



## **Implementing Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in Improving EFL Students' Collaborative Writing in Composing Analytical Exposition Texts: A Classroom Action Research**

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### **Abstract**

Collaboration is important skills in English education and it is essential for educators to develop students' potential. This study aims to improve students' collaboration through Project-based Learning (PjBL) on Analytical Exposition Text. This research was conducted at SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Pontianak from September to October 2025, involving 30 students of class XI and using a class action research method with a qualitative approach. Data were collected through observation checklists, field notes, and interview. In Cycle 1, most groups demonstrated improvement in understanding; however, contribution and regulation still required frequent teacher intervention. Some groups achieved success by fulfilling at least two of the three aspects, indicating that collaboration was emerging but not yet consistent. In Cycle 2, significant improvement was observed across all groups. Students showed clearer shared understanding of the task, more balanced contribution among group members, and better self-regulation with minimal teacher support. All groups successfully achieved the three aspects of collaboration, indicating that Project Based Learning effectively fostered collaborative skills in writing analytical exposition texts. The findings suggest that Project Based Learning provides meaningful opportunities for students to engage in collaborative writing processes and supports the development of essential collaboration skills in EFL classrooms. Therefore, PjBL can be considered an effective instructional approach to improve students' collaboration in writing analytical exposition texts.

**Keywords:** Analytical exposition texts; Classroom action; Collaborative writing; Project-based learning

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Collaboration has become one of the important 21st-century skills required for students to participate effectively in academic and social contexts. In English language learning, collaboration not only promotes social interaction but also enhances cognitive engagement during complex tasks. However, many students still struggle to work collaboratively, particularly when they are required to produce written texts that demand higher-order thinking such as analytical exposition. In senior high school, writing analytical exposition texts is often seen as a challenging task. It requires students to construct logical arguments, present clear reasoning, and develop coherent paragraphs. These cognitive demands can overwhelm students, resulting in a tendency to rely on individual work rather than engaging in meaningful collaboration with their peers.

One of the recurring problems identified in this classroom, particularly in writing activities, is the lack of students' collaboration during group work. Based on the researcher's preliminary classroom observation as the English teacher at the school,

conducted during regular classroom instruction prior to this research, students' collaboration in writing analytical exposition texts was not optimally developed. This condition was observed during teaching and learning activities.

In writing sessions, students were assigned to work in groups to produce analytical exposition texts. However, the collaborative process within the groups tended to be limited. In many groups, only one or two students dominated the writing process, while the others showed minimal involvement. This was evident from the unequal distribution of tasks, limited exchange of ideas, and the absence of joint decision-making during the writing process. The integration of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in the instruction of writing as a foreign language has been extensively examined in the academic literature. Rahman et al. (2021) explored the efficacy of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in enhancing English writing skills among students. This research employed both quantitative regression analysis and qualitative interviews to gain a thorough understanding of how Project-based Learning influences students' writing performance. It adds to the existing body of literature by offering empirical support for the effectiveness of PjBL.

Project-Based Learning (PjBL) represents an instructional model that inherently fosters collaboration among students. As articulated by Bell (2021), PjBL necessitates students' engagement in extended tasks that encompass investigation, communication, and the production of a tangible outcome. Aifah & Astriani (2024) provide empirical evidence that PjBL enhances teamwork, communication, and joint problem-solving skills, resulting in students taking more active roles in idea generation and collective responsibility. Similarly, Nur khasanah (2025) highlights that PjBL encourages balanced participation and significantly increases learner engagement. These findings collectively suggest that PjBL is an effective methodology for cultivating the collaborative skills that are essential for writing tasks.

## RESEARCH METHOD

The research employed a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design. CAR is a systematic approach that enables teachers and learners to collaboratively investigate their instructional practices, refining and enhancing the quality of teaching and learning. The researcher is English teacher at this school. she was helped by two observers to observe the classroom condition, the students' behaviour during teaching learning process and the researcher's a way of teaching process. There are several steps that the researcher used in this classroom action research. Based on Kemmis and Taggart (1994) the steps are planning, action, observation, and reflection.

