

## STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES OF ONLINE COLLABORATIVE LEARNING IN PROFESSIONAL NARRATIVE WRITING COURSE

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### Abstract

Writing becomes one of the complex processes in learning English. Students must consider many things to develop good writing, especially non-native English students in the Professional Narrative Writing course at Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana. Due to the COVID-19, Professional Narrative Writing students had to do online writing activities, one of which was online collaborative learning. Therefore, the aim of this study was to investigate the students' perspectives of online collaborative learning in the Professional Narrative Writing course. Also, this study attempted to address one research question: What are the students' perspectives of online collaborative learning in Professional Narrative Writing course? It used the qualitative method with thematic analysis. Then, the data were collected using open-ended and closed-ended questionnaires and interviews. The results showed that all students did online collaborative learning in the Professional Narrative Writing course. They had positive and negative feelings during the online collaborative learning. Besides that, the students had different opinions on whether online collaborative learning was beneficial or difficult for them. Although students experienced difficulties in online collaborative learning, they could deal with them well. Afterward, the results indicated the number of students who preferred online collaborative learning was higher than individual work.

**Keywords:** students' perspectives, online collaborative learning, Professional Narrative Writing course

### INTRODUCTION

Language has an essential role for human life to express their feelings, ideas, and information. There are many languages in the world, and one of them is English. Since English has become an international language, it is utilized as a communication medium by people from the same country or even different countries. However, Indonesia does not use English as a medium of communication in daily life, educational purposes, or even occupational purposes because En-

English is defined as a foreign language (EFL). Therefore, it is more difficult to learn English in Indonesia than in other countries that set English as a first or second language.

There are four important skills in learning English required to be learned. They are reading, writing, listening, and speaking. However, this study only deals with writing skills due to its limitations. Writing becomes one of the complex processes in studying English. Students must struggle to develop good writing, especially those in Indonesia. As a foreign language, English has different organization, syntax, sentence structures, vocabulary, and spelling from Indonesian as the first language. Those differences make some students have difficulties writing in English.

There are many writing activities that the students do in the classroom. One of them is doing tasks given by the lecturer collaboratively. According to Everett and Drapeau (2001) in Stoytcheva (2018), collaborative learning requires working together in which various knowledge and experience are utilized to gain quality throughout the clash of different perspectives and the developing and consolidation of a community of the learners. For some students who like to work with friends, it is fun because they can exchange ideas. However, this will be a big problem for some students who are uncomfortable working with friends.

Online collaborative learning may be more challenging than offline collaborative learning. In online learning, students do group assignments in their own places with different cultures and backgrounds. Therefore, the researchers chose this topic to find out students' perspectives of online collaborative learning in the Professional Narrative Writing course. One research question was addressed: What are the students' perspectives of online collaborative learning in Professional Narrative Writing course?

“Collaborative learning occurs in a learning environment in which individual students support and add to an emerging pool of knowledge of a group; emphasizes peer relationships as students work together creating learning communities” (Moore and Kearsley, 2012, p.305 in Robinson, Kilgore, and Warren (2017)). Online collaborative learning has proven to be one of the most effective student activities throughout the years, especially during this COVID-19 pandemic. Online collaborative learning is designed where students work together to achieve a specific goal in distance learning. According to Harrasim (2012) in Stoytcheva (2018), students are encouraged and guided into working together through collaborative online education to construct knowledge innovatively and search the conceptual knowledge needed for the solution of a given issue. Therefore, online collaborative learning has become one of the activities that many students are interested in, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Nowadays, COVID-19 is one of the main reasons why students in the world do online collaborative learning. It is done to avoid and reduce the number of COVID-19 transmissions in various countries, especially in Indonesia. Based on covid.go.id (2021), the number of positive sufferers in Indonesia was 1,347,026 people, as many as 1.160.863 people recovered, and 36.518 of them died per Tuesday, March 2, 2021. Therefore, it is hoped that all educational institutions in Indonesia will carry out online learning to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

