A STUDY ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF AN INSTRUCTIONAL INTERVENTION IN ENHANCING CREATIVE STORY WRITING SKILLS AMONG SIXTH GRADERS

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Abstract:

The NEP 2020 emphasises that the aim of education is not only to develop the cognitive skills but also the creative potentials among learner. Hence the researcher intended to study the effectiveness of an instructional intervention in terms of Creative story writing skills of sixth grade students studying in a middle school in Central Mumbai. The researcher did an experimental research by conducting a creative writing skills pre test and implementing the module with the content, such as Elements of short story writing, Critical thinking, Divergent thinking, descriptive writing, tips to organize the thoughts coherently, writing variety of sentences, usage of imagery, technique of showing a story instead of telling a story. Then a post test was conducted. The sample size was 33 sixth graders who were selected using purposive sampling technique, from a school in Central Mumbai. The result of the study was, There is a significant difference between the pre test and post test scores of creative story writing skills of sixth grade students. The post test scores of the Creative story writing skills were higher as compared to the pre test scores as the mean test score of the post test was higher than that of the pre test. The findings of the study was, that the students enhanced their descriptive writing in terms of showing a story instead of telling a story in narrative form. The researcher also found profound vocabulary used by few students was neither the part of the module nor the part of syllabus but realized that those words (vocabulary) are used in their mobile phone games.

Keywords: *Creative story writing Skills, Critical & divergent Thinking, Elements of Story writing, Coherent Organization, Vocabulary, Use of imagery.*

Introduction:

Creativity is characterized as the capacity to create something novel, unique, fitting, tall in quality, inventive, non ordinary, and really important (Snow,1986; Amabile, 1988; Torrance, 1965; Rothenberg, 1990; Lucas,2001; Robinson, 2001). Numerous researchers and teachers accept that each person encompasses a potential to be imaginative and a totally non creative individual does not exist (Amabile, 1996; Cropley, 1997; Maley, 2006; Kaufmann & Sternberg, 2010). To uncover this existed potential of inventiveness, a few speculations were developed. Among many theories, Graham Wallas (1926) claimed that imagination happens in a four-cycle problem solving skills and they are preparation, incubation, illumination and verification. In the first stage

preparation process, the creative writers gather relevant information. After collecting the necessary information, the individual unconsciously generates new ideas by putting the problem aside. The illumination process is the generation of solutions to the problem. It is also called 'Aha!' or 'Eureka!' process. The unconscious ideas become conscious in the illumination stage. Verification is testing the validity of the solution proposed. Accordingly, as per creative potentials of individuals may be enhanced and fostered by continuous encouragement, providing necessary conditions and relevant training. Hence the imaginative possibilities of school students can be improved and cultivated by constant support from school teachers.

Creative writing is defined as an aspect that generates or recognizes new ideas, or the possibilities which are useful in problem solving skills, communication skills, and also engage people with entertainment to oneself and others. The reasons for people getting motivated to become creative is an urge to have varied novel texts, find solutions creatively for existing problems and to communicate their thoughts, feelings and emotions. (Franken, 1932, 396) A creative person views the same things from a new and different perspective. Creativity is not only finding alternatives from different perspectives but also generating unique alternatives.. The ability of generating new alternatives can only be possible with the fundamental human qualities of thinking, flexibility in expression, tolerating the ambiguity and unpredictability by enjoying learning unknown things. (Franken, 1932, 394)

Creative Writing and the Genre of Story

Creative story writing is based upon human observation and designing the plot in a brief and exciting way to showcase the characters resembling real people and realistic events. The elements of the story are woven in narrative text.. Narrations emerge from the requirements of telling and listening of individuals and societies (Tilfarlioglu, Filiz & Başaran, Süleyman, 2008). In terms of creative writing, the most suitable genre of study is narration. Because it contains both fictional and non-fictional elements in its structure, according to Uzuner (2007), creative writing should be allowed in narration more than other genres. Creative story writing provides an opportunity to school students in choosing the genre and is accepted as an undeniable aspect that helps to improve the lingustic, cognitive, socio emotional and communicative skills of children (Cristopher, 1996). Tompkins (1982) says that creative story writing deals with enhancement of artistic expression, imagination, self discovery, open-mindedness and development of literary functional writing among school students.

Creative Story writing is one of the ancient art forms, which was kept in practice to educate and entertain human beings for centuries. People were educated and informed about different cultures and ways of life by sharing experiences and feelings in a story form. folktales, legends, myths, fairy tales, short stories, epics, historical fiction, fantasy novels, science fiction books, crime-fiction novels, and autobiographies are different types of stories. **Elements of short story writing includes, Setting, characters, plot, A beginning, Conflict, Resolution and an ending. Theme** of the story is the central idea of the story which the author is trying to convey to the reader. It is the lesson the reader learns after reading the story.

