

Using Show not Tell on Developing English Majors' Creative Writing skills and Self-Esteem

Reham Salaheldin Ahmed Nageib

Students' Affair Specialist, Minia University

Abstract

The purpose of this research is to determine the effect of using show not tell strategy on developing English majors' creative writing and self-esteem. Participants for the study were 30 students enrolled at third-year English majors at the Faculty of Education, Minia University. The research used a quasi-experimental design. The data required for this research was collected through pre/post-test of creative writing and a scale of self –esteem to evaluate the use of this strategy in enhancing students' creative writing skills and as well raise students' level of self-esteem. The statistical analysis used in this study were T-test, Eta – Square, Alpha Cronbach, and Pearson Correlation Analysis. The findings of the statistical analysis revealed that using show not tell is effective in developing students' creative writing skills and raising their self-esteem.

Keywords: creative writing, show not tell, self-esteem.

استخدام استراتيجية الإبداع لا الإفصاح لتنمية مهارات الكتابة الإبداعية وتقدير الذات لدى طلاب الفرقة الثالثة قسم اللغة الانجليزية

ريهام صلاح الدين أحمد نجيب

اخصائي شئون تعليم- جامعة المنيا

مستخلص

حاولت الدراسة الحالية بحث أثر استخدام استراتيجية الإبداع لا الإفصاح لتنمية مهارات الكتابة الإبداعية و تقدير الذات لدى عينة مكونه من 30 طالب و طالبة من طلاب الفرقة الثالثة شعبة اللغة الانجليزية بكلية التربية، جامعة المنيا. و قد تم تدريب المجموعة التدريبيه علي مهارات الدراسة المحددة باستخدام برنامج قائم علي استراتيجية الإبداع لا الإفصاح. استخدمت الدراسة التصميم الشبه التجريبي المكون من مجموعتين حيث خضعت كليهما لأساليب قبلية و بعدية للحصول علي البيانات. و تم تحليل النتائج باستخدام الأساليب الاحصائية المناسبة و هي : (اختبار (ت) t-test و ألفا كرونباخ (Alpha Chronbach) و معامل بيرسون (Pearson Correlation) و مربع ايتا (Eta-Squared).

و اظهرت النتائج وجود فروق دالة إحصائيا لصالح المجموعة التجريبية في الاختبار البعدي للكتابة الإبداعية و مقياس تقدير الذات و الذي يدل علي نجاح البرنامج في تنمية مهارات الكتابة الإبداعية و رفع مستوى تقدير الذات لدي الطلاب. و انتهى البحث بمناقشة النتائج و تقديم التوصيات و المقترحات لبحوث مستقبلية.

1. Introduction

Writing allows learners to share their communication. It plays an essential role in human life. (Carrol & Kop 2011). It is one of the most essential skills in learning English, which is the main relationship with the learning process. Students can develop and express their ideas, feelings, and thoughts by writing. It is a mental complex process based on the creation and creativity. (Burke & Witt 2002). Writing skills help students gain independence, comprehensibility, fluency, and creativity in writing.

Creative Writing:

The first degree in creative writing was awarded at Iowa University, this discipline has grown dramatically in the American University and reached the highest point of recognition during the 1970s. At that time, creative writing in many institutions becomes the hottest subject in the English department –' *the boom trade of the English Bizz*'. (Wandor, 2008).

Creative writing is the expression of emotions, feelings, and thoughts in an exciting literary manner such as writing poetry, stories, and literary articles. It expresses the writers' thoughts and feelings in an imaginative and

unique way. (Palmer, 2010; and Swanburg, 2001). Erin, (2016) mentioned that there are some qualities such as painting authentic pictures of place and people in readers' minds and having the confidence to produce a creative product makes a good creative writer that produces descriptions of places and people that send readers on trips in their minds.

EFL learners should move beyond the beginner stage of acquisition through multiple motivated tasks. (Smith, 2013). Carol, 2012 cited in Diab, 2019 stated that creative writing involves going beyond the ordinary without deviation from normal values, creating different ideas from everyone else's idea using one's imagination, achieving originality and writing fluently while being happy in composing. Teaching creative writing means encouraging students to write by drawing upon their imagination and other creative processes. This can be achieved by using show me, do not tell me. A good writer does not tell the reader the ideas, readers need to know the thoughts and feelings; they need to see, hear, feel, smell, and taste the piece of writing.

Show not Tell Strategy:

The showing not telling idea is currently credited to the Russian playwright Anton Chekhov, who gave this statement as an example of the concept: “Don’t tell me the moon is shining; show me the glint of light on broken glass.”

"Show Don't Tell" is one of the oldest pieces of advice to new writers, Create a picture in the reader's mind by writing sentences that show what happened rather than telling what happened.

Gerth, (2016) defined showing and telling as follows: telling means that the author gives the reader conclusions and interpretations, is like giving secondhand report, is like reading about accident in a newspaper, is abstract, and gives facts. Showing means that providing the readers with enough concrete, vivid details, letting the readers experience the events, witnessing the accidents at the moment it happens, creating a specific picture in the reader's mind, and evoking emotions.

