



Effectiveness of Program Based on Mind Habits in Developing Creative Writing Skills in Poetry Field for High School Female Students in Saudi Arabia

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Abstract

Training learners in thinking skills and creative writing is of utmost importance for students' success and in the development of both school and society(1). Habits of mind are a group of skills, attitudes and values that enable a person to create performance preferences or intelligent behaviors based on stimuli they are exposed to that lead students to select mind processes or perform according to a choice from a group of available selections to face a problem or solve an issue (2). However, teaching thinking skills is neglected in schools due to different reasons. This study aimed at investigating the effectiveness of a mind-habits- based program in developing creative writing skills in Arabic poetry among female secondary stage students, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Creative writing skills in poetry, appropriate for secondary stage students, were identified. Specifications of mind habits that should be developed among secondary stage students were also identified and a list of the thinking skills needed for developing mind habits was derived. A program based on mind habits was designed with the aim of developing the previously identifies creative thinking for creative writing skills.

Tools of the study, a of Creative Writing Skills in Poetry, a Rubric for Assessing the Creative Writing of the participants and a test of Understanding Creative Writing Skills in Poetry, were administered to both the experimental and control groups before and after the experiment. Using a quasi-experimental design, the mind habits -based program for developing creative writing skills was taught to the experimental group (21 third year secondary stage students) while the control group (21 third year secondary stage students) received no additional treatment.

Results of the study revealed that there was a statistically significant difference at the level of significance $\leq 0,05$ in creative writing skills between the experimental and control groups in favor of the experimental group. In addition, a statistically significant difference at the level of significance $\leq 0,05$ in comprehension of creative writing skills was revealed between the experimental and control groups in favor of the experimental group. Recommendations for further research and implications are presented.

Introduction

The world is shifting to a new stage in which old technology is shifted by the intellectual creative ingenious work. This work develops available information to produce and generate other new information (3).

However, studies proved that creative intellectual work is neglected and that the level of developing it in education is low. Consequently, learning outcomes are poor (4) and (5). Besides, studies varied in finding out the reasons behind that. Some studies assured that the level of realizing the relationship between language and thinking is low which led to the students' poor level in language communicative skills and creative language (6). This is because language learning needs understanding and intensive training to enable learners to use it and develop its skills (7). Therefore, several studies recommended paying great attention to linguistic and creative skills and identifying lists of their skills such as Alhawy's study (8).

Science language has four arts: listening, speaking, reading and writing, catering for the fourth art, writing, means catering for the most important art. This is because it is through writing that the effect of developing the other three arts is manifested (9). In addition, writing is closely related to thinking that each of them affects and is affected by the other. This is due to the fact that clarity of thinking and the search for its development develop the quality



of writing. Writing also functions as a tool for the development and promotion of thinking skills (10).

Mcfarland's study (11) pinpointed the importance of training programs on creative writing in poetry. Recently, psychologists also cared for everything that develops creative skills including experimenting methods of teaching creative skills. These methods included different ways training on which leads to development in performance. Thus, Cognitive researchers started to care for educational strategies that puts students in open environments in order to enable them to make use of the thinking strategies in their daily life. They were also interested in raising their awareness of their works and that thinking should not lag behind work. This necessitated the emergence of active habits of mind (12) which include persistence, controlling impetuosity, listening comprehensively and empathetically, thinking flexibly, metacognitive thinking, striving for accuracy, questioning and problem solving, applying previous information to new situations, clear thinking, data collection using all senses, perception and creativity, responding surprisingly and awesomely, responsible risk-taking, humor, reciprocal thinking, and constant readiness to continuous learning (13) and (14).

Since information economy requires training on problem solving styles, creativity, analysis, working as a group or an organization and drawing research policy, this led to starting in paying interest to habits of mind. This is because their applications depend on creativity, learning for life, and working in teams (15). Costa and Kallick (16) believe that training on habits of mind will aid learners in solving problems in life, taking rational and right decisions, managing business and facing challenges. Wineburg's study (17) ascertained that although habits of mind differ, their learning and using them make them stable and repetitive. Therefore, learning outcomes and educational invariants should be focused on. They should be changed to a repetitive behavior and a constant method a the learner's life.

Results of developing countries' experiments showed that they were concerned with developing habits of mind and their applications, for the development of teaching and learning, while solving problems, practicing creative thinking and decision making. Besides, the British National Curriculum (18) adopted them. Some educational projects were also concerned with habits of mind considering them as a basis for educational development. Some of these projects are Scientific Literacy Project or Science Teaching for All Americans till 2061 under the auspices of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), 1993.

