

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter reports on the findings and provides data as evidence to support the results. The data provide answers to the following research questions:

1. What are the critical incidents that occur during the collaboration of mixed-ability students in the writing process?
2. In what way does collaboration impact the students' composing process and text production?
3. What factors enhance and what factors inhibit collaboration in a mixed proficiency group?

The data are presented according to the research questions. The findings from Group 1 are reported first followed by the findings from Group 2. A summary of the presentation of findings has been provided (see Table 4.1).

Table 4.1

Presentation of Results in Chapter 4

Sections	Research Questions	Groups
First Section	Research Question 1	1
	Research Question 1	2
	Summary of Research Question 1	1 and 2
Second Section	Research Question 2	1
	Research Question 2	2
	Summary of Research Question 2	1 and 2
Third Section	Research Question 3	1
	Research Question 3	2
	Summary of Research Question 3	1 and 2

The first section of this chapter reports findings of significant critical incidents, the second section presents findings regarding the impact of collaboration on the composing process and text production while the final section discusses factors which inhibit or enhance collaboration.

Research Question 1: What are the critical incidents that occur during the collaboration of mixed-ability students in the writing process?

Wragg (1994) defines critical incidents as “critical events which are not spectacular but are simply more interesting than other events worth documenting in greater detail, usually because they tell a small but significant part of a larger story” (p. 64). In addition, Woods (1993) describes critical incidents as “highly charged moments

and episodes that have enormous consequences for personal change and development” (p.1).

The critical incidents were obtained by analysing the spoken transcripts and video recordings of the collaborative writing sessions. Then the information was categorised into themes which formed the critical incidents for both Groups 1 and 2 (see Table 4.2). Information from the interviews and diary entries were also used to provide evidence of the incidents.

Table 4.2

Critical Incidents in Groups 1 and 2

Critical Incidents	Group 1	Group 2
Mutual Interaction and Sharing of Expertise	√	√
Negotiation	√	X
Power Struggle	X	√
Leadership Styles	√	√

The critical incidents were, namely, mutual interaction and sharing of expertise, negotiation, power struggle, and leadership styles. The common features of collaboration shared by both Groups 1 and 2 were mutual interaction and sharing of expertise and leadership styles. Other features which were unique to each group were negotiation in Group 1 and power struggle in Group 2.

Furthermore, there were key findings discovered in each of the critical incidents. First, the specific key findings in Mutual Interaction and Sharing of Expertise for Groups 1 and 2 can be viewed in Appendix 12. Detailed explanations on them are provided in the relevant sections of this chapter (see pages 90 and 114). Second, the key findings discovered for the critical incident of negotiation are listed in Appendix 13. Detailed explanations on them are provided in the relevant section of this chapter (see page 101).

Third, the key findings discovered for the critical incident of power struggle can be viewed in Appendix 14. Detailed explanations on them are provided in the relevant section of this chapter (see page 124). Fourth, the key findings discovered for the critical incident of leadership styles can be seen in Appendix 15. Detailed explanations on them are provided in the relevant sections of this chapter (see pages 106 and 141).

Group 1

Group 1 consisted of six female Chinese learners with mixed proficiency in English. All of them had positive views on collaborative writing. This group constantly used features such as mutual interaction and sharing of expertise, negotiation and was under different leadership styles. The features are explained in the following section and some of the features might recur in subsequent critical incidents.

Mutual Interaction and Sharing of Expertise

The first critical incident observed in Group 1's collaborative writing was mutual interaction and sharing of expertise. Mutual interaction (Dale, 1997) and sharing of expertise (Dale, 1997; Ede and Lunsford, 1990; Ohta 1995, 2001) are two important functions in collaborative writing. These features were observed in Weeks 1, 3, 4 and 5 of the collaborative writing sessions. The participants' interviews and diary entries highlighted the benefits they had gained. An explanation of the findings is provided in the following sections.

Week 1

Sharing of expertise was identified during the performing of three sub-tasks, namely, the appointment of a group leader, selection of topic for their long report and, division of referencing work among the group members. During the process of choosing a suitable topic, Loh (L) who was the leader began the discussion by seeking permission to start the discussion from the group members including the researcher as seen in line 1 (Excerpt 1). The researcher gave her consent immediately (line 2) because she wanted Loh to realise that she was supposed to conduct the discussion. The researcher was adopting the stance of a participant observer in the study.

This excerpt is taken at the juncture the group members were selecting a topic for their long report. All the transcripts are quoted verbatim.

Excerpt 1

- 1 L: We discuss on our own? (smiles and looks at everyone)
2 R: Yes.

- 3 [W: Financial topics.
 4 [P: Financial topics
 5 L: Tesco strategies
 6 S: Obesity
 ...
 8 O: Woman and organisation?

 13 T: Financial planning ... people waste money, don't know of it, give steps to them, common mistakes young made, advice, hmm, like that lah.

The group members suggested ideas without waiting for the direction of the leader. Both Wai (W) and Phua (P) recommended financial topics (lines 3 and 4). Loh (L) was interested in Tesco strategies (line 5). Soong (S) suggested a topic on obesity, Ooi (O) suggested women and their organisations while Tang suggested financial planning (lines 6, 8 and 13). These suggestions were derived from their readings of topics which were of interest to them.

As the discussion progressed, the members provided more detailed information on their respective topics.

Excerpt 2

- 13 T: Financial planning ... people waste money, don't know of it, give steps to them, common mistakes young made, advice, hmm, like that *lah*.
 14 L: Is there any plan?
 15 P: Saving plan for students also those already working, investment *lor*.
 16 W: My title "Touch and Go". Information on company, define what Touch and Go, use more for highways, buses, trains, way replace credit card. Discuss Touch and Go at many places, for travel, a few types, then...
 17 L: My topic on Tesco. (reads her notes) How to attract customers, use packages to reduce cost, collect points, can get the money statement through Tesco Clubcard, internet operations, deliver items ordered to home through internet, also criticisms on cheap

- labour, child labour to keep Tesco building, no refund.
- 18 P: My one Personal Loan. (reads her notes) How much to borrow, interest charges, if want to cancel how early, settlement....(flips through pages)

Tang (T) read out the sub-headings for her topic financial planning (line 13). In line 14, Loh (L) asked for further information from Tang. Phua (P) contributed her knowledge by explaining to Loh the different saving plans available for students and working people (line 15). Wai (W) continued the discussion by elaborating on her topic “Touch and Go” (line 16). The members did not interrupt one another but allowed each member to share their ideas freely. Loh explained Tesco strategies and operations (line 17) while Phua read the information she found on personal loan (line 18). The input that each member provided illustrates the sharing of expertise as proposed by Dale (1997), Ede and Lunsford (1990), and Ohta (1995, 2001).

The leader, Loh, continued to elicit more information regarding personal loan from Phua.

Excerpt 3

- 19 L: This personal loan, for our own?
 20 P: Personal. Hong Leong Bank.
 21 L: How much?
 22 P: RM20 000 to RM40 000. Interest rates 1% per month.
 23 L: So must pay monthly.
 24 P: Yes. (smiles)

Loh’s questions (lines 19 and 21) could be described as using an open approach in which students “ask probing questions, come to tentative decisions and invite elaboration by others while carrying out a task” (Barnes, 1976, p. 67). The questions

were forms of verification and gate-keeping. They were not regarded as disputational (Mercer, 1995) because Loh was trying to ensure that they had sufficient information for them to write about.

The information obtained from the interviews and diary entries showed the students' agreement on the benefits they had gained. The interview responses and diary entries are quoted verbatim.

- L: Many topics. We can choose from them.
 O: Good. Got ideas from my group members.
 T: We got many interesting topics.
 W: Many topics we choose.

When interviewed, Loh (L), Tang (T) and Wai (W) were of the agreement that they could choose from many interesting topics suggested by others while Ooi (O) stated that she received ideas during the discussion. In general, they felt that their discussion had been a productive session.

The diary entries written on 1st October 2008 regarding the collaborative session revealed positive effects from the sharing of expertise.

Loh

The session was useful due to increase understanding of info about topic from teammates.

Ooi

The session was useful due to gain knowledge from information by teammates... Also learned from other mistakes.

Soong

The session was useful due to co-operation members got give... Can solve problem also connect information.

Wai

The session was useful due to can increase knowledge, learn English when communicate, read English articles.

Loh, Ooi and Wai felt that collaboration increased their knowledge and understanding of the topic provided. In addition, Ooi mentioned that she learned from others' mistakes during the discussion. Soong observed that the co-operation from group members helped them to solve problems they faced in their topic and to link information. Wai learned English from the others during the discussion. The collaborative writing session resulted in Group 1 pooling a myriad of information from each group member. They had a wide choice of topics to choose from and simultaneously helped one another to gain knowledge from each other's readings. The social interactions and sharing of expertise, too, helped the members to co-construct knowledge together.

Week 3

Mutual interaction and sharing of expertise were also identified during three sub-tasks which were information-sharing after doing referencing, filtering of information to be used in their writing and preparation of interview questions. After completing the task on preparing interview questions, all the participants, except for Phua (P), discussed new information which they found from their readings on Financial Planning (Excerpt 4).

Excerpt 4

59 W: My article. How to be smart in saving. Save for things you want, be realistic in spending, time bound aim to achieve goals. (Loh

- nods at Ooi)
- 60 O: I have found background of Public Mutual and Pacific Mutual Funds.
- 61 T: I found out how to save money from insurance. Set out good policies like life insurance, find out fees of agents ... Then after buying, must pay on time if not insurance will cancel. (Loh nods at Soong)
- 62 S: What process to do in six steps in reaching goal and financial planning, establishing client relationship. Analyse and /?/ financial planning, implement financial planning, recommendations, self-help or professional help.
- 63 L: I find teach you how to invest in buying, trained in buying things. We buy without thinking like stock market, some not analyse should buy and hold it ... Then, besides buying stock, must make sure company is growing and not making losses. (A long silence)

Each member took turns to present their factual information. Wai (W) shared information about ways to save smartly (line 59). Ooi (O) informed the others that she found information about Public Mutual and Pacific Mutual Funds (line 60), but she did not elaborate on it. Tang (T) continued the discussion by mentioning ways to save money through buying insurance (line 61). Later, Loh (L) nodded at Soong (S) indicating that it was her turn to speak. Soong presented six steps in achieving the goal of financial planning and establishing client relationship (line 62). Finally, Loh presented methods of purchasing shares (line 63).

Loh did not continue the approach she used in Week 1 which was asking her group members questions after they had presented their information. She, however, used a closed approach described by Barnes (1976) as “the group finds nothing to encourage active engagement, nothing to provoke questions or surmises” (p. 38). This approach could reduce exploration of an issue because members did not attempt to ask pertinent questions that could increase understanding.

During the interview, despite admitting that there was a lot of information shared, Loh (L) explained that she initially asked questions to increase understanding of the information. She was disappointed that none of her group members followed her action. Therefore, she decided to discontinue her approach and joined them by just accepting information without interruption. The response below is taken from the interview.

L: Give a lot of information ... Problems in language. Vocabulary. Don't know right word to use. I ask questions. To help members understand and share more... I hope others will follow me. But they didn't.

Since, the group did not question the information presented, Loh decided to follow this trend of behaviour to establish group cohesion. This behaviour is typical in a collectivist culture where members value solidarity (Hofstede, 2005, 2001).

Week 4

Mutual interaction and sharing of expertise were also observed during the continuation of sub-tasks from Week 3, namely, preparation of questionnaire and interview questions, information-sharing after doing referencing, and filtering of information to be used in writing. Loh (L) invited her group to share new information they obtained regarding Financial Planning. This excerpt is a continuation of information-sharing.

Excerpt 5

4 T: Last time, I finds information on save money, buy life insurance policy *lor*. First is we buy insurance since it important. Second we have to seek out low loan policies ... You can online and choose insurance policies ... Then improve the health *lor* before you buy the insurance ... After buy the insurance must make sure pay annually and pay in time.

- ...
- 14 O: Err ... types of mutual funds, advantages, disadvantages. 2 kinds from Public Bank, Public Mutual Fund, Pacific Bank. Ahh ... more stable.
- ...
- 16 O: Advantages is diversification ... Low minimum funds. Low risk for investor. ... Ranging from conservative to high risk ... Shareholders can switch their money but got service charge ... financial planning help people plan retirement ... Wide range of investment styles.
- ...
- 22 L: I have find my articles about my topics. On investment in share. Seems like customers invest cautiously in shares, don't buy follow advice ... When market is hot, people simply put their money without research. ... Not every company have good management ... Good companies like DiGi, Gamuda and Petronas. Timing also important ... If drop more than 10%, consider whether to sell it.
- ...
- 32 P: My information planning investment, steps in planning ...

Tang (T), Ooi (O), Loh (L) and Phua (P), with the exception of Wai (W) and Soong (S), shared their information enthusiastically. Tang in line 4 talked about saving money and buying insurance policies. Ooi explained the types, advantages and disadvantages of mutual funds (lines 14 and 16). Loh presented some information on shares at length (line 22) and Phua only briefly provided the headings of her articles on planning investment (line 32).

Loh constantly asked questions and successfully helped her friends present their information more clearly. She used an open approach by asking questions. As the leader, Loh was acting as a gate-keeper and helping her group to increase their understanding through her probing on ideas presented.

However, Phua was unable to give a detailed explanation of her information compared with her group members. Wai and Soong were passive in the session. Surprisingly, Loh did not invite her to present her information.

Soong later wrote in her diary entry on 22nd October 2008 that she did not explain her information because she did not read her articles thoroughly. Her group members were understanding and did not pressure her to provide any information. They did not describe any negative feelings towards her lack of participation in their interview responses and diary entries.

Interviews

- L: Give a lot of information.
- O: More ideas. We give different ideas.
- S: Many information. Got many different information.
- T: Many information.
- W: Listen to many topics. Can learn.
- P: Learn so many things. Everyone give information.

Diary Entry

Soong

In this session, the mistake I made is did not read articles properly, unclear in my presentation.

When the participants described their collaborative writing through interviews and diary entries, they explained that they managed to increase their knowledge on Financial Planning. Even Soong and Wai who did not share any information commented that they received a lot of knowledge. This clearly shows that even silent group members could benefit by listening to others. Scaffolding took place for Soong and Wai as they listened to their group members' idea generation. Consequently, their understanding of their reading increased.

Week 5

Mutual interaction and sharing of expertise was also identified during the sub-tasks of preparation of questionnaire, information-sharing after doing referencing, filtering of information to be used in writing and integrating information into the topic. As usual, Loh (L) started the discussion by inviting her group to present new information they found on Financial Planning (Excerpt 6). All of them shared their respective information with each other in comparison with Week 4 when everyone except Soong presented their information. It shows that all of them prepared well for the session.

This excerpt is a continuation of Week 4, information-sharing about Financial Planning.

Excerpt 6

- 2 W: I find out some advice in save. First, buy clothes on sale ... Get a part-time job. Even if only once a week, still do it. Do not get a credit card, will make you broke up ... Ask for rise if you deserve one and reason fairly. Don't over the limit. If you buy magazines every month ... Don't borrow money. Just save for thing you want ... Don't waste ...
- ...
- 4 L: My one on shares. Get high liquidity. You can become partial partner in company also. ... Dividend is money given to buyers. ... Check your shares by reading newspapers or check through internet. Other investments unit trust and government bonds ... 2 things involved Fundamental and technical Analysis. Fundamental analysis is company's performance. Technical analysis is price of shares in company So, if invest wrongly, can lose money Besides, bonds can be buy and are secure. ... Not design to high returns. ... Shares can get faster... Yah. That's all. (looks at Tang)
- 5 S: Ahh.. tips in investment. (reads) Before buying, must do research ... Consider many factors. Key issue you want money

- long-term or short –term ... Find what good for you.
- 6 T: Mine on insurance. Life insurance for financial strategy. 2 types like term insurance. Your beneficiaries get money. Another is cash value insurance. Medical insurance covers most medical expenses. Another is insurance for car and house ... The last insurance is long term insurance ... This type available through employers ...
- ...
- 8 P: Ahh... investment in property ... Can get money from houses you have. Value doesn't fall like shares. First, must invest properly by knowing developer before you buy. Second, selecting for right location of house. The last is manage property. Can manage by getting a property manager. The last is insurance ...
- ...
- 10 O: Must know rules in investing. Know yourself. If you can take higher or lower risks. Must know strategy, bonds or shares to buy. Should invest regularly. Top up if needed. Long-term usually have higher income. Measure your risk ...

Wai (W) started the discussion by sharing information on some advice on money saving (line 2). Loh (L) provided some strategies on share buying (line 4). While in Week 4, Soong (S) remained quiet, this time she gave some information on investment techniques (line 5). Tang (T) explained how insurance could be a form of financial strategy (line 6). Phua (P) elaborated on property investment (line 8) and finally, Ooi (O), stated some investment rules in line 10. As seen in the excerpt, the group members did not attempt to build on the ideas of the previous speaker but concerned about sharing their own findings based on their readings. It could be due to their eagerness to show that they had done their part in searching for information. The group did not query the ideas presented, but were very receptive to what had been shared.

It was observed that Loh did not ask many questions compared to her actions in Weeks 1 and 4. When her group failed to follow her actions, she reduced the questions asked. In the end, she decided to ask questions only to increase her group members' understanding and critical thinking.

When the participants were interviewed to describe their collaborative writing session, they were generally satisfied with it.

- L: Members' contribution improved already. Read the topic a lot. They look for many articles.
- S: Err ... get more information. Talk together important information.
- T: More information. Important information present together.
- W: We all together discuss. We discuss important information. Then decide together.
- P: We look together important information.

Loh (L) appreciated her group members' well-preparedness in the session. Furthermore, the rest of the members found that the session had helped them to discuss important information and to make decision collectively.

Negotiation

The second critical incident identified in Group 1's collaborative writing session was negotiation which occurred in Weeks 2 and 3. Most negotiation processes were in the form of confirmation checks. Confirmation checks among students resulted in the responses of repeating, elaborating or simplifying the original message (Pica, 1994). The information obtained from the participants' interviews and diary entries highlighted that they benefited from the negotiation process.

Week 2

Negotiation was identified during the three sub-tasks of preparation of interview questions, information-sharing after doing referencing and filtering of information to be used in their writing. It was in the form of confirmation checks which resulted in the response of elaborating on the original message.

Elaborating was identified in the processes of informing-sharing and planning their interview questions (Excerpt 7).

Excerpt 7

- 15 L: Cash property? What's it?
 16 T: ... I think, *ah*, fixed property cars, house, cash property. I think investment.
 ...
 18 L: What is investment club?
 19 P: They group and plan investment. Also got short and long term investment.
 ...
 21 L: My EPF, family members can top up members' account ... Can be done until members reach 55 years old.
 22 P: It means my family can top up in my account?
 23 L: Yes. (smiles) The money withdraw from EPF can do investment, property, shares, savings.
 24 T: Can take out before deciding on investment.
 25 L: Can take out part of Account 1. I also got some in investment of stocks ... Some investing tops on how to use right middlemen, use cash if investment go like no money after that (laughs). If you don't know ask unit trust companies ...

In lines 15 and 18, Loh (L) asked Tang (T) and Phua (P) to define what cash property and investment clubs were. Both Tang (T) and Phua (P) defined and elaborated their points on cash property and investment club (lines 16 and 19). In line 21, Loh (L) explained that family members could contribute to one's Employee Provision Fund

(EPF) account. Phua (P) wanted a definite confirmation (line 22). Loh (L) expanded her explanation that the money withdrawn from the EPF fund could be used for investment, buying property or shares or put in savings (line 23). In line 24, Tang (T) expanded Loh's explanation. Loh (L) continued to provide a lengthy elaboration on investment of shares using Account 1 contribution (line 25).

These exchanges in lines 21 to 25 among the members are called cumulative talk (Mercer, 1995). The members built on the knowledge of the previous speakers and expanded the ideas. Negotiation in this excerpt is represented by confirmation checks and elaboration of ideas.

When the participants were asked to describe their collaborative writing session through the interviews and diary entries written on 8th October 2008, they had mixed views on the negotiation.

Interviews

L: See which one is important. They explain.
O: Understand more. They explain more. Help me.

Diary Entries

Tang

My difficulty in the session is unable to understand my friends' information (got only main points but not explanations)

Phua

In this session, the mistake I made is too nervous, did not explain clearly. My difficulty in the session is could not speak well, could not find words to express myself

When interviewed, Loh commented that the elaborating of information helped her to evaluate which information was important while Ooi admitted that she could

understand the topic better through her group members' explanation. On the other hand, Tang and Phua complained of difficulty in understanding some of the information due to a lack of clarity and the inability of some members to articulate their thoughts. This situation occurred because the weaker students needed more time to understand information and they, too, felt self-conscious when presenting their ideas to their more capable peers.

Week 3

Negotiation was also identified during the sub-tasks of information-sharing after doing referencing, filtering of information to be used in their writing and preparation of interview questions. It was in the forms of confirmation checks which resulted in the responses of repeating and simplifying the original message.

A response to confirmation checks which was simplifying occurred when Loh (L) simplified Wai's (W) instruction while planning their interview questions (Excerpt 8).

Excerpt 8

- 8 W: You mean we interview those who good and bad in planning.
Maybe why they don't.
- 9 L: You mean 2 sets. Good idea. If the person is already involved in
financial planning, then?
- ...
- 24 L: So, those who not plan and overspend. What to ask?
- 25 P: Ask them the cause.
- 26 L: Oh, ask them the cause.
- 27 S: How much they overspent?

Wai suggested interviewing those who were good in financial planning and those who were bad in planning and find out the reasons for their failure to plan (line 8). To

avoid confusion in Wai's vague suggestion, Loh simplified and refined Wai's statement by stating that it was a good idea to have two sets of interview questions for students who planned financially and those who did not (line 9). Loh's clarification helped the group to understand the idea better.

Confirmation check in the form of repeating also occurred in this excerpt. Loh (L) enquired from Phua (P) what type of questions to ask students who did not have financial planning and those who often overspent (line 24). Phua replied that they could ask the causes for their lack of financial planning (line 25). Loh's repetition of the statement in line 26 could be an indication of confirmation check. In line 27, Soong (S) drew on Loh's word *overspend* in line 24 and contributed another interview question on how much the students overspent.

When the participants were asked to describe their collaborative writing through the interviews and diary entries written on 15th October, 2008, they had positive views on the confirmation checks.

Interviews

O: Maybe understand article.

L: Everything was useful. My friends are active.

Diary Entries

Soong

The benefits are learn more knowledge, improve speaking skills, clarify explanations.

Wai

The benefits are more info, correction of mistakes.

Ooi and Loh commented in their interviews that the simplifying and repetition of information increased their understanding of their readings and the discussion was productive due to active group members. Soong and Wai wrote in their diary entries that they could learn more knowledge, clarify their explanations, improve their speaking skills and even correct each others' mistakes through the collaborative session.

Leadership Styles

The third critical incident identified was the leadership styles used. There are three types of leaders' behaviour, namely, democratic, laissez-faire and autocratic (Galanes et. al., 2004). Loh, was observed to practise a mixed democratic and autocratic behaviour of leadership in Weeks 1 and 3. In subsequent weeks, Loh consistently maintained her democratic leadership style. An explanation of the findings is provided in the following sections together with information obtained from the participants' interviews and diary entries based on the week they occurred.

Week 1

Loh adopted a democratic style of leadership during three sub-tasks which were appointment of group leader, selection of topic for their long report, and division of referencing work among the group members. During the process of choosing a suitable topic, Loh (L) was observed to be democratic in her behaviour towards her group members (Excerpt 9).

Excerpt 9

6. S: Obesity
7 L: Huh? Others?

- 8 O: Woman and organisation?
 ...
 14 L: Is there any plan?
 15 P: Saving plan for students also those already working, investment
lor.
 ...
 19 L: This Personal Loan, for our own?
 20 P: Personal. Hong Leong Bank.
 21 L: How much?
 22 P: RM20 000 to RM40 000. Interest rates 1% per month.
 ...
 25 L: What topic do you want to do? (looks at group members
 smilingly)
 26 P: Touch and Go more attractive.
 27 W: This one minor information. I'm worried that we won't have
 enough information. If talk about credit card, got insurance.
 28 L: Do you agree? Why not financial? (looks at Tang)
 29 T: I've enough info. (looks at Loh)
 ...
 40 L: Who wants to read journals and magazines? To get more info on
 topic.
 ...
 42 L: What topics for financial planning?
 43 T: Savings, investment
 44 P: Insurance *ah?*
 45 T: Some.
 46 P: I look at it.
 47 T: Savings, I can look.
 ...
 55 L: Maybe some advantages, disadvantages. You can find insurance
 scheme. (looks at Tang) Disadvantage? (Ooi raises her hand)
 Common mistakes who wants to find? (No one volunteers)
 Insurance, on mutual funds? (Tang nods) Who else mutual
 funds? (Ooi raises her hand) 2 of you? (looks at Wai and Phua)
 ...
 56 W: I search insurance.

Loh (L) was observed to be inviting her group to share their topics of interest. She encouraged her group members to talk by prompting them regularly as seen in lines 7, 14, 19, 21, 25, and 28.

When the group had to select a topic for their long report, Loh (L) practised democracy by asking her group for their preferred choice (line 25). Phua (P) said that she was interested in the topic on Touch and Go cards (line 26). Wai (W) disagreed because they had insufficient information and suggested choosing a topic on credit cards because information on insurance was included (line 27). Loh (L) sought agreement from the group on Wai's suggestion and simultaneously, suggested choosing the financial topic (line 28). In line 29, Tang (T) confirmed that she had sufficient information on it.

Loh (L) asked her group members if they would like to read from journals and magazines to obtain more information (line 40). She also asked their opinion on what information to search for under financial planning (line 42). Tang (T) and Phua (P) suggested sub-topics such as savings, investments and insurance (lines 43 and 44). Tang (T) volunteered to read up on savings (line 47). Loh allowed the members freedom to choose the areas to collect information from.

In line 55, Loh (L) delegated the referencing work to the other members according to other sub-topics in Financial Planning. The members volunteered to take up sections of the sub-topics except for Wai and Phua who were still indecisive. Finally, Wai volunteered to collect information on insurance (line 56).

