



วารสารอิเล็กทรอนิกส์  
ทางการศึกษา

OJED, Vol. 14, No. 2, 2019. Article ID: OJED-14-02-036  
Article Info: Received 7 May, 2019; Revised 18 July, 2019; Accepted 18 July, 2019

OJED

An Online Journal  
of Education

[www.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/OJED](http://www.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/OJED)

การเปรียบเทียบการเขียนแบบกลุ่มย่อยลดความสามารถด้วยกลวิธีการเขียนแบบร่วมมือ  
เพื่อลดระดับความกังวลในการเขียนภาษาอังกฤษของนักเรียนชั้นมัธยมศึกษาปีที่ 6  
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF COLLABORATIVE WRITING THROUGH SMALL MIXED-ABILITY  
GROUPS TO REDUCE WRITING ANXIETY OF GRADE 12 STUDENTS

นายอร่าม ทองมี \*

Aram Thongmee

อาจารย์ พันตรี ดร. ราเชน มีศรี \*\*

Major Ra-shane Meesri, Ph.D.

**บทคัดย่อ**

งานวิจัยนี้เป็นงานวิจัยประเภทกึ่งทดลอง มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อ 1) ศึกษาความแตกต่างของระดับความกังวลในการเขียนภาษาอังกฤษของกลุ่มย่อยลดความสามารถด้วยกลวิธีการเขียนแบบร่วมมือ 2) ศึกษารูปแบบการจัดกลุ่มย่อยแบบลดความสามารถที่ดีที่สุดเพื่อลดระดับความกังวลในการเขียนภาษาอังกฤษภายใต้กลวิธีการเขียนแบบร่วมมือ งานวิจัยนี้ใช้วิธีการคัดเลือกกลุ่มตัวอย่างแบบโควต้า กลุ่มตัวอย่างได้แก่ นักเรียนชั้นมัธยมศึกษาปีที่ 6 จำนวน 12 คน ในรายวิชาการเขียนภาษาอังกฤษ ภาคฤดูร้อน ปีการศึกษา 2561 ของโรงเรียนมัธยมแห่งหนึ่งในสังกัด สพม. 1 เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในงานวิจัยประกอบด้วย 1) แบบวัดความวิตกกังวลในการเขียนภาษาที่สอง 2) แบบทดสอบทักษะการเขียนเรียงความภาษาอังกฤษ 3) ภาระงานเขียนเรียงความภาษาอังกฤษ 4) การสัมภาษณ์ สถิติที่ใช้ในการวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลประกอบด้วย การวิเคราะห์ค่าเฉลี่ย และการทดสอบค่าที่ได้แก่ Dependent Samples T-Test และ Independent Samples T-Test

ผลการวิจัยพบว่า 1) กลวิธีการเขียนแบบร่วมมือสามารถลดระดับความกังวลในการเขียนภาษาอังกฤษของนักเรียนได้ทุกกลุ่มย่อยลดความสามารถอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติ โดยแบ่งเป็นกลุ่ม HMM ประกอบด้วยนักเรียนที่มีระดับความสามารถทางการเขียนภาษาอังกฤษระดับสูงและระดับกลาง ที่ระดับทางสถิติที่ .014\* และกลุ่ม HLL ประกอบด้วยนักเรียนที่มีระดับความสามารถทางการเขียนภาษาอังกฤษระดับสูงและระดับควรปรับปรุง ที่ระดับทางสถิติที่ .005\* 2) ไม่มีรูปแบบการจัดกลุ่มย่อยแบบลดความสามารถที่ดีที่สุดเพื่อลดระดับความกังวลในการเขียนภาษาอังกฤษภายใต้กลวิธีการเขียนแบบร่วมมือเนื่องจากค่าความกังวลในการเขียนภาษาอังกฤษระหว่างกลุ่มย่อยลดความสามารถลดลงโดยไม่แตกต่างกันทางนัยสำคัญทางสถิติ

\*Master's Degree Student, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Faculty of Education, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok Thailand  
E-mail Address: aramthongmee@gmail.com

\*\*Advisor and Lecturer, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Faculty of Education, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok Thailand  
E-mail Address: rashanemeesri@gmail.com

## Abstract

This quasi-experimental research aims to 1) investigate the difference between the pre and post writing anxiety levels of two types of small mixed-ability groups before and after experiencing collaborative writing and 2) find the best pattern of two types of small mixed-ability groups to reduce Grade 12 students' writing anxiety in collaborative writing. The participants of this study were twelve Grade 12 students enrolled in English Writing, a summer course, academic year 2018, at one secondary school in the Secondary Educational Service Area Office 1 selected using quota sampling. The research instruments were 1) the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) questionnaire, 2) pre and post writing tests, 3) English writing tasks, 4) and semi-structured interview questions. The data were analyzed using means, dependent samples t-test, and independent samples t-test.