Need of the Study: Everyone has the capacity to write, writing can be taught, and teachers can help students become better writers, **NCTE** declares this on the contrary to the myth that creative writers are born. Creative

Original Research Article

Writing is a subjective creation of a picture of the world. Creativity is multidimensional. It can be a trait, skill, ability, or an approach, or all of these. Adele Ramet defines creative writing as "the ability to produce an imaginative, original literary production or composition". Adele mentions that if a person is passionate about writing, he must write something every day, it doesn't have to be finished, but one must commit to writing regularly, even if the piece ends up being rejected. It helps to create discipline and routine.

After going through the various research works in the field of creative writing, the researcher found that even though a lot of research has been made in the field of developing instructional module for effective teaching of creative writing, most of them are focused on the effect of feedback on creativity, the relation between anxiety and creativity, literature reading and creative writing, creative thinking to reading and writing, digital story telling, and also methods like brainstorming, SCAMPER method, cluster method, creative drama method to improve creative writing. Most of the studies were conducted for primary, high school and per-service teachers. There was minimal exploration in particular about enhancing Creative story Writing skills among middle school students. The **NEP 2020** emphasises that the aim of education is not only to develop the cognitive skills but also the creative potentials among learner. Therefore the researcher felt the need to enhance creative writing skills by developing and evaluating an instructional module on Creative Story Writing Skills among the middle school students.

Review of related literature:

Vicol M-I, Gavriluț M-L, Mâță L (2024) conducted a Quasi experimental research to evaluate the effectiveness of an educational program for the improvement of creative writing skills in fourth-grade students. The objectives of the study aimed to identify the general level of development of creative writing skills and establish any significant differences in the development of specific components of creative writing skills (narrative voice, characterization, mood and atmosphere, language and technical aspects of writing, dialogue, narration, setting, image and plot). A quasi-experimental design with intervention and control groups was used. A total of 146 students from 3 public school institutions in the city of Bacau, Romania, that include elementary grades participated in the study. The research group consisted of 73 students in the intervention group and 73 students in the control group. A paired-samples *t* test was used to compare the scores for two paired variables. The research results have shown that creative writing skills are developing in young school-age students. Also, it was found that there are significant differences in the students from the experimental group, compared to the students in the control group, at the level of the nine components of creative writing skills.

Munir & Hendaryan, (2023) was motivated to conduct research to analyse the ability of creative writing among high school students to understand the low ability in them and the difficulty in writing stories especially short stories and other literary works. A quasi-experimental research method was used. Their sample size was 250 high school students, 150 each in the experimental and control group. They used a creative writing skills test as a tool and had indicators to assess choice of words and creativity. For Data analysis they used t test, descriptive statistics and analysis of variance test (ANOVA) to find out whether there are any significant differences between the means of both the groups namely experimental and control by using SPSS. Their study

gave them a result that short story writing sessions/programs can improve creative writing skills of the students'. That improvement of students' were seen in the choice of words in terms of synonyms, shape and collocations used and an improvement in the aspects of creative writing such as originality, fluency, flexibility and elaboration.

(Ali & Atman, 2021) conducted a study to examine the effect of collaborative digital storytelling on the creative writing and social-emotional learning skills of elementary school fourth grade students. The research method selected by them was a quasi-experimental design, with two groups namely experimental and control. 14 females and 16 males, total 30 student were in control group and in the experimental group 15 female and 15 male students in total 30 students were there. The writing activity of the students was assessed by Creative Writing Rubric developed by Öztürk (2007) which was composed of eight sub-dimensions: originality of ideas, fluency of thoughts, flexibility of thoughts, word richness (selection), sentence structure, (organization (introduction to writing, development and outcome), writing style, compliance with grammar rules. They conducted pre test and post test. Statistical analysis was calculated with a paired samples t-test and single factor ANCOVA analysis. According to the t-test results for dependent groups, an increase between pre-test and post-test scores was found significant for creative writing in both the experimental $(t(29)=8.623; p=0,000)$ and the control group $(t(29)=5.259; p=0,000)$. When the experimental and control groups were compared, it was concluded that the experimental process had a moderate effect in favor of the experimental group on the creative writing skill. In this study, it was observed by the researchers that CDST was more advantageous in terms of time and application.

