Gains and losses: Handwriting Versus Digital Writing

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Abstract

In this study, we compared three different writing conditions – pen and paper; tablet and tablet with access to speech synthesis. The study was conducted within a class of fourth graders in Sweden. The aim was to examine how these different conditions for writing affected students’ creation of narrative text. The empirical data consists of students’ texts completed with data from participant observations. The texts were analysed in order to capture dimensions of how the students express themselves from different perspectives such as the use of different verbs in terms of doing, being, sensing or talking (process analyse), the text structure and linguistic correctness. Findings show that digital writing with access to speech synthesis played a crucial role in improving students’ writing. This result turned out to be mainly valid for students with Swedish as their second language. When it comes to findings from the process analyse, that examined one aspect of the content of the texts was that processes that describe verbs of being increased when students wrote digitally, regardless of first or second language for the students.

Keywords: digital resources’, elementary school, narrative texts, writing