The results showed that 1) collaborative writing had a significant effect in reducing pre and post writing anxiety for both small mixed-ability groups at the statistical significance of .014\* for HMM groups, comprised a high English writing proficiency student and two intermediate English writing proficiency students and .005\* for HLL groups, comprised a high English writing proficiency student and two low English writing proficiency students, and 2) there was no statistically significant pattern of mixed-ability groups that best reduced writing anxiety because both mixed-ability groups relieved their writing anxiety level at almost the same amount through collaborative writing.

**คำสำคัญ:** ความกังวลในการเขียนภาษาอังกฤษ / การเขียนแบบร่วมมือ / กลุ่มความสามารถ

**KEYWORDS:** WRITING ANXIETY / COLLABORATIVE WRITING / MIXED-ABILITY GROUP

## Introduction

Writing is one of the most important skills for Grade 12 students, as they are required to write various English compositions such as a statement of purpose, an email or an English report to further their education and for real-life purposes. Since English writing is important for these reasons, it is included as a basis for Grade 12 students' evaluation in foreign language learning as stated in the Basic Education Core Curriculum (A.D. 2008). In order to graduate, upper secondary students should be able to converse and write in order to exchange and present data about various issues, conduct research in English and have a favorable attitude towards the target foreign language (Ministry of Education, 2008).

Unfortunately, most Thai students find English to be one of the most difficult skills to master. In one study by Boonyarattanasoontorn (2017), grammatical accuracy and lexical usage caused difficulty for students when they composed written works in English. In the same vein, Cheng (2004) investigated sources and implications of students' writing anxiety and found that students' anxiety was caused by the result of heavy emphasis on grammatical accuracy, mechanics and language forms.

Without doubt, writing anxiety impedes the progressiveness of students' writing performance. As stated in research by Krashen (1982), anxiety is one of the affective filters that has an influence on second language acquisition as a high level of anxiety does not lead to the success in second language acquisition. To be specific, it can be explained that learners

who have a high level of language anxiety will tend to seek less input; moreover, the input will not reach the part of the brain which is responsible for language acquisition, or the language acquisition device. Unlike the less anxious learners, those who have low anxiety are more conducive to second language acquisition and will obtain more input and be more willing to learn the target language due to the weak affective filters. Similarly, Changlek and Palanukulwong (2017) studied three psychological factors to find the primary determinant of language learning success. The findings revealed that a high level of anxiety was found in low achievers, whereas high achievers had a low level of anxiety. In addition, Hassan (2001, as cited in Ekmekci, 2018) reported that low-anxiety students wrote better English composition than those encountering a high level of writing anxiety. Therefore, anxiety is one of the most important factors providing a negative impact on students' writing achievement.

In this study, it is necessary to focus on writing anxiety. Writing anxiety is defined as "a fear of the writing process that outweighs the projected gain from the ability to write" (Thompson, 1980, as cited in Rungruangthum, 2011). Cheng (2004) discovered that there were three dimensions of writing anxiety; these three factors were cognitive anxiety, somatic anxiety and avoidance anxiety. As described in Zhang (2011), negative expectation, preoccupation with performance and concern with other's thoughts could cause cognitive anxiety. Moreover, somatic anxiety deals with one's perception of the physiological effect of the anxiety experienced from unpleasant feelings such as nervousness and tension. Additionally, avoidance anxiety is described as the behavioral aspect of anxiety and the avoidance of writing.

A previous study from Parichut and Chinokul (2014) showed that Grade 11 students in one school in SESAO 1, which are similar in ability to the participants of this study, had a moderate to high level of writing anxiety while assigned to write English essays. Linguistic, cognitive and affective factors were the respective causes of writing anxiety. These factors not only applied to upper secondary students but also EFL university students, as it was found that Thai EFL learners encountered a high level of anxiety both inside and outside language classroom contexts (Chinpakdee, 2015). In the same vein, Wahyuni and Umam (2017) revealed that 54 percent of Indonesian students had a high level of writing anxiety, whereas 44 percent were moderate-anxiety learners. In other words, it is noteworthy that moderate to high levels of writing anxiety are found in separate EFL contexts. Thus, a pedagogical approach under collaborative writing should be implemented in EFL settings to relieve writing apprehension among learners.