Loh chose to use a democratic leadership style during the selection of topic and referencing work and the group members responded positively to her. The egalitarian

approach allowed the members to provide their opinions freely and to search for information which they were familiar with. Consequently, Loh could get the members interested and motivated in writing on a topic which they liked and to gather sufficient information on it.

When the participants were asked to describe the leadership style and their response through their diary entries written on 1st October, 2008, they had positive views on it.

Loh

In this session, I learned importance of co-operation, honest communication to produce a good report.

Ooi

The experience was different from working alone because disagreements may happen, more info from everyone, delegation of work to everyone resulting in less burden but producing a good report, correction of work.

Soong

The experience was different from working alone because correction can take place (info, how to write), everyone play their roles so work is shared.

Wai

The experience was different from working alone because reduces work thru sharing work in searching info from various sources.

Tang

The experience was different from working alone because more members, more info n delegation of work

Loh was aware of the importance of co-operation and honest communication among her group members while Ooi and Soong were appreciative that their work could be scrutinised and improved. In addition, Ooi, Soong, Wai, and Tang were happy that delegation of work was carried out by Loh to lighten the writing task.

Week 3

Loh demonstrated mixed democratic and autocratic behaviour while performing three tasks, namely, information-sharing after doing referencing, filtering of information to be used in their writing and preparation of interview questions. When the group was generating interview questions, Loh (L) was observed to be democratic in the beginning but became autocratic later on (Excerpt 10).

Excerpt 10

- 7 L: (reads her notes) Aah...type of investment, do you start financial planning for the future... Any questions? Why some of them don't involve in financial planning? What's the reason?
- 8 W: You mean we interview those who good and bad in planning. Maybe why they don't.
- 9 L: You mean 2 sets. Good idea. If the person is already involved in financial planning, then?
- 10 T: When they involved?
- 11 L: Oh, since when. What other? How long they plan? (writes down)
- 12 T: Hmm.
- 13 W: Can ask why they not plan? Reasons? How?
- 14 L: Hmm. Third one?
- ...
- 18 O: The maximum amount The minimum amount.
- 19 L: Ok. On the amount saved. (writes down)
- 20 W: Maybe ask benefits, the advantages of financial planning.
- 21 L: So benefit can get from financial planning. (Long silence)
- 22 L: The last are on the recommendations.
- 23 O: Oh, the opinions of Malaysians on financial planning.
- 24 L: So, those who not plan and overspend. What to ask?
- 25 P: Ask them the cause.
- 26 L: Oh, ask them the cause.

In line 7, Loh (L) invited her group to generate interview questions after reading some information from her notes. Wai (W) suggested interviewing students who planned financially and those who did not (line 8). Loh praised Wai's idea and expanded on it by raising what type of questions to ask those who already practised

financial planning (line 9). As a follow-up of the discussion, Tang (T) proposed asking when they started their financial planning (line 10). Loh agreed to the suggestion and quickly jotted it down (line 11). The discussion went on smoothly as the group members cumulatively built on each other's ideas.

Their discussion was conducted in a democratic way. Loh wanted her group to brainstorm on the interview questions effectively. Through their discussion, the members raised different aspects of financial planning, such the maximum and minimum amount of money that could be saved, benefits and advantages of financial planning, opinions on financial planning, reasons for financial planning, and causes for not planning (lines 18 to 26).

However, Loh's democratic leadership changed to autocratic in the later part of the discussion.

- 31 W: How they solve the problem when overspent? Borrow money
or ...
- 32 L: Sorry?
- 33 W: This question can use?
- 34 L: Repeat.
- 35 W: How they face not having enough money?
- 36 L: Like first?
- 37 W: But can be like case credit card. Maybe other way.
- 38 L: How?
- 39 W: When you overspend, how to solve problem?
- 40 O: Where to get money when you overspend? (laughs)
- 41 R: What do you do when you overspend? (All laugh)
- 42 L: Anymore? (Long silence)

In line 31, Wai (W) suggested including a question to find out how students solved their problem of overspending and gave borrowing money as an example of a

solution. Loh (L) reacted in a sceptical manner (line 32). This caused Wai (W) to become uncertain (line 33). Loh (L) reinforced her authoritative stance by emphasising that Wai's idea was a repetition of the question they had decided to use earlier (lines 34 and 36). Wai (W) defended herself by giving the example of one overspending through the use of credit cards (line 37).

Loh (L) was not satisfied with Wai's reply and continued to question her (line 38). Loh's used of "How" in line 38 was not a Wh question but rather a request for Wai to reflect what she had said earlier. This prompted Wai to restructure her interview question to make it clearer (line 39). Ooi (O) and the researcher (R) refined Wai's idea by providing two clearly defined questions (lines 40 and 41). Loh's response in line 42 was to reject the explanations by seeking for other interview questions from the group.

None of the group members confronted Loh over her authoritative leadership. The reason could be they knew that Loh has better command in English than they and therefore, trusted her judgment. Another possible reason could be the influence of the collectivist culture which emphasises on respect towards leaders and group solidarity (Hofstede, 2001, 2005).

When the participants were asked to describe the leadership styles adopted and their responses through their interviews and diary entries written on 15th. October, 2008, they had positive views of them.

Interviews

- P: Learn so many things. Everyone give information.
 W: Listen to many topics ... Can learn ... Many information. Everyone got many different information.
 O: More ideas ... We give different ideas. Know more ... Friends help me. I don't understand, they help.

Diary Entries

Ooi

The benefits are time for assignment shorten, a complete questionnaire

Wai

The experience was different from working alone because more info from group than individual, mistakes corrected by others

Ooi, Wai and Phua were satisfied with the discussion and agreed that they could learn from the large amount of information presented and their group members helped to increase their understanding on input they initially could not comprehend. Ooi felt happy that the group did not spend too much time in designing a complete questionnaire. Meanwhile Wai was happy to have her mistakes corrected by others.

Group 2

Group 2 consisted of five Chinese females and one Chinese male with mixed proficiency. All of the participants had positive views on collaborative writing except for Corrine who had mixed views on it. The collaborative features that consistently emerged in this group were mutual interaction and sharing of expertise, power struggle and leadership style. The features are explained in the following section and some of the features might recur in subsequent critical incidents.

Mutual Interaction and Sharing of Expertise

The first critical incident observed was mutual interaction and sharing of expertise. Mutual interaction (Dale, 1997) and sharing of expertise (Dale, 1997; Ede and Lunsford, 1990; Ohta 1995, 2001) are two important functions in collaborative writing. These features were observed in Weeks 1, 2 and 3. An explanation of the findings is provided in the following sections together with information obtained from the participants' interviews and diary entries based on the week it occurred.

Week 1

Mutual interaction and sharing of expertise was identified while performing two sub-tasks, namely, the appointment of a group leader and selection of topic for their long report. In this episode, the group members were brainstorming on their topics (Excerpt 11). All the transcripts are quoted verbatim.

Excerpt 11

- 1 S: So, now we've to choose a topic. Start.
- 2 C: Ah, ah, about some social problems. Ah... the first topic ... is domestic violence Domestic violence is like husbands beating up their wives ... And then the there's one topic about fashion magazines, a lot young woman will read then wish to look like the models. And then teenagers on ancient art ... How art represents the woman status then. One more is about sex education is important or sex addiction is a big problem. One more is the working woman nowadays. like how woman can find time for children, family and work at the same time ...
- ...
- 5 K: Ok. My topic on why people want to dye their hair. Now many people like to dye their hair. But never ask why. So this is my topic.
- 6 F: Oh, I just have one topic only. My topic is pop culture or popular culture. Like how to have effect, pop culture and teenagers in Malaysia.
- ...

- 8 Y: Err, my topic is global warming, in the earth around us (laughs) Have many topic. Like global warning what the global warming will be happen. How to effect ah...
- ...
- 11 S: Ah, my topic *lah* is about exorcism. Like something about a witchmen. Is like a person who can cast out a demon or like you're possessed by a demon in the body. Some people they suddenly got crazy.
- ...
- 16 J: Right. Got 2 topic. Ah 2 topic. First why *MAT REMPIT (ILLEGAL MOTORCYCLE RACERS)* always happen in our country. You know about *MAT REMPIT*. Always Malay people. Always dress ah...
- ...
- 18 J: Ah, yes. Like in secondary school always race ... to release stress. Or he has family problem ... Second is important of recycle of packaging ... why recycling is so important ... So, now hmm ... the main thing newspaper can recycle into tissue paper.

Soh (S) started the discussion by requesting for topics for their long report (line 1). Corrine (C) voluntarily presented her five topics, namely, domestic violence, influence of fashion magazines on females, ancient art, sex education and sex addiction, and working women (line 2). Following that, Kok (K), Fun (F), Yin (Y), Soh (S) and James (J) described their topics which were reasons for dyeing hair, the effects of pop culture on teenagers, global warming, exorcism, *Mat Rempit* (illegal motorcycle racers) and recycling (lines 5, 6, 8, 11, 16 and 18). Group 2 presented a total of 12 topics for their long report in comparison with Group 1 who only presented 6 topics during the topic selection stage.

While presenting their topics of interest, the group did not respond to each other's contribution except for Corrine who has better proficiency than her group members.

This is similar with Loh in Group 1 who has better proficiency and was constantly asking questions during the discussion.

The following is a continuation of their brainstorming on topics.

- 6 F: Oh, I just have one topic only. My topic is pop culture or popular culture. Like how to have effect, pop culture and teenagers in Malaysia.
- 7 C: Actually, I think teenagers affect pop culture.
- ...
- 11 S: Ah, my topic *lah* is about exorcism. Like something about a witchmen. Is like a person who can cast out a demon or like you're possessed by a demon in the body. Some people they suddenly got crazy.
- 12 C: You mean witch doctor.
- ...
- 16 J: Right. Got 2 topic. Ah 2 topic. First why *MAT REMPIT (ILLEGAL MOTORCYCLE RACERS)* always happen in our country. You know about *MAT REMPIT*. Always Malay people. Always dress ah...
- 17 C: Majority Malay people.

Fun (F) proposed a topic on pop culture but was unsure how to link the effect between pop culture and teenagers (line 6). Corrine (C) assisted her by saying that teenagers affected pop culture (line 7). Soh (S) presented and defined her topic on exorcism (line 11). She used the term “witchmen” during her explanation and Corrine corrected her that she should use “witch doctor” instead (line 12). James presented his topic on *Mat Rempit* and emphasised that all of them were Malays (line 16). Corrine corrected him by stating that the majority were Malays (line 17). This situation of assisting and correcting each other's ideas enables the pooling of expertise and resources (Wenger, 1998).

As a more proficient language user, Corrine refined her peers' ideas by adding information and correcting them as they presented their topics. Likewise, Loh from

Group 1, constantly asked her group questions to help increase understanding. Both Corrine and Loh provided their expertise to help the group progress in their work.

The information obtained from the interviews and diary entries written on 14th October, 2008 showed the students' mixed opinions on their collaboration.

Interviews

C: Interesting topics. We all come up with our topics. Then we listen to each other talk about them.

K: So many topic. We can choose one.

S: Ahh, more topic to choose. We all got topic. Many topic.

Diary Entries

Corrine

The session was useful due to the success of agreeing on choosing the same topic and set up a pole and voting ... The topic suggested by some of the members create an awareness to me.

Corrine Kok and Soh commented that they had many interesting topics to choose from. In her diary entry, Corrine further explained that her friends' sharing of information created more awareness to her.

Despite the positive comments given, the majority of participants in Group 2 were generally unhappy with the session. Their dissatisfaction was evident from their interviews and diary entries.

Interviews

C: Not enough information. I have more information because I make it a point to read a lot. Also I'm aware that I push my group members hard especially in the beginning.

F: In my opinion, so many topics. So we also confused. Don't know how to choose.

J: I don't like sex topic. Topic sensitive lah. The girls sure shy one. They don't like my topic. Ahh ... maybe *Mat Rempit* the girl don't like.

Diary Entries

Corrine

The session was not useful because some of the members did not prepare properly and does not have much to share or prepare which I find that it is not fair to others as the others are prepare to present their ideas.

Kok

The session was not useful because not all people give out their own opinion.

Yin

The session was not useful because some of members are less explain about their topic or less to share or give opinion.

James

The session was not useful because the topic that based my idea was disagree, my friends doesn't know or lack info about my topic ... My difficulty in the session is to solve the problem and boys thinking or opinion is more different than the girls.

The members were unhappy due to the insufficient information in the topics presented, having too many topics presented and disagreements on which topic to choose as the final one. During the interview, Corrine complained of insufficient explanations provided by her group in comparison with her efforts of preparing well by reading widely on her topics. In her diary entry, she complained that it was unfair that some group members did not prepare well for the discussion. Her view was supported by Kok and Yin who described the discussion as not useful because not every group member provided enough information. It caused them to face difficulty in deciding the final topic.

The members were also dissatisfied with having too many topics presented. When interviewed, Fun stated that it was a deterrent in their decision-making process. Similarly, other group members found it difficult to choose a final topic.

The third reason for being unhappy with the session was their disagreement over the topic selected. When interviewed, James said the final topic was sensitive and he was disappointed that his topic on *Mat Rempit* was rejected. He mentioned in his diary entry that it was due to gender preference because his topic would be favoured by males and not females who might be ignorant about the topic.

Week 2

Sharing of expertise was also observed during three sub-tasks, namely, selection of topic for their long report, division of work on doing referencing on the topic and sharing of information on the topic. This excerpt illustrates the discussion of new information on their topic - sex education.

Excerpt 12

- 1 S: Today in discussion, we narrow down our topic today.
Anything? (looks at Corinne)
- 2 C: We list sub-topic. Last week, we've a few topics. Any info from you? (looks at Soh)
- 3 S: I think the title sex education got causes ah, treatment *ah*. I got 2 small topic here. How to promote sex education in Malaysia and society's response.
- 4 C: Are you talking about awareness? (James shows a book entitled, "Teen Sex" and smiles)
- 5 S: Should sex education include transgender, homosexuality and lesbianism?
- 6 C: That not allowed in our country. If you do, you can get caught. Even if we're Chinese. Even though there're different races. Indians cannot marry.

As the leader, Soh (S) invited her group to share information on sex education and Corrine (C) suggested narrowing it down in to sub-topics (lines 1 and 2). Corrine called upon Soh to share her information first (line 2). Soh summarised her information into

causes and treatment of sex education, how to promote sex education in Malaysia and the society's response (line 3). Corrine counter-checked with Soh whether she meant awareness when she mentioned about promoting sex education (line 4). Soh did not respond directly to Corrine's enquiry but moved on to ask the rest whether to include transgender, homosexuality, and lesbianism (line 5). Corrine commented that they were not allowed in Malaysia including Chinese and Indians who did not permit same sex marriages (line 6).

Corrine helped the group to categorise the information more concisely and also shared her general knowledge on what was permissible in Malaysia. The exchanges between the group members were more dynamic as compared to Group 1. Group 2 was more articulate and seemed interested in talking about their topic.

The information obtained from the interviews and diary entries produced on 21st October, 2008 reflected mixed opinions from the group during the exchanges of information.

Interviews

- C: More information to choose. More people more information.
We don't read on our own only.
- F: Got many information we can choose.
- J: Ahh, more topic to choose. We different topic. Choose lah.
- K: We find point then choose point together.
- S: Ok. Choose from many. Many people many topic.
- Y: We give information. Then select. Ahh, motivate me. Hmm. I work hard. My friends all work hard.

Diary Entries

Corrine

In this session, I learned that everyone is capable to voice out their opinion, which I found it is very good. Becoz. more interaction in between gp members are good to build up teamwork spirit.

James

In this session, I learned the teamwork n understand idea to each other.

There were positive comments elicited from the interview and diary entries. First, the members had more topics to choose from and to exchange information. Second, they also learned about teamwork and understood ideas better. Third, Yin when interviewed realised she was motivated by her group to work hard since they put in a lot of effort. This finding corroborates with Hynes (2005) who comments that “it is good to work in groups while writing a document because of the additional minds and perspectives involved which can result in an increase of understanding and motivation among the group members” (p.74).

Despite the positive comments, there were also negative comments on the session.

Interviews

- C: They don't talk so much. I know I talk a lot. I also confused them. Give them so much information. They also confused.
- Y: Ahh ... not prepared. I think idea first. Then discuss. But I no enough information.
- F: Ahh, in discussing cannot talk. Err, Corrine and Soh. They talk so much.

Diary Entries

Corrine

The session was not useful because we are lack of sufficient info to make a decision therefore it slows the process of finishing the report. But there is no rush to finishing, I think it is not a bad thing that the members can go back and get more info... In this session, the mistake I made is I talk too much...My difficulty in the session is I must try harder to help my members... to give more opinion and try to listen more others opinion before I voiced out mine.

Yin

The session was not useful because some of member not really prepare before in discussion.

The problems they faced were the lack of information and passive participation which resulted in certain group members dominating the session. Corrine expressed her unhappiness that her group did not talk much and they lacked information on the topic. Yin confessed in her interview that her lack of preparation caused her to be unable to support her ideas with sufficient information. Therefore, Corrine had to talk more to continue the discussion. Consequently, she confused her group with too much information.

In the interview, Fun complained that Corrine and Soh dominated the discussion causing her to be unable to contribute. Corrine reflected on the discussion and realised she should be patient with her group, be willing to listen to them and to give them more opportunities to express themselves. Fun and Corrine possibly did not express their dissatisfactions openly to the group because they wanted to avoid conflict in order to establish group harmony (Hofstede, 2001, 2005).

Week 3

Sharing of expertise was also observed while performing three sub-tasks, namely, preparation of questionnaire and interview questions, information-sharing after doing referencing and filtering of information to be used in writing. In this excerpt, the members were sharing information on sex education and preparing questionnaire and interview questions.

Excerpt 13

- 1 S: Since our topic is sex education, anyone got ah ... to share?
 2 J: I can't find many from journalism. I only got this book. (holds up a book)
 3 S: Good.
 4 J: This research on sexuality, talk about culture, sexual revolution and sex education for statistics in Germany, Italy. Many examples this book.
 5 S: Miss, so, what do we do? (looks at researcher)
 6 R: Do you want to use questionnaire or interview?

Soh (S) started the discussion by inviting her group to share new information (line 1). The sharing of information was very brief. Only James (J) provided some information by informing the others that he found a book on sex education (line 2) and Soh praised him for his effort (line 3). Later, James explained some subject topics he found which were sexuality, culture, sexual revolution and statistical information and examples on the topic (line 4). Surprisingly, his group did not respond to him. Soh instead sought the researcher's help to guide them in the next task of preparing the questionnaire (line 5). The researcher observed that none of the group members acknowledged James's contribution and he was hurt by their action.

James expressed his frustration over his group's dismissal of his information through his interview and diary entry written on 28th October, 2008.

Interviews

- J: Ah, not prepare. I got read. Book I borrow got many info. So many cannot explain all... I not happy. My idea not accept. Maybe no good... Could there be another reason? Oh, maybe I only male. They all female, I male.
 C: Yes and no. Yes because we all learn so much. But sometimes if people add irrelevant information then not good. Especially when someone is talking. Then that person will be rejected lah. I think you know I mean James, Miss.

Diary Entry

James

My difficulty in the session is they didn't care of my idea and share ☹ ...The experience was different from working alone because overall, they contribute the idea very well. Actually for their girls but me In my opinion, their teamwork and thinking differently with my thinking. ☹ HAIZZ

In his interview response, James admitted that he could not explain all the information but was disappointed that he was not taken seriously. He suspected that it was not good enough for his group or it could be due to the fact that he was the only male in the group and he did not understand the females' way of thinking.

However, Corrine explained in her interview response that James' ideas were rejected because it was irrelevant information. The group did not state directly that his information was unsuitable because they did not want James to lose face in public. The action could be influenced by the collectivist culture of protecting the interest of a member in the group in order to maintain group solidarity (Hofstede, 2001, 2005). However, James was unaware of his group members' responses towards his effort because they were not open with him.

Power Struggle

The second critical incident observed in Group 2 was power struggle among high-power and low-power members. High-power members attempt to maintain power by rejecting requests for change, ignoring intentions, communications, and co-operative gestures of low-power people (Tjosvold, 1978). On the other hand, low-power members are more co-operative (Lindsfold & Aronoff, 1980), make more concessions (Lawler &

Yoon, 1993), more compliant in responding to threats during negotiation (Lawler & Yoon, 1993), submit more during interpersonal conflicts (Kramer, 1996), and behave less aggressively (Ohbuchi & Saito, 1986) than high-power members.

Corrine was evidently a high-power member while the rest of the group members were low-power members. The members acknowledged her expert power because they had confidence in her vast knowledge and her language ability. Her expertise was important to the group in the production of their long report (Galanes et al., 2004).

Power struggle was prominent in Weeks 1, 2, 3, 6 and 8. The information from the participants' interviews and diary entries showed their dissatisfaction of the situations resulting from unequal power. An explanation of the findings is provided in the following sections together with information obtained from the participants' interviews and diary entries.

Week 1

Unequal distribution of power was identified during the topic selection. This following excerpt illustrates unequal power distribution during the discussion.

Excerpt 14

- 1 S: So, now we've to choose a topic. Start.
- 2 C: Ah, ah, about some social problems. Ah... the first topic that I checked it and found to be interesting is domestic violence Domestic violence is like husbands beating up their wives ... The second will be transgender. And then there's one topic about fashion magazines, a lot young woman will read then wish to look like the models ... And then teenagers on ancient art ... How art represents the woman status then ... One more is about sex

education is important or sex addiction is a big problem. One more is the working woman nowadays. Woman work in factories. Many working woman out there. In this century, like how woman can find time for children, family and work at the same time ...

...

6 F: Oh, I just have one topic only. My topic is pop culture or popular culture. Like how to have effect, pop culture and teenagers in Malaysia.

7 C: Actually, I think teenagers affect pop culture.

...

11 S: Ah, my topic *lah* is about exorcism. Like something about a witchmen. Is like a person who can cast out a demon ... Some people they suddenly got crazy.

12 C: You mean witch doctor.

13 S: Yah, exorcist also called witchman.

...

16 J: Right. Got 2 topic. Ah 2 topic. First why *MAT REMPIT (ILLEGAL MOTORCYCLE RACERS)* always happen in our country. You know about *MAT REMPIT*. Always Malay people. Always dress ah...

17 C: Majority Malay people.

...

21 J: Paper into tissue paper. Ah, after you drink the Coca-Cola can recycle to factory. Can be reprocessed again.

22 S: That one is glasses *ah*.

23 J: Ah ...

24 C: Plastic or glass *ah*?

25 J: Glass *lah* I think. (laughs)

26 C: Huh, you think, you don't know. (laughs)

Soh (S) started the discussion by requesting for topics for their long report (line 1). Corrine (C) suggested five topics (line 2). After Corrine's detailed elaboration of her topic, Fun (F) suggested a topic on pop culture (line 6). As seen in the excerpt, Corrine dominated the discussion with lengthy explanations.

The episode also illustrates that Corrine assumed a high power stance when she helped to refine Fun's idea (line 7), corrected Soh's use of witchmen (line 12) corrected James (J) that the majority of *MAT REMPIT* were Malays (line 17) and questioned

James on his knowledge of the material used to produce Coca-Cola cans (line 24). Although Corrine contributed her expertise, she was indirectly enforcing power by her constant corrections.

The following is the continuation of the discussion whereby Corrine repeated her explanation of her topics but this time with more details.

Excerpt 15

28 C: Since you have little explanation your topic, I explain now ... About domestic violence, is it under pressure or is it because of finance problem or to release their stress ... Next about working woman. Like how successful they can take care of family and work at the same time. But teenage social problems also cause by working mother ... I want to talk about how reading magazines use thin models or healthy models ... Teenage magazines start use healthy models ... And teenagers and ancient art, that one I don't have to explain ... And transgender. You can see many transgender in our society ... Some are born with symptoms like something like that. Based on hormone is one fact also. They will born a female but their mind actually a guy ... And then another sex education and sex addiction. I don't know if you aware many people outside there are addicted to sex and they cause many social problems like rape case ... Some is like in a couple, one is addicted to sex, one is not ... So is this can be a serious issue ...

...

Her lengthy discussion of her topics on domestic violence, working women, influence of fashion magazines on females to diet, ancient art, transgender, sex education and sex addiction, as seen in the utterance in line 28, indicates that she was trying to influence her group into choosing one of her topics.

Corrine's actions of dominating the discussion and constantly correcting her group were detrimental. She was a high-power person for she directly ignored the co-operative gestures of her low-power group members (Tjosvold, 1978). Her group members were low-power people because they were co-operative (Lindskold & Aronoff, 1980), compliant in responding to threats during negotiation (Lawler & Yoon, 1993) and conducted non-aggressively (Ohbuchi & Saito, 1986).

The participants' diary entries produced on 14th October, 2008 revealed their dissatisfaction with the collaborative writing sessions.

Yin

The session was not useful because some of members are less explain about their topic or less to share or give opinion.

Kok

The session was not useful because not all people give out their own opinion.

Fun

The session was not useful because topic can't be too difficult until need to waste a long time just try to explain the introduction of the topic.

Corrine

In this session, the mistake I made is I didn't not explain my ideas clearly which make the others confuse and wasted a bit of time to explain it later.

Yin and Kok realised that there was unequal participation from the group during the generation of topics. Fun was upset because the group spent too much time on topic discussion. The group was unhappy with Corrine's behaviour but was not open with her due to the collectivist orientation of avoiding confrontation in order to maintain harmony in the group (Hofstede, 2005, 2001). During the reflection, Corrine realised

her mistake of not explaining her information clearly which caused confusion and admitted using too much time to talk.

Week 2

Unequal distribution of power was also discovered during two sub-tasks which were the selection of topic for their long report, information-sharing, and division of work on doing referencing on the topic. This excerpt highlights an example of improvement in power distribution as the group members compiled information on their readings about sex education.

