

**The Efficacy of Some Proposed Activities for
Developing Creative Thinking of English learners at the
Preparatory Stage (Second Year)**

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the efficacy of some proposed activities for developing creative thinking of English learners at the preparatory stage. The current study adopted the quasi- experimental design. Two groups of English learners were randomly chosen from one of Port- Said governmental preparatory schools. The experimental group received training through the proposed activities; the control group did not receive any training. Creative thinking and academic achievement tests were developed and used as pre and post-tests. The proposed activities were developed by the researcher based on five strategies: brainstorming, attribute listing, morphological synthesis, SCAMPER and CoRT for developing creative thinking. The proposed activities were taught over a period of 10 weeks.

Results indicated that the proposed activities increased students' creative thinking (fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration) and academic achievement. Results showed that the proposed activities based on divergent thinking strategies were effective in improving English learners' creative thinking at the preparatory.

It was recommended that a) The present proposed activities can be adopted for developing creative thinking for students at different levels of education b)English teachers should use different divergent strategies and activities to help learners become creative persons, C) developing creative thinking has to be given more consideration in designing ELT textbooks. It contains (13) references.

Introduction

Contemporary societies have been improving their culture and their civilization. In order to achieve the desirable progress, they need to develop their human resources of scholar's executives, engineers and artist. The education system is the basis for this development.

For those changes to take place, we need to develop minds, which cannot only think of the best solutions to our present problems but also of creative ways to deal with them. This is why Poon Tang Fatt, (2000) suggests that new disciplines and courses are needed to vitalize the curriculum in order to meet the challenge and demands of new world of teaching and learning. Creativity is the engine that drives the human progress. (Ward & Smith & Vaid, 1997)

Shallcross (1981) maintains, "Creativity is in all of us. It is that the ability that raises humanity above the other living species in our world. Creative abilities exist in varying degrees among us, as do other kinds of intelligence. It is a matter of getting those abilities to surface and making them works for us."

Isenberg and Jalongo(1993) denote that every person needs the opportunity to be creative. They add that when we meet life's challenges and resolve problems, we are being creative.

Therefore, it is high time to foster creativity in our EFL curricula. Cropley (2001) assures that the fostering of creativity in classroom is part of educational efforts aiming at the development of individuals capable of maximizing their own self-fulfillments. David (1991) describes teaching creativity in the twenty first century this way "Curriculum and instruction must change from an emphasis on isolated facts, skills, and coverage to a focus on integrated content, on the application of skills, and on the development of conceptual understanding". It is the right of all children to go as far and as fast as they can along every dimension of the school curriculum without any breaks being put on them (George, 1998).

Get and Jackson (1962) claim that "education can do a great deal in promoting the creative abilities themselves." Poole (1979) points out that "teachers can certainly structure experience so that children have more opportunity to develop flexibility, fluency, literal thinking and so on." David Best (1982) emphasizes that creativity can be taught through what he calls "good teaching" through techniques, that imply original thought under objective criteria, creativity can be taught. George (1998) assures that schools and colleges should offer children a bases entitlement to a broad

range of curriculum experience. Mohamed (2003) explains that all children can be taught creative thinking and the creative attitudes in both school and home.

Several studies have proved that creative thinking can be developed by training and activities.

- Manssy (2003) conducted a study aimed at identifying the extent of development of creative thinking of middle school pupils in Saudi Arabia. Results of the study showed that creative thinking of middle school pupils develop with grade.
- Mildrum (2000) conducted a study to determine the effect of "The Ten Lessons on Creativity Model" on attitudes and abilities related to the creativity of the students in the regular classroom. Results of the study revealed that the children who participated in "The Ten Lessons" demonstrated increased knowledge of creative abilities and increased development of attitudes related to creativity.
- Clapham and Schuster(1992) explored the effectiveness of "A Creativity Training" on engineering students` creativity. The result of the study indicated that the Creativity Training proved to be effective in developing students' creativity.
- Finally, the 14th Biennial Conference of the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children (2001) recommended designing more enrichment activities in school to develop students' creativity.