In recent years, doing online learning is not a big problem for students due to the rapid development of technology. According to Kagermann et al. (2011) in Clavert (2019), the term Industry 4.0 is popular in many countries where significant changes in the industry are allowed

by technological advances. Technology will help students do their online assignments, especially when they do online collaborative learning. When doing online collaborative learning, students can use some applications; one of them is using Google Docs. Google Docs is one of the collaborative devices that can be utilized to facilitate computer-supported group learning to increase learning through the development of technology collaboration (Rahayu, 2016). By using Google Docs, students can work together in the context of distance learning. From the advantages above, it turns out that some school communities think that online collaborative learning is difficult in the era of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Difficulties of online collaborative learning**

Online collaborative learning is a big problem for some students due to the COVID-19 pandemic. According to Kim et al. (2005) in Muuro et al. (2014), students experience difficulties interacting with partners, no real-time input and an absence of sense of association. Other challenges are that some students do not have computers and gadgets that can be used as a medium to do online collaborative learning and do not have a good internet connection (Efriana, 2021). Therefore, students cannot communicate with their peers. Then, the absence of real-time input from the teacher is not understandable for students. Another thing, they lack a sense of community because they cannot meet their friends when doing online collaborative learning.

There are also many problems that students face in doing online collaborative learning. According to Roberts and McInnerney (2007) in Muuro et al. (2014), there were seven general issues in online collaborative learning environments. Those seven issues were imbalance of students' competences, preference of the groups, students' dislike of collaborative work, free rider, the drawdown of group members, lack of important collaborative work skills and valuation of individuals within the groups. Due to the issues above, some students have negative attitudes toward online collaborative learning. Although doing online collaboration is difficult for some students, they need to understand some of the benefits of it.

### **The benefits of online collaborative learning**

It is essential to know the benefits of online collaborative learning because it might affect students, as well as its difficulties. According to Jaques and Salmon (2007) in Muuro, Wagacha, Oboko, and Kihoro (2014), some benefits of online collaborative learning have a good effect on students. First, students can be presented to express their ideas. Then, students can negotiate meaning with their peers to achieve their goals. Another thing, students can develop main professional skills like delivering arguments, listening, persuasion, self-monitoring, self-direction, and group working. These main professional skills help them complete their assignments and increase their motivation to do online collaborative learning.

Ellis (2001) in Jovanovic and Chiong (2012) has found four positive aspects of online collaborative work. First, students can access peer knowledge through the opinions conveyed by their friends. Second, students can get feedback from other students that allow them to identify, correct misunderstandings, and correct other friends' work efficiently. Also, they can use applications to give feedback, like using Google Docs. Through Google Docs, students can control the edit setting whether they want other students to view, edit, or comment on their work. According to Khalil (2018), if other students make changes to the documents in Google Docs, these will be automatically saved and color-coded. Third, students can access the technology at their convenience. Students can use some applications like Google Docs, Google Meet, and

WhatsApp calls to help them do online collaborative learning. Fourth, students have a chance to reflect on the exchanged messages. They can immediately review, rethink, and revise their work efficiently in the group environment.

### **Writing course**

“*Start writing, no matter what. The water does not flow until the faucet is turned on*”, is stated by Louis L’Amour (Silva, 2017, p.1). Writing becomes one of the important skills in learning English that should be mastered by the students. It allows the students to express their feelings, ideas, and experiences. According to Indonesia curricula (2004) in Yoandita (2019), many types of text should be learned in English subjects. They are Recount, Narrative, Procedural, News Item, and Descriptive, where each type has its organization, structures, and purposes.

Therefore, it can be said that writing is a very complex process for some students because they have to consider many things in writing. According to Yoandita (2019), some students thought that the most challenging skill in English was writing. The students found it was hard to come up with ideas. Then, most students wrote incorrect sentences. Also, students could not change the form and combine it into a sentence in that language well because they did not have enough knowledge about English structures (Laia, 2019).

Although writing is one of the tricky processes in learning English, students need to master it since writing is not a natural process. Students need to practice a lot through writing activities given by the teachers. Therefore, students need to take a writing course to increase and improve their writing skills. Through the writing course, students will get a lot of writing exercises that will affect their writing ability. Those writing exercises will help students improve their writing skills and produce good writing.

### **Professional Narrative Writing course**

Writing course is one of the important courses that need to be followed by the students. Several campuses provide many writing classes, such as *Writing for the Media*, *Procedural Writing*, *Creative Writing*, *Professional Narrative Writing*, and *Academic Writing*. However, this study only focused on the *Professional Narrative Writing* course in this research. According to ELEP, UKSW (2020), the *Professional Narrative Writing* course acquaints the learners with narrative writing to meet their professional needs as students and prospective language teachers.