The idea focuses on showing the event by using descriptive language rather than telling that it's happening.

Pope, (2019) mentioned some of the best tips for showing not telling in writing; these steps are:

- 1- Get rid of all basic sensory words as: "I heard," "I felt," and "I smelled," are all very weak.
- 2- Don not use "emotion explaining" words as: (happy, excited, love, anxious, joy, disgust, sad, angry).
- 3- Describe body language.
- 4- Use strong verbs.
- 5- Focus on describing senses.
- 6- Practice showing not telling every day.

Self-Esteem

Self-esteem makes changes in individuals over time. It is an important psychological construct that it is a central component of individuals' daily experience; it refers to the way that people feel about themselves, which reflects and affects their continuous transactions with their environment and the people they encounter in it "(Kernis, 2003). Self-esteem was defined as "a general judgment of personal worth or value" (Gray-Little, and Hafdahl, 2000), and "as global feelings of self-liking, self-worth, respect, and acceptance" (Kernis, 2003).

To increase self-esteem one must either increase one's success or lower one's expectations. Researchers studied the relationship between self-esteem and academic

achievement and found that the increase of students' academic achievement raise their self-esteem level. Mitrofan & Constantin, (2015) examined the effects of creative improvisation through literature technique on self-esteem, in a unifying personal development group. It was observed the positive effects of applying creative writing improvisation techniques can have positive effects on self-esteem.

Pawliczak (2015) revealed that using creative writing is the best way to improve students' writing skills. In addition, the participants of the study mentioned that using creative writing tasks influences positively different fields such as vocabulary, grammar, imagination, and even self-esteem.

2. Research Methodology

2.1 Objective

The purpose of the study is to investigate the effect of using show not tell on developing Faculty of Education English Majors' creative writing skills and self - esteem.

2.2 The Experimental Design:

The present study followed a quasi-experimental pre-post control group design. A treatment group and a non-treatment group were exposed to pre-post means of getting data.

2.3 Participants

A group of (30) students enrolled at the third year, English majors, Faculty of Education, Minia University was randomly assigned to a treatment and non – treatment group.

2.4 Instrument

- **A needs assessment questionnaire**

The researcher developed a needs assessment questionnaire to identify the sub-creative writing skills that are related to the main creative writing skills decided upon the study group.

- **A creative writing test**

To assess the third-year English Majors' level in creative writing skills, to ensure equality of the treatment and non-treatment groups before teaching the program, and to assess the degree of improvement of participants of "the treatment and the non- treatment groups' performance. The test validity was measured by internal consistency for each skill calculated by using (Person Correlation) formula. It also was submitted to a jury of seven TEFL specialists. The reliability coefficient of the test measured by Alpha Cronbach formula showed that the test is considered within the acceptable range (.866).

- **A Scale of Self-Esteem**

A 5–point scale was designed and constructed by the researcher to evaluate students' confidence. It consists of two dimensions, academic characteristics and personal characteristics. The scale validity was measured by internal consistency for each statement calculated by using Pearson Correlation formula showed that the two dimensions of the scale are considered within the acceptable range .879, and .958 in order. It also submitted to a jury of nine TEFL specialists and psychologists to test its validity. The reliability coefficient of the scale responses was 0.805 determined by Alpha's Cronbach reliability coefficient.

2.5 Data Collection

The statistical analysis used in this study were T-test, Eta –Square, Alpha Cronbach, and Pearson Correlation Analysis.

3. Results

Hypothesis 1: Analysis of data obtained using "t–test" shows that the treatment group achieved a higher degree of improvement than the non-treatment group on the creative writing test since 't' value (127.066) is significant

at (0.05) level and beyond. Thus, the first hypothesis is confirmed. See table (6)

Table (6): Means, Standard Deviation, 't' value and Eta-squared of both the Treatment and non-treatment Group on the post testing of Creative Writing test

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t- value	D.F.	Sig	Eta – squared
Treatment	30	298.0000	4.10214	127.066	58	.000	.996
Non-treatment	30	117.6333	6.60451				

***Significant at 0.05 level and beyond**

Comparison of the results of the treatment group on the pre-post test of creative writing shows that the treatment group achieved a significant degree of improvement on post testing than on pre testing. The obtained t-value (45.250) is significant at (0.05) level and beyond as shown in table (7).

Table (7): Means, Standard Deviation, 't' value and Eta-squared of both the Treatment and non-treatment Group on the Pre-posttest of creative writing

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	D.F.	Sig	Eta squared
Post Treatment	30	198.8333	2.49252	45.250	29	0.000	0.986
Pre Treatment	30	154.0333	4.58245				
Post Non-treatment	30	153.2333	13.67021	0.718	29	0.478	—
Pre Non-treatment	30	155.0333	5.14268				

***Significant at 0.05 level and beyond**

On the other hand, the non-treatment group achieved significant improvement but less than the treatment group as the t-value (.795) is significant at 0.05 level. See table (8).