Context of the problem

The researcher performed a pilot study. The first part based on an informal questionnaire administered to 30 teachers and supervisors who work at the preparatory stage (10 teachers and 20 supervisors). This questionnaire aimed at identifying the activities, on the textbook, which develop creative thinking among the second year preparatory Students (see appendix A). Result of analysis of this questionnaire revealed that most of the teachers and supervisors agreed that:

- There are no activities that develop fluency.
- There are no activities that develop flexibility.
- There are no activities that develop originality.
- There are no activities that develop elaboration.

In this way, the first part of the pilot study revealed that there is lack of activities for developing creative thinking.

The second part of the pilot study was composed of a creative thinking test. The test was administered to a sample of second year preparatory students in EL Naam Preparatory School for Girls in March 2000 to assess their creative thinking. The sample of the study consisted of 70 students. The test aimed at measuring the following skills: fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration. (See appendix A). The results proved that students' creativity is low.

Besides, one of the main goals of the teaching English at the preparatory stage in Egypt is to develop students' creativity (Ministry of Education Directives, (2001 – 2002). Therefore, there is a need for research based on a sound theory of creativity so that teachers would be aware of what strategies used to develop students' creativity. The need for this study, thus, emerges an attempt to concentrate on some strategies adopted to develop students' creative thinking at this stage to fulfill the pre-determined goal of teaching.

Statement of the problem

The present study attempts to develop creative thinking for the second year preparatory English Language students through Some Proposed Activities. In other words, this study attempted to address the main following question:

“What is the efficacy of implementing Some Proposed Activities on Developing Creative Thinking of Preparatory students?”

Sub-questions are derived from this question:

1. What creative abilities could be developed of students at second year preparatory?
2. What are the theoretical bases for designing proposed activities for developing creative thinking for the second year preparatory English Language students?
3. What are the proposed activities for developing creative thinking for the second year preparatory English Language students?
4. To what extend will the proposed activities help develop creative thinking for the second year preparatory English Language students?

Study Hypothesis

It was hypothesized that:

1. There were statistical significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group on the pre-test and post-test in overall creative thinking in favor of the post-test scores.
2. There were statistical significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group on the pre-test and post-test in fluency in favor of the post-test scores.
3. There were statistical significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group on the pre-test and post-test in flexibility in favor of the post-test scores.
4. There were statistical significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group on the pre-test and post-test in originality in favor of the post-test scores.

5. There were statistical significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group on the pre-test and post-test in elaboration in favor of the post-test scores.
6. There were statistical significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group exposed to proposed creative activities for developing creative thinking and the control group receiving regular instruction on the overall creative thinking post- test in favour of the experimental group.
7. There were statistical significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group on the pre-test and post-test in academic achievement in favor of the post-test scores.

Aim of the study

This study aimed at:

1. Identifying the creative thinking abilities of preparatory stage students.
2. Identifying appropriate strategies for developing creative thinking to preparatory stage students.
3. Designing some activities based on the assigned strategies.
4. Measuring the efficacy of the proposed activities in developing creative thinking to preparatory stage students.

Variables of the study

Independent variable: This referred to the treatment used in the present study (Some Proposed Activities for Developing Creative Thinking) implemented with the experimental group versus the regular instruction received by the control group.

Dependent variable: This referred to the experimental group students' performance on Creative thinking post-test.

Delimitations of the study

This study was confined to:

1. Two intact second year preparatory classes in public school in Port Said (Port-Said Prep School for Girls). These two classes were randomly assigned to the control and experimental group. Therefore, results of the present study can be generalized only within that population.
2. A limited duration for implementing the Some Proposed Activities for Developing Creative Thinking (10 weeks- three periods per week).
3. Some Proposed Activities for Developing Creative Thinking designed by the researcher consisting of five units (25 minutes each) to develop creative thinking.
4. Developing Creative thinking abilities for second year students. These abilities were fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration.

Significance of the study

Significance of the present study lies in the fact that:

1. It was an attempt to develop creative thinking to second year preparatory stage English language students.
2. It attempted to investigate the efficacy of some proposed activities in developing creative thinking to second year preparatory stage English language students.