ELEP, UKSW (2020) also explained that students would work on their writing skills to understand the structure, linguistic features of narrative writing and practice their narrative writing skills. Then, this *Professional Narrative Writing* course provides several exercises such as a weekly response journal and quizzes about grammar and vocabulary. Moreover, this course also offers two projects for students: writing a biography in a group and writing digital storytelling individually. Another thing, based on the course outline from ELEP, UKSW (2020), students will learn eight materials in the *Professional Narrative Writing* course. Those materials are about practicing how to write a response journal, introducing to narrative writing, language review for narrative writing, paraphrasing, and synthesizing, email writing, introducing to biography writing, how to write a thesis statement and organize ideas, introducing to digital storytelling, and writing storyboard. Those exercises, projects, and materials will help the students enhance their narrative writing skills.

## Previous studies

A previous study had been done by Stoytcheva (2018). It investigated students' perceptions of online collaboration in the distance learning French language course. The participants were 25 students in the online French language course. The data were collected by interviewing the respondents. The interviews used a semi-structured questionnaire that contained closed, semi-closed, and open questions. Some respondents conducted the interviews face to face, and others did the interviews online via Skype. The finding showed that responsibility and involvement to their group were demonstrated by the majority of the students (88%), thus indicating a warm atmosphere and a feeling of belief with the colleagues. Then, 92% of the students stated that to engage in the group work, they efficiently managed their group by giving their competencies and knowledge to the community.

Another research had been done by Muuro et al. (2014), who analyzed students' perceived challenges in an online collaborative learning environment: a case of higher learning institutions in Nairobi, Kenya. The participants were 210 students from Higher Learning Institutions (HLIs) in Kenya, and 183 students responded. The researchers used a questionnaire that consisted of thirty items to collect the data. One item in the questionnaire was open-ended, while twenty-nine items were closed-ended. The questionnaire was shared via email invitations. Then, the finding showed that the lack of participation by other members was considered a major challenge by the majority of respondents (54%). It could be supported by the factor that 53% of respondents stated that they did not have time to participate. Then, 19 % of respondents did not consider the difference in skill level among group members as a major challenge. This research also found some major challenges that are faced by the respondents, which were slow internet connection (30%), a distraction from unskillful colleagues (3%), lack of intelligibility about posted works (2%), free-riders (2%), no consensus on discussions (3%) and no authentic ideas posted (5%). In conclusion, all the educational units have to do online teaching and learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic to avoid transmission of the disease and follow the government's demand. Therefore, the teachers explain the materials and provide activities through an online way. One of the activities is doing online collaborative learning. Online collaborative learning involves students working together in the context of distance learning. Students can use some applications such as Google Meet, Zoom Meetings, Schoology, and WhatsApp Group to help them do this online collaborative learning. Then, this research focuses on online collaborative learning in a writing course which is the *Professional Narrative Writing* course. When doing online collaborative learning in the *Professional Narrative Writing* course, the students should consider many things.

## METHODS

The participants of the study were *Professional Narrative Writing* students at the English Language Education Program (ELEP), Faculty of Language and Arts (FLA), Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana. The participants consisted of 34 second-year students within the age of 17-19 years old. They took the *Professional Narrative Writing* course in Semester I of the 2021/2022 academic year. The researcher chose the *Professional Narrative Writing* course because the lecturer gave some online collaborative learning assignments in this course.

Google Forms were used to share closed-ended and open-ended questionnaires. The link of the Google Forms was shared via WhatsApp Personal Messages. Semi-structured interviews were conducted online by asking the participants to answer through WhatsApp voice notes.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Online collaborative learning in Professional Narrative Writing course

Based on the results of questionnaires and interviews, it was found that students collaboratively had to do online assignments in the *Professional Narrative Writing* course. This part was divided into three points, which were students' participation in online collaborative learning, students' assignments in online collaborative learning, and the applications used for online collaborative learning.

This section showed the students' participation in online collaborative learning in *Professional Narrative Writing Course* Semester 1, 2021/2022. Thirty-four of 34 participants (100%) participated in online collaborative learning throughout this course. They did online collaborative learning two to five times in one semester, both in the online meeting and at home.