Planning has an important role in guiding actions aimed at improving existing classroom practices. Burns (2010, p. 22) explains that at the planning stage of Classroom Action Research (CAR), the focus does not need to be fully specified at the beginning, even though the researcher already has an interest in examining classroom practices and behaviors in greater depth. This indicates that the researcher should be able to identify a classroom problem and formulate a theoretical perspective or possible solution to address it. The action stage involves implementing the plans that were formulated during the planning stage. This phase represents the actual teaching practice conducted in the classroom using the prepared components. The researcher taught the students according to the prepared lesson plans and applied the selected instructional techniques to address the identified problem. Observation is conducted to examine the effects of the implemented actions within the classroom context during each research cycle. According to Burns (2010), this stage involves several procedures, including data collection, data coding, comparison, interpretation, and reporting of findings. In this study, two collaborators observed the researcher's instructional practices and the classroom learning process. The researcher also employed the prepared data collection instruments to

document how the action was implemented and to gather relevant data. Reflection is carried out to evaluate the outcomes of the implemented actions and to use these findings as a basis for subsequent planning and further cycles. In this stage, the researcher and the collaborators analyzed the observation results, discussed the strengths and weaknesses of the action, and formulated feedback to guide improvements in the next cycle.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

In cycle 1, students engaged in brainstorming sessions; however, collaboration was primarily restricted to the exchange of basic ideas, with minimal in-depth discussion or joint problem-solving. In the drafting phase, students wrote analytical exposition steps without engaging in revision or editing. Drafts were directly translated into English, with minimal modifications to language, structure, or content, following a basic procedural format. A challenge in this cycle was the absence of revising and editing; students did not utilize opportunities to refine their work. As a result, the texts remained simplistic and failed to demonstrate the deeper engagement expected in the writing process.

Table 1 Students' Demonstration of Collaboration in Cycle 1

|         |                                                                      |                                                             |                                                                                                    |                                              |            |
|---------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|------------|
| Group 1 | Students actively discuss and align ideas before working on the task | Most members contribute ideas and participate in drafting   | Group reviews the text and corrects grammatical errors, but the process is not fully collaborative | Demonstrated understanding and contribution. | shared and |
| Group 2 | Students discuss and reach agreement on ideas and arguments          | Members actively participate during discussion and writing. | Group reviews the text and checks grammar; however, regulation is not conducted by all members     | Demonstrated understanding and contribution. | shared and |
| Group 3 | Students discuss ideas and agree on how to work on the task          | Limited participation during drafting                       | Minimal collaborative text review                                                                  | Demonstrated understanding only              | shared     |
| Group 4 | Students discuss and align ideas clearly                             | All members participate in discussion and drafting          | Text review and grammar checking are not conducted collaboratively                                 | Demonstrated understanding and contribution  |            |
| Group 5 | Students discuss ideas after teacher explanation and reach agreement | Some members contribute ideas during group work             | No review text or correct grammatical                                                              | Demonstrated understanding and contribution  | and        |
| Group 6 | Students discuss and align ideas after repeated clarification        | Limited contribution during drafting                        | No collaborative text review observed                                                              | Demonstrated shared understanding            |            |
| Group 7 | Students discuss ideas and reach shared understanding                | Unequal participation among members                         | Weak regulation; no collaborative grammar checking                                                 | Demonstrated shared understanding            |            |

Group 1 demonstrated good collaborative performance in terms of shared understanding and contribution. Students actively discussed ideas and aligned their viewpoints before starting the task, which helped them develop a common direction in writing the analytical exposition text. Most members participated in the discussion and contributed ideas during the drafting process. However, the regulation aspect was not fully achieved. Although some grammatical corrections were made, the reviewing process was not conducted collaboratively by all members and lacked systematic group monitoring.

Group 2 showed similar patterns to Group 1. Students were able to discuss ideas and reach agreement on arguments prior to writing, indicating the achievement of shared understanding. Active participation during discussion and writing was also observed, reflecting adequate contribution among members. Nevertheless, regulation remained limited. Text review and grammar checking occurred, but these activities were not shared equally among group members and were not organized as a collective responsibility.

In contrast, Group 3 achieved only shared understanding. Although students discussed and aligned their ideas to determine how the task should be completed, contribution during drafting was limited, and the group showed minimal engagement in reviewing the text or correcting errors. This indicates that shared understanding alone did not lead to active contribution or regulation. Group 4 achieved shared understanding and contribution. Students discussed and agreed on ideas before working on the task, and all members participated during discussion and drafting. However, collaborative regulation was weak, as students rarely reviewed the text together or corrected grammatical mistakes. Group 5 achieved shared understanding and contribution. Students discussed ideas after teacher explanation and some members contributed during group work. Nevertheless, the group did not collaboratively review their text or check grammatical errors, indicating limited regulation.

