

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING IN TEACHING ENGLISH

Ergashova F.B.

*Ergashova Fayoz Bahodirovna - Student of Master's Degree,
ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE FACULTY,
UZBEKISTAN STATE UNIVERSITY OF WORLD LANGUAGES,
TASHKENT, REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN*

Abstract: *over the course of last decade English language teaching has attempted to tackle the issue of implementing effective learning strategies for EFL learners. Collaborative learning and its principles also play very important role here, in which learners enjoy strong bond built between each other that facilitates them to be more productive in terms of becoming proficient English language learners. Thus, this article aims at showing its benefits and how to implement it properly in English language classes.*

Keywords: *collaborative learning, EFL, snowballing, listening triangles, talk with partner.*

Learning a language is different from acquiring a language. In this context, Krashen (1982) says, "Acquiring language is an unconscious process, whereas learning a second language is a conscious one". It is absolutely correct that children acquire their mother tongue right from their birth and on the other hand, they learn their second language once they get some command over the other subjects. The learners should learn the structure as well as its use in real situations while learning a foreign or second language. A native of Spanish learner who wants to learn English will put adjectives after nouns and he should have to do the reverse while he learns English. As the learners are from various backgrounds, the teachers have to create a friendly learning environment for them. Then the learners are motivated and pay more attention towards learning and the learning also happens in a joyful, peasant and congenial atmosphere. Even the small things that are done in the classrooms make a big difference for the English language learners (ELLs) while they are learning a new language and in a different culture. Therefore, the English teachers have to provide a warm and friendly environment for the ELLs to learn English in a learner-friendly manner. The main responsibility of the teachers of English is to motivate the learners towards the subjects by applying different strategies of learning. Furthermore, the teachers have to implement various novel techniques and approaches of English language teaching, the language skills of the ELLs will be improved when they allot more time to learn the new things and give a regular practice to what they have learnt in the classroom. Most frequently, ELLs use the English language not only to describe some notions or ideas but also to contribute to their structured activities where they support group or learner-to-learner interaction.

In most of the situations, effective learning is taking place when the learners learn by working together. Collaborative learning happens when a group of two or more learners work together to collaborate on a task, discuss a point or complete an activity. This type of intended consequence of accomplishing tasks together is to help learners learn the complexities of finding solution to a problem and promote deeper leaning through doing. Group work helps the learners to learn the course material better and provides opportunities for the learners to develop some more additional skills. Learners have to divide the given large project into small tasks, manage time, harness group members' strengths, cooperate, manage time, address group learning needs, resolve conflicts and reach consensus when the learners want to work in groups. These skills are very much useful for the learners not only in their collaborative workspaces but also in their future careers. To achieve specific learning outcomes, effective group work should be structured carefully. The effective group work must have certain learning outcomes such as instructors' continuous support throughout the task, formation of clear learning outcomes and the learners' expectations and well written directions.

As collaborative learning involves groups of learners working together to accomplish a task, solve a problem or create a final product, we can say it is an educational approach. Gerlach (1994) says, "Collaborative learning is based on the idea that learning is a naturally social act in which the participants talk among themselves. It is through the talk that learning occurs". Collaborative learning is an umbrella term for a variety of educational approaches involving joint intellectual effort by either the learners or the learners and teachers together. It is quite common that learners work in groups of two or more, searching mutually for meanings, understanding or solutions. Smith and MacGregor (1992) state, "Collaborative learning varies widely, but it focuses on student's exploration or application of the course material, rather than the teacher's presentation or explication of it".

Collaborative learning is widely used in education and it is one of the realistic and pragmatic teaching approaches where the learners work in teams or groups in order to solve an issue, generate an artifact or understand a notion or concept. In collaborative learning, learners involve with one another in order to get the correct information, assess their notions and scrutinize or monitor their work together. Therefore, collaborative learning is an exact term that caters for educational approaches encircling combined academic exertion between learners or learners and teachers together. Even though the learners work together, each one is responsible and accountable to each other. Collaborative learning either happens in the form of direct communication or uses

computer platforms using online forums or chat-rooms. Collaborative teaching as well as learning creates a situation where learners aggressively cooperate by sharing their experiences and undertake various roles. In collaborative learning, the learners work on the main tasks including problem-solving, collaborative writing, study groups, discussions, group projects and some other activities that are related to finding a solution.

As group work or team work is the main concern of collaborative learning, it has several advantages for both teachers and learners. The learners get a lot of benefit from collaborative learning where the learners share the ideas with the members of the group and also learn many new things and gain more knowledge from it. Competition is valued over cooperation in our current educational framework and in our society. According to Panitz (1996) and Cohen & Cohen (1991), "By asking group members to identify what behaviours help them work together and by asking individuals to reflect on their contribution to the group's success or failure, students are made aware of the need for healthy, positive, helping interactions".

As part of the collaborative learning, the teachers of EFL or ESL have to implement a variety of activities in their classrooms to make the learners active in their learning. So, activities like pair or group discussions provide the learners to work together on shared tasks such as sorting, ranking, matching activities with competitive games like bingo, role play and drama. The teachers can also give the learners some tasks such as information exchange activities including jigsaw activities and barrier games. While doing pair or group discussions, the English teachers have to introduce the activities such as Listening Triangles, Talk Partners, Snowballing, ThinkPair-Share and so on. While working on shared tasks, the teachers should introduce activities like ranking, matching and sorting and the learners work on these tasks collaboratively that encourages them to use the vocabulary of their topic and also inspires them to use the language of agreeing and disagreeing, justifying opinions, making suggestions and so on. The learners also get a chance to have a practice on listening.

In collaborative learning, the role of the English teachers is very important and they should assist the learners whenever they ask for help. Furthermore, they have to act as facilitators rather than instructors. When the learners do their tasks by sharing their duties, the given tasks will be finished easily in a learner-friendly and fun-filled environment. In collaborative learning, even the average learners can contribute a lot and perform well in their group activities. Hence, the English language teachers have to be more dynamic in their classrooms while the learners perform their tasks and should always motivate and encourage them to perform their activities in a well-organized and congenial atmosphere.

References

1. *Bayer A.S.* (1990). Collaborative-apprenticeship learning: Language and thinking across the curriculum, K-12. Mountain View, Calif: Mayfield Pub. Co.
2. *Beebe S.A. & Masterson J.T.* (2003). Communicating in small groups. Pearson Education Inc. Boston: Massachusetts.
3. *MacGregor J.* (1990). "Collaborative learning: Shared inquiry as a process of reform". In Svinicki M.D. (Ed.). The changing face of college teaching, New Directions for Teaching and Learning. № 42.