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The Importance of Using Pictures in Enhancing Creative Writing of Rural Children

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Abstract:

Writing is one of the most important skills to acquire language proficiency. This paper focuses on the effectiveness of using pictures in teaching creative writing. Pictures are considered as a useful visual aid which can change the classroom atmosphere into an active, lively and interesting one. It lightens the complexity of lessons. The main aim of this article is to develop the creative writing skill of students from rural schools. Creative writing denotes spontaneity and freedom. It allows the students to express their ideas, thoughts and feelings. This study also explores the impact of pictures on creative writing in the overall development of learners.

Keywords: Creative Writing, Pictures, Creativity, Imagination, Effectiveness, Writing Skill.

Introduction

English has become the global language and is required in almost all the fields. Writing is a very essential skill for the students in learning English. Like most of the other skills, writing can be learnt and not inborn. The many types of writing include persuasive, narrative, descriptive and expository. When writing, students develop their language use. It allows them to express their opinions and feelings clearly and efficiently. It also emphasizes on using correct sentences, grammar, spelling, punctuation and other writing techniques. Teachers should concentrate on the fun aspects of writing. Students can be asked to write short story, poetry, humorous writing and events from their past experiences. Writing skill can be obtained only by constant practice. Learning through pictures helps students to acquire writing skill as well as English language.

Review of Literature

Various researchers have expressed their views about creative writing and its importance. Nasir et al. (2013) undertook a study entitled *Enhancing Student's Creative Writing Skills: An Action Research Project*. Researchers of this paper created few strategies as interventions which include creative writing exercises, flash cards for vocabulary building, having a library in the class and providing list of vocabulary. It also insists students to use thesaurus and dictionary frequently. Pre-test and post-test were carried out to measure the significant differences in students' writing. In the light of the findings, the data shows 75% of the students showed improvement in the areas of grammar, structure and vocabulary.

Through this study the investigators proved the significant improvement of using interventions in developing the creative writing skills of students.

Dell (1964) has written a paper on *Creative Writing in the English Classroom*. The main objectives of Creative Writing are classroom atmosphere and writing exercise. It is emotional, sensual and expects students to use many of their senses in the expression of their writing. Its main goal is self-knowledge. Students gain confidence, interest and motivation when they see their own writing in print. In creative writing teacher's attitude plays an important role. Negative criticism and fear discourage students to write. In the current study, the researcher gives some creative writing exercises including Frame, The T.C (thought card), The R.C (reaction card), The Deep Well, The Fantasy, The Character, and The Dialogue.

Thonghattha et al. (2016) conducted a study to examine the effectiveness of using storybird in the enhancement of creative writing. Storybird is a story telling website which includes three ideas, namely, creating, reading and sharing. It enhances creativity and improves reading and writing ability. It is one of the helpful tools for the shy and reluctant students to imagine and write on their own. It develops high-order thinking and deep reflection. Researchers used quasi-experimental research and a paper-based creative writing pre-test and post-test. The writing was analysed regarding creative writing, organization, setting, character, grammar, and language usage. The study indicates that the students have positive perception and interest towards creative writing using story bird. So, storybird can be considered as an effective tool in improving students' creative writing ability.

Adam and Babiker (2014) state that literary studies are interrelated with creative writing. So, they conducted an investigation to show the importance of English Literature in enriching the creative writing skills. The result reveals that the students show a significant difference in their performance concerning description of story setting, characterization and literary elements. Students employed story elements including theme, plot, setting, point of view, and conflict more effectively in their post-test. They improved their skill in using symbols, images, metaphors, and other figures of speech. They also used better idioms, proper grammatical structures and spelling, flowery language and correct punctuation. This confirms that literary texts play significant role in students' progress in creative writing.

Visuals are one of the essential teaching facilities. Shabiralyani et al. (2015) conducted a case research to determine the impact of visual aids in developing the language process. To collect the data, researchers have used closed ended questionnaire. The objective of this study is to find out the effectiveness of visuals in the learning process, problems of using visual aids and teachers' skills in using visual aids for effective learning. The data analysis revealed that visuals help in motivation, content clarification, increases observing capacity, vocabulary and gives direct experience. So majority of teachers and learners have a positive perception of visual learning. Students find it relevant, useful, stimulating and different from monotonous learning. The findings observe that there is a lack of time and proper equipment to teach students through visual aids.



Asrifan (2015) uses picture story to enrich the learners' ability in writing narrative composition. The investigator uses pictures for experimental group and conventional method without pictures for control group. In post-test 90% students of experimental group were able to make good writing with logical sequence and well-organised ideas. Meanwhile, only 60% of control group students were able to make good writing. Based on the findings researchers conclude that the students who taught using picture story showed better improvement in using correct words, punctuation, and capitalization. It improved their overall writing skill. So, the researcher finds it effective to use picture story than conventional method in teaching writing.