Excerpt 16

- 1 S: Today in discussion, we narrow down our topic today.
Anything?(looks at Corrine)
- 2 C: We list sub-topic. Last week, we've a few topics. Any info from you? (looks at Soh)
- 3 S: I think the title sex education got causes ah, treatment *ah*. I got 2 small topic here. How to promote sex education in Malaysia and society's response.
- 4 C: Are you talking about awareness? (James shows a book entitled, "Teen Sex" and smiles)
- 5 S: Should sex education include transgender, homosexuality and lesbianism.
- 6 C: That not allowed in our country. If you do, you can get caught. Even if we're Chinese. Even though there're different races. Indians cannot marry.
- ...
- 11 C: Okay, I understand. We can ask our friends on how they learn about sex.. Actually, I feel that transgender is not suitable for our topic. Maybe can cover a small part of it. Any other opinion? What about you, James?
- 12 J: We do sex education or sex addiction?
- 13 C: Which one of you do you prefer?
- 14 J: Maybe sex education.
- 15 C: Can we choose this topic then? (looks at the rest)
- ...
- 19 C: We can list down sub-topics. The leader can do it. (smiles)
- 20 S: We see what we've collect, first.

- 21 C: Can plan outline, first.
 ...
 24 C: What if not enough info?
 25 R: Don't worry. Read as much as possible.
 26 C: Can we list down topic? Then find info?

Soh (S) invited Corrine (C) to present her information (line 1). Corrine (C) suggested listing down the sub-topics and asked Soh if she had any information to share (line 2). Soh (S) presented information on causes and treatment of sex education, promoting sex education in Malaysia and the response towards it (line 3).

Corrine was observed to be in total control of the discussion instead of Soh, the group leader. It can be observed that Corrine was guiding the discussion by eliciting for information from Soh and James (J) in lines 2 and 11; clarifying and expanding Soh's explanations (lines 4 and 6); instructing Soh to list down sub-topics (line 19 and 21), and seeking the researcher's help in performing the next task (lines 24 and 26). Her utterances were much shorter than the previous week because she consciously tried to reduce her talk time. This shows her effort to be less dominating and to allow others to contribute more freely.

Corrine was observed to reduce her high power in Week 2. Consequently, her group, too, had more authority in making decisions. However, the group depended heavily on Corrine's language ability, knowledge and good organisation skills to guide them.

Nonetheless, the interview responses revealed the members' dissatisfactions on the session.

- C: They don't talk so much ... I know I talk a lot. I also confused them ...
Give them so much information. They also confused.
- F: Ahh, in discussing cannot talk ... Err, Corrine and Soh. They talk so much.

Corrine complained that her group did not talk much and she had to provide a lot of information. She realised some of them were confused with her explanations. On the other hand, Fun complained that Soh and Corrine dominated the discussion resulting in others being unable to contribute. Although Corrine allowed others to talk, she was still unable to relinquish her controlling behaviour.

Week 3

Unequal distribution of power was again observed when performing three sub-tasks: preparation of questionnaire and interview questions, information-sharing after doing referencing, and filtering of information to be used in their writing. This excerpt signifies the unequal distribution of power during the preparation of questionnaire and interview questions.

Excerpt 17

- 6 R: Do you want to use questionnaire or interview?
7 C: Questionnaire, I think.
8 R: The rest?
9 J: [Questionnaire
10 K: [Questionnaire
11 C: [Questionnaire
...
35 C: Questionnaire I think not really that much. Can interview after that to get more detail.
36 J: Any suggestion?
37 C: Can we look at interview? (Soh turns to researcher)

- 38 R: It's up to you.
 39 C: All of you've hand phones. Can record interviews, right? (Kok and Yin smile)
 40 S: Ahh...
 41 C: 6 people here. We can divide work. 3 of us interview a group. 3 more another group. One ask questions, two write notes. Ok?
 42 K: No
 43 C: Why?
 44 K: Time.
 45 C: No time *ah*.
 46 S: We all do.
 ...
 84 R: Do you want to interview them alone or as a group?
 85 C: Group. Why not use questionnaire and interview?
 86 S: Ahh... no. (Kok and Yin laugh)
 87 C: What if no detail?
 88 S: We use questionnaire, first. Then interview later. (Kok nods and smiles)

During the discussion on the preparation of questionnaire and interview questions, Corrine (C), James (J) and Kok (K) were in favour of using a questionnaire instead of interview questions (lines 7, 9, 10 and 11). Corrine felt that it would not yield much information and suggested including the use of interviews (line 35). James (J) refused to let Corrine control the decision-making and sought for suggestions from others (line 36). Corrine (C) asked the group whether to use interviews and Soh (S) turned to the researcher for help (line 37). However, the researcher refused to be involved in the decision-making process (line 38).

Corrine continued to assert her view to include interviews because she claimed they could use their hand phones to record their interviews (line 39). She further divided the work of interviewing among the members (line 41). Kok opposed the idea because of time factor (lines 42 and 44). However, Soh (S) supported Corrine's idea and

explained that all of them would be involved in it (line 46). In this excerpt, Kok was regarded as a low-power person because her objection was ignored.

In addition, when the researcher asked the group whether they intended to interview their respondents individually or as a group, Corrine quickly answered that they could distribute questionnaires and interview the respondents as a group (lines 84 and 85). Soh opposed the idea (line 86). However, Corrine counter argued that they might lack information (line 87). Soh justified her decision by stating that they would use questionnaire first before deciding to use interviews if the need arose (line 88). Kok nodded in agreement to Soh's plan.

Corrine, again was considered a high-power person because she was insistent that her ideas be accepted by the group at the expense of rejecting requests for change and ignoring the intentions and communications of her group (Tjosvold, 1978). On the other hand, her group members were considered low-power members because they demonstrated more co-operation (Lindskold & Aronoff, 1980), made more concessions (Lawler & Yoon, 1993), and became more compliant in responding to threats during negotiation (Lawler & Yoon, 1993).

The interviews and diary entries produced on 28th October, 2008 revealed the participants' negative feelings towards the unequal distribution of power in the collaboration.

Interviews

- J: Ahh, not very good. Change questionnaire then interview then questionnaire . Make us confused lah ... Oh, but if group agree, ok with me lah ... Ahh, that Corrine. Talk so much. Talk also not what we want! So *KELAM-KABUT* (MESSY). Vote better. Choose use interview or questionnaire. Corrine say use interview, interview. Say use questionnaire, use questionnaire.
- K: Got one problem. Confused because change questionnaire then interview then interview and questionnaire.
- S: So confused. At first say use questionnaire. Then interview. Then questionnaire and interview. Waste time only ... Yes. Confused also waste time.

Diary Entries

James

The session was not useful because Corrine explain a lot of elaboration and she forget the group is doing questionnaire. ☹

Corrine

In this session, the mistake I made is my mood was a bit down today and i was not talking politely because of the tentionof facing the coming midterm. In the last session, the mistake i've made is forgot that i should talk less and listen more to the others and give them a chance to talk.

James, Kok and Soh expressed their discontent over the changes of decision regarding the use of interviews and questionnaire because they found it confusing. Nevertheless, James did not voice his displeasure because the group agreed with the decision made. He placed more importance on the group's decision than his own due to the influence of the collectivist culture which values the group over an individual in the group (Hofstede, 2005, 2001). In addition, he felt that Corrine was talking too much on irrelevant issues. However, he did not confront Corrine in his effort to avoid conflict and maintain harmony in the group (Hofstede, 2005, 2001).

In contrast, after Corrine reflected on the session, she admitted that she was impolite because she was tensed over her mid-term test. She was also aware that she was dominating the discussion and should attempt to listen to her group members more.

This showed that Corrine used her reflection as an attempt to improve on her collaborative writing skills.

Week 6

Power struggle also existed while performing four sub-tasks which were analysis of data from questionnaire and interviews, filtering of information to be used in writing, integrating information into the topic, and producing a mind-map to summarise information. During the discussion on the analysis of data from the questionnaire, Soh realised that James was tardy again (Excerpt 18). He had been late for a few times.

Excerpt 18

- 6 C: No. Why not write all the options? Then put the percentage.
(Yin and Fun nod)
- 7 S: James's part not here yet.
- 8 K: James not here. Already 15 minutes.
- 9 C: Always like that.
- 10 K: Say, coming, coming. But no.
- 11 S: What *lah*, he.
- 12 K: Terrible, terrible.
- 13 C: If want us respect, must earn it. We ignore him *ah* afterwards.
- 14 S: Oh, we ignore him.
- ...
- 21 Y: How they learn?
- 22 K: 40 per cent parents. (Corrine and Soh are having a private conversation as James walks in.)
- 23 C: You are late. Say coming ... late.
- 24 J: Really? (laughs) (Corrine points to his watch)
- 25 C: Heh!
- 26 J: Ha! Ha! (Corrine shows a fist to him. James shrinks away, laughing while Soh laughs) Got cold. Take pill go to sleep.
- 27 S: Oh. (The rest continue whispering to each other and ignore James)
- ...
- 42 C: Count how many.
- 43 K: One, two, three, four, five.

- 44 J: I go out. (Everyone ignores him as he walks out.)
 ...
 51 S: Eh, do you ask questions? (points at mind-map)
 52 K: 10% yes, 80% no.
 53 J: So, how now? (walks towards Yin and Fun and reads mind-map)

The group could not proceed with their sub-task because they did not have James' information (lines 6 to 8). Kok (K), Corrine(C) and Soh (S) expressed their anger with James for being late (lines 8 to 12). Although Soh (S) was the leader, Corrine (C) was more influential in decision-making because she was perceived as having knowledge and skills important to the group. She suggested ignoring James as a form of punishment and Soh agreed with her (line 13). The action is consistent with the collectivist practice of ostracising and shaming members who are different from others and have failed to follow the norms of a group (Hofstede, 2005, 2001).

When James arrived, Corrine (C) chided him for being late (line 23). James (J) responded by laughing and this action was consistent in all the sessions when he was reprimanded for being late. He could be trying to undermine Corrine's high power over him by not taking her seriously. Corrine (C) even showed him her fist to threaten him while he was explaining his lateness (line 26). Everyone ignored him except Soh (S) who responded to him (line 27). The others did not respond to James because they had agreed to ignore him and continued analysing their data without involving him.

When James excused himself from the room (line 44), they continued to ignore him. Finally, he tried to reduce the tension by asking about the mind-map (line 53) but nobody answered him. James realised that his tardiness had annoyed his group and it

had affected the group solidarity (Brown & Levinson, 1978). He tried to improve the situation by making peace with them but was unsuccessful.

The students' interviews and diary entries produced on 18th November, 2008 showed that Corrine and Yin were unhappy with James.

Interview

Y: James don't prepare. Always late. Make me angry ... Miss, we all know he very blur. Tell him but no use ... Yes. We study together 2 years ... Actually ahh ... I like group work. Problem with James not serious lah. Can still work together.

Diary Entries

Corrine

The session was not useful because some of us come late which wasted time. Some time when come unprepared it is also a waste of time. If task was not divided properly, the session would be wasted and achieve little throughout the session, time management is important.

James

My difficulty in the session is hard to join the point to mind-map. Beside, the brain will burst if think to much of unuseful point.

Corrine felt that James made the group wasted time because their work could not be divided properly. Yin, in addition, explained that all of them in class knew that James was always unclear about his work. However, she felt that it was not a serious problem because she could still work with him. James, in contrast, defended his inactive role in the discussion by describing that it was difficult to place points into their mind-map. He could be angry and disappointed with his group's negative treatment towards him.

Week 8

The diffusion of power struggle was observed when writing the first draft of the long report based on the mind-map. Corrine (C) who had expert power continued to ignore James (J) in the discussion as seen in Excerpt 19.

Excerpt 19

- 8 C: We write straight away. This is dert, dert, dert. (gestures)
- 9 S: Then explain.
- 10 J: What is sex education *ah*?
- 11 C: Must count percentage *ah*. Got calculator?
- 12 J: Calculator? (Nobody responds)
- 13 C: So, start. Introduction.
- ...
- 23 C: Ok, I start writing.
- 24 S: Sex education is (Corrine writes and mumbles to herself)
- 25 C: Who has no class later? (James raises his hand but nobody responds to him)
- 26 F: Kok have lunch with lecturer. Say she want to discuss something.
- 27 J: Why you so sad? (looks at Corrine)
- 28 C: What? (looks at him angrily)
- 29 F: She do good job.
- 30 J: You proud of yourself. (sarcasm)
- 31 C: Use “prevent” or “avoid” *ah*? Shows writing to group members.
- ...
- 51 C: (writes) Teenagers get misleading information. From internet, blah, blah, blah.
- 52 S: Accessibility. (Corrine stops writing and looks at Soh) Accessibility to material.
- 53 J: /?/ (mumbles to himself)
- 54 C: Ok. Accessibility. Get information. How many words? (counts)
- 55 S: *Aiya*, outline. (Corrine continues to write)
- 56 J: Newspapers. (Nobody responds to James while Corrine continues to write)
- 57 S: What time you sleep? (looks at Fun)
- 58 F: Ten.
- 59 S: I only 1 hour.
- 60 J: Your eyes ... black. (Soh smiles)
- ...

- 63 C: Eh, don't expect me to write in full *ah*. Can expand later.
- 64 S: My part here. (points at paper)
- 65 C: After that, yours? (points at James) No, yours. Recommendations.
(looks at Fun) Eh, what about you? (looks at James)
- 66 J: Don't know.
- 67 C: You better do a good job. If not, I ... (raises her hand to threaten to
hit his head)
- 68 J: Okay, okay. (smiles)
- 69 C: Summarise your information *ah*.
- 70 J: 200 words. Very fast *lah*.

As the group discussed how to write their long report, James (J) who was punctual for the session time tried to join in by asking for the definition of sex education (line 10). No one responded to him as they continued their work. Corrine (C) asked her group if they had a class later and James quickly raised his hand to indicate he was free but she pretended not to see his gesture to shame him (line 25).

After being ignored, James (J) tried to show his concern for Corrine by asking her about her sad countenance (line 27). Corrine (C) retorted angrily for his distracting question (line 28). Fun (F) defended Corrine by praising her contribution to the group (line 29). James sarcastically told Corrine that she must be very proud of herself (line 30) and she ignored him by continuing with the sub-task.

James purposely mumbled to himself to obtain attention from the group (line 53) after Soh (S) gave her point (line 52). He tried to draw attention to himself by contributing an idea (line 56), but no one responded to him. When Soh off-tracked by talking with Fun about the amount of time they spent sleeping the previous night, James joined in by talking about Soh's dark circles under her eyes due to her lack of sleep

(lines 57 to 60). James was trying to re-establish his sense of belonging to the group after losing it through his lack of punctuality and commitment.

Finally, in lines 65 and 69, Corrine involved him in the discussion by asking him the section of his writing and instructed him to summarise his information. She emphatically reminded him to do a good job (line 67). James quickly showed his willingness to accept her instructions (lines 68 and 70). The verbal exchanges between Corrine and James showed the importance placed on group solidarity (Hofstede, 2005, 2001).

The interviews and diary entries written on 2nd December, 2008 reflected the group's positive feelings about Corrine's contributions.

Interviews

- C: We talk about our information we find. Then choose relevant and important ones ... We talk then write. I know I talk so much. I talk to fill in. I also talk to make it more fun. When I stop talking, everyone become serious.
- J: All the point in outline Corrine write ... We not sure how write outline. Corrine know.

Diary Entries

Kok

The experience was different from working alone because if we do the report individually, there must be many point we can not state out, the report may go bias, we also will may go into a wrong way/thinking in writing report, we also may can not handle the whole report well in a short period.. When we do the report, there are many arguement among us but its better no arguement between us because in during the arguement we were exchange and sharing our opinion. So that, the report may not go bias.

Soh

The experience was different from working alone because although is slow, but fell easier, cause not need worry about the grammar (thx god Corrine here) the whole

sections & process of these assg is actually scheduled & quite organised, is a good method for students to really do a 'Group assg':

James

The experience was different from working alone because all the points Corrine do it for me and I have difficulty to well prepared. So far I'm satisfied my group teamwork.

Corrine was happy that they could discuss as they wrote their draft together and she realised that her loquaciousness helped the group to proceed with their task. James admitted that Corrine was important and acknowledged her help in preparing an outline as a guide for them to use in their writing. Furthermore, Kok regarded the arguments in the discussions as helpful because they could exchange and share information. Soh was appreciative of Corrine's help in organising the writing and rendering help in the language aspect.

Leadership Style

The third critical incident identified was leadership style. There are three types of behaviour of leaders, namely, democratic leaders, laissez-faire leaders and autocratic leaders (Galanes et al., 2004). Soh only used a democratic approach in comparison with Loh from Group 1 who adopted a mixed democratic and autocratic leadership style. This could be due to the differences of character. Soh is an easy-going and sociable person while Loh is an organised and serious person. The democratic approach was suitable for them due to their emphasis on maintaining group harmony (Hofstede, 2005, 2001). However, Loh, being a responsible leader decided to use the autocratic approach to enforce her authority when deciding suitable questions for a good questionnaire. The

information obtained from the participants' interviews and diary entries highlighted the benefits gained from the leadership style.

Week 1

Soh adopted a democratic style of leadership during two sub-tasks, namely, the appointment of a group leader and selection of topic for their long report (Excerpt 20).

Excerpt 20

- 1 S: So, now we've to choose a topic. Start.
 2 C: Ah, ah, about some social problems. Ah... the first ... And now back to our leader.
 3 S: Ah, James.
 4 J: Someone first. Ah, I think first. (laughs)
 ...
 29 S: Ok. We got 12 topics here.
 30 C: Thanks to my same contribution. (laughs)
 31 S: Ok. (smiles) First, we have to know the knowledge and our experience of the topic. Also our interest. And now we vote.
 ...
 69 C: Hormone system. Bad for hormone system. Like you on diet, your period time become abnormal. Have problems in getting pregnant, later in life. If you don't eat anything, also cause constipation and gastric.
 70 S: Or do you guys concern about this topic?
 71 C: I concern.
 72 F: I concern.
 73 J: I no concern.

In line 1, Soh (S) started the discussion by inviting her group to present their topics. Corrine was the first person to present her topics (line 2). After that Soh directly asked James to present his topics (line 3). James (J) who was unprepared declined to speak and asked Soh to allow others to talk first (line 4).

Soh (S) informed the group that the discussion resulted in 12 topics they could choose from (line 29). Corrine (C) jokingly praised herself for contributing five topics (line 30). Soh practised democracy by instructing her group to vote for the topic they were interested in (line 31). After the group voted for three topics, Corrine (C) continued to explain her topic on the influence of fashion magazines on females to diet (line 69). Soh (S) immediately sought her group's opinions on the topic (line 70), resulting in Corrine (C) and Fun (F) indicating their interest in the topic while James expressed his disinterest in lines 71 to 73.

Soh's group responded positively to her leadership. It enabled the group to provide opinions freely and to make decisions unreservedly. When the participants were asked to describe their collaborative writing through their interviews and diary entries written on 14th October, 2008, they had mixed views on the leadership style adopted.

Interviews

- C: Yes. That's important at the beginning of the assignment. To build interest ... No, no. It doesn't mean I'm influenced by my position as the class rep. Just think it's good to create interest in assignment.
- S: Ahh. They let only leader decide. Last time, when we do assignment like that. James don't want to decide.

Diary Entries

Corrine

The session was not useful because some of the members did not prepare properly n does not have much to share or prepare which I find that it is not fair to others as the others are prepare to present their ideas.

James

In this session, I learned speaking English is smooth n clear (depends on my mood), very co-operative (teamwork n share feeling), easy to solve the problem and won't be clumsiness, respect to each other.

Yin

The session was useful due to build to co-operation with group members. After the discussion, every people can do the work together and the work will be more easy to complete. Becoz have some group assignment, have one or two members will not do their own work. But after this section, I will find it, every people will try to do they work.

Corrine was comfortable with the use of democratic leadership style because it created interest among the members. Soh, on the other hand, felt that this style could involve the members in the decision-making process. Yin and James were satisfied with the existence of co-operation and fair sharing of work among the group members. Corrine, however, felt that the relaxed style did not enforce the sense of responsibility on members to prepare their work and play their part seriously.

Week 8

Soh continued using democratic leadership during the writing of the first draft of the long report based on the mind-map. This excerpt highlights a situation when Soh relinquished her leadership to Corrine.

Excerpt 21

- 1 C: We start with sex education first. Then continue with the rest.
So start. (writes on paper)
- 2 R: Where's Kok?
- 3 Y: On the bus. (smiles)
- 4 C: Write what is sex education ... Outline?
- 5 S: With Kok. On the bus! (laughs)
- ...
- 8 C: We write straight away. This is dert, dert, dert. (gestures)
- 9 S: Then explain.
- ...
- 13 C: So, start. Introduction.
- 14 S: Introduction!
- ...

- 51 C: (writes) Teenagers get misleading information. From internet, blah, blah, blah.
- 52 S: Accessibility. (Corrine stops writing and looks at Soh) Accessibility to material.
- 53 J: /?/ (mumbles to himself)
- 54 C: Ok. Accessibility. Get information. How many words? (counts)
- 55 S: *Aiya*, outline. (Corrine continues to write)
- ...
- 62 K: Huh? Point form?
- 63 C: Eh, don't expect me to write in full *ah*. Can expand later.
- 64 S: My part here. (points at paper)

Corrine (C) started the discussion by informing her group that they would start writing the sex education section (line 1). Soh relinquished her control of the group and allowed Corrine to be in charge of the discussion for she realised that Corrine has better command of English and writing skills than her.

The researcher (R) noticed Kok's absence and enquired where she was (line 2). Yin (Y) informed the group that Kok was still on a bus travelling to college (line 3). Corrine asked the group whether they should start writing based on the outline they had prepared the previous week and requested for it (line 4). Soh (S) jokingly informed her that it was on the bus with Kok as she was supposed to bring it to the discussion (line 5).

The discussion on the long report continued. Corrine informed the group that she would start writing immediately (line 8). Soh responded by saying that explanations should be provided in their writing (line 9). The discussion continued. When the

discussion focussed on the writing of the section on Introduction, Corrine informed her group of it and Soh repeated it (lines 13 and 14).

Corrine continued writing and mentioned the point on teenagers obtaining misleading information from the internet and Soh helped her to form the term “accessibility to materials” (lines 51 and 52). Corrine agreed to the term and asked how long the section should be and started counting the words (line 54). Soh suggested that she referred to the outline (line 55).

Finally Corrine showed her writing to her group and Kok (K) was surprised that it was written in point form (line 62). Corrine sounded impatient and explained she could only do that for the group and they could expand her points (line 63). Soh noticed the part of writing for her to expand (line 64).

The group was consistently supportive of Corrine’s leadership. They knew that they needed Corrine’s help and decided to help her in whatever way they could. When the participants were asked to describe their collaborative writing session through their interviews and diary entries written on 2nd December, 2008, they had positive views on the leadership style adopted.

Interviews

- J: All the point in outline Corrine write. We not sure how write outline. Corrine know.
- S: Good ah. We all organised. Got time for everything. Because we got table to follow. Corrine help me become leader. I no need control member because

Corrine control. Corrine a good leader not me. English good also. My second time work with Corrine. No lah. Corrine is good leader. Help me a lot.

F: Can improve English. Help member improve. Corrine and Soh talk, can learn language. I okay. I can learn from them. Also, this group project so it's ok good member talk more.

Diary Entries

Soh

The experience was different from working alone because although is slow, but fell easier, cause not need worry about the grammar (thx god Corrine here) the whole sections & process of these assignment is actually scheduled & quite organised, is a good method for students to really do a 'Group assignment':

James

The benefits are Corrine do all points.

Soh was grateful to Corrine for taking over the leadership of the session. She admitted that Corrine was a better leader than her due to the language and writing assistance she provided. Likewise, Fun felt that she learned English from both Corrine and Soh as she listened to their utterances. James was also happy that Corrine helped the group to write their outline. Corrine provided the scaffold for her group in the language and writing aspects.

Summary of Findings from Groups 1 and 2 based on Research

Question 1

Both case studies shared commonalities, namely, in the features of mutual interaction, sharing of expertise and leadership styles. However, only negotiation was discovered in Group 1 and only power struggle was evident in Group 2. Summaries of the key findings for the critical incidents can be viewed in Appendix 12, 13, 14 and 15. Important information on the features and a comparison between the two case studies are presented in the following section.

Mutual Interaction and Sharing of Expertise

The participants' spoken transcripts showed mutual interaction and sharing of expertise during the weeks of choosing a suitable topic, information-sharing after doing referencing and filtering of information. They mutually exchanged and explained information in a cumulative manner, filtered through their information, corrected one another's language and factual mistakes and organised the content together.

Both Loh and Corrine who have better language proficiency than their groups acted as gatekeepers in filtering information provided by the group members. They asked questions during the information-sharing to increase the groups' understanding. Loh decided to question them in alternate weeks when she realised their difficulty in answering them. Corrine, however, was consistent in seeking explanations from her group members every week. She even dominated most of the sessions and it caused unhappiness in her group.

Both groups benefitted from the mutual interaction and sharing of expertise in the forms of co-constructing knowledge, being motivated to perform the task and learning about teamwork. However, Group 2 was less satisfied with the collaborative sessions than Group 1. It was due to their confusion with the information, lacking opportunities to talk and disappointment with the rejection of ideas.

Negotiation

A feature uniquely found in Group 1 was negotiation in the forms of confirmation

checks during the sub-tasks of information-sharing and preparation of questionnaire and interview questions. They produced the responses of repeating, elaborating and simplifying the original ideas.

Cumulative talk was also discovered in which they built their knowledge from the previous speaker and from one another. The benefits from the negotiation process were increasing their understanding of the information through the elaborations, clarifying information and correcting one another's mistakes. However, the group faced difficulty in understanding the information due to the inability of the weak group members in articulating their thoughts.

Leadership Styles

Another feature shared by the case studies was leadership styles. Loh used a mixed democratic and autocratic leadership style while Soh consistently used a democratic leadership style. Both of them preferred the egalitarian approach to ensure that the members could provide their opinions freely. Furthermore, the democratic approach was suitable due to their emphasis on maintaining group harmony (Hofstede, 2005, 2001). However, there was disparity in the leadership styles between Loh and Soh in the sub-task of preparing the questionnaire.

Due to her autocratic behaviour, Loh incorrectly rejected Wai's proposed question. However, none of the group members confronted her over the matter because Loh has better command in English than them and they trusted her judgement. Another

possible reason was due to the influence of the collectivist culture which emphasised on respect towards leaders and group solidarity (Hofstede, 2005, 2001).