Meanwhile, Group 6 achieved only shared understanding. Students were able to discuss and align their ideas after repeated clarification, but contribution during drafting was limited and no collaborative text review was observed. Group 7 demonstrated shared understanding through discussion; however, participation among members was unequal, and the group showed weak regulation, as students did not engage in reviewing the text or correcting grammatical mistakes collaboratively. The findings of Cycle 1 show that students were more successful in developing shared understanding through discussion than in sustaining contribution and regulation during the writing process. This suggests that while students were able to align their ideas and opinions, they still required guidance to actively contribute to drafting and to regulate their writing through collaborative text review. These issues became the focus of improvement in Cycle 2.

Cycle 2, students demonstrated improvements in collaboration, actively engaging in revising and editing their analytical exposition text. Before starting discussion, students worked together to share ideas and plan out their steps for the tasks. They were already knowing their job desk and responsibility in group through Project-based Learning implementation. Each group got the topic related to contextual learning and daily life. In the drafting stage, students began to write detailed analytical exposition text by thesis, arguments, and reiteration. They generated ideas together during brainstorming. The groups outlined their writing procedures in a structured way, though some steps still needed refinement for clarity and flow. For instance, Group 2 found the arguments that support thesis and group 4 drafted the text according to generic structure of analytical exposition text.

Table 2. Students' Demonstration of Collaboration in Cycle 3

| Group   | Shared Understanding                                    | Contribution                            | Regulation                                              | Demonstration in Cycle 2 |
|---------|---------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Group 1 | Students actively discuss and align ideas independently | All members contribute during drafting  | Group reviews text and corrects grammar collaboratively | all three aspects        |
| Group 2 | Students reach shared understanding through discussion  | Members participate actively in writing | Group conducts peer-review and corrects errors together | all three aspects        |



| Group   | Shared Understanding                                   | Contribution                                | Regulation                                                         | Demonstration in Cycle 2 |
|---------|--------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Group 3 | Students discuss and align ideas clearly               | Members actively contribute during drafting | Group reviews text and corrects grammatical mistakes               | all three aspects        |
| Group 4 | Students show strong shared understanding              | All members contribute equally              | Collaborative text review and grammar checking observed            | all three aspects        |
| Group 5 | Students discuss and agree on task direction           | Increased participation during drafting     | Group reviews text with guidance and corrects errors               | all three aspects        |
| Group 6 | Students discuss and align ideas confidently           | Members contribute ideas and sentences      | Group reviews text and checks grammar with minimal teacher support | all three aspects        |
| Group 7 | Students reach shared understanding through discussion | Participation among members improves        | Group collaboratively reviews text and corrects errors             | all three aspects        |

In Group 1, students were able to discuss and align their ideas independently without relying heavily on teacher guidance. All members actively contributed during drafting, and the group collaboratively reviewed their text by checking grammar and correcting errors. This indicates a clear improvement in students' ability to regulate their writing process. Group 2 demonstrated strong collaboration. Students reached shared understanding through focused discussion, actively participated in writing, and conducted peer-review activities to revise their text. The group showed greater autonomy in identifying and correcting grammatical errors compared to Cycle 1. Group 3, which previously showed limited collaboration, exhibited notable progress in Cycle 2. Students were able to discuss and align ideas clearly, contribute actively during drafting, and collaboratively review their text. This improvement suggests that the scaffolding provided in Cycle 2 effectively supported students' collaborative regulation.

In Group 4, students showed strong shared understanding and equal contribution among members. Collaborative text review was consistently observed, and grammatical corrections were made through group discussion. The group demonstrated effective collaborative writing practices. Group 5 also showed improvement in Cycle 2. Students discussed and agreed on the task direction, participation during drafting increased, and the group reviewed their text with minimal teacher guidance. This indicates that students became more confident in regulating their own writing process. In Group 6, students were able to discuss and align ideas confidently. Members contributed ideas and sentences during drafting, and the group collaboratively reviewed their text and corrected grammatical errors with little teacher support. This reflects a positive development in both contribution and regulation.