In the light of the previous considerations, it is hoped that the present study would:

1. Provide English language teachers with a better understanding of the creative thinking abilities of the second year preparatory students.
2. Contribute to a rethinking and modification of the teaching methods used currently to develop creative thinking in Egyptian preparatory stage.
3. Provide English language specialists and curricula designers with different strategies to be taken into consideration in planning and constructing activities for preparatory stage English language students.
4. Provide a sound tool for testing creative thinking for second year preparatory students.
5. Help textbook authors design their textbooks implementing creative thinking strategies.

The study Design

The present study adopted the quasi- experimental design called the non-equivalent group design. A pre-post test was administered to both the experimental group and control one before and after the experiment.

Sample of the study

A group of 72 second year preparatory students were randomly selected from one of Port-Said governmental preparatory schools, namely Port-Said School For Girls (37 students The experimental group and 36 students in the control group).

Tools of the study

- a) A pre-post test to measure students`achievement.
- b) A pre-post test to measure students`creative thinking.
- c) An instructional five units based the first term of the textbook.

Procedure of the study

1. Reviewing previous literature in the field of the
2. Reviewing previous literature in the domain for developing creative thinking.
3. Building up five units based on divergent thinking strategies to develop the creative abilities.
 - The behavioral objectives.
 - Five units (30 lessons) based on the first term of the textbook.

4. Constructing a pre-post creative thinking test.
5. Constructing a pre-post achievement academic test.
6. Administering the pre-tests to both the experimental group and the control one.
7. Implementing the proposed activities by the researcher to the sample of the study.
8. Administering the post-tests to both the experimental group and the control one.
9. Analyzing the results and drawing conclusions.
10. Presenting suggestions and recommendations.

Study results

Most of the study results were positive which means that using activities based on some divergent thinking strategies developed second year preparatory students` creative thinking.

The study showed evidence that:

1. There were significance differences at 0, 05 level between the mean scores of the experimental group on the pre-test and post-test in overall creative thinking in favor of the post-test scores.
2. There were significance differences at 0, 05 level between the mean scores of the experimental group on the pre-test and post-test in fluency in favor of the post-test scores.
3. There were significance differences at 0, 05 level between the mean scores of the experimental group on the pre-test and post-test in flexibility in favor of the post-test scores.
4. There were significance differences at 0, 05 level between the mean scores of the experimental group on the pre-test and post-test in originality in favor of the post-test scores.
5. There were significance differences at 0, 05 level between the mean scores of the experimental group on the pre-test and post-test in elaboration favor of the post-test scores.
6. There were significance differences at 0,05 level between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group on the overall creative thinking post- test in favor of the experimental group.
7. There were significance differences at 0, 05 level between the mean scores of the experimental group on the pre-test and post-test in achievement in favor of the post-test scores.

Conclusion

It was concluded that:

The proposed activities proved to be effective for developing creative thinking abilities (fluency – flexibility – originality - elaboration) for second year preparatory students. There was correlation between developing creative thinking and academic achievement improvement.

Recommendations

Based on the significant findings of the present study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The present proposed activities can be adopted for developing creative thinking at the different stages, taking into consideration the learners` age needs and levels.
2. English teachers are recommended to use appropriate strategies to develop students` creative thinking.
3. Teachers should emphasize on developing students` skills, and mental abilities.
4. Teachers should not criticize students` ideas all the time but help students become more independent learners and active participants in their own learning.
5. Designing instructional materials that create cantered-learner environment.
6. Student-teachers and in-service teachers should be trained on how to adopt divergent thinking strategies to develop students` creative thinking at different stages.
7. Developing creative thinking has to be given more consideration in EFL courses especially at the preparatory stage.

further studies

1. Educators and curriculum developers need to continue research on the effectiveness of extra curricula activities on students` creative thinking at the secondary stage.
2. Similar proposed activities can be adopted effectively to develop students` creative thinking at the primary stage.
3. Further studies are recommended to investigate the effectiveness of using divergent thinking strategies on developing students` critical thinking.
4. Further studies are needed to investigate the effectiveness of other divergent thinking strategies on developing students` creative thinking.
5. Designing training programmes on divergent thinking strategies for student-teachers and in-service teachers to develop students` creative thinking at different stages for student-teachers.

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