(Senel & Esma, 2018) conducted a study to investigate B2 level of Creative writing and its impact on student's academic writing as writing is considered as one of the difficult and challenging tasks of all the language learning skills among EFL students. The researchers adapted SCAMPER method to integrate creative writing in to academic writing. Their sample size was only 15 students who were studying in B2 module at English preparatory school, out of which 10 were females. The study selected an experimental method. The t-test results obtained from midterm and final exams indicate that students' success level improves in academic writing skills. Participants' pretest and post test results revealed that creative writing helps them develop critical thinking skills and when the SCAMPER method is used, students' problem solving skills are promoted.

(Golda L T, 2014) Conducted a study on Precept and practice strategies for the acquisition of writing skills an experimental study, with the objective to find out if strategies like motivation, diary-writing, feedback, substitution drills, reading and vocabulary enhancement improve the writing skills of students. The study was undertaken in two phases: the first one, a survey and the second one, an experiment. The tool used was a diagnostic test for students (tool to assess the writing skills of students). A sample of 800 students both boys and girls ranging in age from 17 to 20, participated from eight colleges of arts and science. It was found that explicit grammar teaching does not help much in acquisition of writing skills. The fact that the proficiency in grammar will not lead to error-free or well-organized writing is clearly supported by the findings of the study. The assumption has been proved to be right that the strategies like motivation, substitution drills, diary-writing,

feedback, reading and vocabulary enhancement will enable students to acquire writing skills.

Smeda, Najat, Dakich, E and Sharda, Nalin (2014) aimed to create a constructivist learning environment with digital storytelling. Their research investigated the pedagogical aspects of digital storytelling and the impact of digital storytelling on student learning when teachers and students use digital stories. It was conducted in Australian primary and secondary school where both teachers and students were engaged in innovative learning experiences based on digital storytelling. Data was collected with qualitative and quantitative methods. An evaluation rubric was used to collect quantitative data, while interviews and observation were used to collect qualitative data. Data collection was guided by a mixed methods research design in order to evaluate if and how digital storytelling enhances teaching and learning outcomes. The findings from this study suggest that digital storytelling is a powerful tool to integrate instructional messages with learning activities to create more engaging and exciting learning environments. It is a meaningful approach for creating a constructivist learning environment based on novel principles of teaching and learning. Thus, this approach has the potential to enhance student engagement and provide better educational outcomes for learners.

Rababah L M, Mohamed A H et al (2013) investigated the level of creativity in English writing among Jordanian high school students. The researchers used a random sample of 100 high school students in the Jordanian cities of Irbid and Amman. The TTCT (Adapted Torrance Test of Creative Thinking) test was used to measure their creativity in English literature. The TTCT test is probably the best test to assess the magnitude of students' creativity in writing. The TTCT assesses the fluency or number of ideas; flexibility, different response categories; and originality, which consists of considering innovative, unusual, or inappropriate responses. The results of the survey showed that the respondents belong to a moderate level of creativity.

Nasir L, Naqvi SM, Bhamani S (2013) attempted to improve the written expression, basically composition writing skills of 5th grade students in an elite private school. This was an action research project. 39 students from the age group of 9-11 of grade five from four divisions of two elite schools were selected for the study. The researchers conducted a pre test to determine students' pre-intervention writing skills. The topic of the composition was -a traffic accident. The scores were taken and after that they implemented a module with written support strategies. This intervention was carried out for eight weeks. They gave the students a list of new words and asked the students to use it while framing sentences. Flash cards were used for reinforcing their learning and retention of vocabulary Finally, a post-test was conducted to examine differences in student writing performance as an intervention effect. The post test composition topic was - An unforgettable experience and the students after learning vocabulary performed well. The difference between the two test scores was analyzed by a T-test, it was a difference of 38%. The result of the tests ensured that there was an improvement in students' written expression.

Vanaja N (2012) conducted an experimental study to investigate the effectiveness of cognitive and affective research strategies in improving English writing skills among B Ed trainees. The aim of the study was to write English flawlessly, to obtain information about cognitive and affective intervention strategies, to develop an attitude towards English writing ability. The sample was 80 students of the B Ed program who chose English as

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an elective subject. In the light of the research findings, it was found that research can help alleviate the B.Ed. trainees to improve their English writing skills through an innovative approach.

Objective of the study:

To provide an instructional intervention for enhancing elements of story writing among sixth graders.

To study the effectiveness of the instructional module for enhancing creative story writing skills among sixth grade students as indicated by the difference in pretest and post-test scores of sixth graders.

Research Hypothesis:

There is no significant difference between the Creative Story Writing Skills Pre test Scores and Creative Story Writing Skills Post test Scores of sixth graders studying in SNG Central school of Mumbai.