Table (8): Means, Standard Deviation, and 't' value of both the Treatment and non-treatment Groups on the pre- testing of the Creative Writing Test

Group	N.	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean difference	't' value	D.F.	Sig.
Treatment	30	154.0333	4.58245	-1	.795	58	.442
Non-treatment	30	155.0333	5.14268				

***Significant at 0.05 level and beyond**

Hypothesis 2

Using statistical analysis revealed that there is a significant statistical difference (favoring the treatment group) between mean scores obtained by the treatment and of the non-treatment group on the post-performance on the scale of self-esteem related to the academic and personal characteristics. The analysis of data obtained using "t – test" shows that the treatment group achieved a higher degree of improvement than the non-treatment group on the self-esteem scale since 't' value (31.386) is significant at (0.05) level and beyond. Thus, the second hypothesis is confirmed.

Table (9): Means, Standard Deviation, 't' value and Eta-squared of both the Treatment and non-treatment Group on the post scale of self-esteem

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	D.F.	Sig	Eta - squared
Treatment	30	220.77	10.371	31.386	58	0.000	0.944
Non-treatment	30	156.73	4.160				

***Significant at 0.05 level and beyond**

To ensure the effect of the program in achieving its prescribed objectives, Eta – Squared formula is used. As shown in table (9) Eta –Squared value (0.944) is highly significant. Comparison of the results of the treatment group on the pre-post scale of self-esteem shows that the treatment group achieved a significant degree of improvement on post scale than on pre scale. The obtained t-value (30.025) is significant at (0.055) level and beyond as shown in table (10).

Table (10): Means, Standard Deviation, 't' value and Eta-squared of both the Treatment and non-treatment Group on the Pre-post scale of self-esteem

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	D.F.	Sig	Eta squared
Post Treatment	30	220.77	10.371	30.025	29	0.000	0.969
Pre Treatment	30	154.0333	4.58245				
Post Non-treatment	30	156.73	4.160	1.596	29	0.121	—
Pre Non-treatment	30	154.8000	4.93684				

***Significant at 0.05 level and beyond**

On the other hand, the non-treatment group achieved significant improvement but less than the treatment group as the t-value (0.623) is significant at 0.05 level. Table (11) presents a summary of the analysis of data obtained in the pre and post-performance of the treatment and the non-treatment groups on the scale of self-esteem.

Table (11): Means, Standard Deviation, 't' value and Eta-squared of both the Treatment and non-treatment Group on the pre scale of self-esteem

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	D.F.	Sig	Eta squared
Treatment	30	154.0333	4.58245	0.623	58	0.535	—
Non-treatment	30	154.8000	4.93684				

*Significant at 0.05 level and beyond

4. Discussion

Hypothesis 1 predicted that there would be a statistical significant difference (favoring the treatment group) between mean scores obtained by the treatment and the non-treatment groups on the post test of creative writing. Analysis of data obtained showed that this hypothesis was accepted. The effect size was calculated using Eta-squared formula to guarantee that the effect of a program based on some strategies on developing creative writing. Results obtained on the post test of creative writing revealed that there were significant differences favoring the treatment

group. The degree of improvement reflected that students' creative writing has been developed.

Hypothesis 2 predicted that there would be a statistical significant difference (favoring the treatment group) between mean scores obtained by the treatment and the non-treatment groups on the post-performance of the self-esteem scale. Analysis of data obtained showed that this hypothesis was accepted. Results obtained on the post scale of self-esteem revealed significant differences favoring the treatment group. Participants of the treatment group improved their confidence in their academic and personal characteristics.

5. Implications:

These high gains obtained by the participants of the treatment group on post measures could be attributed to the use of a program based on some strategies which is based on developing creative writing skills, and self-esteem. These skills are: fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration. Such skills were developed through the use of show not tell strategy.

Recommendations:

In the light of the results obtained in the present study, a number of recommendations are suggested:

- 1- The role of creative writing instructor is not to provide students with a flat A or B grade, but rather to foster a classroom environment in which students are encouraged to share and discover new methods of writing.
- 2- Expanding the duration of the course would allow for further self-exploration and the writing process.
- 3- Teaching creative writing to college students should be more directed towards the development of imaginative abilities rather than just being writing texts followed by comprehension questions.
- 4- Help in publishing students' work in the faculty magazine and see their development in writing over time.
- 5- The development of creative writing skills should start from the very beginning of learning English, and should be among the objectives of the programs of EFL pre service teachers especially the "Novel" courses.

Suggestions for Further Research:

- 1- Investigating the effect of using show not tell strategy in elaborating students' creative writing.

- 2- Investigating the effect of creative writing on fostering students' imagination.
- 3- Investigating the effect of developing creative writing skills on enhancing the level self-esteem.
- 4- The study suggests to shed further some light on the field of creative writing for EFL students.

Conclusion

The present study investigated the effect of using show not tell strategy on developing Faculty of Education English majors' creative writing skills and self-esteem. Findings from this investigation provided a positive support for the hypotheses of the study.

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