

Using fun and collaborative learning to increase students' confidence in writing

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the implementation of fun and collaborative learning to increase students' confidence in writing. A Classroom Action Research (CAR) design was employed, consisting of two cycles with the stages of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The findings show that in Cycle I, 40% of students demonstrated confidence in writing, 60% showed active involvement during the learning process, and 60% of the fun collaborative learning strategies were successfully implemented. In Cycle II, students' confidence increased to 90%, their involvement reached 80%, and 90% of the fun collaborative learning procedures were implemented. The results indicate a significant improvement across cycles, and all success criteria were achieved.

1. INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the most complex skills in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, requiring students to integrate ideas, linguistic knowledge, and organization to produce meaningful texts (Kleinbort et al., 2020). However, many EFL learners struggle with writing due to low confidence, limited vocabulary, and restricted opportunities for meaningful practice (Bozgün & Akın-Kösterelioğlu, 2021). Factors such as motor skills, perception, memory, and self-confidence also influence students' writing development.

In many Indonesian EFL classrooms, teacher-centered approaches—particularly the Grammar Translation Method (GTM)—limit opportunities for students to explore their ideas and build confidence in writing (Bukit & Marcela, 2023). These traditional methods often result in student passivity, disengagement, and anxiety about writing. To address these challenges, engaging approaches such as fun learning and collaborative learning are needed. Fun learning creates a relaxed and motivating atmosphere that encourages creativity and enjoyment (Zhao, 2019). Collaborative learning, which involves peer interaction and shared tasks, supports confidence-building through social engagement and collective problem-solving (Deana, 2019; van Leeuwen & Janssen, 2019).

Research suggests that fun collaborative learning can enhance students' writing confidence by reducing pressure, promoting peer support, and making writing activities more engaging (Chen & Hapgood, 2021; Zotzmann & Sheldrake, 2021). Therefore, this study aims to investigate how fun and collaborative learning strategies can improve students' writing confidence and involvement in the classroom.

2. METHOD

The study used Classroom Action Research (CAR), which involves planning, implementing, observing, and reflecting. The researcher, also serving as the teacher, collaborated with a partner to diagnose classroom problems and implement solutions through fun collaborative learning. The participants of this research were 15 second-year junior high school students, all female, during narrative text lessons. The procedures were planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. In collecting data, observation checklist, students' self assessment form, and observation sheet were used.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study was conducted in two cycles and aimed to investigate how fun and collaborative learning improves students' confidence and involvement in writing. The data were collected through observation checklists, student self-assessment forms, and involvement observation sheets.

Cycle I

In the first cycle, the implementation of fun collaborative learning was still at an early stage. The results showed that 40% of students demonstrated confidence in writing, while 60% actively participated in the learning process. The observation checklist indicated that only 60% of the planned fun collaborative activities were carried out effectively. Students were still adjusting to the new approach. Many appeared hesitant, shy, and unsure about contributing to group tasks. This confirmed previous studies stating that learners need time to adapt to collaborative and enjoyable learning environments before they can participate comfortably (Zotzmann & Sheldrake, 2021). The incomplete implementation also contributed to limited confidence improvement. Thus, several modifications were planned for Cycle II, including clearer instructions, more structured group activities, and additional engaging media.

Cycle II

After the improvements, Cycle II showed notable progress. Students' confidence increased significantly to 90%, and their involvement rose to 80%. Additionally, 90% of the fun collaborative learning procedures were successfully implemented. Students participated more enthusiastically, shared ideas in their groups, and showed reduced anxiety when completing writing tasks. These findings support theories suggesting that fun learning environments reduce students' affective barriers and enhance motivation (Whitton & Langan, 2019). Collaborative activities also allowed learners to rely on peer support, which contributed to greater confidence when expressing ideas in writing (Haataja et al., 2022). The combination of enjoyable media, group discussions, and interactive tasks helped transform the learning atmosphere, making writing activities feel less intimidating and more engaging.

The comparison between the two cycles demonstrates that fun and collaborative learning effectively promotes students' writing confidence and involvement. The significant improvements across all indicators show that when students feel supported, engaged, and entertained, they are more willing to express ideas and participate actively. This reinforces the view that meaningful interaction, enjoyment, and social support are key components in successful EFL writing instruction. The findings support the effectiveness of combining fun and collaborative learning in writing instruction. Students became more relaxed, enthusiastic, and motivated when working with peers and engaging in enjoyable activities. These results align with existing research emphasizing that enjoyable and collaborative environments foster confidence and active learning (Brandle, 2020; Whitton & Langan, 2020).

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it is concluded that fun and collaborative learning significantly increased students' confidence in writing and improved their involvement. The strategies encouraged teamwork, reduced anxiety, and made writing more enjoyable. Thus, it is suggested that the teachers should incorporate fun and collaborative activities to create engaging writing lessons. It is also suggested for students that they should participate actively in group work to develop writing skills and confidence.

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