First, students did in-class writing activities. According to the syllabus of the *Professional Narrative Writing* class at English Language Education Program, UKSW (2021), during the in-class writing activities in *Professional Narrative Writing* course, students would be given various short narrative texts by the teacher individually, in pairs, or groups including writing an email, a postcard, commenting on the post. Also, the lecturer asked the students to do group assignments at home.

Based on the data results of the interviews, it was found that the lecturer gave students assignments in the *Professional Narrative Writing* course. The data showed that 5 of 5 interviewees (100%) were given tasks by the lecturer. First, the lecturers asked the students to do in-class writing assignments. Students were asked to write emails, characters, plot, setting, and conflict in a story in this assignment. Then, they were also asked to write a historical narrative. Below are the statements from Participant 2 and Participant 5.

Excerpt 1.

*"In the in-class writing, we are asked to do freewriting and writing an email during the learning process."* (Participant 2/Interview on December 23, 2021)

Excerpt 2.

*"In the in-class-writing activities, we write about characters, plots, settings, conflicts in a story, and historical narrative in groups."* (Participant 5/Interview on December 29, 2021)

Besides, students were asked to write a storybook twice in the online meeting and at home. In the first storybook, students had to write a short and straightforward storybook in the in-class writing activity. Then, students had to write the second storybook that had a complete story plot. Below is the statement from Participant 3.

Excerpt 3:

*"First, the students have to write a simple and short storybook in the in-class writing activity. Another one is that students have to write a storybook that is quite long and must have a complete story plot."* (Participant 3/Interview on December 28, 2021)

According to the syllabus of the *Professional Narrative Writing* Course at English Language Education Program, Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana (2021), after writing a storybook in groups, students will write a storybook individually in StoryJumper and share the link on Padlet. The assignments given by the lecturer are summarized in the following Table 1.

**Table 1. Group Assignments in Professional Narrative Writing Course**

No.	Group Assignments in <i>Professional Narrative Writing</i> Course
1.	Writing an Email
2.	Writing characters, plot, setting, and conflict in a story
3.	Writing a historical narrative
4.	Writing a storybook

Some applications were used by the students for online collaborative learning in the *Professional Narrative Writing* course. The data showed that 5 of 5 interviewees (100%) used applications to help them do online collaborative learning. Students used five applications for online collaborative learning in the *Professional Narrative Writing* course. First, the students discussed their assignments online via Zoom, Google Meet, and WhatsApp. While communicating with their group members, the students used Google Docs to write the tasks given and used StoryJumper to write the storybook. The lecturers also asked the students to do online collaborative learning via Zoom during the online class meeting. Below are the statements from Participant 1 and Participant 2:

Excerpt 4.

*“In online collaborative learning we use WhatsApp Call and Zoom. So, while communicating through WhatsApp Call or Zoom, we do the assignments in Google Docs.”* (Participants 1/Interview on December 23, 2021)

Excerpt 5.

*“We use StoryJumper for writing the storybook. We also use Zoom in online class meetings and use Google Meet outside the online class meetings. For an appointment time and others, we use WhatsApp.”* (Participant 2/Interview on December 23, 2021)

By using the five applications above, students can easily do online collaborative learning in their places. According to Maulidah and Aziz (2020), in the field of information and communication (ICT), the social network has been a recent movement that allows individuals to meet, communicate, exchange ideas, objects, and interests. For the summary of the applications used by the students, we can see them in Table 2.

**Table 2. The Applications Used for Online Collaborative Learning in the Professional Narrative Writing Course**

No.	The Applications Used for Online Collaborative Learning
1.	Zoom
2.	Google Meet
3.	WhatsApp
4.	StoryJumper
5.	Google Docs

### Students' feelings toward online collaborative learning

Based on the data results of the questionnaires and interviews, it was found that students had positive and negative feelings about online collaborative learning in the *Professional Narrative Writing* course. Therefore, the explanations were grouped into two points which are students' positive feelings toward online collaborative learning and students' negative feelings toward online collaborative learning.

It was found that students had positive feelings toward online collaborative learning. The data showed that 23 of 34 students (67,64%) felt happy doing online collaborative learning because they could exchange ideas with each other. These helped them in understanding the materials well and completing the assignments quickly. Below is the statement from Participant 14.

Excerpt 6.