Soh in comparison with Loh relinquished her control of the group and allowed Corrine to be in charge of the discussion while performing the sub-task of writing the long report. The reason was Soh realised that Corrine had expert power due to her possession of knowledge and skills important to the group (Galanes et al., 2004).

Group 1 concurred that their work was scrutinised and improved, the task was carried out easily through the delegation of work and their understanding was increased from the sessions. Group 2, on the other hand, had mixed views with positive comments ranging from the increased level of interest, the existence of co-operation, fair sharing of work among the group members, appreciation of Corrine's leadership while the negative remarks were the lack of preparation and over dependence on the leader.

Power Struggle

A feature unique in Group 2 was power struggle between Corrine and her group members. Corrine was evidently a high-power member while the rest of the group members were low-power members. Loh in comparison with Corrine was not a high-power member despite her proficiency due to her group who readily accepted her comments.

Corrine's domination of the sessions deprived her group members the chance to contribute in the discussions. Group 1 provided more in-depth information than Group 2. In addition, there was fairer contribution in Group 1 than in Group 2.

When Corrine realised she was dominating, she attempted to speak less than before. However, her group did not present much information and it resulted again in her dominating the discussions. Corrine made decisions for her group in using both questionnaire and interviews despite the group's objections. The group found the session confusing and was unhappy with Corrine. However, they did not confront her but placed more importance on conflict avoidance and harmony in the group (Hofstede, 2005, 2001).

Due to Corrine's high power, she also took the initiative to confront James over his lateness. She suggested ignoring him which is consistent with the collectivist practice of ostracising group members who are different from others and have failed to follow the norms of a group (Hofstede, 2005, 2001). After being ignored, James became punctual for the discussions. Corrine only talked to him when explaining his part of writing in the long report.

The group was unhappy with James because he was unclear about his work and wasted the group's time. James, in contrast, described the session as unproductive and useless. In the end, however, they were happy that they could write their draft through Corrine's assistance.

Research Question 2: In what way does collaboration impact the students' composing process and text production?

The findings were obtained from the spoken transcripts, video recordings and written long report. They were then categorised according to the stages of writing and criteria used to mark the written work. Hence, the presentation of findings is divided into four sections which are topic selection and brainstorming, format and organisation, drafting, and editing and proofreading.

There were key findings discovered in each of the sections, too. First, the specific key findings of topic selection and brainstorming can be viewed in Appendix 16. Detailed explanations on them are provided in the relevant sections of this chapter (pages 153 and 181). Second, the specific key findings of format and organisation can be obtained from Appendix 17. Detailed explanations on them are provided in the relevant sections of this chapter (pages 159 and 190).

Third, the specific key findings of drafting can be seen in Appendix 18. Detailed explanations on them are provided in the relevant sections of this chapter (pages 163 and 194). Fourth, the specific key findings of editing and proofreading are listed in Appendix 19. Detailed explanations on them are provided in the relevant sections of this chapter (pages 180 and 205).

Group 1

Topic Selection and Brainstorming

The first stage of writing is topic selection and brainstorming. Firstly, the participants obtained ideas from their group members in order to choose a suitable topic for their long report. Secondly, they brainstormed on the topic to obtain suitable information on their topic. Brainstorming was conducted by performing the sub-tasks of information-sharing after doing referencing, filtering of information to be used in writing, preparation of questionnaire and interview questions, analysis of data obtained from questionnaire and interview questions and producing a mind-map to summarise the information they intended to write on the topic. These sub-tasks were completed in seven collaborative writing sessions.

Each group member's involvement was different during the sub-tasks. Loh, Ooi, Tang and Wai contributed regularly but Phua and Soong were irregular in their contributions. It was observed that Loh was the most active in the discussions. She performed various tasks such as initiating, maintaining and ending the sessions. As seen in Excerpt 1 (see page 90), Loh (L) initiated the discussion by inviting her group to contribute topics for their long report. This resulted in Wai (W), P (Phua), S (Soong), O (Ooi) and T (Tang) suggesting topics on financial topics, obesity, women and their organisations and financial planning. Loh (L), too, put forward her topic on Tesco strategies. Through interaction they reached mutual consensus of selecting financial planning as their topic.

The group proceeded to search for articles on financial planning and share information with one another (see page 92, excerpt 3). Loh (L) elicited information from the members to obtain more information. Loh was active in the discussions due to two reasons. First, she was the group leader and it was her responsibility to facilitate the discussion. Another reason for her active participation was her high proficiency in English and she could help her group members to increase their understanding of the articles they had read.

Ooi (O), Tang (T) and Wai (W) were consistent in their responses. They took the initiative to contribute ideas without having Loh to probe them to do so. They presented new information they found on smart saving, Public Mutual and Pacific Mutual Funds and insurance (see page 94, week 3). They could present their input confidently because they had read articles on the topics before the discussion.

Phua and Soong were observed to be inactive in most of the sessions. They did not speak at all during two sessions. Both of them have low English proficiency and they faced difficulties in understanding the articles they had read. In addition, they were observed to be self-conscious and shy in nature. Therefore, they did not contribute as much as their group members did.

After sharing and filtering information on financial planning, the members proceeded to the next sub-task of designing their questionnaire and preparing their interview questions. All the members contributed actively in formulating suitable

questions for the questionnaire and interview. They had ideas on how to make sure that the questions formed covered an extensive area of financial planning. In addition, the students had experience carrying out surveys for their elective business course. Loh also suggested having two sets of interview questions for respondents who planned financially and those who did not. The other members readily agreed to her idea.

After administering the questionnaire and interviewing the respondents, Group 1 performed the next sub-task which was analysing the data collected. The following excerpt shows exchange of information while the members were analysing responses from the respondents.

Excerpt 22

- 1 L: Let's share the questionnaire answers given out last Tuesday. 5 males and 5 females used, right? How many of them, how many of them have financial planning?
- 2 W: 1
- 3 L: What about monthly allowance? (No one raise their hands)
Err, A? (Wai and Phua raise their hands)
- ...
- 23 L: Anything special answer to add? (Ooi and Loh discuss privately)
- 24 O: (reads and shows paper to Loh) Those financial planning RM500 ... /?/ So ... /?/
- 25 T: Maximum financial planning RM50. The benefit. Can use for emergency.
- 26 L: Phua?
- 27 P: Maximum financial planning is RM600. Last some don't know package for financial planning.

All of the group members contributed actively in the analysis of data process. It was because not much language skills were needed in carrying out the sub-task since it involved mostly simple calculations and compilation of figures into suitable categories

of information. They were familiar with such tasks for they had performed similar undertakings in many of their technical subjects such as Mathematics and Statistics.

The last sub-task carried out at the Topic Selection and Brainstorming stage was producing a mind-map to summarise information they planned to use in their writing.

The following excerpt shows the discussion on preparing the mind-map.

Excerpt 23

- 32 L: So, now we draw mind-map? (All clear away their books)
(Loh writes on paper but finds smooth surface of table
beneath hard to write on) Cannot write. (smiles) (Wai turns
around to get a magazine to put under paper)
- ...
- 35 O: Can write sub-topic, then move here and there. (Loh looks
confused. Makes face at Wai and Wai laughs.)
- 36 L: First, write ... (starts to write. Tang presses paper down for
her.) Purposes ... (looks at Wai's paper) Need to write A and
B?
- 37 T: A is ... /?/ (L continues writing while referring to Tang's
notes)

Loh (L) informed her group members that they were going to start drawing up their mind-map (line 32). Ooi (O) suggested to Loh how to place their sub-headings in the mind-map (line 35). Loh started writing down information on the purposes of writing the long report and asked her group members whether to write both points A and B (line 36). Tang (T) responded by explaining point A to Loh but she was inaudible (line 37) and Loh continued to write while referring to Tang's notes. Loh then ended the discussion because they had to attend a class.

The following excerpt shows the continuation of the discussion on preparing the mind-map in the following session.

Excerpt 24

- 1 L: So didn't finish points on mind-map.
 2 T: We stop here. Buy insurance to save money. Consider right insurance. Decide policy. (Loh writes on mind-map)
 3 L: Ok. (writes)
 ...
 8 L: So, let's... Who wants to ... continue with next one?
 9 P: Let's talk about real estate management. (flips pages and looks uncertain)
 10 L: Why not start with real estate industry first?
 11 P: Oh. (flips through pages)
 12 L: Ok. Where's the details on real estate management? Oh, I have. Write this down then yours. (looks at Phua and writes for a few seconds) Yours? Long?
 13 P: Quite long. Why invest in real estate. How to invest. (Loh writes)
 ...
 18 O: Write down your spending. (Loh writes)
 19 L: Ok.
 ...
 23 L: Now include questionnaire findings. I use red pen. (Tang, Loh and Ooi take out their marker pens)
 24 O: /?/ (whispers to Loh and points at notes)
 25 L: There're 4 males who start financial planning. 4 females also. We split into 2? (looks at Ooi)
 26 O: Ok.

The participation of the group members in carrying out the sub-task of producing a mind-map was commendable. Since they had compiled the information in the earlier weeks they could suggest relevant ideas to be put in the mind-map (lines 2, 9, 18, 23, and 25). Most of the group members were enthusiastic in contributing information to prepare their mind-map. However, Soong and Phua who have low proficiency in

English still talked minimally. They were still shy and self-conscious over their command of the language.

When the participants were asked to describe their sessions through the interviews and diary entries written on 1st October, 2008 and 15th October, 2008, they had mixed views on them.

Interviews

P: Learn so many things ... But we all nervous. Don't know say what.

W: Many topics we choose ... I weak in English. Cannot talk a lot.

S: Ahh...we got many topics.

L: Easy to work with. Because we all are friends so not much argument ... I tried asking question. Challenge what they say. But only short answers given.

Diary Entries

Loh

The session was useful due to increase understanding of info about topic from teammates.

Soong

My difficulty in the session is many grammatical mistakes when I spoke.

Phua

My difficulty in the session is could not speak well, could not find words to express myself.

Wai

In this session, the mistake I made is couldn't express well due to poor grammar n English.

The positive comments were learning from each other, having many topics, easy to work with each other and an increase of understanding on the information presented.

On the other hand, the negative views were not being able to contribute due to their poor language and giving short answers to questions.

Format and Organisation

Group 1 did not discuss much of the format and organisation to be used. The reason was they were unsure of how to decide on the information to write in the different sections and the use of mind-map. They frequently used mind-map as a means to summarise information for their technical subjects, but they hardly used it as a tool for writing purpose. Therefore, they sought the researcher's help in performing the sub-task (Excerpt 25).

Excerpt 25

- 1 L: Miss, how to start?
 2 R: Label your information in the mind-map. "I" for Introduction, "F" for Findings, "C" for Conclusions and "R" for Recommendations.
 3 Ss: Ok. (started labelling information)
 4 W: This can be the purpose of the report. (points at purposes for Financial Planning on paper)
 ...
 12 O: Statistics can put *ah*? (looks at researcher)
 13 R: Yes, you can. But then add relevant statistics.
 14 O: What kind?
 15 R: Say, people who don't like to invest in trust funds? ... (points at mind-map)
 ...
 24 R: What about real estate? Are there problems? ... Probably the soaring prices of houses. People can't afford to buy them ...
 25 Ss: Ah.
 26 R: That can be a problem. So, these points are under "Conclusions" (points at mind-map).
 ...
 45 L: Recommendations write what? (looks at researcher)
 46 R: Ways to overcome financial problem ...

The excerpt reveals that the group members had difficulties in sorting out information for each sub-section of the report. The researcher guided them in labelling

their information by including three items, namely, the use of relevant statistics, real estate and ways to overcome financial problem.

Analysis of the written draft revealed that the group did not use the point on the purposes which was suggested by Wai (line 4). The reason was Loh found the information too lengthy to be used in the Introduction and eventually she selected only pertinent points. She was responsible in making the final decision on the content of the report because she was the leader and she has a good command of English.

The group followed the advice given by the researcher in their writing. (Excerpt 26). Sections of the long report are quoted verbatim from their final draft.

Excerpt 26

Conclusion

The following conclusions were drawn based:

i. Questionnaire Findings

According to the questionnaires, there are 80% of male have started their financial planning as compared to female students, as there are 80% of female have not start any financial planning.

Besides, there are 60% of students save monthly while another 40% of students only save when they have excess of money... 50% of students choose to save their money in fixed deposit, which generate lesser return as inflation rate is usually higher than the interest rate offered.

...

The members selected important statistics to be used in their writing as suggested in line 13 (Excerpt 25) and produced two paragraphs on it. The use of statistics was

evident in those paragraphs which were placed under the Questionnaire Findings heading.

Information on real estate and other points which were not discussed but written in the mind-map such as problems faced in purchasing insurance policies, shares and mutual funds were used in the conclusion based on the researcher's advice in lines 24 and 26 (Excerpt 25). Consequently, three paragraphs were written on it (Excerpt 27).

Excerpt 27

Conclusion

...

ii. Insurance

Although it is good and considered as less risky invest in saving and investment scheme provided by insurance companies, there are certain issues which may cause problems if care is not taken. There is risk that incorrect or fraudulent information given by agent, which might caused by lack of knowledge or experience of that agent, or intentional fraud message given by the agent, in order to increase their commissions. Besides, investments like this need long-term commitments, which is troublesome during difficulties time, investor in this policy may terminate it due to financial problems.

iii Investment

For share investments, investor might make wrong buying decisions due to their lack of information and research. For real estate investments, it generates a higher return but students are unable to collect sufficient funds to invest in property.

iv Mutual Funds

Mutual funds are considered as less risky as it is operated by experiences and expert financial institutions with experts handling the investment portfolio. However, it gives a lower yield for passive funds which require long period of investment. Funds may be tied up due to that reason.

...

All of the points were explained clearly using the information obtained from the reading materials the participants found on the issues.

The point on how to overcome financial problem suggested by the researcher to be used in the Recommendations was used in the participants' actual writing (line 46, Excerpt 25). Consequently, four paragraphs were written on it (Excerpt 28).

Excerpt 28

Recommendation

Based on the conclusion, the following recommendations are made:

i. Questionnaire Findings

Students need education on the importance of financial planning, therefore, talks may need to be arranged in order to widen their knowledge on this area. Students who are affordable may choose to invest in shares which give a higher return. Students should not spend more than necessary. For fixed deposit, government might want to increase rate to encourage savings in our country.

ii Insurance

Buyers of insurance policy should enquire detailed information from the agent by asking more probing questions that help them to understand what they are buying. Insurance company shall reduce the instalment payment during difficult time so that they would not lose their customers.

iii Investment

For share investment, detailed researches are needed in order to make the correct buying decision. For real estate investment, banks should give a higher loan with lower interest rate so that investor can buy a potential but lower priced property.

iv Mutual Funds

Aggressive investors can choose move to higher returns funds but that comes with higher risks involved. If investor want to have consistent and safe return, they must realise that patient is needed.

Other points which were explained had been listed out in the mind-map under the heading of solutions to problems which could arise due to the respondents' efforts to obtain more money. They were made up of a combination of the participants' own ideas and information gained from their reading materials.

The instructors marking Group 1's long report awarded three out of five marks for their format and organisation. In addition, there were mixed comments given on these two areas. The positive comments were the correct format with appropriate headings was used, correct sequence of the headings was followed and suitable sub-headings were selected to categorise the information presented. However, there were negative comments on their work, too. There were disjointed writing between the content of the headings and sub-headings, irrelevant information in the Findings and Recommendations sections, and the absence of a bibliography to provide information on the articles, books and journals referred to.

Actions which occurred during the sessions attributed to the quality of the long report. The group faced the problem of managing large amounts of information collected. In their discussions, they did not leave out any of the information but included all of it in their writing. Therefore, they could not organise their writing effectively. This resulted in the production of a long report with disjointed writing and irrelevant information. In addition, the group overlooked the task of preparing a bibliography during their discussions.

Drafting

The second stage of writing is drafting. Group 1 needed three sessions to write their draft based on the mind-map produced beforehand. Only Phua, Sook and Tang were punctual for the session because Loh, Ooi and Wai had informed them that they

would be late for the discussion. As a result, the session started with only three of the group members present.

Based on the explanations, the group proceeded to write the long report (Excerpt 29).

Excerpt 29

- 1 P: (Loh, Ooi and Wai have informed other members to start without them because they will be late) What to write?
- 2 T: (laughs) Don't know. This one financial planning. (Phua starts to write, Soong points at mind-map and smiles while looking at Tang and Phua)
- 3 S: How they spend money? Grow the concept /?/ investment portfolio, common mistake in this part (points at mind-map)
- 4 P: Another part?
- 5 S: Ok *lah*. (Ooi arrives)
- 6 O: Copy?
- 7 T: Ah, copy *lah* ... Types of investment. (Phua continues writing) Insurance. Types. Life insurance. Shop online first. Ask ... for help. Don't buy less or more than that. Buy as soon as the need exist. Then check credit report. The last one pay insurance monthly.
- 8 P: Check... (mumbles and writes)
- 9 T: Then ... this one top investment.(Ooi looks bored) Then real estate. Show financial report ...
- 10 P: Conclusion.
- 11 O: Oh. (Loh and Wai arrive late)
- 12 L: Writing?
- 13 T: Conclusion. (Ooi takes out her notes. Tang and Ooi discuss and flips through pages of notes)
- 14 O: Types of /?/ (places notes on table) (Phua writes while referring to Ooi's notes; Loh and Ooi discuss privately)
- 15 T: Enough? (looks at Loh)
- 16 L: (smiles) Ok.
- 17 L: (Phua passes written work to Loh) So, first paragraph. (points at mind-map) That, right? (Phua nods)
- ...
- 28 S: Just write short. (smiles)
- 29 L: Write short? (smiles back) Introduction ... Background. So ...the study is ...
- 30 O: The purpose of the study is to ... (smiles at Loh)

- 31 R: Good start to writing? (smiles at students)
 32 L: The purpose of the study is to know more about financial planning. (refers to notes)
 ...
 37 L: So, Introduction discuss ... (looks at researcher)
 38 R: Hmm. Your Introduction looks okay. (reads draft Loh has written) We'll continue next week.

Phua (P) initiated the discussion by inviting ideas to be included in the writing (line 1). Tang (T) sounded unsure and stated that they were writing on financial planning (line 2). Soong (S) pointed at some information and smiled at her group while reading out the headings on how they spent money, how the concept was grown, investment portfolio and common mistakes (line 3). Phua (P) suggested moving some of the information to another section (line 4) and Soong agreed with her (line 5). Ooi (O) arrived for the discussion and checked with her group members whether they were copying information from the mind-map for their writing (line 6). Tang (T) confirmed that they were doing it and continued guiding Phua to write on types of investment, types of insurance, online shopping, checking of credit report and monthly insurance payment (line 7).

On the other hand, the written long report shows that not all of the agreed upon points were used (Excerpt 30).

Excerpt 30

2. Findings/Discussion

...

2.1 How to Save Money and Spend Wisely

In order to avoid facing with financial problems, we shall learn how to spend wisely in our daily life. There are several guide lines help us to achieve financial planning and save money for our future use.

1. **Set saving goals.** As a student, you have to save money to pay our tuition fees and exam fees. So you have to set a goal how much we need it and save it ...
2. **Keep a record of your expenses.** After you have set the goals, you need to figure out how much you have and how much we spend ...
3. **Stop using credit cards.** Pay for everything with cash or money orders ...
4. **Open an interest-bearing savings account.** It's a lot easier to keep track of your savings if you have them separate from your spending money ...
5. **Know where your money is.** And how much of it, too ...
6. **Debt Prevention:** The main reason that people go into debt is because they make purchases that they can't afford ...
7. **Plan for the Future:** Everyone has something that they are striving for ...
15. **Energy Efficient Light-Bulbs:** Although it may cost more in the short term, installing energy efficient light bulbs throughout the your house can greatly reduce your electricity bill (not to mention being better for the environment) ...

Common Mistakes with Regards to Financial Planning

It may be helpful to be aware of some common mistakes eople make when approaching financial planning.

- (a) Don't set measurable financial goals.
- (b) Make a financial decision without understanding its effect on other financial issues.
- (c) Confuse financial planning with investing.
- (d) Neglect to re-evaluate their financial plan periodically ...
- (j) Think that using a financial planner means losing control.
- (k) Believe that financial planning is primarily tax planning ...

2.4 Investment

Stock Investment

There are a number of different shares you can buy, including preference shares, bonds and gifts but the most popular type is the ordinary share. Ordinary shares simply represent ownership of a company ...

The risks of investing

Inflation may eat away at your savings over the long term but if share prices fall, you can run the risk of losing money. If a company you invest in goes bankrupt, your shares could become worthless ...

How to build a portfolio

Most investors dream at some point of putting all their money into the shares of just one company and making a fortune overnight.

Unfortunately, the chances of this happening are extremely slim and the risks all too high. Putting all your investment eggs in just one basket is a risk very few people can afford to take.

Successful investing is not about taking big risks but balancing risk and return by investing in a broad portfolio of cash, bonds, property and cash.

Cash is king

The starting point for every investor is to make sure you have enough money tucked away safely for emergencies. The best place for this money is in a deposit account with a bank or building society where you can get to your cash quickly ...

Your attitude to risk

Your next step should be to decide what type of investor you are. This is crucial as it will determine the type of investments that will suit you. Investment experts tend to put investors in one of three categories: cautious, balanced or adventurous ...

First, all of Soong's points (line 3, Excerpt 29) were included in the Findings with the exception of her point on concept growth. Secondly, Soong's points were not placed in another section of the long report but all of them were in the Findings. The changes were made by Loh during the editing and proofreading stage because she felt that the writing was clearer in that manner. She made the final decision as the group leader and as a group member with the best command of English.

In addition, information on types of insurance and types of investments (line 7, Excerpt 29) was presented in the writing (Excerpt 31).

Excerpt 31**2. Findings/Discussion**

...

2.3 INSURANCE

Insurance is defined as a contract (called an insurance policy) where one party (insurer) agrees to pay another party (insured) for losses affecting the insured's interests (the insurable interest) ...

TYPES OF INSURANCE**1. Life Insurance**

The primary purpose of life insurance is income replacement, especially to protect loved ones who depend on you for financial security. The birth of a child or buying a home where two incomes are needed to make the mortgage payments are common motivations to buy life insurance ...

2. Medical Insurance

Health insurance policies cover the cost of most medical expenses. Because of the extremely high costs associated with medical treatment, such insurance is important to have ...

3. Property Insurance

Homeowners insurance is required if you own your own home. It protects your personal property and personal liability, as well as your lender's financial interest if you do not pay your mortgage balance ...

4. Long-term Disability

If you can't work because of an injury or illness, long-term disability policies provide an income stream for a long period of time. This type of insurance is often available through employers and generally picks up where short-term disability leaves off ...

5. Auto Insurance

In most states you are required to have auto insurance and you don't have be without it. Basically, you buy auto insurance for two purposes: to insure against liability you have to others and to insure against damage that others do to you or your car ...

2.4 Investment**Stock Investment**

There are a number of different shares you can buy, including preference shares, bonds and gifts but the most popular type is the ordinary share. Ordinary shares simply represent ownership of a company ...

The risks of investing

Inflation may eat away at your savings over the long term but if share prices fall, you can run the risk of losing money. If a company you invest in goes bankrupt, your shares could become worthless ...

How to build a portfolio

Most investors dream at some point of putting all their money into the shares of just one company and making a fortune overnight ...

Cash is king

The starting point for every investor is to make sure you have enough money tucked away safely for emergencies.

...

Your attitude to risk

Your next step should be to decide what type of investor you are ...

Bonds Investment

If you are looking for income from your investments or want to build a balanced portfolio, bonds may be an area worth considering ...

What influence bond prices

Bond prices are influenced by the yield they pay and the rate of interest investors can earn elsewhere ...

Different types of bonds

There are a number of different types of bonds and demand for each type is different depending on market conditions ...

Buying bonds

You can buy gilts simply through the post office or a stockbroker ...

Common Mistakes when Investing**i. Act without a plan**

The mistakes investors most often make involve a lack of strategy ...

x. Not invest

One of the biggest risks is quitting the share market when it crashes or not investing in shares at all ...

Real Estate

One of the most profitable investments is from real estate investment. Investment in property is less volatile than shares and the value of the property does not typically decrease.

Advantages of invest in property

i. Financial gain – borrows money by a bit of free capital, buy property and let it out to generate income ...

Potential Return

i. Net rental income after deducting all other expenses and loan interest ...

Selecting a Property

The most important thing is to buy a property in a growth area. Further by looking the access to transport, shops and leisure facilities ...

Managing Property

Consider the use of services of professional property manager to manage your property. They will have all the up-to-date information on what happening in the market ...

2.5 Mutual Funds**Introduction**

Mutual fund is the collection of stocks and bonds. It works like a company that brings together a group of people and invests their money in stocks, bonds and other securities ...

Advantages of Mutual Funds

d. The first advantage of mutual fund is the professional management of investor money. Investors purchase fund because they do not have the time or the expertise to manage their own portfolios ...

Types of Mutual Funds

There are various types of mutual funds exist in the financial markets. Each mutual fund has different risks and rewards. In general, the return will also be higher ...

(a) Money Market Funds

There are various types of mutual funds exist in the financial markets. Each mutual fund has different risks and rewards ...

(b) Index Funds

For many investors, index funds are by far the easiest and most effective way to go because it simply buys all the stocks or bonds in the chosen market index with the goal of matching that index's performance. Index funds replicate the performance of a broad market index ...

However, the types of insurance were clearly explained while the types of investments were unclearly presented in the long report. Types of insurance were explained with the help of suitable headings and sub-headings such as "Types of Insurance", "Life Insurance", "Medical Insurance", "Property Insurance", "Long-term Disability" and

“Auto Insurance” (see page 168, excerpt 31). Consequently, the information was connected with each other.

However, the types of investments were not presented with suitable sub-headings which created difficulty in understanding the information. It did not have the sub-heading of “Types of Investment” to introduce the sub-points (see section 2.4, excerpt 31). Section 2.5 (Excerpt 31) which was information written on mutual funds should not have a numbered section on its own because it was one of the types of investment. The connection between the sub-points could not be clearly observed, too. It was due to Phua not writing down the headings and sub-headings in the first draft and Loh, in turn, did not notice the missing items from the long report. This shows the importance of group members being meticulous in their tasks of producing a good long report.

