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Comparison Of Individual and Collaborative Learning in Offline Teaching

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Abstract: This article speaks about the comparison of individual and collaborative learning in face-to-face learning using reading and writing tasks to define the motivation and academic achievement of learners. The framework took place during the fall semester using 24 students who study at the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan. In the study, it is used reading and writing tasks to define the best learning methods with regards to motivation and academic success. It was decided that collaborative learning is more effective with learners in terms of academic success and motivation compared to individual learning. However, individual learning was higher in informative writing than cooperative learning.

Introduction

Many researchers compared the efficacy and usefulness of collaborative and individual learning in their research work. Some researchers point out that collaborative learning differs from individual learning in terms of its methods, devices, and styles. However, some argue by saying that there might be relationships between them. For example, the individualized approach could be initially used by members within a group to follow an interesting area of the problem being involved into the project. Then collaboration can be used within the group to find a solution to the problem while doing project work. Thus, it can be seen that collaborative work is linked to problem-solving methods, which is crucial in forming interaction between students. Individual learning was popular in the 1970s and it was supported by many professors as "freeing up" students to follow learning and knowledge on their own. Technological advancements over the past several decades have aided individualized education via the wealth and breadth of information available to students independent of teachers. Dillenburg et al (1996) stated that individualized education can also supplement a lot of instructional strategies, as well as being used independently with middle school students. They also added that collaborative learning can be considered to involve the relative engagement of participants to solve the problem together. Gokhale & Digby, Russ (1995) claimed that students become critical thinkers since they take responsibility for their learning when discussions are held in the class. Senge et al (1994) defined a team as a tool to transmit conversation and collect skills so that groups of people could improve a team's intelligence and abilities greater than individual members. Researchers believe that in simple tasks individual learners are better, however, group learners are better in complex tasks. Through my small-scale research, we want to observe students' collaborative and individual learning in reading and writing tasks.

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Gokhale (1995) pointed out collaborative learning is a useful learning process in educational approach where through working in small groups learners can achieve a goal. Apart from being useful to achieve a goal, individual learners can acquire skills and knowledge while interacting and experiencing with people. A study that was conducted by Smith & MacGregor (1992) proved that students and teachers benefit from the discussion in searching for interaction, solutions or meanings, or creating a product. According to Sweller and Van Merrinboer & Ayres's theory, collaborative learners have a great ability in working memory compared to individuals. Lev Vygotsky developed this theory by researching the relationship between cognitive processes and social activities, developing the sociocultural theory of development. The sociocultural theory of development suggests that learning takes place when learners solve problems with the support of their peers. Positive group independent learners supported the idea of a zone of proximal development. Roger Johnson and Karl Smith conducted a meta-analysis of 168 studies comparing cooperative learning and individualistic learning in college students. They found that cooperative learning improved greater academic achievement than individualistic learning across the studies. These results indicate that cooperative learning increases student academic performance compared to non-cooperative learning models. Importantly, the academic achievement measures were defined in lower-level cognitive tasks to higher-level cognitive activity and from verbal tasks to mathematical and procedural tasks. The meta-analysis also showed that collaborative learning has substantial effects on self-esteem and positive attitudes about learning. George Kuh and colleagues also conclude that cooperative group learning promotes student engagement and academic performance.

Valuable knowledge and information related to tasks within the group can be discussed, recalled, broadcasted with great effort (Tindale & Sheffey, 2002). As a result, there is no need to acquire information and knowledge from all members simultaneously. Therefore, using collaborative learning in complex tasks brings enjoyment and useful transactional benefit. Kracher and his colleagues (2010) revealed that individual learning of worked-out examples is more efficient than collaborative learning. However, the collaborative method can lead to better results if it is learned through problem-solving. Each student should work together to exchange ideas between them. Lowes and Targetm (1998) advocated that independent learning gives better results through learning theory that promotes autonomous learning giving students to enhance effective independent learning strategies in all areas of ESL instruction from speaking to grammar. Every classroom activity from project work to writing portfolios and self-assessment can allow developing students' all learning skills. Brody (1995) claimed that in individual strategy each student is regarded as an individual learner and promoted according to their academic potential and learning style. Students work independently and are responsible for their achievements. It is seen that both of the methods demand active participation during the learning process.

Material and methods

For our case study, we have chosen 24 students who are learning English as a foreign language at the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan. In the survey, there were 70 % of male and 45% of female students at age 19. We tried to involve both genders. They all were pre-intermediate level. We have been working with them for 5 weeks. We aimed to observe their individual and collaborative learning in terms of reading and writing tasks.

