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Impact of Collaborative Writing on Learners of English as a Second Language

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Teaching English for the learners of English as a second language has undergone many changes in the recent times and numerous novel methods are being introduced to make language learning and writing more effective. Collaborative writing is one among those methods used to enhance the writing proficiency of the learners of English as a second language. The major concern of this study is to identify the impact of collaborative writing on learners of English as a second language. The study has investigated how collaborative writing can improve the critical thinking skills of the learners. The study mainly focuses on the collaborative writing skill, with specific focus on the composition writing skill of the learners of English as a second Language in the University College of Jaffna. The sample of the study included thirty students from the Food Technology course of the University College of Jaffna. The data were collected through written tests where an individual test and a group test on the same topic was given and assessed. Further data were collected through questionnaires and Observer's notes. The analysis of the data showed that the group essays were more organized and meaningful with less errors rather than the individual test. Among the thirty samples for the study, the collaborative writing was effective for almost all of them and for nineteen of them it was more useful. The analysis also helped to identify the attitude of learners towards collaborative writing and it revealed a positive impact on their learning and writing proficiency. The writing ability and the writing skill of the students seem to be limited in many parts of Sri Lanka compared to the other three basic language skills. Therefore, there is a pressing need for research on the writing practices of Sri Lanka and to discover suitable remedies to improve the writing skill. Finally, through this research, it is identified that collaborative writing is an effective way to improve the writing skill of learners of English as a Second Language.

Key words: Collaborative Writing, Composition Writing, ESL, Language Teaching, Writing Skill