The discussion continued on the writing of the long report. Phua (P) urged her group members to check her writing (line 8, Excerpt 29). No one responded to her but Tang (T) suggested points on top investment, real estate and on a financial report (line 9). Phua (P) stated that it could be included in the Conclusions (line 10).

Again, all the points put forward by Tang (line 9) were not written in the Conclusions of the long report. Initially, Phua only wrote down one of Tang’s points which was real estate in the first draft but Loh removed it when she edited and proofread the work.

When Loh and Wai arrived for the discussion, Loh (L) enquired if the group had started writing (line 12, Excerpt 29). Tang (T) informed her that they were writing the Conclusion (line 13). Ooi (O) showed her notes to Phua so that she could include the points in her writing (line 14). Tang (T) checked with Loh whether they had enough information (line 15). Loh (L) stated that there was enough information to write on (line 16) as Phua passed the written work to her. Loh took over the writing and confirmed with Phua whether she should write the first paragraph based on the information in the mind-map and Phua nodded (line 17).

Later, the group decided to write the Introduction of the long report. Soong (S) recommended writing a short Introduction (line 28). Loh (L) then attempted to form a sentence to state the purpose of the study (line 29). Ooi (O) helped her by improving it to form the phrase “The purpose of the study is to” (line 30) and Loh expanded on it to produce the sentence “The purpose of the study is to know more about financial planning” (line 32). The discussion continued. After completing their writing, Loh asked the researcher (R) if they had written it correctly (line 37). The researcher read through their Introduction and approved it. Later, she ended the discussion because they had to attend a class but reminded them to come for the following session (line 38).

Although Soong, Phua, Ooi and Loh discussed the writing of the Introduction and even produced a complete sentence to start the section, the contributions were not evident in the long report. Loh wrote down other points she felt were relevant for the

section. She even excluded the sentence the group decided to use which was “The purpose of the study is to know more about financial planning” from the final draft. Loh again decided on making her own decision regarding the content of the Introduction.

Loh continued to write as her group provided information collected from the questionnaire and interviews (Excerpt 32).

Excerpt 32

- 1 L: We stop at second paragraph last week. So we continue.
(opens up folded mind-map)
- 2 T: All this thing.
- 3 L: Convenience (reads from her notes) Opinions. Now we start
to write. Write down all the headings.
- 4 T: Write headings? (points at mind-map)
- 5 L: Yes. (Loh writes) So?
- 6 O: Hmm. (Loh looks at her) Types of financial planning.
(points at draft)
- 7 L: After this? (reads from mind-map) Types So, we start
lah. (writes) So?
- 8 T: We start with this. (Tang points at mind-map. Loh and
Soong looks at mind-map and refers to notes)
- 9 S: This? (points at mind-map)
- 10 T: Oh, questionnaire findings.
- 11 L: This report covers some problems in financial planning,
questionnaire findings. (writes) So, first? (looks at Ooi)
- 12 O: This one.
- 13 L: Suggestions and recommendations. (writes)
- 14 T: This first.
- 15 L: First questionnaire findings.
- 16 O: Need to write all?
- 17 S: Here can write. Summarise.
- 18 L: So, we can draw a table? Some headings for questionnaire.
...
- 61 L: Insurance? (Loh writes while Soong and Tang point to
mind-map while Ooi reads to Loh from mind-map while she
writes)
- 62 T: This one not in mind-map. (points at notes)
- 63 S: How? (takes notes and flips through)

- 64 T: Write what we have *lor*. (smiles at Soong and she laughs)
 65 L: Explain myself. (writes while Soong laughs)
 ...
 76 L: So, we start writing our Conclusion ... (Members read their own articles)
 77 O: This? (points at notes)
 78 L: So, refer to this. (points at notes) So, write questionnaire findings. (Loh writes while members look at her) This one, how? (Phua and Wai quickly point at mind-map while Loh smiles and writes)
 79 P: This questionnaire finding?
 80 L: Yes.
 81 S: This one not in.
 82 L: So, put where? (Soong and Phua smile) Conclusion? (Phua nods and smiles while Loh writes)
 83 Ss: Ok.
 84 L: Last. (writes) (turns to Wai) End of information ... What not write yet? (looks at mind-map and Wai points at it) Insurance also? ... (continues to write and mumbles to herself; points at mind-map and frowns; Wai points at it; Loh writes) Next question... (Phua smiles) Any last sentence? (looks at Wai who points at a section of her article causing Loh to smile and read it) So, ... (writes) Looks like we finish. (smiles at everyone) Ah, anything to add?
 85 P: Finish already? (Phua smiles and Loh smiles back)
 86 R: You can type it out at home.
 ...

Loh (L) informed her group members that they stopped writing at the second paragraph (line 1). Later, Loh (L), Tan (T) and Ooi (O) discussed points to be included with Tan suggesting information on convenience and opinions and Loh stating that types of financial planning should be included (lines 2 to 6).

However, only the information on types of financial planning was included in the third paragraph of the Introduction of the long report (Excerpt 33).

Excerpt 33

1. Introduction

Due to economy slowdown recently, financial planning is increasingly important in our life. Financial planning is important because it secures our future financial position ...

This report is based on findings of a survey conducted on ...

Types of financial planning packages include insurance, investment in stock market, real estate and bonds & debentures, mutual funds and fixed deposit. This report will include the findings of questionnaires, the problems faced and recommendations on ways to solve the situations ...

Loh left out Tan's information during the editing and proofreading stage because she felt that it was unsuitable.

In line 7 (Excerpt 32), Loh (L) was finishing the last line and asked her group members which information they should continue to write on. Tang (T) pointed at some points in the mind-map (line 8) and Soong (S) checked with her whether she was referring to the points by pointing at them (line 9). Loh realised that they were referring to the questionnaire findings (line 10). She continued to write based on the information her group suggested. Loh (L) wrote the sentence "This report covers some problems in financial planning, questionnaire findings" and asked her group members which point to write first (line 11).

Loh then wrote the information on suggestions and recommendations based on Ooi's suggestion (lines 12 and 13). Tang (T) then suggested writing information on questionnaire findings and Loh repeated her suggestion (lines 14 and 15). Ooi (O) asked her group whether they should write all of the points (line 16). Soong (S)

suggested summarising the information (line 17). Loh responded by indicating they could present the information in a table and using some headings from the questionnaire (line 18).

It was surprising to observe that none of the suggestions from lines 9 to 18 were used in the long report. The questionnaire findings and the sentence “This report covers some problems in financial planning, questionnaire findings” were left out and there was no table used to present the information. Loh was responsible in the decision of selecting points to use for the writing and rejecting her group’s points which were considered unsuitable. However, her action of totally leaving out the questionnaire findings deprived her group of the depth of information required for the long report.

The group continued contributing information for their writing. Loh suggested that the information on insurance be included in their writing (line 61, Excerpt 32) and Tang noticed that it was not placed in their mind-map (line 62). Soong (S) was concerned and asked what the next course of action was (line 63). Tang suggested writing based on what they had (line 64). Loh offered her help in explaining the information on her own (line 65). Her action showed her willingness to help her group because she knew that her command of English is better than the other group members.

Later, the discussion moved on to the writing of the Conclusions at Loh’s suggestion (line 76). Ooi (O) directed the attention of the group to some information in her notes (line 77). Loh (L) referred to it and informed the group it was questionnaire

findings and started writing on it (line 78). In addition, she asked her group's opinions on a piece of information in the notes as well (line 78). Phua (P) checked with her group if it was part of the questionnaire findings (line 79). Loh (L) agreed with her (line 80). Soong (S) discovered that some points were left out in the writing (line 81). Loh (L) asked her group where to put them and suggested placing them in the Conclusions (line 82). Her group agreed with her (line 83). Loh (L) announced that she had finished writing and included the point on insurance which she noticed was left out (line 84). Phua confirmed with her group whether they had finished their writing (line 85). The researcher (R) then instructed the group to type out their work at home (line 86).

Group 1 was very co-operative during the writing process despite not having the whole group present for one of the sessions. Phua took over Loh's responsibility in writing and only passed on the writing task to Loh when she arrived. This shows that Phua respected Loh's position as a leader and realised that Loh could perform the job better than her due to her language skills. The group's action of maintaining solidarity through their co-operation and respect for their leader was influenced by the collectivist culture (Hofstede, 2001).

The instructors marking the long report awarded 13 marks out of 20 marks for content and 8 marks out of 25 marks for the language criteria due to their plagiarised work. Some mixed comments were provided by the instructors. The positive feedback

was having an impressive amount of information and a good development of ideas. They were due to some actions which occurred during the sessions.

Due to the diligence and commitment of the group, they could find a lot of information from their reading materials. They were motivated by each other to be responsible for their work. In addition, the mutual interactions and negotiations increased their understanding of the information (see page 90, weeks 1, 3, 4, 5 and page 101, weeks 2, 3). As a result, they were able to explain their information clearly in their long report.

However, there were negative comments on the report, too. There were irrelevant information in the Findings and Recommendations sections, informal style of language used, tense and sentence errors, plagiarised writing with no proper citations made and the absence of a bibliography to provide information on the articles, books and journals referred to. They were due to some actions which occurred during the sessions, too.

The group faced the problem of managing large amounts of information. They included all of the collected information in their discussions. Therefore, they could not organise their writing effectively and it resulted in the production of a long report with irrelevant information. The informal style of writing and language errors in the writing resulted from the lack of discussion on the tone and language to be used. The responsibility of writing was placed on Loh alone while the other group members merely contributed information (see Excerpts 29 and 32). In addition, they overlooked

the tasks of re-phrasing their information, making citations and preparing a bibliography during their discussions.

However, most of the group members had positive views on the drafting sessions.

Interviews

P: Ok. Ahh ... know what to do. We help to write.

W: Ok. I very blur. Oh, at first I want to write short report.

S: Ok. I don't know, very blur. I think write short report.

L: Ok. But we don't divide time for section. We don't plan time. Like Introduction 5 minutes. Like that lah. Err ... maybe we spend too much time. Like find the word in English. But we can know the word in Chinese!

Diary Entries

Loh

In this session, I learned working as group help me to decrease my burden, co-operation between team members very important.

Soong

In this session, I learned how to write long report, I can know many information about how the student know about the financial planning

Phua

In this session, I learned write in full sentence all information we find, classify in findings, conclusions, recommendations, etc.

The session was useful due to I have a whole picture about the format of the long report n the content of the report, learn how to co-operative with other group members

Wai

In this session, I learned a complete way to write report with help of teacher and group members.

Loh, Phua, Soong and Wai realised that the sessions guided them to write, made them aware of writing a long report instead of a short report, reduced the responsibility of writing through co-operation from members, learned about the format of a long report, categorised information for writing and discovered the whole writing process through the help provided by the researcher and their group members. Nonetheless, Loh was

dissatisfied with the time management because too much time was spent on the writing process. She felt that it was better to give a timeframe to complete each section. Furthermore, she described the difficulty they faced in writing due to their limited vocabulary.

Editing and Proofreading

The third stage of writing is editing and proofreading. The group did not perform the sub-tasks but Loh carried it out on her own. She volunteered to perform it because she knew her command of the language was better than the others. In addition, being a responsible leader, she felt that it was her role to check the final written product before submitting it to their instructor.

Ede and Lunsford (1990) are of the opinion that it is acceptable to have an individual performing a task alone called “hierarchical co-authoring” in collaborative writing. Ede and Lunsford (1990) state that planning and writing can be carried out by the team but revision can be performed by only one group member. Similarly, Locker (2006) explains that editing and proofreading a document can be performed by having a person to check for correctness in grammar, mechanics and spelling, consistency in format elements, names and numbers, using a spell checker to check the document, and final proofread of the document can be carried out by only a person.

Group 2

Topic Selection and Brainstorming

Mutual interactions and negotiations were observed in the group's interactions. However, just like Group 1, the level of involvement of the group members was different. Corrine and Soh contributed regularly but James, Yin, Fun and Kok were irregular in their contributions.

It was observed that Corrine was the most active. In Excerpt 11, line 2, Corrine (C) was shown to present five topics she was interested in which were domestic violence, influence of fashion magazines on females, ancient art, sex education and sex addiction, and working women (see page 114, week 1). Following that, Kok (K), Fun (F), Yin (Y), Soh (S) and James (J) described their topics of interest which were reasons for dyeing hair, the effects of pop culture on teenagers, global warming, exorcism, *Mat Rempit* (illegal motorcycle racers) and recycling (lines 5, 6, 8, 11, 16 and 18). Group 2 presented a total of 12 topics in comparison with Group 1 who only presented 6 topics during the topic selection stage. This shows that Group 2 was more active than Group 1.

In addition, Corrine (C) responded frequently to her group members as they presented information on their respective topics (page 116). When Fun (F) showed uncertainty on how to link the effect between pop culture and teenagers (line 6), Corrine (C) assisted her by saying that teenagers affected pop culture (line 7). When Soh (S) presented and defined her topic on exorcism (line 11), she used the term

“witchmen” during her explanation of it. Corrine assisted her by providing another term “witch doctor” to replace “witchmen” (line 12). Furthermore, when James presented his topic on *Mat Rempit* and emphasised that all of these illegal racers were Malays (line16), Corrine corrected him by stating that the majority were Malays (line 17).

Corrine’s actions of correcting her group were similar with Loh from Group 1 who asked her group questions to increase their understanding of the information. Since both of them possess better command of English than their groups, they realised they had to assist their weaker counterparts by providing extra help for them to learn. Therefore, it was evident from the transcripts that both of them produced more lines than their group members.

Soh who was the group leader was consistent in her contributions. From Excerpts 11 (line 1) and 12 (line 1), they were in the form of inviting her group to present information (see pages 114 and 119, weeks 1 and 2). In addition, in Excerpts 11 (line 11) and 12 (line 3), another form of her interactions was explaining new information she found on exorcism and sex education. Soh was overshadowed by Corrine who seemed to be more in control of the discussions than her. Soh’s lines, too, were shorter than Corrine’s. It was due to Corrine having a strong personality and also a better command of English.

Yin, Kok, Fun and James were observed to be moderately active in most of the sessions. All of them have low language proficiency and they faced difficulties in expressing themselves. Yin did not speak at all during three sessions. In addition, they did not have many opportunities to speak because Corrine dominated the discussions.

A significant feature in the group was power struggle between Corrine and her group. Corrine was a high-power member due to her command of English while the rest of the group members were low-power members. Group 1 did not have power struggle because the group was agreeable and co-operated well.

In Excerpt 14, line 2, Corrine dominated the discussion during the topic selection sub-task (see page 125, week 1). Her group provided shorter explanations than her in their elaborations of their intended topics. The episode also shows Corrine's high-power stance when she helped to refine Fun's idea (line 7), corrected Soh's use of witchmen (line 12), corrected James that the majority of *MAT REMPIT* (illegal motorcycle riders) were Malays (line 17) and questioned James on his knowledge of the material used to produce Coca-Cola cans (line 24). Although Corrine assisted her group with her expertise, she indirectly enforced power over the group by her constant correction of their contributions. The action intimidated her group members who have low proficiency in English and discouraged them from contributing.

In addition, Corrine enforced her power over her group when deciding on using questionnaire and interviews in their data collection. In Excerpt 17 (lines 7, 9, 10 and

11), Corrine, James and Kok initially agreed on the use of questionnaire (see page 131, week 3). However, Corrine changed her mind for she was concerned that they would not collect enough information and insisted on using questionnaire and interviews (line 35). Despite objections from Kok (lines 42 and 44) and Soh (line 86), Corrine wanted the group to follow her suggestion. Corrine's action caused a lot of frustration among her group members. However, they did not confront Corrine over her behaviour but placed more importance on conflict avoidance and harmony in the group (Hofstede, 2001).

In Excerpt 18 (line 13), Corrine influenced her group members to ignore James due to his tardiness (see page 135, week 6). She was very influential and all of her group members totally disregarded James' contributions. The action is consistent with the collectivist practice of shaming and ostracising group members who are different from others and who have failed to follow the norms of a group (Hofstede, 2001).

The next sub-tasks performed were producing a mind-map and analysing their data. The sequence of their sub-tasks was different in comparison with Group 1 who performed the latter first and then followed by the former. Corrine continued to be in control of the discussion during the production of a mind-map.

Excerpt 34

...
 35 C: (glares at James) You're late! Late!
 36 J: (smiles) Thank you very much.
 37 C: We've not much time.
 38 J: You look different. Got new hairstyle. (points at Corinne and she glares at him)

- 39 C: So?
- 40 J: Must say thank you (smiles) (Soh starts to write. Asks for pen from Yin)
- 41 J: *Wah*, so big!
- 42 C: Don't talk rubbish. (looks at what Soh has written) I add relationship here. (draws on mind-map)
- 43 K: Exposure.
- 44 C: Strategy also.
- 45 S: Put under here. (points at mind-map)
- 46 C: Both different *lah. Aiyoh!*
- 47 Ss: Ha! Ha! (James walks out, sighs and wipes nose with tissue paper)
- 48 S: Conclusion?
- 49 C: Make up your mind. What you want? (Everyone looks upset. Corinne looks at everyone for a few seconds) What about feelings? (writes down her point and cancelled another point)
- 50 K: Ahh. (looks at Soh)
- 51 S: This one not nice. (looks at crossed out point) (James enters room)
- 52 C: No liquid paper *lah*.

Soh (S) started writing on the mind-map when Corrine (C) reprimanded James (J) for being late (lines 35 until 40). James joked on the size of Yin's pen (line 41) but Corrine continued to scold him but simultaneously informed Soh of her intention to add the point on relationship (line 42). Kok (K) and Corrine (C) added that they could also put the points on exposure and strategy under the point on relationship (lines 43 and 44). Soh responded by pointing at the mind-map where to put the points (line 45). Corrine corrected her impatiently by stating that both the points were different (line 46). Her group members responded by laughing at the situation.

Soh (S) suggested placing the points under the Conclusion (line 48). Corrine (C) again impatiently requested that Soh make up her mind on where to put the points (line 49). The group looked unhappy and no one responded to Corrine. In the end, she suggested placing the point on feelings and wrote it down before obtaining agreement from her group after cancelling a point (line 49).

Kok (K) tried to help Soh by attempting to say something and looking at her to give her encouragement to respond to Corrine's behaviour (line 50). Soh commented on the messy appearance of the cancelled out point (line 51). Corrine replied defensively that she did not have correction liquid to cover up the cancelled-out point (line 52). Corrine's controlling and disrespectful behaviour towards Soh frustrated her group. The group was influenced by the collectivist approach in maintaining harmony by not confronting Corrine on her inappropriate behaviour (Hofstede, 2005). However, they were intimidated by Corrine resulting in Yin and Fun not talking at all during the session.

The group decided to write down their calculations on the mind-map while analysing data from the questionnaire and interviews. It was observed that Corrine did not dominate the session.

Excerpt 35

- 1 C: Please be patient with me today. Continue. (everyone laughs)
- 2 S: *Wah!* (laughs and waves at her)
- 3 C: I'm impatient today. But it doesn't mean I won't talk (laughs)
- 4 S: Continue, continue.

- 5 K: This one cannot write in percentage. So many.
 6 C: No. Why not write all the options? Then put the percentage.
 (Yin and Fun nod)
 ...
 15 K: This one need calculator. Cannot count *lah*.
 16 S: We help *lah*. This one count already *ah* (points at paper)
 ...
 20 K: Do you think sex education important? 20% no, 80% yes.
 21 Y: How they learn?
 22 K: 40 per cent parents. (Corinne and Soh are having a private
 conversation) (James walks in)
 ...
 51 S: Eh, do you ask questions? (points at mind-map)
 52 K: 10% yes, 80% no.
 53 J: So, how now? (walks towards Yin and Fun and reads
 mind-map)

Corrine (C) informed her group to be patient with her during the session (line 1). Soh (S) found her remark funny and laughed over it (line 2). Corrine (C) explained that she was impatient but jestingly said she would still contribute in the session (line 3). Soh instructed her group to continue their work (line 4). Kok (K) responded by stating that they could not write all of the percentage of the options because there were too many of them (line 5). Corrine disagreed and suggested writing all of them (line 6). Yin and Fun nodded to show their agreement. The discussion continued.

Kok (K) claimed that it was difficult to count the percentage without using a calculator (line 15). Soh (S) assured her by saying that everyone could help out and some of them had already been calculated (line 16). The discussion continued with the group members helping out in the calculation. Kok (K) and Yin (Y) continued to discuss and calculate the percentages on the opinions if sex education was important

and the source of information regarding sex education (lines 20 to 21). Kok (K) informed Yin (Y) that 40 per cent of the respondents learned about sex education from their parents (line 22). The calculation of the percentages of the data continued.

Soh (S) reminded the group of the percentage of students who asked questions about sex (line 51). Kok (K) responded by stating that 10 per cent of the respondents answered yes but 80 percent answered no for the question (line 52). James asked about the progress of the analysis of data and walked over to Yin and Fun to help check the mind-map (line 53). Yin and Kok were more participative during this session than the previous sessions. Similar with Group 1, it was due to the nature of the sub-task of analysing data which did not require much language skills but required simple calculations.

When the participants were asked to describe their sessions through the interviews and diary entries written on 11th November, 2008 and 18th November, 2008, they had mixed views on them.

Interviews

C: Ahh ... more topics to choose from ... I have more information because I make it a point to read a lot.

Yes because we can put all topics there (mind-map) then can see everything. No because some members not helping. Not sure of even the topics at this stage!

We count same time. Use calculator.

F: In my opinion, so many topics. So we also confused. Don't know how to choose .. Ahh ... we can learn more... I didn't talk a lot ... I ... ahh don't know tense. Sentence wrong tense.

Hmm ... count together. Write percentage.

We discuss what to put inside (mind-map). Heading and sub-heading all write.

J: They don't like my topic ... Ahh ... maybe Mat Rempit the girl don't like.

Ahh ... we count and record together.

Hmm ... example too many! Boring lah put so many point. Choose lah what important for mind-map.

K: Ahh ... I don't talk much. No opinion ... My English very poor lah ... Yes. I cannot ... how to say ah. Speak not clear.

Count use calculator. Write percentage on paper.

We all see what to write (mind-map). Discuss first then we write lah.

Y: Everyone got topic. Can choose. But I cannot ... I don't have many opinion ... More time think. Also, I not in the mood to think.

S: Ok lah. Count together.

Ahh ... we all discuss. Write down what we want. After discuss, we write what we see we want to use. Use in report.

Diary Entries

Fun

My difficulty in the session is I didn't suggest so much and my english level grammar is not good. And, my voic is so soft.

James

In this session, I learned speaking English is smooth n clear (depends on my mood), very co-operative (teamwork n share feeling), easy to solve the problem and won't be clumsiness, respect to each other.

The session was not useful because the topic that based my idea was disagree, my friends doesn't know or lack info about my topic.

Kok

In this session, I learned how to listen to other's opinion properly. In this session, the mistake I made is my English pronounce is wrongly.

Yin

My difficulty in the session is about talking when during the disc. Becoz I will fell tension and no idea when discussion. But I will try to change it.

The majority problem maybe is I shame to talk english becoz my english is not good.

The session was useful due to every member can be knowing more about the question or survey when doing the mindmap & analze together.

Both Corrine and Yin were happy with the number of topics produced but Fun found having too many topics confusing and making it hard to decide on their final topic. Other positive comments were they learned to speak, listen to each other, appreciate team work, respect one another's opinions, decide on the headings and sub-

headings to be put in the mind-map and count the percentage of their questionnaire results together.

The negative comments provided by the participants were the disappointment Corrine had with the lack of preparation from her group and the uncertainty of topics to include in the mind-map. James was unhappy over the rejection of his topic on *Mat Rempit* (illegal motorcycle riders) and found the session boring due to having many examples used in the mind-map. In addition, Yin, Kok and Fun were self-conscious about their poor command of English and consequently could not contribute much in the sessions.

Format and Organisation

Unlike Group 1, Group 2 did not seek the researcher's help in explaining the format of the long report. The discussion on their writing started with Corrine (C) instructing the group to start contributing in the session (Excerpt 36).

Excerpt 36

- 1 C: Start!
- 2 S: Today talk about content of report.
- 3 K: Start, action! (gesturing with hand movements)
- 4 J: Yes.
- 5 S: Start with you. (looks at Corrine while James mumbles inaudibly)
- 6 C: Why me?
- 7 K: Start with Introduction.
- 8 C: No, should start with background, first.
- 9 K: Yes
- 10 C: I write outline first.
- 11 S: No need. Just write *lah*.
- 12 C: What? Must write outline *lah*. I'm sure all of you don't have

- all the information now. (Kok and Soh laugh and shake their heads)
- 13 S: Go back and write. (laughs)
- 14 C: What? (smiles) Define sex education.
- 15 S: Write *lah*.
- ...
- 20 F: The data also include.
- 21 K: Exposure before or after Introduction.
- 22 C: After. I got 4 under exposure media, knowledge, age, experiences.
- 23 S: Ok.
- 24 C: I got 5 points. Under misleading information. (points at mind-map) credibility of information, origin, media, influences... /?/ We go back and find more information. I finished my part. Any more?
- 25 S: Ah. (smiles)
- 26 K: *Wah* so fast.
- 27 C: School. Got any problem?
- 28 K: Write what? Look at mind-map.
- 29 C: Write in 2000 words.
- 30 S: Not 3000? (smiles)
- 31 C: Not 10000 *ah*? (laughs) (Everyone laughs) Write 2000 words per section. I can do that. Then choose what I want. (laughs)
- 32 K: 200 to 400 words, can?
- 33 S: We write half then you write other half. (smiles and look at Corinne)
- 34 C: What about 300 words? Each part 300 words.
- 35 K: If more?
- 36 C: I cut. Don't worry.
- ...

Soh (S) added they were going to discuss the content of the long report (line 2). Kok (K) jokingly stated they should start the discussion with hand movements and James (J) agreed with her (lines 3 and 4). They were not contributing much due to their lack of confidence in writing the long report.