To solve this problem, collaborative writing can play a major role in reducing the writing anxiety of EFL learners to enhance writing projects. Significant research exists on collaborative writing; Flower and Hayes (1981, as cited in Rbuaiee, Darus & Bakar, 2015) defined collaborative writing as a collective cognitive process where more than one authors co-write

and share their knowledge and accountability to produce a text. In other words, collaborative writing is a collective cognitive process that requires a group effort towards producing a text. To elaborate further, Flower and Hayes (1981) described that there are three main stages during the collective cognitive process of collaborative writing (CW). These three stages are the planning stage (prewriting stage), the translating stage (writing stage) and the reviewing stage (postwriting stage). Planning is the first stage, where learners gather together as a group or team to set or describe goals for collaborative tasks, assign roles, strategies, coordination and responsibilities, schedule work plans, generate and review information, and organize information and writing plan. At this stage, it requires team planning and management. The second stage is the translating stage or writing stage, where the process of putting ideas down in concrete language occurs. Students start to collaboratively brainstorm their ideas, summarize the benefits of the topic for writing, outline the factors related to the topic of writing and draft their writing assignment. In other words, students are required to collectively work to organize information to produce a text. The last stage is the reviewing stage, where students jointly evaluate and revise their work. They help read their written draft, evaluate it and revise the text within their group. This view is in agreement with Lowry, Curtis & Lowry (2004) that all individual members have a chance to practice their writing skills in as a team through the whole process of planning, translating and reviewing stages. It is noteworthy that CW is a process where everyone in the collaborative writing group contributes their efforts in producing a text and building up or stretching their knowledge of writing.

In previous research from Storch (2005), product, process and students' reflections on collaborative writing were explored. When the researcher allowed participants to choose the working types, the majority of the students chose to write in a small group while others chose to write individually. The findings reported that collaboration had an effect on students' writing beliefs and writing accuracy. The texts created from collaborative work were more precise and of higher textual quality (language accuracy, deliberation and complexity) because collaborative writing allowed students to generate ideas together on both language and content, learn from their friends, and provide valuable feedback to each other. The overall attitudes towards collaborative writing were positive, meaning that students might have low anxiety level in writing. Furthermore, studies from Debaio and Blum (2013), Lin and Maarof (2013), Li and Zhu (2017) and McDonough, Vleeschauwer and Crawford (2018) supported the theory and the findings of Storch (2005) mentioned above. They found that, compared to a non-collaborative writing group, students who wrote in a collaborative group produced higher quality texts. The collaborative texts were more accurate, constructive and deliberate in language and content because there were opportunities for active participation in exchanging and generating ideas, as well as opportunities for students to help each other develop language proficiency.

With regard to the collective cognitive process of collaborative writing, the participants agree that CW supports language development and positive attitudes towards writing. As the benefits of collaborative writing are due to cognitive and social processes, CW provides clear steps for teachers to teach writing, enhance students' language accuracy, create a low-anxiety environment for writing, allow students to learn from each other, support students in writing high-quality texts and construct good attitudes towards writing English for students of all proficiency levels.

To conclude, significant research has proven that CW has a positive impact towards students' writing ability, attitude and anxiety; however, one concern that teachers have about collaborative writing is how to group various mixed-proficiency learners to produce high-quality texts, enhance language development and reduce students' writing anxiety. In real classroom settings, teachers are usually faced with a group of students of different language proficiencies. However, there is a lack of research on how to pair students in mixed-ability groups along with the resulting pedagogical implications in reducing writing anxiety. Thus, the research aims to find the differences in writing anxiety levels between two types of mixed-ability groups: high (high English writing proficiency) + mid (moderate English writing proficiency) + mid and high + low + low (low English writing proficiency) before and after the process of collaborative writing, and to discover the pattern that most effectively provides the lowest anxiety level in collaborative writing projects.

## **Objectives**

1. To investigate the difference between the pre and post writing anxiety level of two types of small mixed-ability groups before and after experiencing collaborative writing.
2. To find the best pattern of using two types of small mixed-ability groups to reduce grade 12 students' writing anxiety when writing collaboratively.