*"In online collaborative learning, I felt happy because we can gain many ideas from others so that we can understand the materials well and finish the task quickly.*  
(Participant 14/Questionnaire on November 9, 2021)

It thus can be concluded that students felt happy doing online collaborative learning because they could exchange ideas to help them understand the materials better and finish the assignments quickly. According to Jaques and Salmon (2007) in Muuro et al. (2014), while doing online collaborative learning, students could be given the opportunity to express their ideas with their friends. Besides being happy, 4 of 34 students (11,76%) also enjoyed doing online collaborative learning because they could provide feedback to others.

In summary, online collaborative learning could give positive feelings to the students. Students felt happy because they could exchange ideas. Also, they enjoyed doing online collaborative learning since they could provide feedback to each other. In line with that, Ku, Lhor, and Cheng (2004), in their research, stated that having group members that could share ideas and having chances to provide and receive feedback from others became a kind of reward for students who enjoyed online collaborative learning.

From the data, it was also found that the students not only had positive feelings but also had negative feelings towards online collaborative learning. Those negative feelings were feeling anxious, feeling unhappy, feeling awkward, feeling upset, feeling uncomfortable, and feeling afraid.

After gaining the data from the questionnaires, it was found that 2 of 34 students (5.88%) were anxious when doing online collaborative learning. One of the participants felt anxious when sharing his ideas with others. Besides, one of the participants felt anxious because she found passive group members who were unwilling to help. Also, she felt nervous because her group members had a bad Internet connection. Participant 29 stated, *"I feel nervous when I have partners that are passive and not willing to help. Moreover, when they have a bad internet connection."* (Participant 29/ Questionnaire on November 16, 2021).

Also, 1 of 34 students (2,94%) was not happy when doing online collaborative learning because he had lousy internet connections, so he could not clearly hear their friends' voices. Besides, 1 of 34 students (2,94%) felt awkward when doing online collaborative learning because he had a lack of interaction with the group members. This is the statement from Participant 18, *"I feel*



*awkward because of the lack of communication between my group members”* (Participant 18/ Questionnaire on November 9, 2021).

Next, 1 of 34 students (2,94%) felt upset because she could not discuss with her friends smoothly. Another thing, 4 of 34 students (11,8%) did not enjoy doing online collaborative learning because it did not help them communicate well with their group due to their friends' bad internet connection. Last, 1 of 34 students (2,94%) was afraid of doing online collaborative learning. He was scared that he would make the other members feel burdened when doing online collaborative learning with him. Here is the statement from Participant 34, *“I was afraid that would make the other participants in my group burdened.”* (Participant 34/ Questionnaire on December 18, 2021).

In conclusion, online collaborative learning gave negative feelings to the students. Students felt nervous about sharing ideas with their friends, and they were not happy because of bad internet connections. Besides, students felt awkward, upset and did not enjoy online collaborative learning since they could not share ideas and communicate well with their group members. Another thing, the students also felt anxious because they had passive group members who had bad Internet connections. Last, students were afraid that they could make their group members burdened. The negative feelings above would have negative effects on students' when doing online collaborative learning. According to Lee and Osman (2021), Korean and UAE students showed that online collaboration could be negatively affected by students' attitudes and the lack of online collaboration skills.

### **Students' opinions toward online collaborative learning**

After gaining the data results from questionnaires and interviews, the researcher found that students in the *Professional Narrative Writing* course had different opinions toward online collaborative learning. Hence, to find out detailed explanations of the students' opinions, the researcher grouped the explanations into four points. Those four points are the benefits of online collaborative learning, the difficulties of online collaborative learning, the solutions to overcome the difficulties, and students' preference for online collaborative learning and individual work.

Based on the data results of the questionnaires and interviews, it was found that online collaborative learning could bring good benefits to the students. There were seven benefits gained by the students when doing online collaborative learning. Those seven benefits are expressing ideas, helping the students finish the assignments quickly, saving time, improving students' communication skills, improving students' writing skills, making use of technology, and providing feedback.

First, the students could freely express their ideas during online collaborative learning. It was helpful for them to exchange ideas with their friends. Participant 14 mentioned, *“In my opinion, online collaborative learning is good for me because I can exchange ideas with my friends.”* (Participant 14/Questionnaire on November 9, 2021).