We devised a reading consisting of questions for students to collect the data. They had to read for specific information and tick the correct multiple-choice answer. We chose the text due to their level. The reason why we selected multiple-choice question types was that they could focus on the content rather than detail. Apart from that, it took less time compared to other types of questions. We wanted to know if they could accomplish the task individually. At the next stage, we gave them true, false, filling the gaps and matching the picture. However, for these tasks, it was advisable to read in detail and skim the text. At the next stage, we asked them to do the reading task in groups. We placed them in one group. Based on this task, students had to do different reading question types working with a partner through asking suggestions, discussing ideas with a group member. These questions were regarded to be a suitable tool for the study. The reason why

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we gave them different reading types of questions it was crucial to know the most efficient style of working. In the last stage, we gave them writing tasks including picture writing, descriptive writing, and informative writing to determine differences between effective working styles. Firstly, we distributed pictures to each one with similar tasks. According to the picture, they had to write an essay. The following day, they were given a task to write about "Descriptions: personal items". Lastly, we used informative writing where they had to inform about their daily life. We helped them understand the question in case of difficulty. In groups, we provided the same task to write an essay while sharing ideas. We aimed they could cope with the given task individually or in groups. After collecting the data, we analyzed by classifying them into two groups such as individual and collaborative learners. We assessed their work according to the provided text in the handouts.

Results

   In Figure 1, the result of the data indicates that in multiple-choice question group work learners got a higher percentage of marks compared to individual work learners who struggled to find the answers. They were encouraged to work individually without interacting with peers. When the students worked individually, they made overall 2 and 3 mistakes. When they work in groups it was clearly seen that there were significant differences between working styles. The result showed that by discussing the answers with each other they could perform the task better distinguishing correct answers from incorrect.

Figure 1. The result of students in reading tasks
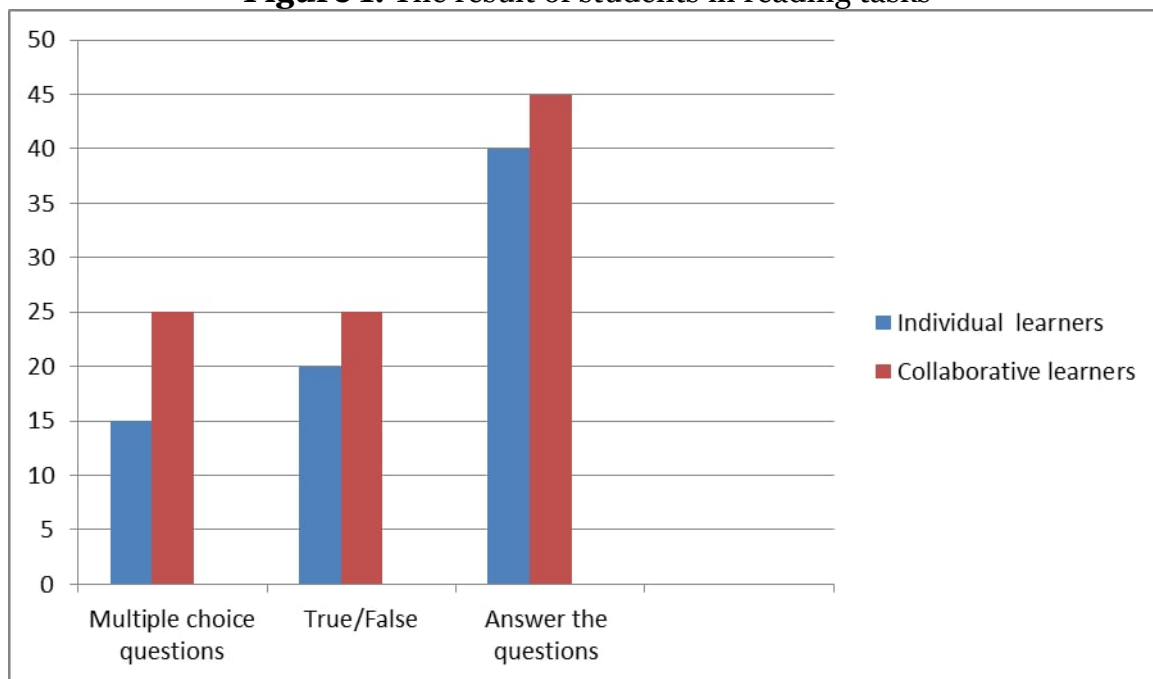
Secondly, in True, False question type learners could manage to do the task perfectly when they work in groups. As shown in the table, their scores were 25, which were higher than the scores of individual learners. This shows collaborative learners can progress if they work with their peers by sharing their ideas.

Thirdly, in the next task group work dealt with assignments more effectively than individual groups as members could find the answer through analyzing, discussing, and communicating whereas individual learners felt some stress in completing the task. The table provided the differences in answer the question type with higher scores than independent learners did.
As shown in Figure 2, collaborative learning is more effective than individual in writing. The result shows that in picture writing students collaborated to achieve a shared goal. The data proved

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shows 90% higher results than individuals did. There was a mutual engagement of all participants to solve a problem. Their ideas were well connected and structured. Indeed, collaboration leads to academic achievement and motivation which is important for their future life.

