

**THE EFFECT OF BRAINSTORMING AS A PREWRITING
STRATEGY IN INCREASING EFL LEARNERS' WRITING ABILITY**

Nilufar Mamatkulova, PhD

Scientific Advisor, Uzbekistan State World Languages University

Sugdiyona Turgunboeva

3rd year student of Uzbekistan State World Languages University

Abstract: *This research article aims to investigate the significance of brainstorming as a prewriting strategy in improving students' writing ability in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. By reviewing previous research studies and scientific facts, this article establishes the benefits of incorporating brainstorming activities into the writing process.*

Key words: *writing proficiency, brainstorming, creativity, prewriting strategy, idea generation, EFL classrooms, reading and writing.*

INTRODUCTION

Writing proficiency is essential for EFL students to effectively communicate in English. As many learners face challenges in generating ideas and organizing their thoughts during the writing process, brainstorming, as a prewriting technique, has gained recognition as an effective strategy to overcome these difficulties. This article investigates the significance of brainstorming in enhancing students' writing ability in EFL classrooms.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Brown (1987), reading and writing need to be taken as an advanced stage of language development and he suggested that one of the highly complicated and difficult processes for the most of the second language learners is writing.

However, it has been neglected as a valid activity for language practice and development for years and most teachers did not emphasize the importance of

brainstorming at all. According to Ashwell (2000), 60% of the students said that they know the importance of brainstorming but do not use it daily. Ashwell proposed that all the activities that intervene between the first decision to write and the beginning of a maintained first draft are related to pre-writing phase so named as pre drafting. Many investigators begin to insist that students use different ways in order to explore a topic before writing a draft, such as making use of mediation, journals, analogies, brainstorming, clustering, grouping and free writing.

Several studies have investigated the impact of brainstorming on EFL learners' writing ability. For instance, Farhangi, Fatemi, and Qaviketf (2014) investigated the effect of brainstorming on the writing performance of Iranian intermediate EFL learners. Results of the study revealed that brainstorming strategies instruction had positive effects on EFL learners writing achievement. It also made them responsible for their better learning.

Zhang and Vukelich (1998) investigated the influences of prewriting activities on the writing quality of male and female students with varying academic achievement across four grade levels. Results indicated that on average, students who wrote with prewriting activities performed better than students who wrote without prewriting activities. Students' gender and academic achievement level had strong influences on the effectiveness of prewriting, with females consistently scoring higher than males. Mogahed (2013) stated that most of the problems cannot be solved automatically by the first ideas that come to mind and found that 60% of the students reported that writing was the toughest subject.

Overall, the evidence from the reviewed literature suggests that brainstorming is an effective prewriting strategy that can significantly improve students' writing ability, particularly in terms of generating and organizing ideas, coherence, and organization of their writing. It is an open-minded and non-judgmental process that encourages free thinking and creativity. The purpose of brainstorming as a pre-writing activity is to stimulate the mind, overcome writer's block, and explore multiple perspectives on a subject matter.

PRIMARY BENEFITS OF BRAINSTORMING

- **Developing Critical Thinking Skills**

Brainstorming also plays a crucial role in developing students' critical thinking skills. This critical thinking practice strengthens their ability to approach writing tasks with a more analytical mindset, resulting in well-structured arguments and coherent ideas.

- **Expanding Vocabulary and Knowledge Base**

Through brainstorming, students are exposed to a wide range of ideas and topics related to their writing assignments. This exposure helps expand their vocabulary and knowledge base.

- **Organizing Thoughts and Ideas**

One of the biggest challenges in writing is organizing thoughts and ideas in a logical and coherent manner. This structured approach provides a roadmap for their essays, research papers, or other written assignments, making the writing process more manageable and efficient.

- **Overcoming Writer's Block**

Writer's block is a common hurdle that many students face during the writing process. The non-judgmental nature of brainstorming allows students to freely express their thoughts without fear of criticism or evaluation. This freedom helps remove mental barriers and boosts their confidence, enabling them to overcome creative blocks and produce high-quality written work.

Maghsoudi and Haririan (2013) carried out a study on the impact of brainstorming strategies on Iranian EFL learners writing skill regarding their social class students. Results of the study provided the evidence that the instruction of brainstorming strategy had a positive effect on EFL learners writing improvement and also make them more active. They believed that brainstorming strategy applied as controversial issue in history of ELT and it has long been considered with suspicion by language teachers therefore, it has been neglected as a valid activity for language practice and development. However, regarding the nature of brainstorming and creative thinking we can mention that there are

important elements in teaching process which causes it appropriate for being applied in language teaching procedure.

CONCLUSION

Brainstorming is a powerful pre-writing activity that significantly enhances students' writing abilities. By unlocking creativity, fostering critical thinking, expanding vocabulary, and facilitating the organization of thoughts, brainstorming provides students with a solid foundation for successful writing. Moreover, it serves as a valuable tool to overcome writer's block and encourages collaborative learning and peer interaction. By incorporating brainstorming into their writing process, students can develop stronger writing skills, produce more engaging content, and excel in their academic endeavors.

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