Based on the aforementioned the problem of the study is identified in investigating the effectiveness of a mind-habits- based program in developing creative writing skills in poetry among female secondary stage students in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Thus, the study aimed at answering the following main question:

What is the effectiveness of a mind-habits- based program in developing creative writing skills in poetry among female secondary stage students in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia?

This main question can be divided into the following sub-questions:

1. What are the creative writing skills suitable for female secondary stage students in poetry?
2. What are the specifications of mind-habits that should be developed in female secondary stage students?
3. What is the effectiveness of a mind-habits- based program in developing creative writing skills in poetry among female secondary stage students in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

In the light of what is mentioned earlier, this study aimed at developing the teaching and learning processes through :-

1. Relating language to thinking through identifying the creative writing skills suitable to the female students at the secondary stage.



2. Training students on mind- habits that will leads to having the ability to organize mind processes and ordering them in a way that will help in correcting one's way of life.
3. Investigating the effectiveness of a mind-habits- based program in developing creative writing skills in poetry among female secondary stage students in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

To answer these questions and achieve the aims of the study, the following steps were carried out :-

1. Conducting a pilot study that included content analysis of 20 model Arabic Language tests for the female third year secondary stage students. Results of the pilot study showed that the tests did not include what develops sub-creative writing skills.
2. Observing (20) teachers to investigate the extent to which teachers develop mind habits. Results indicated that the percentage of developing mind habits among students is low .
3. Conducting an interview with a sample of Arabic language teachers and supervisors to find out the reasons behind neglecting training students in creative writing skills in poetry. It was revealed that this is attributed to the difficulty of teaching poetry writing. Besides, the objectives of teaching composition do not include poetry and are limited to creative writing in prose. Other reasons are Arabic language teachers are not trained in teaching creative writing in poetry before or in-service. Furthermore, the creative writing skills is low among the students and the number of students is big resulting in inability to making equal opportunities for developing these skills available among students.
4. Identifying the creative writing skills in poetry through identifying the creative writing skills suitable to creative writing in poetry then the sub-skills for each main skills.
5. Preparing specifications of mind-habits and identifying the main thinking skills related to each mind-habit.
6. Developing a program based on mind-habits to develop creative writing skills through:
 - a. Selecting a model for designing the suggested program.
 - b. Identifying the way through which mind habits will be taught to develop creative writing skills.
 - c. Identifying the basics and objectives of the program besides students' characteristics.
 - d. Developing the program content, selecting teaching strategies and preparing for them, preparing teaching aids, teaching and learning activities.
7. Preparing a teachers' guide for teaching the program. Preparing students' guide.
8. Pre-testing students.
9. Applying the program to the students.
10. Evaluating the effectiveness of the program.

Tools of the study included Scale of Creative Writing Skills , A rubric for Correcting Creative Writing and A Test of understanding Creative Writing Skills in Poetry.

Statistical analysis was conducted using Pearson Correlation to estimate internal consistency, Alpha Cronbakh to estimate reliability , t-test to find out the difference between the control and experimental groups and Eta Squared η^2 to estimate the size of effect.

The most important results of the study are:

1. There is a statistically significant difference at 0.05 level between the post scores of the experimental and control groups on the Scale of Creative Writing Skills in favor of the experimental group.
2. The explained variance percentage caused by experiment (represented in training on creative writing skills in poetry) in the variable variance estimated as 68%, and thus reflecting a great size of effect of the independent variable according to the results of applying Scale of Creative Writing Skills in Poetry. The explained variance percentage caused by experiment (represented in training on creative writing skills in poetry) in the variable variance estimated as 98%, and thus reflecting a great size of effect of the independent variable according to the



results of applying the Test of Understanding Creative Writing Skills in Poetry. This is because the effect which interprets about 15% or more of the total variance is considered of a high significance . this suggests that the training program is highly effective in developing creative writing skills of poetry among trainee participants.

In the light of the results of the study, the researcher recommends the following:

1. Making use of the list of creative writing skills in designing and evaluating the composition, literature and poetry curricula.
2. The importance of including training on mind-habits in the different educational stages and integrating them with the different subjects specially the Arabic subjects. It is also important to relate the mind-habit to the educational stage suitable for its training and practice.
3. The necessity of training the Arabic language teachers on teaching creative writing in poetry practicing the mind-habits that lead to the students ' active participation and feeling of responsibility towards their learning.
4. Making use of the Scale of Creative Writing Skills in Poetry when evaluating creative writing skills in poetry and in the studies that deal with creative writing skills in poetry

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