

## **Effectiveness of Collaborative Strategic Reading Instruction for Tertiary Level English as a Second Language (ESL) Learners**

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**Abstract** – Inherent preferences of individuals or a particular group of individuals, as to how they engage in the learning process is identified as ‘preferred learning style’. Learning styles are part of the socialization process within a culture (Bruner, 1996). Learners of certain cultural groups lend themselves more readily to collaborative learning (CL) than competitive learning at secondary and post-secondary levels (Anderson, 1995). This study was carried out in order to investigate the preferred learning style of Sri Lankan undergraduates when developing reading skills in English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom. Collaborative Strategic Reading Instruction Approach (CSR) which is a learner-centered reading approach closely related to cooperative learning theory (Klingner and Vaughn, 1996; 1998; 2000) was employed in the study. The informants of the study were 67 lower intermediate level undergraduates from the University of Peradeniya. Data was collected through the mixed-method approach. The qualitative data of the experiment demonstrated that collaborative work during the reading activities leads the learners to learn and think significantly more and better. Also, they were of the opinion that they enjoy CL more as opposed to the instructor lead method. However, lack of individual accountability and slowing down of learning speed due to less proficient learners were noticed as drawbacks. Thus, pedagogical implications for English instruction at the university level in Sri Lanka and suggestions for future research based on the findings to further validate the impact and effectiveness of collaborative learning are proposed.

**Keywords:** Preferred Learning Style, Collaborative Learning, Collaborative Strategic Reading