The statement from Participant 14 above could be supported based on Lipponen (2002) in Rahayu (2016), which stated that collaborative work and peer interaction; facilitate distributing and sharing knowledge and information between a community of students could be improved by collaborative tools. Besides, online collaborative learning could help the students finish their assignments well and quickly since they could think about their tasks together.

Another thing, online collaborative learning was effective and efficient for students. It was because students could discuss their assignments with their group members, which was helpful for saving their time. Then, students could improve their communication skills through conversation with their friends during online collaborative learning. The conversation trained the students to be able to communicate well. Besides, doing online collaborative learning could improve students' writing skills. Students could learn how to choose the appropriate vocabulary for their assignments and how to paraphrase sentences well.

The other benefit was that students could do online collaborative learning easily by using applications such as Zoom and Schoology. The applications helped the students in doing online collaborative learning efficiently. Last, through online collaborative learning, the students could provide feedback to each other. They could learn from their friends' input and freely correct their friends' work. Then, the students used *Google Docs* when doing online collaborative learning. By using *Google Docs*, students could edit their work together to correct each other's errors directly and easily. Below is the statement from Participant 3.

Excerpt 7

*"While doing online collaborative learning, my friend and I can correct each other so that I can learn from my friends' corrections. Also, it is helpful for me because my group members can easily correct my mistakes while writing the assignments on Google Docs. These help me to develop my awareness in writing."* (Participant 3/ Interview on December 2021)

Through *Google Docs*, students could manage the edit setting whether they want others to only view, edit, or comment on their work. The changes from others will be automatically saved and color-coded. (Khalil, 2018) Also, *Google Docs* had given a sign such as underlining the incorrect words.

In conclusion, doing online collaborative learning was beneficial for students. First, students could share ideas with others. Also, students could improve their speaking and writing skills. Then, students could help each other finish the assignments well and quickly. Another thing, students could make use of technology for online collaborative learning. Moreover, students could provide feedback to their friends and use *Google Docs* to correct their assignments. The benefits of online collaborative learning above would be useful for students. Hence, it could be said that those benefits of online collaborative learning could have positive effects on students. In line with that, Jaques and Salmon (2007) in Muuro, Wagacha, Oboko, and Kihoro (2014) in their research, stated that some benefits of online collaborative learning have great effects on students.

After obtaining the data from questionnaires, the researcher found that 20 of 34 participants (58.8%) had difficulties doing online collaborative learning. The findings were also strengthened by the interviews done by the researcher. From the questionnaires and interviews, the researcher found that students faced five difficulties during online collaborative learning. Those five difficulties are the teacher's unclear explanations of the assignments, having bad internet connections, misunderstanding between group members, having difficulties in combining ideas, and having passive group members.

The teachers' unclear explanations of the assignments become one of the five difficulties students encountered during online collaborative learning. Students had difficulties understanding the assignments given since the lecturer did not explain the tasks specifically, and the tasks were too complicated for them.

Besides, students had bad Internet connections when doing online collaborative learning. Therefore, it negatively affected students because the discussions between members became disrupted. Thus, the students had a hard time talking to their friends. This is supported based on Efriana (2021), who stated that students had a bad internet connection when doing online collaborative learning. Therefore, they had difficulty communicating with their group members. Then, bad Internet connections made it difficult for students to express ideas. Moreover, the students did not know the assignments that would be done. Also, they did not know how to do the assignments. Below is the statement from Participant 22.

Excerpt 8

*“When having a bad internet connection, I have difficulty expressing ideas and do not understand the part that will be done. Moreover, I also do not understand the way to do the assignments.”* (Participant 22/Questionnaire on November 10, 2021)

Next, students had misunderstandings of the assignments given by the lecturer. It made the students not discuss the assignments given instead of discussing other things. Another thing is, since each student had their own ideas for the assignments, it caused them difficulty in combining ideas with their group members. They found it was difficult to put each member's ideas into one idea. Below is the statement from Participant 3.