Noticing the lack of input from the group members, Soh (S) then directed the discussion back to Corrine because she knew that her help was needed (line 5). Corrine was surprised and queried why she should start contributing points (line 6). Kwan (K) stated they could start writing the Introduction (line 7) but Corrine corrected her by saying that they should start with the Background (line 8). Kwan agreed with her (line 9). Corrine proceeded to suggest writing the outline (line 10) but Soh disagreed with her (line 11). Corrine defended her idea of writing an outline by explaining that they did not have all of the information with them (line 12). Soh jokingly told her that they could write it at home (line 13). Corrine smiled and stated that she would define sex education (line 14) and Soh agreed with her (line 15). Group 2's initial approach in writing was different from Group 1 because they prepared an outline to guide them in their writing.

Corrine wrote and completed the outline with minimal help from Fun (F) who reminded her to include the data and Kok (K) checking on where to place the point on exposure (lines 20 and 21). Corrine explained that it should be after the Introduction because she had already placed four sub-points under the exposure point which were media, knowledge, age and experiences (line 22). Soh agreed with her (line 23). Corrine further explained that she had five points under misleading information which were credibility of information, origin, media, influences and another sub-point she stated which could not be heard and later instructed her group to look for information to explain the points before announcing that she had finished preparing the outline

(line 24). Soh and Kok were happy and Kok praised Corrine for her speed in drawing out the outline (lines 25 and 26).

Corrine referred to a point on school and asked if there were any problems under the point (line 27). Kok was unsure of what to write for that section (line 28). Corrine jokingly said that they should write 2,000 words on the section (line 29). Soh jokingly asked her if they had to write 3,000 words instead (line 30). Corrine responded by jestingly saying it was 10,000 words and she would write 2,000 words for each section and then chose what she wanted from the writing (line 31).

Kok tried to negotiate the length from 200 to 400 words (line 32). Soh supported her by proposing that they would write half the number of words required while Corrine would write the other half (line 33). Corrine relented and fixed the number of words to 300 (line 34). Kok checked with her group whether it was acceptable to write more than 300 words (line 35). Corrine decided to help them in reducing the number of words in their writing (line 36).

It was evident that Corrine being a group member with better proficiency than her group members was organising their writing. After completing the outline, she instructed her group members to write their sections individually. Corrine's help in organising is a form of scaffolding which can result in improved writing abilities (Bruffee, 1984) because she guided her less capable group members in their individual writing so that the writing pieces could be merged to produce a complete long report.

The instructors marking the long report awarded two marks out of five marks for their format and organisation. The group did not discuss the format and organisation in their sessions but concentrated on the content. As a result, their final long report only had the Introduction and Recommendations headings but did not have the Findings and Conclusions headings.

Drafting

The group needed two sessions for the second stage of writing which was drafting. The first draft of the long report was prepared based on the mind-map produced beforehand. The group started writing with Corrine playing a prominent role (Excerpt 37).

Excerpt 37

- 1 C: We start with sex education first. Then continue with the rest. So start. (writes on paper)
- 2 R: Where's Kok?
- 3 Y: On the bus. (smiles)
- 4 C: Write what is sex education ... Outline?
- 5 S: With Kok. On the bus! (laughs)
- 6 R: On the bus? Want to write an outline again?
- 7 Ss: Ah ... no.
- 8 C: We write straight away. This is dert, dert, dert. (gestures)
- 9 S: Then explain.
- 10 J: What is sex education *ah*?
- 11 C: Must count percentage *ah*. Got calculator?
- 12 J: Calculator? (Nobody responds)
- 13 C: So, start. Introduction. (writes)
- 14 S: Introduction! Now confirm mid-term.
- 15 C: Already confirm.
- 16 S: Must study.
- 17 C: Ok, little knowledge. (writes)
- 18 F: Continue, continue.

- ...
- 31 C: Use “prevent” or “avoid” ah? (Shows writing on Recommendations to group members)
- 32 S: “Prevent”.
- 33 F: “Avoid”
- 34 C: What I’m trying to say is not do again.
- 35 S: “Prevent?” (Kok enters room)
- 36 K: (smiles) Sorry.
- 37 S: Outline?
- 38 K: *Ah ...*
- 39 S: She didn’ t bring.
- 40 C: (sings) Joy to the world, ter, ter ter, ter. (smiles)
- 41 S: Why late *ah?*
- 42 K: Assignment *lor*. Oversleep. (laughs)
- 43 C: This year Christmas the worst. Not free. Many assignments.
- 44 K: Want to attend class *ah*, Christmas eve?
- 45 C: What to do? Housemate say she want my notes. (smiles)
- 46 F: Lecturer give so many assignment. Last minute give. (sighs)
- 47 C: I can’t see clearly. Can’t see straight one point.
- 48 S: You do assignment in dark? (smiles)
- 49 C: No *lah*. I do it at night ...
- 50 K: Misleading information.
- ...

Corrine (C) stated that she was going to start by writing the point on sex education and followed by other points (line 1). The researcher noticed Kok’s absence and enquired where she was (line 2). Yin (Y) replied that she was late and was travelling on a bus (line 3). Corrine continued writing her point on sex education and realised she needed to refer to the outline (line 4). Soh (S) laughingly told her that it was with Kok on the bus (line 5).

The researcher was concerned and asked if they wanted to prepare another outline (line 6). The group refused to write another outline (line 7). Corrine suggested writing

without the outline (line 8). The discussion continued with the group providing points directly taken from their articles for Corrine to write on. Soh (S) said they should explain their information (line 9). James (J) added what sex education was to the writing (line 10). Corrine (C) emphasised that they had to count the percentage and requested for a calculator (line 11). James (J) tried to assist her by asking for a calculator but nobody responded (line 12). The group seemed inactive because they were depending on Corrine to perform the writing task.

Then Corrine (C) informed her group that she was going to start writing the Introduction (line 13). Soh (S) repeated what Corrine had said and side-tracked by reminding her group that their mid-term test was confirmed (line 14). Corrine repeated what Soh had said (line 15). Soh (S) responded by saying that they had to study for it (line 16). Corrine (C) mentioned that she was writing the information on little knowledge (line 17). Fun (F) urged her group to continue the task because she realised that her group was talking about a matter which was unrelated to their long report (line 18).

However, in the long report submitted, the Introduction heading was missing. In addition, the point on little knowledge that was supposed to be included in the section was left out. The group member in charge of expanding the points after Corrine's initial effort in writing the section could have left them out. This shows that information decided upon by the group to be included in the writing could also be left out in the process of writing by individual members.

Corrine discussed with her friends whether to use the words “avoid” or “prevent” in the Recommendations with Fun (F) favouring the former while Soh (S) preferring the latter in their writing (lines 31 to 35). According to Butler-Nalin (1984), Cumming (1989, 1990), Silva (1992) and Qi (1998), their cognitively-oriented studies revealed that one of the significant behaviour of skilled second-language writers was emphasising on the appropriate words or phrases to be used. Corrine being more proficient than her group members was concerned about using the suitable word in their writing. The long report produced by the group shows the use of the word “prevent” appearing twice in the Recommendations section (Excerpt 38).

Excerpt 38

Recommendation

Achieving healthy sexuality is a developmental process from birth to senior adulthood.¹ This sentence is showing that sex education is encouraged to be started from kindergarten or even earlier ...

Besides this, the importance of sex education is make sure safety and healthy mind of the people.² People that has been sex educated knows ...

The criminals do not know method to control curiosity toward sexuality and lack of knowledge of the sexual consequences and the law relating to sexual behaviour. Sex education programs that provide information about both abstinence and contraception can delay the onset of sexual activity in teenagers, reduce their number of sexual partners and increase contraceptive use when they become sexually active.³ These abstinence and contraception information prevent cases like giving birth before married and fetus discard. Knowledge of sexual reproduction, sexual transmitted diseases (STD), contraception and law relating to sexual behaviour in order to prevent sexual behaviour that illegal to law. ...

The use of the word “prevent” is seen in paragraph 3, lines 6 and 8, “These abstinence and contraception information *prevent* cases like giving birth before married and fetus discard. Knowledge of sexual reproduction, sexual transmitted

diseases (STD), contraception and law relating to sexual behaviour in order to *prevent* sexual behaviour that illegal to law.” The use of the word shows that the decision made by the group to use it was carried out in the long report.

Kok (K) arrived late and apologised for her lateness (line 36). Soh asked her for the outline (line 37) and Kok (K) indirectly answered that she did not bring it (line 38). Soh (S) lamented that Kok forgot to bring the outline (line 39) and Corrine (C) lightened up the atmosphere by jestingly singing “Joy to the World” (line 40). Soh (S) asked Kok why she was late (line 41) and Kok (K) explained that she overslept due to spending much time on her assignment (line 42). However, none of the group members confronted Kok over her lateness due to their desire to maintain group harmony (Hofstede, 2001, 2005).

Later, Corrine, Kok, Fun and Soh distracted the group from their task. They complained that they could not enjoy the Christmas holidays due to their classes and the number of assignments they had to submit (lines 43 to 49). The discussion on their writing only continued when Kok (K) reminded them of the task by stating the point on misleading information (line 50). She interrupted their private discussion because she was concerned that the group was spending too much time talking about other issues which were not connected to their writing.

The discussion on the writing of the long report continued.

51 C: (writes) Teenagers get misleading information. From internet, blah, blah, blah.

- 52 S: Accessibility. (Corinne stops writing and looks at Soh)
 53 J: (smiles) Accessibility to material. (James mumbles to himself)
 54 C: Ok. Accessibility. Get information. How many words? (counts)
 55 S: *Haiya*, outline. (Corinne continues to write)
 ...

Corrine (C) began to write the information of teenagers getting misleading information from the internet (line 51). Soh (S) added a point on accessibility (line 52). James (J) repeated the point (line 53). Corrine (C) accepted the point and started counting the number of words she had written (line 54). Soh (S) commented that it was only the outline (line 55).

The group's long report shows the inclusion of the point on misleading information raised in the discussion (Excerpt 39).

Excerpt 39

Sex Crimes

Sex crimes are most commonly being perceived as sexual harassment, sexual abusive act and rape cases ...

There are many reasons that these crimes happened and it is getting more and more common nowadays. This shows that the situation is getting more and more serious and some measures must be taken to prevent more victims and tragedy from happening. The researcher first looked into the perception of the people that have perform sex crimes and found out that misleading information or some false influences can lead them to abusive behaviour.

Researcher found out that there are five stages or level of sex crimes. Starting from peeping on certain people that they found attractive, when peeping is not enough, they began to stalk the person sending them messages or take pictures of them. ...

Sexual crimes are considered very serious among the others as it would not only shows that the criminal is mentally unstable but the effects of the crimes. The victim might

not only suffer body injuries but also they are mentally injured and psychological injuries are hard to heal ...

An example case of sex crime is Lonnie Burton, who earlier had been convicted of multiple child rape and molestation, raped a 15 years old federal Way boy in 1991. This shows that woman is not only target of sex criminalist, children or even men can be victims too ...

The use of the point on misleading information is seen in paragraph 2, lines 4 to 6, “The researcher first looked into the perception of the people that have perform sex crimes and found out that *misleading information* or some false influences can lead them to abusive behaviour.” The use of the point shows that the decision by the group to use it was carried out in the long report.

The discussion on the writing continued.

- 56 J: Newspapers. (Nobody responds to James while Corinne continues to write)
- 57 S: What time you sleep? (looks at Fun)
- 58 F: Ten.
- 59 S: I only 1 hour.
- 60 J: Your eyes (points at his eyes). Black. (Soh smiles)
- 61 C: *Nah*, see. (shows writing)
- 62 K: Huh? Point form?
- 63 C: Eh, don't expect me to write in full *ah*. Can expand later.
- 64 S: My part here. (points at paper)
- 65 C: After that, yours? (points at James) No, yours. Recommendations. (looks at Fun) Eh, what about you? (looks at James)
- 66 J: Don't know.
- 67 C: You better do a good job. If not, I ... (raises her hand to threaten to hit his head)
- 68 J: Ok, ok. (smiles)
- 69 C: Summarise your information *ah*.
- 70 J: 200 words. Very fast *lah*.

- 71 Y: Assignment must bring CD cover?
 72 C: Bring one for yourself. One for lecturer.
 73 S: *Aiyoh.*
 74 R: How're you getting on?
 75 C: Talking about assignment.
 76 R: Huh?
 77 Ss: Ha! Ha! (laugh)
 78 R: Next week, continue writing?
 79 C: How many pages?
 80 R: Around 20.
 81 C: If cannot?
 82 R: To be exact, 2000 words. Submit in Week 11.
 ...

James mentioned a point on newspapers (line 56). No one responded to him. The group again side-tracked from their discussion when Soh (S) asked Fun the time she went to sleep (line 57). Fun (F) replied by saying that she went to sleep at ten (line 58). Soh complained that she only slept for one hour (line 59). James (J) commented that Soh had dark circles under her eyes (line 60). Finally Corrine (C) finished writing and showed it to her group (line 61).

Kok (K) was surprised that Corrine had written in point form (line 62). Corrine (C) said that they could expand on her points (line 63). They discussed the different parts they had to write individually (lines 64 to 70). Again, the group was distracted from the writing task when they started discussing their assignment which required them to bring CD covers (lines 71 to 73).

Realising that the group had side-tracked from their work again, the researcher (R) checked on their work (line 74). Corrine (C) jestingly said they were doing their

assignment and her group laughed (lines 75 and 77). The researcher asked them if they would like to continue in the following session (line 78). Corrine checked on the number of pages to write (line 79). The researcher informed them they had to write 20 pages (line 80). Corrine was uncertain if they could do it (line 81). The researcher then told her that the actual number of words was 2,000 and the long report should be submitted in Week 11 (line 82).

The long report produced was about 2,880 words. Too detailed information had been included in the writing (Excerpt 40).

Excerpt 40

Introduction

Sex education is the process of acquiring information and forming attitudes and beliefs about sex, sexual identity, relationship and intimacy ...

Inappropriate information or misleading information might cause teenagers or youngsters to be involved in various negative sexual behaviours such as sex addiction, harassment, rape and more ...

Through research data, Abstinence-only sex education programs in Ohio might contain false or misleading about abortion, contraceptives and sexually transmitted diseases, according to a report released on Monday by a Case Western Reserve university researcher, the Cleveland Plain Dealer reports is a good example case of misleading information provided by inappropriate organization ...

The mediums most commonly easy to be access are mass medias such as internet (the most popular), magazines, pornography, novels, books and etc ...

Through the survey conducted by the researchers, there are 60% out of the people that finished the questionnaire admit that they have been mislead before by peers or other medium ...

Through survey, 70% believes that a person would take in any sex related information whether it's true or false out of curiosity ...

The detailed information was in the forms of survey findings in the Introduction (paragraphs 3, 5 and 6, Excerpt 40) which should be written in the Findings instead and a lengthy description of a sex offence in the Conclusions (paragraphs 3, 4 and 5, Excerpt 39) which should be summarised.

The discussion continued on finding out the referencing system to be used and the deadline for the submission of the long report.

- 83 J: Use APA? Harvard?
 84 R: Use Harvard.
 85 C: Somebody do the referencing *ah*. I write.
 86 R: So we end here.
 87 J: When to submit?
 88 Ss: Week 11!

James checked whether they should use APA (American Psychological Association) or Harvard Referencing System for their Bibliography (line 83). The researcher informed him that the latter should be used (line 84). Corrine instructed her group that one of them should prepare the Bibliography since she was writing the long report (line 85). The researcher ended the session because Group 2 had a class to attend (line 86). James checked on the submission date of their work (line 87). His group told him that it was in Week 11 (line 88).

The long report submitted had a Bibliography and constant use of citations and footnotes. Overall, the content had less plagiarised sections than Group 1 due to the discussions carried out on referencing. Group 1 did not broach on the matter at all and therefore, produced a plagiarised long report with a missing Bibliography.

Group 2's long report was awarded eleven marks out of 20 marks for content and thirteen marks out of 25 marks for the language criteria. There was good organisation and a good development of ideas which was better than Group 1. There was cohesion and coherence in the writing because less information was used by Group 2 than Group 1.

On the other hand, Group 2 had more language errors such as tense and sentence errors than Group 1. It was due to their effort in using their own words to form sentences in their writing. Group 1, in comparison, had less independent writing because they copied a lot of information from their reading materials in their writing.

Group 2 had fewer discussions than Group 1 due to distractions from their writing task such as their discussions on their mid-term test, Christmas holidays and other assignments they had to submit. Group 1 was able to focus on their task and ensured that only matters regarding their writing were raised in their discussions. Therefore, they produced a more detailed and informative long report than Group 2.

The interview responses and diary entries written on 2nd. December, 2008 sessions revealed positive opinions from the participants in Group 2.

Interviews

C: We talk then write. I know I talk so much. I talk to fill in ... I also talk to make it more fun. When I stop talking, everyone become serious.

F: I know my English not good. So let Corrine and Soh talk more ... Ahh ... I can learn from them. When they that time. The point, ahh ... how to write. Explain then write.

- J: All the point in outline Corrine write ... We not sure how write outline. Corrine know.
- K: I got many coursework. Cannot sleep. In discussion cannot contribute. Members help and talk. So can write.
- Y: Report write myself not good. If group write good ... Ahh ... more idea, can find more point, also language not bad.

Diary Entries

Corrine

The session was useful due to we learn about how to work as a team, When working in a team what kind of roles are are playing and the strenght and weakness. By knowing the strenght and weakness of all members it is more easy to divide the tasks.

James

The experience was different from working alone because all the points Corrine do it for me and I have difficulty to well prepared. So far I'm satisfied my group teamwork.

The benefits are Corrine do all points.

Kok

In this session, I learned we have to be punctual for any discussion.

Soh

The experience was different from working alone because although is slow, but fell easier, cause not need worry about the grammar (thx god Corrine here) the whole sections & process of these assg is actually scheduled & quite organised, is a good method for students to really do a 'Group assg':

The benefits they had were enjoyment of the task, benefiting from Corrine's valuable assistance in writing, dividing of work according to one's ability and learning the importance of punctuality.

Editing and Proofreading

The third stage of writing was editing and proofreading. Similarly with Group 1, Group 2 did not perform the sub-tasks as a group but Corrine carried it out on her own. Just like Loh, she volunteered to perform the sub-task because she knew her command of the language was better than others.

“Hierarchical co-authoring” in collaborative writing is explained by Ede and Lunsford (1990) as having an individual perform a task independently. The planning and writing stage can involve the whole team but the revision stage can only be performed by one group member. Locker (2006) supports this view by elaborating that a person can be in charge of editing and proofreading a document. Correctness in grammar, mechanics and spelling, consistency in format elements, names and numbers and using a spell checker to run through the document can be carried out in the process. The findings from this study supported their view.

Summary of Findings from Groups 1 and 2 based on Research Question 2

Topic Selection and Brainstorming

Mutual interactions and negotiations were observed during the topic selection and sharing of information. A summary of the key findings can be viewed in Appendix 16. The level of involvement of group members was different. In Group 1, Loh, Ooi, Tang and Wai had regular contributions but Phua and Soong had irregular contributions during the collaborative writing sessions. In Group 2, Corrine and Soh contributed regularly but James, Yin, Fun and Kok had irregular contributions during the sessions.

Loh and Corrine who have good command of English were actively involved in the discussions. Loh, in her capacity as the leader, performed various tasks in order to initiate, maintain and end the collaborative writing sessions. She elicited information from her group to increase their understanding of the information. Corrine, too,

responded frequently to her group by providing assistance in clarifying vague points and providing accurate terms to be used during the discussions.

Ooi, Tang and Wai from Group 1 and Soh from Group 2 were consistent in their responses during the sessions. They had the initiative to speak without being probed to do so. They could present their input confidently because they had made preparations by reading articles on the topics. Soh, being the leader, had to set a good example by contributing much in the discussions

However, Phua and Soong from Group 1 and Yin, Kok, Fun and James from Group 2 were observed to be moderately active. Phua and Soong did not speak at all during two sessions while Yin did not speak at all during three sessions. All of them have low language proficiency and faced difficulties in understanding the articles they had read and expressing themselves. They were also observed to be self-conscious and shy in nature. Furthermore, Corrine's group did not have many opportunities to speak because she dominated the discussions.

Group 2 presented twelve topics during the topic selection in comparison with Group 1 who only presented six topics. In Group 2, Corrine alone contributed five topics while the rest contributed one to two topics each. This shows that Group 2 was more active during the topic selection sub-task.

Confirmation check in the form of repetition and simplifying occurred in Group 1 but not in Group 2. This was due to Loh's efforts in clarifying and probing her group members' suggestions and eventually, confirming on the suggestions to indicate acceptance of the ideas. It was different in Group 2 for Corrine dominated the discussions and due to her position as a high power-member with a strong personality, she was insistent that her group accept her input most of the time.

A significant feature in Group 2's collaboration was a power struggle between Corrine and her group. Group 1 did not have power struggle because all of the group members were agreeable and co-operated well in their sub-tasks. Corrine responded constantly in refining, correcting and questioning her group members' ideas. In addition, she even forced her group to use both questionnaire and interviews in the data collection despite opposition from her group members. She also influenced her group to ignore James who was repeatedly late for their discussions. Her action is attributed to the collectivist practice of ostracising and shaming group members who are different from others and have failed to follow the norms of a group (Hofstede, 2001). Corrine's dominating behaviour intimidated her group members who have low proficiency. They did not correct Corrine's behaviour but emphasised on conflict avoidance and harmony in the group (Hofstede, 2005).

Groups 1 and 2 were active in the process of designing their questionnaire and interview questions. They knew how to form questions covering extensive areas of their topics. It was due to an elective business course they had taken in the previous semester which required them to carry out surveys.

After that, Group 1 analysed the data collected. However, Group 2 prepared their mind-map first instead of analysing their data beforehand. The group members cooperated in counting the percentages and recording their questionnaire results.

Corrine from Group 2 did not dominate the session of data analysis. Many of the quiet group members with low proficiency were active during the session. It was due to the less necessity for language skills required for the sub-task.

During the production of the mind-maps, Group 1 worked better than Group 2. Group 1 decided together where to place their information according to the headings and sub-headings in the mind-map. Corrine intimidated her group by forcing her decisions on the organisation of information in the mind-map. The group members with low proficiency talked minimally because they were shy.

Group 1 was more satisfied than Group 2 during the topic selection and brainstorming sessions. Group 1 listed having many topics to choose from, gaining information, simplifying of information, improving their speaking skills and correcting each others' mistakes as the benefits gained. However, the negative views were a lack of preparation resulting in little information shared, being too intimidated to speak, lacking information and lacking of time management skills.

Group 2's positive feedback on the sessions were being able to generate many interesting topics, create awareness on the topics, motivate one another and decide on

the headings and sub-headings to be put in the mind-map together. On the other hand, their negative views were having insufficient information, too many topics presented, disagreement on topic selection, disappointment with group members' lack of preparation and boredom due to having too much information discussed.

Format and Organisation

The key findings regarding the format and organisation areas can be viewed in Appendix 17. Group 1 did not discuss much of the format and organisation. Since they were uncertain of which information to write in the sections, they sought the researcher's help. She provided guidance on how to place their information, use a mind-map for writing and use statistics in their long report.

Group 1's long report showed that they did not use the point suggested by Wai which was the purposes of writing. Loh left it out because the introduction was too long. However, the researcher's advice on organisation and the use of statistics were reflected in their writing.

Group 1 was awarded three out of five marks for their format and organisation. The positive comments were the correct format with appropriate headings was used, correct sequence of the headings was followed and suitable sub-headings were selected to categorise the information. Nevertheless, the negative comments were disjointed writing between the content of the headings and sub-headings, irrelevant information in the Findings and Recommendations, and the absence of Bibliography. This was due

to their failure in managing the excessive information and overlooking the preparation of a Bibliography in their discussions.

Group 2 was different from Group 1 because they did not seek the researcher's help but were independent in carrying out their discussions. Group 2 used an outline to help them write but Group 1 did not do so. Group 2 did not discuss the format and organisation in their sessions but concentrated on the content alone in comparison with Group 1. As a result, Group 2's long report only had the Introduction and Recommendations headings but had missing Findings and Conclusions headings. Thus, they were awarded two marks out of five marks for their format and organisation.

Drafting

The second stage of writing was drafting. A summary of the key findings can be viewed in Appendix 18. Group 1 needed three sessions while Group 2 only required two sessions for it. Both groups used their mind-maps to guide them in their writing but Group 2 even had an outline to refer to during their writing.

Group 1 unlike Group 2 faced difficulties in their writing and sought the researcher's help. Group 1 co-operated well and was influenced by the collectivist culture in maintaining group solidarity and respecting their leader. On the other hand, their long report showed that not all of the agreed upon ideas were used in their writing. Loh decided on which information to include during the editing and

proofreading. Her decision in totally leaving out the questionnaire findings deprived in-depth information from being provided. Nevertheless, most information suggested by the group was used in the long report.

Group 1's long report was awarded 13 marks out of 20 marks for content and eight marks out of 25 marks for language. The positive feedback was an impressive amount of information was provided and a good development of ideas was presented. However, the negative comments were irrelevant information in the Findings and Recommendations, informal style of language used, tense and sentence errors, plagiarised writing with no proper citations made and the absence of bibliography.

In Group 2's discussions, Corrine took over Soh's role as the leader. She had to facilitate the discussion in guiding the group to write. Her good command of English and writing skills were advantageous to her group, too. Corrine insisted that the group prepare an outline before proceeding to write. She made final decisions on the organisation of information in the outline. The group was then instructed to write sections individually but they were worried that they could not write according to the length decided. Finally, Corrine offered to edit their work. The group wrote their long report without the outline because Kok forgot to bring it to the discussion.

The level of satisfaction on the sessions was higher in Group 2 than Group 1. Group 1's positive views were being guided to write, informed of writing a long report instead of a short report, reduced individual responsibility through co-operation,

learned the correct format and the proper steps in the writing process. Nonetheless, they were dissatisfied with their time management and lack of vocabulary. Group 2's positive comments were being able to have fun during their writing, assisted by Corrine in writing, good division of work and realised the importance of punctuality.

