

International Conference on Current Trends in ELT

The Impact of Brainstorming on Reading Comprehension and Critical Thinking Ability of EFL Learners

Zargham Ghabanchi^a, Saeedeh Behrooznia^{b, *}

^a English Language Department, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, 9177948974, Mashhad, Iran

^b English Language Department, Political Sciences and Foreign Languages, Islamic Azad University of Mashhad, 9187144123, Mashhad, Iran

Abstract

The present study investigated the impact of brainstorming as a pre-reading strategy on reading comprehension ability as well as critical thinking (CT) ability of EFL learners. In so doing, the study used an experimental design with 29 participants in the control group and 25 participants in the experimental one. The results of the pre test confirmed the homogeneity of the participants in the two groups regarding their reading comprehension ability as well as critical thinking ability. Neither the control group nor experimental group had any previous experience in brainstorming strategies. The participants in the experimental group were instructed how to use brainstorming strategies before reading passages. A 45 multiple-choice reading items taken from Flash (2005) TOEFL Reading and the 'Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal' (CTA) were employed to evaluate students' reading comprehension ability, besides their CT ability; respectively. The post test results indicated that brainstorming strategies have a positive significant effect on both CT ability as well as reading comprehension ability of the participants. The conclusions and implications of the research have been further pointed out with reference to foreign language teaching context.

© 2014 The Authors. Published by Elsevier Ltd. Open access under [CC BY-NC-ND license](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/).

Selection and peer-review under responsibility of Urmia University, Iran.

Keywords: Brainstorming Strategy, Critical Thinking ability, Reading Comprehension Ability

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +98-915-507-8550.
E-mail address: s_behrooznia2007@yahoo.com

1. Introduction

The role of brainstorming in obtaining educational objectives in various fields was extensively under research, recently. Many empirical studies have been performed considering the effectiveness of this approach in group idea generation. Brainstorming was the term proposed by Dr. Alex Osborn in 1953. Osborn (1953) defined this new technique as: "An organized way to allow the mind to produce ideas without getting bogged down in trying to judge the value of those ideas at the same time" (Kirk & Spreckelmeyer, 1993, p. 85).

Osborn (1953) mentioned the four following central guidelines for brainstorming:

1. Criticism is ruled out. 2. Freewheeling is welcomed. 3. Quantity is wanted. 4. Combination and improvement are sought (pp. 300-30). Osborn's claims have been investigated in great deal of research concerning the usefulness of group brainstorming. It has been verified that generating ideas in group is considerably more when Osborn's brainstorming guidelines are applied compared with individual ideation (Johnson, Parrott, & Stratten, 1968; Meadow, Parnes, & Reese, 1959; Parnes & Meadow, 1959).

It has been found that brainstorming can be an effective tool in teaching English as a foreign language. In Mongeau and Morr's (1999) terms brainstorming is a "method of ideation" (p. 14), through which a group of language learners are motivated to generate a large number of ideas.

One of the main benefits of brainstorming is the activation of readers' prior knowledge. As it is expressed by Feather (2004, p.82) "brainstorming provides plenty of materials for making prediction". Furthermore, it is likely that through this strategy, the reader becomes conscious concerning what he knows about a given text's topic before he goes on reading it. Feather (2004, p. 84) argues that brainstorming enhances the activation of the reader's schema globally; so that they will know in advance about the ideas, vocabulary, culture, grammatical features and genre structures which are most probably met in the text to be read. It has been documented in Labiod's (2007) study that prior knowledge activation through brainstorming enhances learners' reading comprehension.

Richards (1990) recognized that brainstorming was effective of achieving student interaction in developing the cognitive skills for the purpose of generating ideas. He found that students trained in brainstorming techniques were more successful at generating and organizing ideas.

Similarly, Rao (2007) found that students trained in brainstorming techniques and utilized them regularly over a twelve-month period produced significantly higher results in writing tasks. Besides, an attitudinal survey showed students' complacency about the effectiveness of the brainstorming techniques.

Brainstorming is regarded as an effective tool in creative problem solving (Fernald & Nickolenko, 1993; Leclef, 1994; Stein, 1975). Its popularity can be traced back to the pervasive need to enhance the productivity of groups.

The need for high-quality creative ideas likely achieved through brainstorming (Ganji, Sharifi & Mir-Hashemi, 2005; Madandar-Arani & Kakia, 2007) is considered of utmost importance in the field of ELT because when ample opportunities of discussion are provided to learners in language learning contexts, learners' critical abilities concerning learners' lives, their social intelligence, novelty, problem-solving, etc. are going to be enhanced.

In the same line, to further clarify the relationship between brainstorming and cognitive aspects, critical thinking (CT) has been the issue of concern. The literature around CT entails so many dimensions. In Dewey's (1933) term CT is: "active, persistent, and the further conclusions to which it tends" (p. 9, cited in Fisher, 2001). Paul (1988) defined CT as "the ability to reach sound conclusions based on observations and information". Hughes (2000), approaches CT as recognizing "true premises" and "logical strength of an argument" which constitutes the main part of learning.

More recently, CT is considered as something more than cognitive skills. To name a few, Ennis (1996, as cited in Mason, 2008) defined it as reflective thinking. The American Philosophical Association Project defined CT (as cited in Giancarlo & Facione, 2001) as purposeful, self-regulatory judgment ending in interpretation,

متن کامل مقاله

دریافت فوری ←

ISIArticles

مرجع مقالات تخصصی ایران

- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه تمام متن مقالات انگلیسی
- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه ترجمه شده مقالات
- ✓ پذیرش سفارش ترجمه تخصصی
- ✓ امکان جستجو در آرشیو جامعی از صدها موضوع و هزاران مقاله
- ✓ امکان دانلود رایگان ۲ صفحه اول هر مقاله
- ✓ امکان پرداخت اینترنتی با کلیه کارت های عضو شتاب
- ✓ دانلود فوری مقاله پس از پرداخت آنلاین
- ✓ پشتیبانی کامل خرید با بهره مندی از سیستم هوشمند رهگیری سفارشات