## **Methodology**

### **Participants**

Twelve students with different levels of English writing proficiency, enrolled in an English writing summer course, participated in this research project and were chosen using quota sampling. The participants were in an intact group. The researcher had a chance to teach them all in this study. The students were all 18 years old and were divided into two types of small mixed-ability groups: 1) a group of three students comprised of a high English writing proficiency student and two intermediate English writing proficiency students (HMM), and 2) a group of three students comprised of a high English writing proficiency student and two low English writing proficiency students (HLL). Thus, there were four groups in total which consisted of two HMM groups and two HLL groups. Their English writing proficiency was based on their individual essays at the beginning of the Fundamental English 6 course. The

participants who obtained 39-50 points were considered as high English writing proficiency students. Having received 26-38 points, they were intermediate English writing proficiency students. Lastly, the participants who got below 25 points, they were classified as low English writing proficiency students. However, their scores were kept confidential to avoid negative perspectives towards their group mates.

### **Instruments**

Four major research instruments were used to investigate and explore the effectiveness of collaborative writing groups in order to reduce students' writing anxiety.

#### **1. Questionnaire – the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI)**

The Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) was developed by Cheng in 2004. It was used to discover the level of an individual's writing anxiety both before and after writing collaboratively. It consists of 22 items; the participants respond to a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). According to Parichut and Chinokul (2014), students who scored above 65 points are defined as high-anxiety learners, whereas those who had a total score below 50 points are defined as low-anxiety learners.

#### **2. Semi-structured interviews**

A semi-structured interview was employed to identify students' level of writing anxiety while working in an assigned mixed-ability group. In this case, the researcher adapted the guidelines for the interview from Cheng (2004) regarding sources of writing anxiety. After writing English compositions, the participants were asked to describe the situations under which they felt anxious during collaborative writing. Additionally, students were interviewed about their preferences in writing English with friends of different proficiency levels along with their reasons.

#### **3. English writing tasks**

In this present study, students had to write three collaborative writing tasks in the form of descriptive essays. The topics of the essays were taken from their students' book, were approved by the Ministry of Education, and had not been previously taught. The three topics were "The Great Ways to Survive in Natural Disaster", followed by "Disorder" and "Unexplained Superstition".

#### **4. Pre and post writing tests**

The students were given pre and post writing tests in order to measure the effectiveness of mixed-ability patterns in terms of writing ability. The topics were developed from Sharpe (2017), who provided suggestions for mixed proficiency writers. In his writing framework, the suggested themes for descriptive writing were "Hometown", "Country" and "Famous Person". Thus, the researcher decided to use places near the school for the tests to suit to the suggested themes mentioned above. The topics for pre and post writing tests

were “The Most Wonderful Place for Tourists in Bangkok-Noi District” and “The Most Fascinating Historical Sites in Bangkok-Noi District”.

### **Data Collection**

In this study, the researcher spent four weeks collecting data including pre and post writing anxiety levels, pre and post writing tests, and three English essays. To begin with, the SLWAI adopted from Cheng (2004) was distributed to the participants in order to know each individual's writing anxiety level before receiving the treatment, which was collaborative writing. There were 22 items in the questionnaire comprising three dimensional areas of anxiety: cognitive anxiety, somatic anxiety and avoidance anxiety.

Next, the participants were divided into their assigned patterns base on their writing ability. The first pattern was high + mid + mid (HMM), whereas the second pattern was high + low + low (HLL). After pairing students into the target groups, the researchers assigned them a prewriting task; the topic of the prewriting task was “The Most Wonderful Place for Tourists in Bangkok-Noi District”, which was adapted from Sharpe (2017). He suggested that students should write something familiar to their experience; thus, the researcher decided to use places near the students' school to write their essays about.

The third step of data collection involved the writing tasks. The research followed the form of collaborative process by Flower and Hades (1981). There are three stages in collaborative writing referred to as planning (prewriting stage), translating (writing stage), and reviewing (postwriting stage). In each stage, students were assigned to negotiate, coordinate and communicate with each other to produce English written texts as Lowry et al. (2004) and Storch (2013, as cited in Rbuiase et al., 2015) believed that collaborative writing was a collective cognitive process. After that, students were given a post writing test on the topic “Most Fascinating Historical Sites in Bangkok-Noi District” to evaluate the progression of writing performance.