Excerpt 9

*“In writing a storybook, I have difficulties in putting ideas between group members to become one idea. It is hard to combine these ideas.”* (Participant 4/Interview on December 28, 2021)

Last, when doing online collaborative learning, students found group members who tended to be passive and did not contribute to the group well. In summary, students faced five difficulties in doing online collaborative learning. First, their lecturers did not give clear explanations for the assignments. Also, students had lousy internet connections when doing online collaborative learning. Then, they had misunderstandings of the tasks given. Moreover, students had difficulty in combining ideas with their friends. Last, the students found passive group members that did not contribute well. The difficulties above had negative impacts on students. Also, as said by Roberts and McInnerney (2007) in Muuro et al. (2014), students had negative behaviors toward online collaborative learning due to their problems.

Based on the data results of the interviews, it was found that students had six solutions to overcome their difficulties in doing online collaborative learning. Those six solutions are dividing the assignments, asking friends or lecturers, voting to combine ideas, finding better ways for bad internet connections, re-discussing the assignments, and building good communication. First, students divided the assignments among each member so that each member could be active and could contribute well. Second, students asked their friends or lecturers to explain the unclear assignments. Third, students could combine ideas easily by voting on the obvious ideas. Fourth,

students found two better ways to avoid bad internet connections which were sharing ideas through WhatsApp and rescheduling the time for discussion. Fifth, the students rediscussed the assignments to resolve their misunderstandings. Last, students built good communication to achieve the expected results. Indeed, the difficulties of online collaborative learning must be overcome to help the students do online collaborative learning. Not only helping the students, but students must also handle the problems to enhance the quality of learning and promote their satisfaction with online collaborative work and online classes (Koh and Hill, 2009)

Twenty-one (21) of 34 participants (61,8%) preferred online collaborative learning since it helped them express ideas, understand the materials, and do the task together to reduce their burden and finish the tasks quickly. However, 13 of 34 participants (38,2%) preferred individual work because it helped them manage their time. Also, students enjoyed doing individual work and thought that online collaborative learning reduced their focus and took a long time due to their friends' bad internet connections. Therefore, from the explanation above, it could be said that the number of students who chose online collaborative learning was more than students who chose individual work. It meant that students were more motivated in online collaborative learning. According to Ozkara and Cakir (2020), in the cooperative learning group, participants' motivation was defined to be higher than that in the individual work.

## CONCLUSION

This study answered one research question: What are the students' perspectives of online collaborative learning in the *Professional Narrative Writing* course? First, the findings indicated that all students did online collaborative learning two to five times in one semester due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They had to finish group assignments by using online learning applications such as Zoom, Google Meet, WhatsApp, Google Docs, and StoryJumper.

Next, the results showed that students had positive feelings toward online collaborative learning. Twenty-three of 34 students (67,64%) were pleased because they could exchange ideas with their friends, and 4 of 34 students (11,76%) felt comfortable doing online collaborative learning since they could give feedback to others. However, students also had negative feelings toward online collaborative learning, such as feeling anxious (5,88%), feeling unhappy (2,94%), feeling awkward (2,94%), feeling upset (2,94%), feeling uncomfortable (11,8%), and feeling afraid (2,94%).

The third major finding showed students' opinions toward online collaborative learning. First, students believed that online collaborative learning was fruitful since they could express ideas, complete tasks quickly, save time, enhance their communication skills, enhance their writing skills, utilize technology, and provide feedback. On the other hand, 20 of 34 students (58,8%) experienced five difficulties in doing online collaborative learning. Those five difficulties were the teacher's unclear explanations of the tasks, having lousy internet connections, misunderstanding between group members, having difficulties in incorporating ideas, and having passive group members. However, they could handle those difficulties by dividing the tasks (40%), asking friends or lecturers (20%), voting to incorporate ideas (20%), finding better ways for lousy internet connections (20%), rediscussing the tasks (20%), and developing good communication (40%). Last, the findings indicated that 21 of 34 students (61,8%) preferred online collaborative learning since it helped them to share ideas, understand the materials, and do the task together. Then, 13 of 34 participants (38,2%) preferred individual work to help them manage their time

and do the job comfortably. Furthermore, online collaborative learning reduced students' focus and took a long time due to their friends' bad internet connections.

This study, however, had a limitation in the data collection instruments. The researchers could not obtain the data face-to-face due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Instead, the researchers took the questionnaire data via Google Form and the interview data through WhatsApp voice notes. However, these were not effective in collecting the data since the researchers could not dig further detailed information. Therefore, future researchers are suggested to distribute questionnaires directly and do face-to-face interviews to gain more detailed information and richer data.

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