

Peer-Assessment: Sri Lankan English as a Second Language Teachers' Perception

PBSL Pushpakumara#

University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka

#sampath@sjp.ac.lk

Peer-assessment offers various benefits. There is empirical evidence that peer-assessment enhances learner performance, develops cognitive and metacognitive skills, professional skills, personal and intellectual skills, and social competencies. Also, previous studies on affective factors of peer-assessment such as motivation and anxiety suggest that peer-assessment reduces learner anxiety and stress and enhances confidence and motivation. In spite of these benefits, peer-assessment is not common in educational settings. Teachers, the key stakeholders in education, also tend to hold reservations regarding peer-assessment. Therefore, the present study was conducted using six English teachers teaching in a compulsory English course in a state university in Sri Lanka to explore their perception regarding peer-assessment in English writing class. Qualitative data obtained through one-on-one interviews and focus group interviews were analysed using content analysis method. The results of the present study revealed that the participants believed that peer-assessment helps learners develop their cognitive and metacognitive skills, personal and intellectual skills, some professional skills and that it saves teachers' time. Also, they believed that peer-assessment motivates learners. However, they identified limited English language proficiency and friendship as some key challenges to effectively implement peer-assessment in the language classroom. Group-based peer-assessment and active teacher participation as a facilitator in the peer-assessment process were proposed as solutions to overcome these challenges and ensure successful implementation of peer-assessment in the English classroom. Taken together, the findings of the present study provide strong empirical support for the use of learner-centred peer-assessment in the English writing class in university and other similar contexts.

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