On the other hand, Group 2's long report showed that not all of the agreed upon ideas were used in their writing. The Introduction heading was missing, information on little knowledge about sex in the Introduction was left out and the length of writing was different. However, some information agreed upon by the group was included in the report such as misleading information on sex and the use of Harvard Referencing System. Overall, Group 2 had less plagiarised sections than Group 1 due to the discussion and delegation of work regarding referencing.

Group 2's long report was awarded eleven marks out of 20 marks for content and thirteen marks out of 25 marks for language. The positive feedback was good organisation and a good development of ideas. The organisation was better than Group 1 due to the cohesion and coherence in the different sections and the information was related with each other. Group 2 could manage their ideas better than Group 1 due to the small amount of information they had.

Group 2's report had more language errors than Group 1 because of the effort to rephrase their sentences to avoid committing plagiarism. Group 1, in comparison, had less independent writing because they copied a lot of information from their articles

which, eventually, resulted in a plagiarised long report. Group 2 had fewer discussions than Group 1 because of the side-tracking from their task. Group 1 could focus on their writing and obtained detailed information for their work.

Editing and Proofreading

The third stage of writing was editing and proofreading. A summary of the key findings for this stage can be viewed in Appendix 19. Groups 1 and 2 did not perform the editing and proofreading sub-task as a group but Loh and Corrine carried out the sub-task on their own. Both of them volunteered to perform the sub-task because they knew their command of English was better than the others.

Ede and Lunsford (1990) approve of having an individual performing a task alone which is called “hierarchical co-authoring”. The whole team can plan and write a document together but leaves the revision to be carried out by a selected group member. This view is shared by Locker (2006) who further explains that editing and proofreading a document can be performed by having a person to check for correctness in the final piece of work. The findings from both Groups 1 and 2 supported their view.

Research Question 3: What factors enhance and what factors inhibit collaboration in a mixed proficiency group?

The third research question attempts to provide factors which have positive and negative effects on collaboration. They were obtained from the spoken transcripts, video recordings, interviews and diary entries. Significant participants' contributions, experiences and opinions on the collaboration process were analysed according to their individual profiles. The presentation of findings in this section is divided into two sections, namely, factors which enhance collaboration and factors which inhibit collaboration. A summary of the findings is provided for the two sections (see Table 4.3).

Table 4.3

Factors which Enhance and Inhibit Collaboration in Groups 1 and 2

Factors	Group 1	Group 2
a. <u>Enhance</u>		
Leadership Styles	√	√
Collectivist Culture	√	√
Participants' Proficiency	√	√
Humour	√	√
Use of National Language	Not Used	√
b. <u>Inhibit</u>		
Collectivist Culture	√	√
Participants' Proficiency	√	√
Different Levels of Expectations	√	√
Lack of Time Management Skills	√	√
Leadership Style	X	√
Lack of Punctuality	X	√

There were key findings discovered in each of the sections, too. First, the specific key findings of factors which enhance collaboration can be viewed in both Appendices 20 and 21. Appendix 20 highlights important insights pertaining to leadership styles, collectivist culture and participants' proficiency. Detailed explanations on them are provided in the relevant sections of this chapter (pages 218, 219, 229, 230 and 231). Appendix 21 highlights other factors which promote collaboration such as the use of humour and national language. Detailed explanations on them are provided in relevant sections of this chapter (pages 220, 232 and 236).

Second, the specific key findings of factors which inhibit collaboration can be obtained from Appendices 22 and 23. Appendix 22 highlights insights in terms of collectivist culture, participants' proficiency, different levels of expectations and the lack of time management skills. Detailed explanations on them are provided in the relevant sections of this chapter (pages 223, 225, 226, 228, 240, 242, 243 and 244). Appendix 23 highlights other factors which inhibit collaboration such as leadership style and lack of punctuality. Detailed explanations on them are provided in the relevant sections of this chapter (pages 238 and 245).

Group 1

Factors Which Enhance Collaboration

A number of factors which promoted collaboration were identified in Group 1's collaborative writing sessions. They were leadership styles, collectivist culture,

participants' proficiency and humour. Explanations of how these factors affect collaboration are provided in the following sections.

Leadership Styles

Loh, the group leader practised mixed democratic and autocratic behaviour during the collaborative writing sessions in Weeks 1 and 3. Initially, she consistently maintained her democratic leadership style (see page 106). She was democratic during the topic selection and referencing work but changed her behaviour during information-sharing after doing referencing, filtering of information to be used in their writing and preparation of interview questions.

Loh preferred the egalitarian approach to ensure that the group could brainstorm and provide their opinions freely. Her behaviour, however, became autocratic when Wai suggested a question which she did not approve. She rejected the question despite the agreement of other members in accepting Wai's question as one of their interview questions. None of the group members confronted Loh over her authoritative leadership. The reason could be the group realised that Loh has better command in English than they and they trusted her judgment. Another possible reason could be due to the influence of the collectivist culture which emphasises on respect towards leaders and group solidarity (Hofstede, 2001).

It was observed that the group responded positively to the styles of leadership. The interviews and diary entries revealed that all of them agreed that they learned from

the information presented and they could understand input they initially could not comprehend on their own. Hence, there was improvement in the group's ZPD in the area of understanding knowledge.

Collectivist Culture

Group 1 was co-operative, agreeable and respectful towards Loh. Since they emphasised on group harmony despite having disagreements with each other, it resulted in ten weeks of successful collaborative writing sessions.

The group tried very hard to accept all of Loh's ideas, too. The reason was the group respected her as the leader having been influenced by their Chinese culture which is collectivist in nature. The collectivist culture places much importance on respect towards the leader and group solidarity (Hofstede, 2005).

The group expressed their satisfaction with the discussions through their interviews and diary entries. The benefits gained from the sessions were learning from the sharing of information, increasing their understanding on the topic, not spending too much time in the sub-task of designing a questionnaire and having their mistakes corrected by others. They also strongly believed that the collaboration resulted in better presentation of their information in the long report.

Participants' Proficiency

Group 1 comprised members with mixed proficiency in English. However, all of

them pooled their knowledge and abilities in producing the long report. They depended on Loh's language and writing abilities in understanding their articles and in writing the long report. Likewise, Salli-Copur (2005) discovered that stronger students could be a source of language or knowledge to weaker students when they worked in a mixed-ability group.

All of the group members worked together in searching for information on the topic but some of them could not understand the information they had read. Therefore, Loh elicited information from them by asking probing questions in their interactions (see page 90, week 1). It resulted in better understanding of the information. However, some of them were intimidated and Loh decided to reduce the frequency of her questions (see page 94, week 3).

Loh even guided the weak students in the writing and offered to edit and proofread the long report on her own after it was produced. Therefore, Loh's language and writing assistance could be regarded as a form of scaffold. She provided them with guidance in sub-tasks which they could not perform initially but could perform in the end.

Humour

According to Bloch et al. (1983), humour can be used either positively or negatively in relation to the leader, members or the group. Positive group-related exhibitions of humour were identified in Group 1's discussions. They were used to

create group dynamics, reduce tension, establish cohesion (Terrion & Ashforth, 2002) and maintain solidarity (Holmes, 2000). Group dynamics is established by making themes and processes more explicit through humour, tension reduction is reducing discomfort and anxiety usually associated with taboo subjects while cohesiveness is the sharing of experience of laughter to promote acceptance and belongingness (Bloch et al., 1983).

First, Wai's use of humour to create group dynamics during the sharing of information is shown in the following excerpt.

Excerpt 41

- 18 L: What is investment club?
 19 P: They group and plan investment. Also got short and long term investment.
 20 W: I search for journals. How to save money, this one give the opinion how to save, spend the money. Also something like how to manage well like credit card, organised payment, get less interest charged. Hmm like over-reacting like Mega Sales. People rush there and buy, buy, buy. (laughs) Oh, like you hear the share very good, you go and buy. But some, I also didn't read. (laughs)
 21 L: My EPF, family members can top up members' account, no limit of money to put in. Can be done until members reach 55 years old.

Loh (L) asked Phua (P) what an investment club was (line 18). Phua explained that it was to group and plan either short or long-term investments (line 19). Wai (W) reported her information on how to save money, spend money and manage credit cards (line 20). She explained and emphasised in a humorous way on how people misuse their credit cards by overspending during the Mega Sales period and people who buy shares after hearing from others on how good they were. Wai also admitted that she did

not finish reading her article. Loh then continued presenting her information on how one's EPF account could be topped up by their family members until one reached 55 years of age (line 21). Wai's group did not respond to her effort to be humorous. They were serious in nature and very task-focussed.

Second, the use of humour to reduce tension during the discussion on the preparation of interview questions can be observed in the following excerpt.

Excerpt 42

- 31 W: How they solve the problem when overspent? Borrow money or ...
 32 L: Sorry?
 33 W: This question can use?
 34 L: Repeat.
 35 W: How they face not having enough money?
 36 L: Like first?
 37 W: But can be like case credit card. Maybe other way.
 38 L: How?
 39 W: When you overspend, how to solve problem?
 40 O: Where to get money when you overspend? (laughs)
 41 R: What do you do when you overspend? (All laugh)
 42 L: Anymore? (Long silence)

Loh (L) and Wai (W) were having a slight disagreement on Wai's suggested interview question (lines 31 to 39). The group realised that tension was building up and Ooi (O) attempted to lighten up the situation by interjecting on where one could obtain money when one had overspent (line 40). The researcher (R), too, assisted Ooi by expanding her idea by asking what one could do when one had overspent and it made the group laughed (line 41). The humour helped to diffuse the situation. When Loh sought for

more contribution from her group, it was noticed that Wai did not continue persuading her to accept her interview question (line 42). It can be said that the use of humour in this situation, too, helped Group 1 to maintain solidarity (Holmes, 2000), and create a sense of cohesion (Bloch et al., 1983; Terrion & Ashforth, 2002) because they continued to work as a group and forgo their own individual opinions.

Factors which Inhibit Collaboration

A number of factors which inhibited collaboration were identified in Group 1's sessions. They were collectivist culture, participants' proficiency, different levels of expectations and a lack of time management. Explanations of how these factors affect collaboration are provided in the following sections.

Collectivist Culture

Group 1 was observed to be co-operative, agreeable and respectful towards each other. Their priority on group harmony and conformity had negatively affected the quality of their work. The adverse influence of the collectivist culture can be seen in two prominent incidents during the collaborative writing sessions.

Firstly, Loh stopped asking probing questions during their sessions to follow the behaviour of other group members (see pages 90 and 94, weeks 1 and 3). Her use of questions was an open approach in which group members "ask probing questions, come to tentative decisions and invite elaboration by others while carrying out a task" (Barnes, 1976, p. 67). The questions were forms of verification and gate-keeping, too.

As the leader, Loh was trying to ensure that the group understood the information deeply before writing on the topic.

However, Loh reduced the frequency of asking questions because she realised that her group was uncomfortable with her action and none of them followed her example. She instead used a closed approach described by Barnes (1976) as “the group finds nothing to encourage active engagement, nothing to provoke questions or surmises” (p. 38). This approach reduced further exploration of an issue.

Loh stopped asking questions due to the influence of the collectivist culture which emphasises on conformity in the behaviour of group members and self-concept in terms of a group (Asch, 1956; Hofstede, 2001, 2005). She chose to behave in the same way as her group which was merely accepting the information presented without any questions asked. Consequently, the content of the long report consisted of a large amount of information which was not properly linked and organised due to their lack of understanding and exploration of the information.

Secondly, the group did not challenge Loh even though they did not agree with her idea. During the preparation of interview questions (see page 110, week 3), Wai contributed an interview question on how the respondents solved their problem of overspending. Loh rejected her question by explaining that it was similar with a question planned earlier but it was incorrect. Wai later gave an example of the type of

information that could be obtained from her question. Loh continued to reject it and it resulted in Wai re-structuring her question.

Despite the support shown by Ooi and the researcher on Wai's question, Loh refused to accept it. It was observed that none of the group members tried to correct Loh by emphasising on the suitability of Wai's question and the dissimilarity between it and the earlier question. It was due to the group's attempt to avoid an argument in order to create a harmonious atmosphere. Hence, a good interview question that could be used to elicit useful information from the respondents was left out. This, in turn, disallowed the group from obtaining input for their long report.

Participants' Proficiency

Group 1 consisted of group members with mixed proficiency. It was observed that the weak students faced problems in contributing their ideas during the discussions. According to Lensmire (1994), one of the reasons for students not participating in collaborative writing sessions is insufficient command of the language besides other reasons ranging from a lack of confidence in writing, and hierarchical peer relationships.

All of the group members except Loh were self-conscious during the discussions. There were situations in which Soong and Phua did not talk at all in a session due to their lack of confidence. Soong admitted through her diary entry that she experienced difficulty in explaining the information she had read from her articles. She was unsure

whether to present a summary of it or all of the points. Her fears were added by her poor command of English. Consequently, she decided not to talk at all.

When interviewed, Phua and Wai admitted that they were all very shy and nervous during the sessions. It resulted in their inability to think well before speaking. Both of them felt that they should allow other group members with better proficiency to talk instead. Furthermore, Ooi knew she spoke softly due to her lack of confidence in her command of the language while Wai realised that her group members had difficulty understanding her explanations of points. Tang, too, could not understand her friends' points due to her weak command of English. She could only grasp the main points but not the sub-points presented.

The lack of contribution from the weak group members frustrated Loh. She assumed that they did not prepare well for the discussions. As a result, they did not contribute as much information as she expected from her group.

Different Levels of Expectations

The interviews and diary entries revealed that individual group members had different levels of expectations from the collaboration. They did not share with each other their expectations and sought ways on how they could achieve them as a group. Therefore, some of them felt dissatisfied with the sessions. They had negative perceptions of the collaboration which occurred.

Firstly, Loh, being the group leader, was disappointed with her group. She assumed that they did not contribute effectively when they failed to answer her questions well. Her intention of asking questions was to help her group increase their understanding. They, however, provided only short answers which did not meet her expectations.

Secondly, Soong wrote in her diary entry that she was dissatisfied with the collaboration due to the uncertainty on how to present her information. Some of her group members gave detailed explanations of their points which made the session boring. However, some only read out the sub-headings of their information, thus, depriving the group of useful elaborations. After observing them, Soong was unsure whether to present all of her information or only provide a summary of her points. Since she was unsure of the proper method of presentation and she lacked confidence in her language ability, she decided to remain silent in the sessions.

Loh felt that their lack of preparation caused the group to be unable to answer her questions. This was supported by Ooi who stated that their group members could not communicate well because they did not prepare beforehand. Tang and Soong confirmed that they did not contribute much due to their lack of preparation for the discussions. Tang repeated information in most of the sessions because she could not understand the new information she had read while Soong did not update her collection of information regularly due to her lack of comprehension when reading the articles.

Loh did not understand that many of them were struggling with the task of presenting their information due to their weak command of English.

Lack of Time Management Skills

The participants complained of the lack of time management skills in their collaboration through their interviews and diary entries. They felt that it had resulted in too much time spent on unimportant sub-tasks.

Loh and Soong were unhappy with the group concentrating on unimportant sub-tasks. Loh confessed that she did not plan their time for the sub-tasks of drawing the mind-map and drafting their long report. Consequently, they needed more than one session for them. She felt strongly that they would not have spent so much time had she allocated time for them. In addition, she felt that as the leader, she should be responsible for good time management for her group.

Group 2

Factors which Enhance Collaboration

A number of factors which promoted collaboration were identified in Group 2's sessions. They were leadership style, collectivist culture, participants' proficiency, humour and the use of national language. Explanations of how these factors affect collaboration are provided in the following sections.

Leadership Style

Soh, the leader of the group was observed to display democratic behaviour in all of the sessions (see page 141). Group 2 maintained a democratic leadership style while Group 1 had a mixture of autocratic and democratic leadership. Soh chose to be lax in her leadership to create a conducive atmosphere as a means to encourage participation from her group. Consequently, they produced twelve topics to choose from as their final topic and in addition, mutual interactions and sharing of expertise were observed in the sessions.

Soh even relinquished her leadership to Corrine in Week 8. She made the decision based on the group's interest realising that Corrine has a good command of English and could guide the group in the writing task better than her. As a result, the group successfully produced a long report with much language and writing assistance from Corrine.

Group 2 expressed their satisfaction with the leadership style adopted through their interviews and diary entries. Firstly, they were grateful to Corrine for taking over the leadership of the writing session. They admitted that Corrine provided the scaffold for her group in the language and writing aspects. Due to the difficulties the group members expressed before their individual writing, Corrine patiently explained to them how to perform the task before their writing was merged to become a complete long report. Soh strongly felt that Corrine was a better leader than her due to the assistance she offered to the group. Likewise, Fun felt that she learned English from both Corrine

and Soh as she listened to their utterances. James, too, was happy that Corrine helped the group to write their outline.

Collectivist Culture

Similarly, the influence of the collectivist culture was evident during the discussions in Group 1 and 2. Group 2 placed a lot of importance on establishing group harmony and solidarity, gave more priority to the group's achievement than individuals' goals, and handled a misbehaving group member successfully by showing their displeasure towards him (Hofstede, 2001). There were a few episodes observed during their collaboration which reflected the collectivist behaviour.

Corrine's constant action of dominating the discussions throughout Weeks 1 to 8 was tolerated by her group. Some of them were unhappy that their ideas were rejected and they did not have the opportunity to contribute due to Corrine's presence. However, they did not confront her to correct her action due to their emphasis on group harmony. On the other hand, Corrine was unhappy with her group who depended too much on her. She felt that they should prepare well for their sessions by reading up on sex education. Her personal dissatisfaction did not deter her from guiding her group. This was due to the influence of the collectivist culture which made Corrine realise that the group's task of writing a long report was more important than her personal dissatisfaction.

The method used to handle James' misbehaviour during the discussions also reflected the collectivist behaviour. Initially, James was frequently late and did not contribute effectively despite being reprimanded by Corrine. His group's action of ignoring him in a few sessions to show their displeasure was collectivist in nature. The group hoped that James would be more co-operative after being rejected by them. Consequently, James contributed more than before in his attempt to re-establish his sense of belonging towards his group. He realised that the group's task was more important than his own needs.

The group expressed mixed views on the sessions through their interviews and diary entries. They were unhappy with Corrine's dominating and James' tardiness. On the other hand, they were also grateful to Corrine for providing assistance in their writing.

Participants' Proficiency

Similar with Group 1, Group 2 consisted of members with different proficiency in English. It was observed that they pooled their knowledge and abilities to produce the long report. Corrine's language and writing abilities also helped them to perform their task. Salli-Copur (2005) found out that stronger students could be a source of language or knowledge to weaker students when they worked in a mixed-ability group.

The group collaborated in searching for information to help them decide on the topic and to write on it. Corrine, as a more proficient language user, refined her peers'

ideas by adding information and correcting them as they presented (see page 114). It resulted in the group having a high level of understanding on the ideas presented.

The weak students were guided by Corrine in their writing just like Group 1 who was helped by Loh. Corrine produced an outline for her group to follow in their writing and offered to edit and proofread the long report on her own. The language and writing assistance provided by Corrine was a form of scaffold for the group. It enabled the group to carry out sub-tasks which they could not perform initially but could perform in the end.

Humour

According to Bloch et al. (1983), humour can be used either positively or negatively in relation to the leader, members or the group. Only positive group-related exhibitions of humour were identified in both groups.

More humour was detected in Group 2 than in Group 1 during their collaborative writing sessions. This can be attributed to the nature of the group members in Group 2 which were relaxed and easy-going. Most of the group members in Group 1 were serious and conscientious in nature.

The positive group-related exhibitions of humour used in Group 2 were used to create cohesiveness and to reduce tension in the situations. Cohesiveness is having the shared experience of laughter to promote acceptance and belongingness while tension

reduction is decreasing discomfort and anxiety usually associated with taboo subjects (Bloch et al., 1983).

Firstly, the constant use of humour to create cohesiveness (Bloch et al., 1983; Terrion & Ashforth, 2002) during the discussion on interviews can be observed from the following excerpt.

Excerpt 43

- 89 R: What about your questionnaire questions?
 90 C: Ha. Ha.
 91 R: You can prepare them at home and we continue our
 discussion next week.
 92 J: What if I interview a girl and she say, “What will you give
 me?”
 93 S: *Haiya*, you. (smiles while the rest laugh)
 94 R: Give each one a sweet? (All laugh)
 95 C: Ok. We prepare and discuss.

The researcher (R) checked with the group on the questions to be used in the questionnaire (line 89). Corrine (C) responded by laughing (line 90). The researcher then advised the group to prepare the questions at home and to continue their discussion the following week (line 91). James (J) jokingly asked his group what to do if a girl he interviewed asked him what she would be given for participating in the interview. His group found his remark amusing and laughed while Soh (S) responded in an amused manner (line 93). The researcher jestingly suggested giving the interviewees a sweet each (line 94) and the group laughed again. Corrine then concluded the discussion by reminding her group to prepare their work for the next session (line 95). James’ action could be described as attempting to create

cohesiveness in the group through humour since they were involved in interviewing their respondents together.

Another situation in which humour was used to create cohesiveness during the preparation of questionnaire and interview questions can be observed in the following excerpt.

Excerpt 44

- 62 C: Do you think sex education is satisfactory in school?
 63 S: Ok
 64 Y: Friends in school?
 65 C: She's right. Peers can teach friends. How many from co-ed?
 66 J: Me. (Fun, Yin and Kok smile)
 67 C: (putting her elbow on James's shoulder) Tell us. You boys pass pictures *ah*.
 68 J: Ah, yes.
 69 C: Really. What did you say?
 70 J: I say toot toot. (smiles) Girls, believe me. I'm a good boy, you know. (points at Yin and Fun who are shaking their heads and laughing)

Corrine (C) asked her group if they thought that sex education taught in schools was satisfactory (line 62). Soh (S) replied by saying that it was okay (line 63). Yin (Y) checked with her group if friends in school had a role to play in sex education (line 64). Corrine (C) agreed with her and explained that peers could teach one another (line 65). She further asked her group how many of them come from co-educational schools (line 65). James (J) admitted he was from a co-educational school (line 66). Corrine checked with James if the boys passed pictures around (line 67). James admitted that they did (line 68). Corrine wanted to find out his comments on the pictures (line 69). James refused to repeat what he said and jokingly demonstrated self-censorship on his

speech. Furthermore, he told the girls that he was a good boy and did not pass negative comments on the pictures (line 70). His group members laughed over his statement. Again, James' behaviour reflected his use of humour to create cohesiveness in the group by making himself like-minded with his group by not passing negative remarks on the pictures.

Secondly, the use of humour to reduce tension during the topic selection can be observed in the following excerpt.

Excerpt 45

- 85 C: Sex education hard to do.
 86 S: Difference from culture to culture, country to country.
 Sex education? Any objection?
 87 C: Going for number 1? Going for number 2? Sold out!
 88 S: Sex education. You guys so sensitive also choose
 sex education. (all laugh)
 89 C: What to cover?
 90 S: Of course, Introduction, the causes....

Corrine (C) complained to her group that sex education was hard to write on (line 85). Soh (S) agreed with her and explained that it was different among cultures and countries and further sought opinions from her group on the topic (line 86). However, Corrine (C) quickly used a bidding style to finalise on the topic selection and the group chose sex education (line 87). Soh (S) informed the group that the topic chosen was sex education but she jokingly said she was surprised that her group eventually chose it despite their sensitivity towards it and her group laughed (line 88). Corrine and Soh then continued to discuss the areas to be covered in the topic (lines 89 and 90). The

group laughed over their selection of topic because they tried to reduce their discomfort over their selection of a topic they felt sensitive about.

Another situation which involved the use of humour to reduce tension during the drafting process is shown in the following excerpt.

Excerpt 46

- 1 C: We start with sex education first. Then continue with the rest. So start. (writes on paper)
 2 R: Where's Kok?
 3 Y: On the bus. (smiles)
 4 C: Write what is sex education ... Outline?
 5 S: With Kok. On the bus! (all laugh)

Corrine (C) started the discussion by stating that they would start writing on sex education and then continue with the other areas (line 1). The researcher (R) asked the group where Kok was (line 2). Yin (Y) informed her in a humorous manner that Kok was on the bus (line 3). Corrine (C) asked where the outline was because she wanted to refer to it (line 4). Soh (S) informed her in a jesting manner that it was with Kok on the bus and the whole group laughed (line 5). The humour used was to reduce the seriousness of the situation because the whole group knew that they were uneasy with Kok not being in the discussion and the outline could not be referred to since it was with her.

Use of National Language

The use of the national language in Malaysia which is *Bahasa Malaysia* (Malay Language) was evident during the collaborative writing sessions in Group 2 but not in

Group 1. Group 2 used it while performing the sub-task of the selection of topic and can be observed in the following excerpt.

Excerpt 47

- 15 S: No, just ask them if they believe or not. If believe, why you believe, if not believe, why not believe *lor*. Like our school, right also happen. Like ghost stories. Usually Malay *lah*. They just possesses, running around, screaming. Then bring them to exorcist to get out err...demon or devil *lah* something bad. So my topic is about this. This exorcist you believe is a parapsychology just because of mental.
- 16 J: Right. Got 2 topic. Ah 2 topic. First why *MAT REMPIT (ILLEGAL MOTORCYCLE RACERS)* always happen in our country. You know about *MAT REMPIT*. Always Malay people. Always dress ah...
- 17 C: Majority Malay people.
- ...
- 43 C: Ok, not to vote until 6 times.
- 44 Ss: Ok.
- 45 Y: *MAT REMPIT*.
- 46 F: *MAT REMPIT*.

Soh (S) was presenting information on her topic on exorcism (line 15). It was followed by James (J) who presented his first topic on *Mat Rempit* (illegal motorcycle racers) which he felt was common in his country and who were Malays (line 16). Corrine (C) corrected him by saying that a majority of Malays were *Mat Rempit* (line 17). The discussion continued until they had to select a topic by using the voting method. Corrine suggested to the group that they should not vote six times (line 43). The group agreed with her (line 44). Yin (Y) and Fun (F) stated their decision in choosing the *Mat Rempit* topic (lines 45 and 46). The group constantly used *Mat Rempit* in their discussion because they did not know the English term for it. Therefore, they used the

term in their national language instead since everyone could understand the meaning of it.

