Blending Varied Concepts: Is it Effective in ESL Writing Class?

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Writing has been a difficulty in ESL education. According to Weigle (2002), there have been various approaches to teach writing that have led to numerous changes and subsequent development of writing models. The present study, which is a part of a larger study, attempted to improve the skill of writing in ESL by blending different notions drawn from varied concepts. It adopted the Flower & Hayes’s Model of L2 Writing, an element of process approach into which some effective elements from product approach to writing and strategy instruction were amalgamated. The action research, which comprised of two cycles, spanned over a period of six months, and it was carried out with a sample of 16 immature writing learners drawn from a Type 2 school in the Colombo South Zone. It used multiple data collection instruments: pre-test, guided writing activities, portfolio writing activities, assignments, students’ reflective journals, field notes by the researcher and post-test. An on-going evaluation was made through a comparison of marks of the first and the final portfolio drafts, the analysis of the in-class written assignment marks, the analysis of the field notes by the researcher and the analysis of the students’ reflective journals. The effectiveness of the intervention was measured through the comparison of the scores of the four portfolio writings—final drafts, marks for the four in-class written assignments and marks for the pre-test and the post-test. There was a remarkable progress recorded in the majority. Thus, it proved the effectiveness of blending varied concepts as a way of improving writing skills in ESL learners.

Keywords: English as a second language, Flower and Hayes’s writing model, Product approach to writing, Process approach to writing, Strategy instruction