Similarly, Group 7 demonstrated improved collaboration. Students reached shared understanding through discussion, participation among members became more balanced, and the group collaboratively reviewed their text and corrected errors. This suggests that students developed greater awareness of collaborative responsibility. The findings of Cycle 2 indicate that all groups successfully achieved the three collaborative aspects. Compared to Cycle 1, students showed substantial improvement particularly in regulation, as they were able to collaboratively review their texts and correct grammatical errors more independently. The study demonstrates that Project-based Learning (PjBL) enhances

students' collaborative skills, particularly in the domains of idea sharing and task division. Notably, students who initially exhibited passive behaviors became more actively engaged as they were motivated by the enthusiasm displayed by their peers. Group discussions played a critical role in elucidating the steps necessary for composing an analytical exposition text, promoting a deeper understanding of the writing process within a collaborative framework.

### **Discussion**

The findings of this classroom action research indicate that Project-Based Learning (PjBL) improved students' collaboration in composing analytical exposition texts, particularly across the three observed dimensions: shared understanding, collective contribution, and collective regulation. In Cycle 1, students began to show willingness to discuss ideas, but their collaboration was still partial and inconsistent. Most groups were able to reach shared understanding, yet contribution was often uneven and regulation was weak because revising, editing, and grammar checking were not performed collectively. This suggests that students initially perceived group writing as a task-sharing activity rather than a truly collaborative process. Such a condition is common in collaborative learning when students have not yet developed clear roles, mutual responsibility, and group-monitoring habits. Dillenbourg (1999) explains that collaborative learning requires more than placing students in groups; it depends on meaningful interaction, negotiation, and shared construction of knowledge. Therefore, the limited collaboration in Cycle 1 can be interpreted as an early stage of adjustment in which students were still learning how to work interdependently in writing tasks. The attached study also shows that several groups in Cycle 1 achieved only shared understanding or shared understanding and contribution, while regulation remained underdeveloped, confirming that teacher support was still needed to guide students toward fuller collaboration.

The improvement observed in Cycle 2 demonstrates that PjBL provided a more structured and meaningful learning environment for developing collaboration. After reflection on Cycle 1, students became more familiar with their responsibilities, task procedures, and expected group outcomes. All groups were able to demonstrate the three aspects of collaboration: they discussed and aligned ideas, contributed more equally during drafting, and reviewed their texts collaboratively. This finding supports the view that PjBL encourages students to engage in extended inquiry, communication, and product development, which are essential for building collaborative competence (Bell, 2010; Thomas, 2000). In this study, the final product was an analytical exposition text, and the process of producing it required students to brainstorm, organize arguments, draft paragraphs, revise content, and edit language use. These stages created repeated opportunities for interaction and peer support. As a result, collaboration became embedded in the writing process rather than treated as a separate classroom activity.

The development of shared understanding was one of the most visible improvements across the two cycles. In Cycle 1, students discussed ideas, but their discussions were often limited to identifying the topic or deciding who would write certain parts. In Cycle 2, however, students demonstrated clearer understanding of the task direction, text structure, and argumentative purpose of analytical exposition writing. This improvement is pedagogically important because analytical exposition requires students to present a thesis, support it with logical arguments, and close with a reiteration. Without shared understanding, group members may produce disconnected ideas and weak arguments. Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory supports this finding by emphasizing that learning develops through social interaction, especially when learners exchange ideas and assist one another within the zone of proximal development. Through discussion, students were able to clarify meanings, negotiate arguments, and build a collective plan before writing.

This process strengthened both their comprehension of the genre and their ability to participate in collaborative writing.

The improvement in contribution also shows that PjBL helped reduce passive participation. In Cycle 1, several groups still depended on one or two dominant students, while other members contributed minimally. This imbalance limited the quality of collaboration because group writing requires the active involvement of all members. In Cycle 2, participation became more balanced as students contributed ideas, sentences, and revisions during the drafting process. This result is consistent with Johnson and Johnson's (2009) social interdependence theory, which argues that cooperation becomes effective when learners experience positive interdependence and individual accountability. PjBL encouraged this condition because each student had a role in completing the group product. When students understood that the success of the final text depended on everyone's participation, they became more willing to share responsibility. Similar findings were reported by Aifah and Astriani (2024), who found that PjBL improves students' collaboration, communication, and joint problem-solving skills.