Methodology of the Study:

The main purpose of this research paper is to study the differences between the Creative story Writing Skills pre test Scores and Creative story Writing Skills post Test Scores of sixth grade students studying in a school of Central Mumbai. A Quantitative Experimental research approach was used to conduct the study because the research objective demands numerical data and statistical data analysis techniques. The study was conducted by giving a pre test to the students and implementation of the module was given to the students. The students were introduced to elements of story, importance of reading, imagination skills, showing a story not telling a story method, parts of speech in a digital story telling method, vocabulary to describe the characters in terms of the texture, pattern and colour of the clothes worn, special mannerisms, specific facial features etc. then a post test was conducted to find out the effectiveness of the intervention.

Sample of the Study:

Sixth graders among Middle school students were selected for this research paper. Students were selected from a co-education school of Central Mumbai. The researcher here selected 36 students from class VI out of which 16 were girls and 20 were boys. Those students were selected using the Purposive sampling technique. All 36 were present during pre test and only 33 were present during post test. Hence the researcher has taken only 33 samples in consideration.

Tools and techniques of the study:

The researcher used a Creative Story Writing Test developed by the researcher. The test was based on writing a descriptive, creative story by using the words forest, mobile phone, magician, dragon and market. Total marks for the story was 20. In order to score the test objectively, a rubric and scoring key for assessing was prepared by the researcher.

Distribution of marks: Plot/setting -3 marks; Characters/sub characters - 3 marks; Coherent Organisation - 2 marks; Appropriate beginning/closure - 2 marks; Variety of sentences - 2 marks; Spelling/punctuation -2 marks; Humour/suspense - 2 marks; Hand writing - 1 mark; Descriptive words/Vocabulary - 3 marks.

Techniques of Data Analysis:

For descriptive data analysis mean, median and standard deviation was used. The mean of the scores on the creative story writing skills pre test scores and post test scores were analyzed. The standard deviation was

calculated for the pre and post test scores on the creative story writing skills. For inferential data analysis paired T-Test was used to assess differences between the means and standard value of the pre test and post test scores..

Analysis and Interpretation of Data:

A paired t-test was conducted to compare the creative story writing skills pre test scores and post test scores to verify the null hypothesis, "There is no significant difference between the Creative Story Writing Skills Pre test Scores and Creative Story Writing Skills Post test Scores of sixth graders studying in SNG Central school of Mumbai".

Table 1. Comparing the PreTest Scores and post test scores of Sixth graders with respect to their creative story writing skills.

	N	Mean	Median	SD	SE	P value
Pre test scores	33	11.1	11.0	2.83	0.492	
Post test scores	33	13.2	14.0	3.60	0.627	< 0.001

Paired T-Test

		Statistic	df	p	Mean difference	SE difference
test scores	Student's t	-6.25	32.0	<.001	-2.05	0.327

Note. H_a μ measure $_1$ - measure $_2$ <0

From the above results of the T test the p value is less than 0.001, which is less than 0.05. Hence the Null hypothesis is rejected as it indicates that there is a significant difference between the creative story writing skills pre test scores and creative story writing skills test scores of sixth grade students studying in SNG Central school. Moreover the value of t for 32 df in the T Table value is less than the t statistic 6.25. So the null hypothesis is not accepted. Hence the Research hypothesis "There is no significant difference between the Creative Story Writing Skills Pre test Scores and Creative Story Writing Skills Post test Scores of sixth graders studying in SNG Central school of Mumbai" was rejected. It is concluded that, there is a significant difference between the creative story writing skills pre test scores and creative story writing skills post test scores of sixth grade students of SNG Central school, Mumbai.

Major findings of the study:

1. There is a significant difference between the pre test and post test scores of sixth grade students of SNG central School, with respect to their Creative Story writing Skills.

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2. The students enhanced their descriptive writing in terms of showing a story instead of telling a story in narrative form.

3. The researcher also found that the students used certain words, which was neither the part of the module nor the part of syllabus but realized that these words (vocabulary) are used in the mobile phone games.

4. The students' imagination and creative thought process was varied and few students wrote the moral of the story too. This shows their socio-emotional side along with creative side.

Conclusion:

This study found that there is a significant difference between the pre test and post test scores of sixth graders studying in SNG Central School of Central Mumbai with respect to their Creative story Writing Skills. The teachers and parents should help the students to enhance the Creative Writing Skills of all students irrespective of their gender. A creative work is an individual's creation, gender, age, religion, caste is irrelevant as each person has infinite life experiences. All that matters is the ability of an individual to transcend those life experiences into creative writing and make it Universal. Every school should Foster creative thinking, problem solving and divergent thinking by restructuring the curriculum.

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