

Group Work for Stress-Free Environment for Effective Language Learning and Acquisition - An Experimental Study

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ABSTRACT

Group work is a general teaching-learning strategy where students work together in face-to-face interaction and teacher as a facilitator to achieve a common goal. Language competency occurs successfully in the stress-free, friendly and low anxiety environment. Through fruitful discussions, students are able to personalize this knowledge and intensify thinking processes and also, they can mold their language ability. This study examined whether group work enhances students' English language dexterity in a stress-free environment. The problem associated with this study is to find why students show inability and hesitance to compete in the language skills, especially, students feeling insecure when they communicate in English though they have been learning the language for more than decade; besides, they scarcely show interest in learning the language. This study was conducted selecting sixty undergraduates from the Faculty of Business Studies, Vavuniya Campus. Students were put into twelve groups consisting five in each. They were given series of individual and group work activities throughout the semester and their performances were measured by pre-test, post-test scores; continuous observations and open-ended questionnaires were administered to elicit opinions from the respondents. The collected data were analyzed by using statistical analysis such as descriptive analysis. After conducting the statistical analysis on the test scores, significant improvement was observed among the students after the implementation of systematic group activities rather than individual or whole class activities. The findings showed a higher mean value of 40.31 for group learning performance than the individual learning (29.6). The findings recommend for the implementation of collaborative learning; practicing the traditional way of language teaching and following the conventional class room set up should be avoided to achieve the competency in the language learning.

Keywords: group work; collaborative learning; English language learning; language competency; learner anxiety; undergraduate students; ESL; Business Studies