The fourth step was that students were tested on their writing anxiety level by SWLAI to compare the writing anxiety levels before and after writing collaboratively in mixed-ability groups. All participants were also interviewed to express their feelings of anxiety during the collaborative writing process to identify causes and effects of writing anxiety. The guidelines for the interview questions were adapted from Cheng (2004).

### **Data Analysis**

Since this research employs quasi-experimental research, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analyzed.

For quantitative data, the respondents' answers to the SWLAI questionnaire were analyzed by using dependent samples t-test to examine the significant difference between pre and post writing anxiety levels of mixed-ability groups. The use of independent samples t-test was to clarify any significant difference between pre and post writing anxiety levels

between mixed-ability groups. Moreover, three professional raters used the rubric scoring of English composition adapted from an ESL composition profile (Jacob et al., 1981) to correct English writing tests and essays. The contents of the rubric are organization, content, language use, vocabulary and mechanics to analyze the progress of writing performance after experiencing the treatment. The data were concluded with mean score to examine their writing achievement. In order to ensure the reliability of three raters, inter-rater reliability was employed in this study. The researcher utilized the Pearson Correlation Coefficient to discover the correlation among three raters. The results were very high correlations at the levels of .916, .922 and .929, meaning that three raters evaluated students' essays almost at the same level. It can be summarized that the scores from the raters were reliable.

For qualitative data, a semi-structured interview was conducted to interview all participants. The researcher aimed to receive in-depth information about collaborative work with mixed-ability groupmates, writing anxiety, language improvement and group interaction.

## Results and Discussion

In order to investigate the difference between pre and post writing anxiety levels of mixed ability groups before and after engaging in collaborative writing, the SLWAI questionnaire and respondents' answers in the semi-structured interview were collected and analyzed.

Table 1

*Descriptive Statistics of pre and post writing anxiety levels of the participants*

<i>Pairs</i>	<i>Participants</i>	<i>Mean of Pre-Writing Anxiety</i>	<i>Mean of Post-Writing Anxiety</i>	<i>Diff.</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Sig (2-tailed)</i>
All	12	77.83	52.58	25.25	14.18	.000*
HMM	6	78.66	54.66	24.00	15.86	.014*
HLL	6	77.00	50.50	26.50	13.69	.005*

As seen in Table 1, the mean score of prewriting anxiety level for all mixed-ability groups was 77.83. According to Parichut and Chinokul (2014), a score higher than 65 indicates a high level of writing anxiety. It is undeniable that the participants in this research were highly anxious about writing English before engaging in collaborative writing. This agrees with previous studies reporting that Thai high school students encountered moderate to high levels of anxiety in these situations. However, after going through the collaborative writing process, the level of writing anxiety decreased. The mean score of the post writing anxiety level for all mixed-ability groups was 52.58. The difference between pre and post writing anxiety points was 25.25; the dependent samples T-Test proved that the writing apprehension level for all mixed-ability groups was statistically decreased at the .000\* level of significance.



All HMM groups had a high level of writing apprehension at first; in contrast, their writing anxiety was alleviated by the use of collaborative writing. Their average post writing anxiety level was 54.66, which was significantly different from the mean of the previous anxiety level, which was 78.66. Thus, the writing anxiety level of HMM groups was significantly ameliorated at the statistical level of .014\*. In the same vein, the students' level of writing anxiety in HLL groups was also significantly lessened after receiving the collaborative writing treatment; their mean prewriting anxiety level was 77.00 while their average of the post writing anxiety level was 50.50. The difference between pre and post writing anxiety levels was 26.50, which is statistically different at the .005\* level of significance.

Moreover, the researcher analyzed the causes of the decrease in writing anxiety level between the two mixed-ability groups by conducting a semi-structured interview where students were interviewed to express their feelings towards working with friends of different proficiency levels. First, the reduced level of writing anxiety in mixed-ability groups was mainly based on personal beliefs about writing and learning to write. For instance, students involved stated the following:

*"In my opinion, working with friends is fun. I have a chance to learn more about global aspects. My friends always show me various interesting ideas. It really helps me write better essay in term of content."* (Jasmine (pseudonym), personal communication, 13 March 2019)

*"Even though I haven't learnt much about grammar from my friends, but collaborative writing provides me low-anxiety environment to write because I have my friends. Their ideas are constructive and useful to make the essay more comprehensible despite the fact that we have to argue to conclude the ideas."* (Arthur (pseudonym), personal communication, 13 March 2019)

These two examples showed that Jasmine and Arthur acknowledged their peer's help as useful. Although they gained less in terms of grammatical deliberation, they appreciated their friends' ideas, which made their essay more logical and understandable.

