preference for cooperative writing: 38.8% chose groups; 28.7% chose pairs; 21.3% chose a combination of individual, pairs and group writing; and 11.3% chose to work individually. Open responses indicated that students appreciated working collaboratively for planning, but occasionally preferred to work independently during drafting. This facilitates flexible collaboration in which collaboration differs during the stages of writing.

Writing Preferences

The majority of students were in favor of a cooperative model. 38.8% selected groups, 28.7% pairs and a combination of individual, pair and group writing was 21.3%. 11.3% liked to write it alone. Students were not discouraged from working independently with the distribution. In open responses, some learners described the importance of discussion in the planning stage, but expressed a desire for freedom and concentration in the drafting stage. The findings lend themselves to a flexible process in which the nature of collaboration varies as a function of writing stages.

Discussion

Collaboration as Scaffolding for Idea and Language Development

The results suggest that collaborative writing has a positive impact on idea generation, language development, feedback and confidence. Brainstorming, peer explanation, and error detection were stresses by students and teachers, as these are the same items that are discussed in the sociocultural approach of Vygotsky (1978) and the peer scaffolding that is described by Chairinkam and Yawiloeng (2021). The results also align with the previous studies that have been conducted on the relationship between collaborative writing and content, coherence, and positive perceptions of the learners (Anshu & Yesuf, 2022; Anggraini et al., 2020; Sitompul & Anditasari, 2022). Peer discussion was used to discuss grammar and vocabulary, but teachers should ensure that students explain the changes, not just answers.

The Importance of Teacher Guidance

Collaborative process was largely guided by the teacher. Clarity of instructions, monitoring and clear responsibilities can help alleviate uncertainty and recognise lack of understanding or inequitable participation. As per the Wang et al. (2025), metacognitive support can also help students with planning, monitoring, and evaluating their work. Teacher-assisted peer assessment (Abo et al., 2025) is also one way to enhance student's self-efficacy in writing.

Participation and Coordination

He results also indicate that there is a need for good coordination for collaborative writing. Can be reduced because of shyness, lack of time, sound barrier, unequal participation, large classes. Individual accountability can be used to equalize contributions by utilizing short individual records, alternate roles, or individual writing following the group planning. The size of the group should also be appropriate to the task, as groups of two or three may be more appropriate for aspects of the sentence or short tasks, and larger groups for extended planning (Fernández Dobao, 2012).

Confidence and Motivation

Previously the researchers found that there was a positive correlation between collaboration and higher participation and lower anxiety (Abo et al., 2025; Li, 2023). However, confidence and enjoyment does not equate to more advanced writing abilities. Based on the data obtained from the present study, it can be concluded that collaborative writing has positive attitudes and further studies are required to see the effects of collaborative writing on real writing performance in a valid writing assessment system.

Pedagogical Implications

The results justify a process-writing model in secondary ESL classrooms in a structured process. The model includes teachers stating a clear purpose, audience, and criteria for writing, followed by pair or small group brainstorming and planning. The student(s) should have clear responsibilities when drafting, have focused questions for peer review and record at least one revision/learning point. Pairs can be a less intimidating option for more introverted students, and short tasks and/ or time limits for each part of the class can help manage classroom time. Switching roles and individual accountability may help level participation. Teacher development should concentrate on the design of the tasks, the feedback to students, the formation of groups, and the monitoring of tasks, ensuring that collaborative activities are purposeful, but at the same time students have the opportunity to learn to write independently.

Limitations

The results need to be understood in the context of the study. The data was limited to one district, and was largely self-reported, potentially subject to self-reconstruction or socially desirable

responses. For some products there were less than the expected number of valid answers and some items gave several possible answers. The results are descriptive only and cannot be read as a measure of the effectiveness of collaborative writing on achievement and should not be interpreted as such. Further research needs to be done on individual writing products before and after collaborative activities, and contrasted with suitable conditions.

Conclusion

In this secondary ESL context in Bangladesh, students and teachers found collaborative writing as effective in generating ideas, assisting each other, discussing language, and boosting confidence. The majority of students indicated some joint experience and favored group, pair, and/or mixed arrangements. But shyness, time constraints, classroom noise, less training for teachers and participation were factors that curtailed its impact. The findings suggest that structured collaboration that has clear goals, small group sizes, rotating roles, specific and predetermined peer review, teacher monitoring and accountability is helpful. Collaborative writing should not take the place of independent writing, but rather support it, allowing students to apply the collaborative ideas and strategies to the individual task.

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