In descriptive writing, the results were the same. Both working types of learners used adjectives as well as words by looking at the picture. However, there were some mistakes including grammar and spelling. Learners tried to describe the shown picture with clear content and connected ideas.

In the last task, in informative writing individual learners showed higher results compared to collaborative learners. Individual and collaborative learners provided information writing about their daily life. The collaborative learners had difficulties in informing their daily life due to different feelings. Although the ideas were mixed up, they tried to give full answers through well-supported members. The result shows s slight difference between both learners. They were satisfied with being involved in groups as well as individually to gain confidence.

Figure 2. The results of students who participated in writing tasks
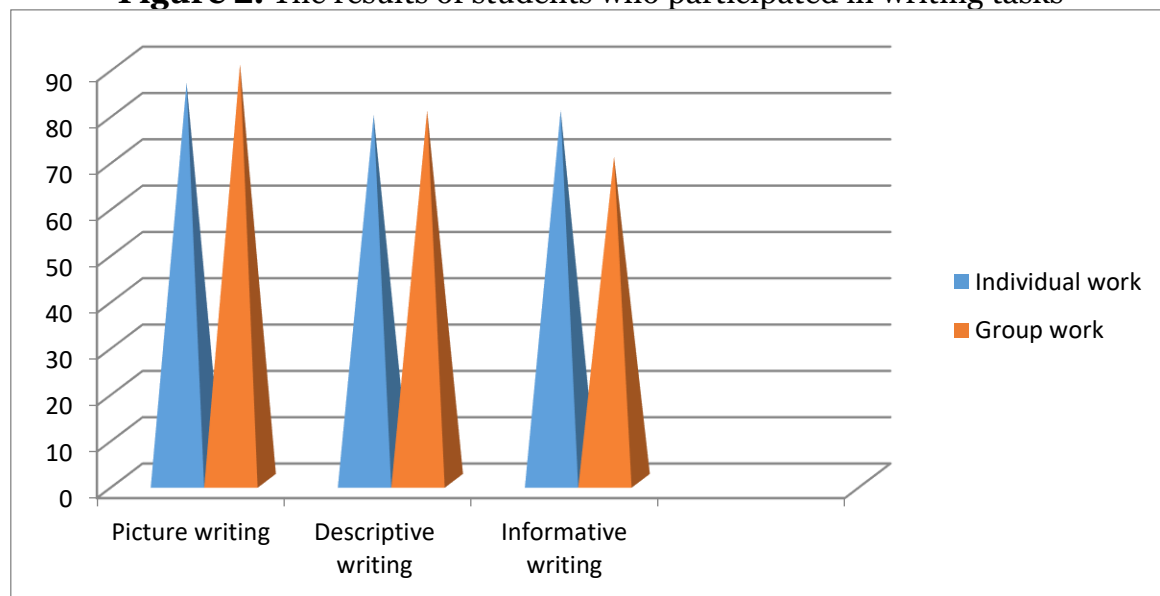
The research was aimed to determine the differences between individual and collaborative working styles. It is seen that there were significant differences between learners in reading tasks. A close inspection of the result showed that the collaborative learners performed better in three types of reading tasks. This was probably because through interaction with a peer challenges could be overcome. Nevertheless, in True, False question type they were generally got the same score. Indeed, both types of learners were confident in their achievements. We noticed that learners are motivated a lot if they do the task in groups. However, some members may not rely too heavily on others to do the work. Freeman and Greenacre (2011) claimed some members may not help and do not adequately contribute to the group.

The second findings showed a bit similar results in writing overall that is 80%. It was proven that both types of work were completed the task with great effort. Even if they were not writers, they wrote like co-authors to express their ideas freely. Individual learners had lack of ideas in picture writing however, in informative writing their answers were more developed than collaborative learners did. Davis stated (1993) that when a group does not bind as a whole, the students need to find ways to interact and establish goals for a successful group. Writing can be successfully accomplished owing to all learners discuss experiences and background knowledge.

Discussions and conclusion
Summarizing all findings, this small scale revealed that collaborative learning plays significantly important role in the learning process. For this reason, in reading tasks such as True, False, Multiple choice collaborative groups were higher than individual groups. But, it was

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contrary in the case of answering the questions. According to Di Carlo (n.d) working together as one family can create a sense of community which can prepare the children for future experiences. They learn better through participation in groups. However, working individually increases competitiveness and confidence. In writing tasks it was seen that through collaborating in group learners achieve better results in getting high scores in picture writing. Individual learners learn best through informative writing as the task was related to their daily life. On the contrary, both learners coped with descriptive writing. Individual learning is a lifelong process and, as Mullins (2010) stated, it is essential for people who have to cope with the changing nature of organizations. Group work was provided better support so enabled them to work more efficiently work on the task. Being able to overcome challenges in the task may increase low-achieving students feeling of success and increase their motivation in reading and writing. Thus, many works of literature support the value of group work for motivating students in different ways, which in turn leads to better learning.

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