Like studies by Chinpakdee (2015) and Yu and Hu (2017), which showed that when the students strongly believed that comments from their peers were constructive and useful, the students then trusted in their peers and made use of the fruitful comments to compose and edit their group's essays to be effective in the area of global aspects in EFL writing.

Apart from the positive attitude towards collaborative writing, the factors that supported the alleviation of writing anxiety were a low-anxiety atmosphere, lack of language difficulties and language improvement. Other examples of students' comments include the following:

*"I prefer writing with my friends because we can share ideas, languages and so on. Plus, I learn new vocabulary and interesting grammatical points from them."* (Laura (pseudonym), personal communication, 13 March 2019)

*“I always stick with one idea while writing an essay alone. Writing with friends broadens my views, my ideas and my thinking skills. I have learned grammar and vocabulary during the process of brainstorming and reviewing. I listen to them and think along. Then, I have something to share.” (Carlos (pseudonym), personal communication, 13 March 2019)*

Owing to the two examples, mixed-ability students preferred collaborative writing because they were able to observe and learn from their friends to improve their writing ability, both in global and local aspects in EFL writing, and had a good attitude towards writing. In other words, the social interaction processes allowed mixed-ability students to help each other to increase their writing potential. The result was congruent with studies by Dobao and Blum (2013) and Challob, Bakar and Latif (2016), which found that most students had a positive attitude toward collaborative writing and reduced their writing apprehension towards it because the students had a chance to share and discuss ideas, and gain more opportunities for language exchange.

In order to compare the difference in writing anxiety levels between mixed ability groups from the process of collaborative writing, the dependent samples t-test indicated that there was a significant difference between pre and post writing anxiety levels for both mixed-ability groups. In other words, the participants significantly alleviated their writing anxiety because they had a strong belief that every comment was useful and positively affected their ideas towards English writing. Moreover, they appreciated that collaborative writing provided active participation for them to generate ideas and an opportunity to learn how to write from others.

In order to find the best pattern of small mixed-ability groups to reduce grade 12 students' writing anxiety in collaborative writing, the SLWAI, pre and post writing test, writing tests and answers from the semi-structured interview were collected and examined.

Table 2

*The difference between pre and post writing anxiety level of two writing patterns*

<i>Test</i>	<i>Groups</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Sig (2-tailed)</i>
Pre-anxiety	HMM	6	78.66	13.33	.819
Level	HLL	6	77.00	11.20	
Post-anxiety	HMM	6	54.66	5.68	.479
Level	HLL	6	50.50	8.19	
Difference	HMM	6	24.00	15.86	.776
	HLL	6	26.50	13.69	

As seen in table 2, there was no significant difference between the two types of mixed-ability groups. The difference between the means of the pre and post writing anxiety level was 24.00 for HMM groups and 26.50 for HLL groups. When compared, the statistic indicates that both groups relieved their writing anxiety with no statistical difference between the two

( $P=.776$ ). From this study, there was no best pattern for forming mixed-ability groups to reduce writing anxiety because the participants in HMM and HLL groups gradually alleviated their writing anxiety with collaborative writing at the same level.