Factors which Inhibit Collaboration

A number of factors which inhibited collaboration were identified in Group 2's sessions. They were collectivist culture, participants' proficiency, different levels of expectations, a lack of time management skills, leadership style and a lack of punctuality. Explanations of how these factors affect collaboration are provided in the following sections.

Leadership Style

Soh, the leader in Group 2 was observed to display democratic behaviour in all of the collaborative writing sessions (see page 141). Group 2 maintained a democratic leadership style while Group 1 had a mixture of autocratic and democratic leadership. Soh chose to be lax in her leadership to encourage participation from her group. However, they did not place much importance on the sessions. Group 2 only had a total of eight sessions in comparison with Group 1 which had ten sessions for the writing task. The negative consequences of the leadership style in Group 2 were a lack of preparation for discussions, Corrine's constant dominating, unpunctual group members and being easily distracted from their work.

Firstly, the group failed to prepare well for the sessions. They only collected information on the topic and reported on it for three sessions while Group 1 performed

the sub-task for five sessions. It was observed from Group 2's long report that it did not have as much in-depth information in comparison with Group 1's work. Soh, as Group 2's leader did not emphasise to her group the importance of preparing well for their discussions. Therefore, their collaboration was not very productive because not much information was discussed.

Secondly, Soh allowed Corrine to dominate the discussions and exasperated her group (see page 125, week 1 and page 131, week 3). Corrine's constant correction of her group's contributions and insistence of making decisions for her group affected them negatively. Soh, as the leader did not try to improve the situation by inviting others to talk regularly and did not advise Corrine to be considerate towards others.

Thirdly, some of the group members were not punctual for their discussions. Their tardiness affected the collaboration adversely. James did not arrive punctually in Weeks 5 and 6 while Kok was late for her discussion in Week 8. James' lateness disappointed and angered his group. Corrine instead of Soh reprimanded him on his lateness and influenced the group to ignore him (see page 135, week 6, excerpt 18). Kok's lateness resulted in her group being unable to refer to the outline as they wrote their long report (see page 194, drafting). Her group had to write without referring to the outline at all. Consequently, it was noticed that some important information was missing from their work.

Fourthly, Group 2 was distracted from their sub-tasks in a few situations (see page 194, excerpt 37) and in the following excerpt.

Excerpt 48

- 44 J: I go out. (Everyone ignores him as he walks out.)
 45 S: You know how to fill this form? (shows a form for study loan application to Kok)
 46 K: (looks at form) Must have SURAT. (LETTER)
 47 F: So difficult.
 48 C: We must continue to write at home.

James (J) excused himself from the room (line 44). Soh (S) asked Kok (K) how to fill out a study loan application form (line 45). Kok explained to her that a *surat* (letter) had to be submitted (line 46). Fun (F) commented that it was difficult to do it (line 47). Corrine (C) informed her group that they must continue writing at home (line 48). Soh as the group leader side-tracked from the discussion and eventually, Corrine had to get the group to focus on the sub-task by telling them of the need to do their work at home. Due to their constant side-tracking in their discussions, Group 2's long report was not as detailed as Group 1's work. Group 1 in comparison with Group 2 concentrated fully on their sub-tasks during their collaborative writing.

Collectivist Culture

Groups 2 and 1 were observed to avoid confrontation and maintain group harmony having been influenced by the collectivist culture (Hofstede, 2005, 2001). Only Corrine who was a high-power member was assertive while the rest of them placed more importance on the group's goals over their own goals. Due to Group 2's

emphasis on the group's needs, their collaboration had been adversely affected. It is evident in two prominent incidents during the collaborative writing sessions.

Firstly, the group did not confront Corrine over her dominating ways despite feeling unhappy (see page 125, week 1 and page 131, week 3). She constantly corrected her group and insisted on the use of both questionnaire and interviews during the data collection. James sought the group's support to challenge Corrine's decision but only Kok supported him. Therefore, Corrine's idea was accepted. James, Soh, Kok, Yin and Fun expressed their dissatisfactions with the discussions. Surprisingly, none of them decided to honestly express their feelings to Corrine. James in his diary entry even stated that he placed the group's goal over his own unhappiness. Consequently, he refused to take any action which might affect the group's solidarity.

Secondly, the group except for Corrine did not have open communication with one another. They chose to remain silent over their unhappiness because they wanted to maintain group harmony. James admitted through his diary entries that he was disappointed that his group did not select his topics for their long report and he was angry with Corrine over her high-handed way in forcing the group to accept her opinion on the use of questionnaire and interviews.

Consequently, James lost interest in the sessions and decided to arrive late. His lateness created friction between him and his group (see pages 135, week 6 and page 138, week 8). His group, under the influence of Corrine, decided to ignore him. This

action is influenced by the collectivist culture in which group members who do not behave like the rest of them in the group is to be ostracised (Hofstede, 2005, 2001). By ignoring him, important contribution from James was overlooked. The group finally accepted him back to the group in their last collaborative writing session.

Participants' Proficiency

Group 2, similarly with Group 1 consisted of group members with mixed proficiency. It was observed that some of the weak students, too, faced problems in contributing their ideas during the discussions. According to Lensmire (1994), one of the reasons for students not participating in collaborative writing sessions is insufficient command of the language besides other reasons ranging from a lack of confidence in writing to hierarchical peer relationships.

Only Fun, Kok and Yin who have weak command of English expressed their difficulties in contributing their ideas due to their quiet and shy nature. On the other hand, Soh and James, who also have weak command of English did not face any problem because they were confident in nature. Similarly with weak students in Group 1, Yin, Kok and Fun failed to present their ideas during some of the collaborative writing sessions. They admitted through their diary entries that they did not speak much due to their lack of confidence in their grammar. Kok and Yin explain in their interviews that they could understand their group but they could not think of what to say because they were too tensed to process their thoughts. Fun added that she was

aware that her voice was too soft when speaking due to her fear of speaking in the group.

Corrine just like Loh who have better command of English than their group members was unhappy with the group's lack of preparation and contribution. Corrine claimed that she talked a lot in the discussions because her group members were inactive. She tried keeping silent initially to allow them the opportunity to speak but they failed to do so.

Different Levels of Expectations

The interviews and diary entries revealed that individual group members had different levels of expectations from the collaboration similar with Group 1. All of them did not share with each other their expectations and sought ways on how they could achieve them as a group. Therefore, they felt dissatisfied with the sessions and formed negative perceptions of the collaboration which occurred.

First, Corrine felt the sessions were unproductive because the members did not prepare well and therefore, could not make decisions effectively. The lack of preparation was evident when they could not share new information on the topic regularly. Corrine felt it was unfair to others who had worked hard in collecting and sharing new information for every session. She was disappointed that they could not make quick decisions on questions to be used for the questionnaire and on information to be included in their writing because not everyone contributed in the discussions.

Therefore, the group had to spend a long time on the sub-tasks. Corrine, similar with Loh from Group 1 did not realise that a major problem her group faced was understanding the articles they had read due to their weak command of English.

Second, Kok expressed her frustration with James who came late for the discussions in her diary entry. His tardiness resulted in a delay of work. The group could not proceed with their plan of work but had to postpone their discussion on James' share of work until he arrived. James, in turn, was unapologetic about his tardiness.

All the group members except Corrine admitted that they did not contribute much in the sub-tasks of sharing information, preparing questions for their questionnaire and analysing the data. It was due to a few problems they faced. They experienced difficulty in understanding the new information they had collected. Hence, they decided to depend on Corrine to explain her new information. Furthermore, Fun misunderstood the topic and her suggested questions for the questionnaire were found to be unsuitable. She understood that her mistake slowed the group in making a decision on the final questions to be used. In addition, Yin and Soh claimed in their diary entries that they could not assist in analysing the data because they could not calculate well. They feared making serious mistakes and allowed other group members to do it.

Lack of Time Management Skills

The participants complained of the lack of time management skills in their collaboration through their interviews and diary entries. They felt that it had resulted in them wasting too much time on certain sub-tasks. Some sub-tasks could have been completed in a short time had they allocated a certain amount of time for them.

Corrine and Fun were dissatisfied with the amount of time spent on unimportant sub-tasks. Corrine was unhappy with the group spending more than one session on drawing the mind-map while Fun complained that they spent too much time in deciding their topic. They felt that both sub-tasks were not complicated and they should not have spent so much time on them. Consequently, the time allotted for other sub-tasks in the following sessions was shortened.

Lack of Punctuality

Another factor which inhibited Group 2's collaboration was a lack of punctuality. Group 1's members, however, attempted to be punctual for all of their discussions and informed their group members earlier whenever they were late. James and Kok from Group 2 who were late in arriving for their collaborative writing sessions affected their group's collaboration negatively. Their late arrival created major problems for the group.

First, James who was unhappy with the rejection of his suggested topics and Corrine's dominating behaviour decided to arrive late. His action caused his group to

be unable to continue their work of analysing their questionnaire results (see page 135, week 6). His group decided to ignore him as a form of punishment. When he arrived, he did not apologise for his lateness. Corrine reprimanded him but he did not treat her seriously. His group ostracised him and totally disregarded his contributions. James' lack of punctuality slowed down the progress of their work and when he was ignored by his group, important ideas from him were not considered.

Second, Kok who was late for the discussion created a serious problem to her group (see page 194, drafting). Kok who was having the outline was late and the group decided to start writing without referring to it. As a result, there was missing information because they could not remember the contents allotted for the different sections of the long report. The group, too, forgot to check their writing with the outline prepared after that.

Summary of Findings from Groups 1 and 2 based on Research Question 3

Factors which Enhance Collaboration

Groups 1 and 2 shared similar factors which promoted collaboration except for one factor which was uniquely found in Group 2. The factors found in both groups which enhanced collaboration were leadership style, collectivist culture, participants' proficiency and humour. The single factor found in Group 2 which boosted collaboration was the use of national language. A summary of the key findings can be viewed in Appendices 20 and 21.

Leadership Styles

Group 1 used a mixture of democratic and autocratic behaviour while Group 2 used purely democratic behaviour as their leadership styles. The group members found the styles adopted appropriate for them. Consequently, they could collaborate successfully.

Loh, the leader from Group 1 was democratic initially but later demonstrated mixed democratic and autocratic behaviour. As a result, the members could brainstorm and provide their opinions freely but they were not deterred by Loh's change of leadership style. The reasons could be the group realised that Loh has a good command of English and the collectivist culture emphasises on respect towards leaders and group solidarity (Hofstede, 2001).

Soh, the leader from Group 2 was consistently democratic during the sessions. She wanted to create a conducive atmosphere as a means to encourage participation from her group. Consequently, they produced twelve topics to choose from as their final topic. Soh even relinquished her leadership to Corrine in Week 8. She made the decision based on the group's interest because Corrine could guide the group in the writing task better than her due to her good command of English. As a result, the group successfully produced a long report with much language and writing assistance from Corrine.

Collectivist Culture

Both Groups 1 and 2 were influenced by the collectivist culture. It resulted in group harmony and solidarity, priority given to the group's achievement than individuals' goals and successful handling of a group member who misbehaved by showing their displeasure. Hence, the sessions could be conducted effectively.

Group 1 was co-operative, agreeable and respectful towards Loh, their group leader. Their emphasis on group harmony helped to resolve disagreements with each other. This resulted in the group having ten weeks of successful collaborative writing sessions.

The group members tried very hard to accept all of Loh's ideas due to their respect towards her. The collectivist culture places much importance on respect towards the leader (Hofstede, 2001). The group was satisfied with the discussions. The benefits gained were learning and understanding the information presented, not spending too much time in performing the sub-task of designing a questionnaire and having their mistakes corrected by others.

Group 2 tolerated with Corrine's dominating behaviour during the discussions despite being dissatisfied with her. However, they did not confront her nor correct her action due to their emphasis on group harmony. Furthermore, they realised they needed Corrine's language and writing assistance. On the other hand, Corrine was slightly unhappy with her group who depended too much on her but she did not stop guiding

her group. This was due to the influence of the collectivist culture which made Corrine understand that performing the group's task was more important than her personal dissatisfaction of the discussions.

The method used to handle James' misbehaviour during the discussions reflected the collectivist behaviour, too. Initially, James was frequently late and did not contribute effectively despite being reprimanded by Corrine. His group's action of ignoring him to show their displeasure was collectivist in nature. They hoped that James would change after being continually rejected by them. Consequently, he was punctual and contributed more than before because of his wish to re-establish his sense of belonging towards his group. He realised that the group's task was more important than his own pride.

Participants' Proficiency

Group 1 and 2 comprised members with mixed proficiency in English. However, all of them pooled their knowledge and abilities in producing their long reports.

Both groups depended heavily on Loh and Corrine in increasing their understanding of their articles. They helped to elicit information from the articles by asking probing questions and correcting them when they misunderstood the knowledge. Thus, it increased their understanding and refined their compiled knowledge. However, some of the weak group members were intimidated by Loh's questions and did not talk much causing her to reduce the frequency of her questions.

In addition, Loh and Corrine provided much help in the writing of the long reports. Corrine wrote an outline for her group to refer to in their writing. Both Loh and Corrine offered to edit and proofread the long reports for their groups. They understood that their groups needed their language and writing assistance. Therefore, the help provided was a form of scaffold for their group because they enabled them to perform sub-tasks which they could not perform initially.

Humour

Only positive group-related exhibitions of humour were identified in Groups 1 and 2. They were used to create group dynamics, reduce tension, establish cohesion (Terrion & Ashforth, 2002) and maintain solidarity (Holmes, 2000). Group dynamics is established, namely, by making themes and processes more explicit through humour, tension reduction is reducing discomfort and anxiety usually associated with taboo subjects while cohesiveness is the sharing of experience of laughter to promote acceptance and belongingness (Bloch et al., 1983).

However, more humour was detected in Group 2 than in Group 1. Group 2 was relaxed and easy-going while most of Group 1's members were serious and conscientious in nature. Groups 1 and 2 similarly used humour to reduce tension. Only Group 1 used humour to establish group dynamics while Group 2 used it to create cohesiveness and solidarity.

Groups 1 and 2 used humour to reduce tension. In Group 1, Loh and Wai were having a slight disagreement. The group realised that tension was building up and Ooi, aided by the researcher, used humour to diffuse the situation. The use of humour helped maintain solidarity and create a sense of cohesion.

The use of humour to reduce tension was also observed in Group 2. The group chose sex education which was difficult to write as their topic. When Soh announced the topic, she jokingly said she was surprised with their choice since they were sensitive towards it and her group laughed. They laughed to reduce their discomfort over their selection of topic.

Another situation which involved Group 2 using humour to reduce tension was detected during the drafting process. Kok was late for the discussion and they could not refer to their outline because it was with her. Soh informed Corrine in a jesting manner that the outline was with Kok on the bus when she asked for it causing the group to laugh. The humour was used to reduce the seriousness of the situation because the group was uneasy with Kok for not being in the discussion.

Second, it was observed that Wai from Group 1 used humour to create group dynamics during the sharing of information. When she reported her information on how to save money, spend money and manage credit cards, she interspersed her explanation on how people misuse their credit cards and buy shares without much

consideration with humour. However, her group did not respond to her effort to be humorous. It was because they were serious in nature and very task-focussed.

Third, Group 2 constantly used humour to create cohesiveness. It was observed during the discussion on the preparation of questionnaire and interview questions. When the researcher checked with the group on their questions, Corrine responded by giving a humorous answer.

Fourth, James jokingly asked his group what he should do if a girl he interviewed asked him what she would be given for participating in the interview. His group found his remark amusing and laughed. The researcher jestingly suggested giving the interviewees a sweet each and the group laughed again. James' behaviour could be described as attempting to create cohesiveness in the group because they were involved in the sub-task of interviewing their friends together.

Another situation in which humour was used by Group 2 to create cohesiveness was during the preparation of questionnaire and interview questions. Corrine checked with James if the boys in co-educational schools passed pictures around and James admitted that they did. Corrine wanted to find out his comments on the pictures but James refused to repeat what he said. He jokingly demonstrated self censorship on his speech and furthermore told the girls that he was a good boy and did not pass negative comments on the pictures. His group laughed over his statement. Again, James

behaviour reflected his use of humour to create cohesiveness in the group by making himself similar with his group members.

Use of National Language

The use of *Bahasa Malaysia* (Malay Language) which is the national language of Malaysia was evident in Group 2 but not in Group 1. Group 1 was able to discuss effectively without using their national language. However, Group 2 needed to use it to clarify their meaning.

After Soh presented her information on exorcism, James presented his first topic on *Mat Rempit* (illegal motorcycle racers). The group constantly used *Mat Rempit* in their discussion because they did not know the English term for it. Therefore, they used the term in their national language since everyone could understand the meaning of it.

Factors which Inhibit Collaboration

Groups 1 and 2 shared similar factors which hindered collaboration except for two factors which were uniquely found in Group 2. The factors found in both groups which prevented collaboration were collectivist culture, participants' proficiency, different levels of expectations, and a lack of time management skills. The factors uniquely found in Group 2 which reduced collaboration were the leadership style and a lack of punctuality. A summary of the key findings can be viewed in Appendices 22 and 23.

Collectivist Culture

Groups 1 and 2 were influenced by the collectivist culture during their discussions. Their priority on group harmony and conformity during their discussions had negatively affected the quality of their work. The adverse results were stopping an action in increasing understanding, failing to correct wrong behaviour, and avoiding open communication with one another.

Firstly, Loh stopped asking probing questions during their sessions. The questions were forms of verification and gate-keeping, too. However, Loh reduced the frequency of asking questions because she realised that her group was uncomfortable with her action and none of her group members followed her example. In the end, she used a closed approach instead which reduced further exploration of the issue. Influenced by the collectivist culture, she behaved in the same way as her group members which was merely accepting the information presented without any questions asked. Consequently, the content of the long report consisted of a large amount of information which was not properly linked and organised due to their lack of understanding and exploration of the information.

Secondly, Groups 1 and 2 did not correct Loh and Corrine when they made mistakes. Group 1 did not emphasise to Loh that she was wrong when she rejected Wai's question by claiming that it was similar with a question approved earlier. It was due to the group's attempt to avoid an argument in order to create a harmonious

atmosphere. Hence, a suitable interview question that could be used to elicit information was left out.

Group 2 did not attempt to correct Corrine's dominating ways despite feeling unhappy over it. Surprisingly, none of them honestly expressed their feelings to her. James stated that he placed the group's decision over his own. Consequently, he refused to take any action which might affect the group's solidarity.

Group 2 failed to have open communication with one another, too. They chose to remain silent over their unhappiness in order to maintain group harmony. James admitted through his diary entries that he was disappointed that his topics were not chosen and he was angry with Corrine over her high-handed ways. Consequently, James lost interest in the sessions and arrived late for the discussions. His group, under the influence of Corrine, ignored him but finally accepted him back to the group in their last session. The action of leaving him out of the discussions, too, is influenced by the collectivist culture in which group members who do not behave like the rest of them in the group is to be ostracised (Hofstede, 2005, 2001).

Participants' Proficiency

Groups 1 and 2 consisted of group members with mixed proficiency. The problems which arose due to their proficiency were the inhibitions they had in speaking and their lack of contribution. First, most of the group members with poor command of English were self-conscious during the discussions. Soong and Phua from

Group 1 did not talk at all in a single session due to their lack of confidence. Soong admitted that she experienced difficulty in explaining the information and was unsure on how to present it. Her fears were added by her poor command of English. In addition, Phua and Wai admitted that they were very shy and nervous during the sessions. It resulted in their inability to think well before speaking. Tang, too, faced difficulty in understanding her friends' points due to her weak command of the language.

Meanwhile, only Fun, Kok and Yin from Group 2 who have poor command of English expressed their difficulties in contributing their ideas due to their quiet and shy nature. On the other hand, Soh and James, who also have poor command of English did not face any problem in the discussion because they were confident in nature. Similarly with weak students in Group 1, Yin, Kok and Fun admitted that they did not speak much due to their lack of confidence in their grammar and they could not understand their group members' information.

The lack of contribution and preparation from the weak group members frustrated both Loh and Corrine who have good command of English. They made the assumption that their group did not prepare well for the discussions. Corrine claimed that she was forced to talk a lot in the discussions because her group members were inactive. She tried keeping silent initially to allow them the opportunity to speak but they failed to do so.

Different Levels of Expectations

The interviews and diary entries revealed that individual group members had different levels of expectations from the collaboration. They did not share with each other their expectations and discussed ways to meet them. Therefore, they felt dissatisfied and formed negative perceptions of the collaboration.

First, Loh, being the leader of Group 1, was disappointed with her group. She assumed that they did not contribute effectively when they failed to answer her questions well. Her intention of asking questions was to help her group increase their understanding. On the other hand, they provided only short answers which did not meet her expectations. Loh felt that the lack of preparation caused them to be unable to answer her questions. Tang and Soong confirmed that they did not contribute much due to their lack of preparation because they failed to understand their readings. Loh did not understand that they were struggling with the sub-task due to their weak command of English.

Second, Soong from Group 1, wrote in her diary entry that she was dissatisfied with the collaboration due to the uncertainty on how to contribute in the discussions. Some of her group members gave detailed explanations of their points but some only read out the sub-headings of their information, thus, depriving the group of useful elaborations. Since she was unsure of the proper method of presentation and she lacked confidence in her language ability, she decided to remain silent.

Thirdly, Corrine from Group 2 felt the sessions were unproductive because the members did not prepare well and they could not make decisions effectively. Their lack of preparation was evident when they could not share new information on the topic regularly. Corrine felt it was unfair to others who had worked hard in searching and sharing new information for every session. She was disappointed that they could not make quick decisions on questions to be used for the questionnaire and on information to be included in their writing. Therefore, the group had to spend a long time on the sub-tasks. Corrine, similar with Loh from Group 1 did not realise that a major problem her group members faced was understanding the articles they had read due to their weak command of English.

Fourth, Kok from Group 2 was unhappy with James who came late for the discussions. It resulted in a delay of work. The group could not proceed with their plan of work but had to postpone their discussion on James' share of work until he arrived. James, in turn, was unapologetic about his tardiness.

All the members in Group 2 except Corrine admitted that they did not contribute much in the sub-tasks. They experienced difficulty in understanding the new information they had collected. Hence, they decided to depend on Corrine alone. Furthermore, Fun misunderstood the topic and her suggested questions for the questionnaire were unsuitable. Her mistake slowed the group in deciding on the final questions to be used. In addition, Yin and Soh claimed that they could not assist in analysing the data because they were afraid of making calculation mistakes.

Lack of Time Management Skills

Groups 1 and 2 complained of the lack of time management skills in their collaboration through their interviews and diary entries. They felt that it had resulted in them wasting too much time on certain sub-tasks.

First, Loh and Soong from Group 1 were unhappy with spending too much time on the sub-tasks of drawing the mind-map and drafting their long report. Loh confessed that she did not plan their time and it resulted in them needing more than one session to complete them. She felt strongly that they would not have spent so much time had she allocated time for them. In addition, she felt that as the group leader, she should be responsible for good time management for her group.

Similarly, Corrine and Fun from Group 2 were dissatisfied with the amount of time spent on certain sub-tasks. Corrine was unhappy with the group spending more than one session on the drawing of the mind-map while Fun complained that they spent too much time in deciding on their topic. They felt that both of the sub-tasks were not complicated and they should not have spent so much time on them. Consequently, the time allotted for other difficult sub-tasks in the following sessions was shortened.

Leadership Style

It was only found in Group 2 that the democratic leadership style adopted by Soh was a deterrent in collaboration. Soh chose to be lax in her leadership in order to create a conducive atmosphere as a means to encourage participation. However, it resulted in

less effort from her group and they did not place much importance on the collaborative writing sessions. Group 2 only had a total of eight collaborative writing sessions in comparison with Group 1 which had ten productive sessions in which the group members were observed to be contributing effectively. The negative consequences of the leadership style in Group 2 were a lack of preparation, Corrine's dominating, unpunctual group members and being easily distracted from their work.

First, the group did not prepare well prior to the sessions. They only searched for information and reported on it for three sessions while Group 1 performed the sub-task for five sessions. It was observed from Group 2's long report that it did not have as much detailed information in comparison with Group 1's work. Soh, as the group leader did not emphasise to her group the importance of preparing well for their discussions.

Second, Soh allowed Corrine to dominate the discussions. Corrine's constant correction of her group's contribution and insistence of making decisions for her group exasperated them. Her group was unhappy with her. Soh, as the group leader did not try to solve the problem.

Third, some of the members' lack of punctuality affected the collaboration adversely. James did not arrive punctually in Weeks 5 and 6 while Kok was late in Week 8. James' lateness disappointed and angered his group. Corrine instead of Soh reprimanded him and influenced the group to ignore him. Kok's tardiness resulted in

her group being unable to refer to the outline as they wrote their long report. She was supposed to bring the outline to the session but she forgot about it. Her group were forced to write without referring to the outline. Consequently, it was noticed that some important information was left out from their work.

Fourth, the group was easily distracted from their sub-tasks. James constantly excused himself from the room and Soh together with Kok and Fun discussed how to fill out a study loan application during their sessions. Surprisingly, Soh as the group leader also side-tracked from the discussion and eventually, Corrine had to get the group to focus by reminding them the need to do their work at home. Due to their constant distractions from their discussions, Group 2's long report was not as detailed as Group 1's work. Group 1 in comparison with Group 2 concentrated fully on their task during their sessions due to Loh's guidance as the group leader.

Lack of Punctuality

Another factor which inhibited Group 2's collaboration was a lack of punctuality. Group 1's members, however, attempted to be punctual for their discussions. There was only one session in which Ong, Loh and Wai were late but their group could still proceed with the task because they informed their group of their lateness earlier. James and Kok from Group 2 who were late created problems for their group.

Firstly, James who was unhappy with the rejection of his suggested topics and Corrine's dominating behaviour decided to arrive late. His action slowed the progress

of work. When he arrived, he did not apologise for his lateness. His group ignored him as a form of punishment. Furthermore, when he was ignored by his group, important ideas from him could have been missed out.

Second, Kok who was late for the discussion created a serious problem to her group. Since she was late and was having the outline, the group decided to start writing without her. When she arrived, they realised that she had forgotten to bring the outline. As a result, there was missing information in the writing because they could not remember the contents allotted for the different sections of the long report. The group, too, overlooked checking their writing with the outline later to ensure that all of the information had been included.