The most significant change appeared in the aspect of collective regulation. In Cycle 1, most groups rarely reviewed their work together, and grammar checking was often done by only one student or not done at all. This indicates that students had not yet developed the habit of monitoring the quality of their group product. In Cycle 2, all groups engaged in reviewing, revising, and correcting errors more collaboratively. This improvement suggests that PjBL can strengthen students' metacognitive awareness because they are required to evaluate their progress and refine their product before submission. Scoular et al. (2020) describe collaboration as involving not only participation but also regulation, coordination, and responsibility for group outcomes. In writing instruction, this regulation is especially important because good writing develops through recursive processes of planning, drafting, revising, and editing (Harmer, 2007; Hyland, 2023). The students' increased involvement in peer review and editing shows that they began to understand writing as a process rather than a one-time production activity.

The findings also support previous research showing the relationship between PjBL and writing improvement in EFL contexts. Praba' et al. (2018) found that PjBL is related to better writing performance because it gives students purposeful tasks and opportunities to produce meaningful written products. Garim et al. (2023) similarly reported that project-based instruction can elevate analytical exposition writing when students engage with contextual issues and collaborative learning activities. In the present study, the use of contextual topics helped students connect the writing task with real-life issues, making the analytical exposition activity more meaningful. This is aligned with Dewey's (1938) view that learning becomes more effective when students engage in experiences that are relevant to their lives. By working on topics connected to daily contexts, students were not only practicing English writing but also learning to construct arguments collaboratively.

Another important implication is that PjBL changed the classroom atmosphere from teacher-centered instruction to student-centered learning. In Cycle 1, teacher intervention was still frequently needed to clarify tasks, stimulate participation, and guide revision. In Cycle 2, students showed greater independence and required less teacher support. This shift reflects one of the strengths of classroom action research, namely the use of reflection to improve instructional practice from one cycle to the next (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1994; Burns, 2010). The teacher's role gradually moved from direct instructor to facilitator who guided students in managing their own collaborative process. This finding is consistent with Karyawati and Ashadi (2018), who argue that PjBL increases student engagement because learners become active participants in planning, developing, and presenting their work.

The study confirms that PjBL is an effective instructional approach for improving students' collaboration in writing analytical exposition texts. The progression from Cycle 1 to Cycle 2 shows that collaboration can be developed through repeated practice, clear task design, structured group roles, and reflective improvement. The findings indicate that students became better at building shared understanding, contributing to group writing, and regulating their work through peer review and editing. However, the improvement did not occur automatically; it required scaffolding, observation, reflection, and adjustment between cycles. Therefore, English teachers who wish to apply PjBL in writing classes should provide clear project procedures, assign collaborative responsibilities, model revision strategies, and create opportunities for students to reflect on their group process. In this way, PjBL can support not only writing achievement but also the development of essential 21st-century collaboration skills.

## CONCLUSION

The implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) has successfully enhanced students' collaboration in analytical exposition text at SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Pontianak in the academic year 2025/2026. Project-Based Learning (PjBL) helps students in developing their collaboration. There are three main aspects that become the foundation in improving students' collaboration, namely Developing Shared Understanding, Collectively Contribution, and Collective Regulation. By developing shared understanding, students can align their goals and create a more inclusive environment. Meanwhile, collective contributing encourages each member to take responsibility and support the group task, regulation allows students to refine their work through peer review and error checking and engagement permits students have motivation and persistence to complete the task. Although each group progressed at a different rate, all showed improvements progressively. These developments confirm that project-based learning is effective in strengthening students' collaboration.

The improvement of collaboration in Project-based Learning (PjBl) is influenced by various interrelated factors. In the first cycle, students' collaboration level was still low, with the majority of students in the very low and low categories. In the initial phase, students tended to participate passively in group discussions and mainly followed instructions without engaging in meaningful collaboration. However, in the second cycle, student involvement increased noticeably. Project-Based Learning (PjBL) also aligns with the sequential stages of the writing process as articulated by Richards & Willy in Sadapotto et al. (2021): planning, drafting, revising, and editing. During the planning phase, students engaged in brainstorming and organizing ideas, which were instrumental for effective group collaboration. In the drafting phase, students were encouraged to freely express their ideas without the constraints of grammatical accuracy, fostering a more creative and open writing environment. The revision stage allowed for the incorporation of peer feedback, enhancing the collaborative writing process, while the editing stage focused on refining and polishing the final product. By harmonizing these stages within PjBL, students significantly improved the quality of their analytical exposition texts.

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