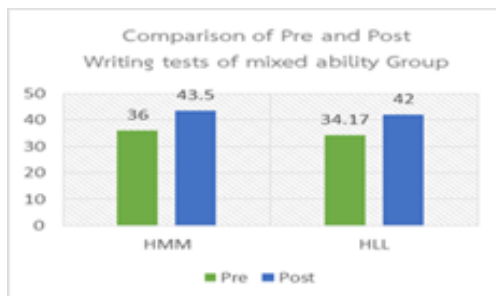


Figure 1. The comparison of pre and post writing tests of mixed-ability groups

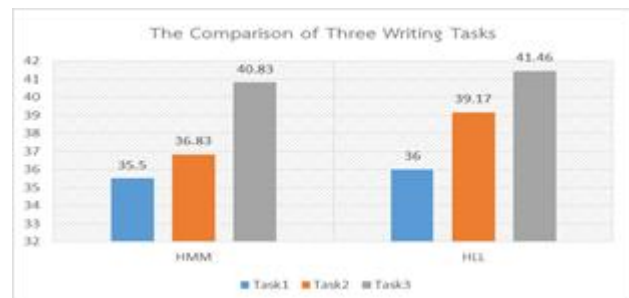


Figure 2. The comparison of three writing tasks of mixed-ability groups

Apart from the decrease in writing anxiety, there was progress by both groups in terms of writing achievement. As seen in figure 1 below, the total score of the pre and post writing tests and the three writing tasks was 50 points. Both HMM and HLL groups gradually improved their writing skills; for HMM groups, the average pre-writing test score was 36 while the average post-writing test score was 43.5. To be more specific, the increase in writing performance of the HMM group is clarified in figure 2; their mean scores for the three writing tasks were 35.5 (task 1), 36.83 (task 2) and 40.83 (task 3). However, the HLL groups also made a big leap in terms of writing achievement. The mean scores of the pre and post writing tests were 34.14 and 42, respectively. Among the three writing tasks, there was an improvement in writing scores, as their mean scores on the writing tasks were 36 (task 1), 39.17 (task 2) and 41.76 (task 3). In other words, collaborative writing reduced writing anxiety while enhancing language proficiency.

Owing to the results of the study, it is undeniable that collaborative writing had an impact on the decrease of writing anxiety level; both HMM and HLL groups lowered their writing anxiety level due to the process of collaborative writing. In addition, students had possibilities to share ideas, improve their language and learn from others in a low-anxiety atmosphere during the three stages of collaborative writing; planning, translating and reviewing. Consequently, students improved their writing ability, gained new vocabulary and learned grammatical points, and developed their writing abilities. With the social interaction from collaborative writing, students were able to overcome the causes of writing anxiety such as fear of negative evaluation, language difficulties and a lack of topical knowledge. Aside from this, mixed-ability students helped their friends gain more knowledge in English language and writing through social interaction activities.

Hence, this research finding is similar to the studies of Storch (2005), Lin and Maarof (2013), Li and Zhu (2017) and McDonough et al. (2018), who found that those who wrote

collaboratively provided high quality texts that were more accurate and complex in terms of language and ideas. The studies also showed that collaborative writing enhanced language proficiency and improved students' attitudes towards English writing.

### Recommendation for Future Research

The findings of the current study indicate several further areas for researchers to explore in the areas of mixed-ability groups, collaborative writing and writing anxiety. Because the number of participants was small and had only two types of mixed-ability groups, future studies could deal with samples involving a large number of participants, several mixed-ability groups or even matched-ability groups to investigate their effects on writing anxiety levels in a variety of contexts. Moreover, future studies should include both control and experimental groups to examine the difference in writing anxiety level between collaborative writing and individual writing. Furthermore, as this research was done under time constraints, it would be interesting to provide more writing tasks and increase the duration of the research to examine how collaborative writing's longer term effects on writing anxiety levels.

### References

- Boonyarattanasoontorn, P. (2017). An investigation of Thai students' English language writing difficulties and their use of writing strategies. *Journal of Advanced Research in Social Sciences and Humanities*, 2(2), 111-118. doi:10.26500/JARSSH-02-2017-0205
- Challob, A. I., Bakar, N. A., & Latif, H. (2016). Collaborative blended learning writing environment: Effects on EFL students' writing apprehension and writing performance. *English Language Teaching*, 9(6), 229-241. doi:10.5539/elt.v9n6p229
- Changlek, A., & Palanukulwong, T. (2017). Motivation, anxiety and grit: Interactive factors determining language learning success. *Journal of Liberal Arts, Prince of Songkla University, Hat Yai Campus*, 9(2), 88-116. Retrieved from <https://tci-thaijo.org/index.php/journal-la/article/download/107700/85495/>.
- Cheng, Y. S. (2004). A measure of second language writing anxiety: Scale development and preliminary validation. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 13, 313-335. doi:10.1016/j.jslw.2004.07.001
- Cheng, Y. S. (2004). EFL students' writing anxiety: Sources and implications. *English Teaching & Learning*, 29, 41-62. Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/306392321\\_EFL\\_Students'\\_Writing\\_Anxiety\\_Sources\\_and\\_Implications](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/306392321_EFL_Students'_Writing_Anxiety_Sources_and_Implications)
- Chinpakdee, M. (2015). Thai EFL university students' perspectives on foreign language anxiety. *Silpakorn University Journal of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts*, 15(3). Retrieved from <https://tci-thaijo.org/index.php/hasss/article/view/44672>.
- Debao, A. F., & Blum, A. (2013). Collaborative Writing in Pairs and Small Group. *System*, 41, 365-378. doi:10.1016/j.system.2013.02.002

