

Summary of a Qualitative Study

Reference: Falloon, G. (2015). What's the difference? Learning collaboratively using iPads in conventional classrooms. *Computers & Education*, 84, 62-77. doi:[10.1016/j.compedu.2015.01.010](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2015.01.010)

Purpose of Study: The study examines if any differences exist between the iPad and other digital devices that may make it a 'stand out performer' for supporting learner collaboration.

Research Question: Does digital device use affect student's ability to collaborate?

Method: Qualitative design - Case Study.

Research Setting: Classroom setting in a medium sized primary school in New Zealand.

Participants:

New Zealand Primary School Students (Ages 7 – 10)			
Grade	New Entrant & Year 1	Year 3 & Year 4	Year 5 & Year 6
# of students	41 Students	26 students	28 Students
Year	2012/2013	2014	2014

Data Collection: Twenty item slider scale/Likert/short response online survey administered using SurveyGizmo. Focus group discussions (30 mins) information collected and coded into survey. Data collected in surveys to participants from 2012-2014. Dialogue was digitally recorded and transcribed.

Data Analysis: Slider and Likert scale data exported from survey Gizmo, and turned into line/bar charts. Short response data coded axially using manual color coding. Transcripts of focus group discussion were reviewed for data, and aligned with the code categories. The review sought more information on why and how students considered the technical/design and app-related attributes of iPads assisted them (or not) to work together.

Study Report: Researcher used tables to provide data summaries from the survey, short response questions and focus group discussions, responding to the two classifications identified from the earlier studies linked to facilitating student collaboration (device technical/design and app-related).

Rigor and Trustworthiness: Researcher rotated iPads with grades who did not have the recording device over multi-year study. Researcher and teacher read aloud and explained the questions one at a time due to their age and some their relatively limited reading capability, to ensure all understood what the question asked and how they were to respond to it. Short response data and categories were discussed with a colleague who assisted in category refinement, before coding was carried out independently by the researcher and his colleague. A kappa inter-rater agreement calculation was performed on data both raters identified.

Results: Short response and focus group data indicated these students considered some apps valuable for facilitating feedback, that they could then use to improve their work. Google docs was the app of choice for collaboration; Students gave the features of the device a high ranking in assisting with ease of use to collaborate; working synchronously with others (multi-devices) helped with collaboration b/c you could respond immediately.

Comments: I think this study would be interesting to follow if it wasn't 'staged' for collaboration. For instance, if you followed a classroom and collected collaboration data on their devices when the teachers weren't asked to set up the class that way similar results? I'd also like to see high school aged students results in the same type of study.