- Ekmekci, E. (2018). Exploring Turkish EFL students' writing anxiety. *The Reading Matrix: An International Online Journal*, 18(1), 158-175. Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/324825129\\_Exploring\\_Turkish\\_EFL\\_Students'\\_Writing\\_Anxiety](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/324825129_Exploring_Turkish_EFL_Students'_Writing_Anxiety).
- Flower, L., & Hayes, J. R. (1981). A cognitive process theory of writing. *College Composition and Communication*, 32(4), 364-387. Retrieved from [www.jstor.org/stable/356600](http://www.jstor.org/stable/356600).
- Jacobs., H. L., Stephen, A., Zinggraf., Deanne. R., Wormuth, V., Faye, H., Jane, B., Hughey. (1981). *Testing ESL Composition: A Practical Approach*. Rowley: Newbury House Publishers, Inc.
- Krashen, S. (1982). *Principles and practice in second language acquisition*. Retrieved from [http://www.sdkrashen.com/content/books/principles\\_and\\_practice.pdf](http://www.sdkrashen.com/content/books/principles_and_practice.pdf)
- Li, M., & Zhu, W. (2017). Good or bad collaborative wiki writing: Exploring links between group interactions and writing products. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 35, 38-53. doi:10.1016/j.jslw.2017.01.003
- Lin, O. P., & Maarof, N. (2013). Collaborative Writing in Summary Writing: Student Perceptions and Problems. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 90, 599-606. doi:10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.07.131
- Lowry, P. B., Curtis, A., & Lowry, M. R. (2004). Building a taxonomy and nomenclature of collaborative writing to improve interdisciplinary research and practice. *Journal of Business Communication*, 41(1), 66-99. doi:10.1177/0021943603259363
- McDonough, K., De Vleeschauwer, J., & Crawford, W. (2018). Comparing the quality of collaborative writing, collaborative prewriting, and individual texts in a Thai EFL context. *System*, 109-120. doi:10.1016/j.system.2018.02.010
- Ministry of Education. (2008). *Basic Core Curriculum B.E.2551 (A.D. 2008)*. Bangkok: Ministry of Education.
- Parichut, W., & Chinokul, S. (2014). English language writing anxiety among Grade 11 Thai students. *OJED*, 9(1), 657-671. Retrieved from <https://tci-thaijo.org/index.php/OJED/article/view/37265>.
- Rbuiaee, A. A., Darus, S., & Bakar, N. A. (2015). Collaborative writing: A review of definitions from past studies. *SOLLs.INTEC 2015 Proceedings*, 138-149. doi:10.13140/RG.2.1.3932.7760
- Rungruangthum, M. (2011). Writing anxiety: EFL postgraduate students writing research papers in English. *Journal of English Studies*, 6, 185-198. Retrieved from <https://tci-thaijo.org/index.php/jse/issue/view/2524>.
- Sharpe, M. (2017). *L2 composition projects for mixed proficiency writers*. Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/314181385\\_L2\\_composition\\_projects\\_for\\_mixed\\_proficiency\\_writers/citation/download](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/314181385_L2_composition_projects_for_mixed_proficiency_writers/citation/download)

- Storch, N. (2005). Collaborative writing: Product, process, and students' reflections. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 14, 153-173. doi:10.1016/j.jslw.2005.05.002
- Wahyuni, S., & Umam, K. (2017). An Analysis on Writing Anxiety of Indonesian EFL College Learners. *JEELS*, 4(1), 105-127. doi:10.30762/jeels.v4i1.333
- Yu, S., & Hu, G. (2017). Can higher-proficiency L2 learners benefit from working with lower-proficiency partners in peer feedback?. *Routledge*, 22(2), 178-192. doi:10.1080/13562517.2016.1221806
- Zhang, H. (2011). *A Study on ESL Writing Anxiety among Chinese English Majors – Causes, Effects and Coping Strategies for ESL Writing Anxiety* (Unpublished Master's Thesis). Kristianstad University.