Creative Writing and its Importance

Traditionally, creative writing refers to literature. It is a kind of art which focuses on self-expressions. It is written to express, render and entertain. It includes fiction, poetry, songs, novels, screenplays, scripts, speeches, personal essays, short stories and creative non-fiction. Creative writing is considered to be subjective writing. It is written from the point of view of the author. It is an original composition and artistic expression of the writer. It gives opportunity for the learners to express their own thoughts and feelings which contribute to their mental and physical health. Creativity denotes free writing, spontaneity, freedom, and lack of structure. It often does not follow a standard structure. It differs from most types of academic and informative writing. It indicates in producing a new technique or writing style. It requires students to organize their ideas logically and effectively. The process of Creative Writing involves thinking, brainstorming ideas, discussing, forming sentences, organising writing, and revising. Creative writing is one of the important skills to learn English language. It is very stimulating and a lot of fun. Its purpose is to both entertain and share experience. This Creative Writing activity focuses to bring out the emotion, intellect, creativity and hidden talent of students. It provides opportunity for language practice.

Children express themselves openly. Their imagination and creativity run limitless. They spend time in non-reality that is imaginative play. They have the ability to innovate, explore unfamiliar and new areas. They have a more active imagination than adults. Children are more flexible, adapt changes and technological advances. They are less constrained by practicality and rules, and more open to new possibilities. They feel a sense of freedom and unaware of being judged. Every child is an artist. So, teaching creative writing to children is relatively easy and joyful. Creativity is seen as a skill rather than an inborn talent. So, developing the creativity of children is important. They should be provided with the resources they need for creative expression. The investigator of the study believes that the creative writing through pictures will provide opportunity to promote imagination and creative thinking of children.

Techniques in Creative Writing

Technique is a way of executing or performing a particular task. It is a skilful way of carrying out something. Creative writing involves being creative and letting one's imagination run wild. The techniques which used in creative writing include plot

development, character development, point of view, dialogue, vivid setting, underlying theme, figures of speech, imaginative language, anecdotes, and emotional appeal.

Importance of Visual Aids

Visual tools play a vital role in English Language Teaching. Visuals can be used to teach reading, writing, speaking and also in enriching students vocabulary and grammar. Visual tools include photos, pictures, mind maps, icons, illustrations, figures, sketches, and presentations. Most of the students in the classroom will be visual learners. Their brain works faster to visual information than text. They will easily understand the ideas and information more clearly than oral or written words. It also improves their learning speed and kindles analytical thought. Teachers use visual tools to clarify the precise concepts, understandings and appreciation. It changes dull learning into active, real, motivating and significant. Students are more likely to remember the concept permanently if they are taught using visual aids. They also tend to learn more vocabulary. It provides them direct experience and increases their interest in learning. It encourages learners to understand and interpret the subject taught. It boosts their self-confidence. The investigator of the present study uses pictures to enhance the creative writing skill of students from rural background. Majority of the students are interested in learning through pictures and consider it as a joyful activity. It helps them to generate ideas and learn seriously with maximum attention. Pictures can be used to improve their creativity. It also reduces the difficulty level of understanding complex grammar and their usage. It will make learners to think outside the box. Various investigations prove that the use of picture enhances ideas and promotes students' motivation and concentration. The content of the picture must be selected according to the age and maturity of students. So, they will be able to identify the elements of the pictures based on their previous experiences.

Enhancing Creative writing of Rural Students through Pictures

English is a major link language at international level but English learning is seen as a challenging one in the rural parts of India. Since English is their second language, students find it very difficult to understand. Lack of listening and reading, environment, family background of students promotes difficulty in learning. Students are not taught English properly in schools. Since majority of students are from rural background, bilingual method has adopted in language classes and students lack exposure in English. It requires patience and practice to learn English.

Most often rural students feel threatened and reluctant to write a creative story about a given theme. If they are provided with some fun activities and inspiration, learners will involve themselves eagerly in writing. So pictures can stimulate their interest and formulate new ideas to write. Using pictures is effective in getting student's focused attention and interest. It creates a supportive and pleasant environment. Through pictures students will learn to think, observe, and imagine unique ideas, stories and even a new world. Sometimes rural students may suffer from writer's block and hesitate to create their own story. So, students will be divided into groups to help them overcome fear and hesitation, and gain confidence. Students will work enthusiastically and usually above their normal level if they



are in groups. Each group should be given separate pictures. Learners have to write a story based on the picture. Idling or loafing is not allowed in the group work so each student should contribute his/her ideas. Each group will discuss the title, setting, characters and theme for the story. Ideas for the story can be realistic or fanciful. The settings of the story include atmosphere, place, time, and mood. The development of the plot should have a proper beginning, middle and the end. Learners will observe the picture, think, form sentences and organise the story. The story should have some problem, suspense, mystery and solution. There will be interaction among students and lots of discussions. They can also give a moral to their stories.

The writings of the students can be evaluated regarding their content, language and organization. Each group should judge their own writing performance. They should be encouraged to correct their own mistakes. Problems in punctuation, spelling and grammatical structure must be given much attention by both students and instructor. Through creative writing students will learn to describe settings, characters and create new imaginative stories. Teachers can ask the learners to read aloud their stories in the classroom. Giving positive feedback motivates students to write more in the future. Discussing and sharing their ideas with each other increases their maturity. While discussing, instructor should not impose his own thoughts but can give suggestions and alternatives. This Creative Writing activity focuses to bring out the emotion, intellect, creativity and hidden talent of students. One can see a notable improvement in students' self-esteem. Students tend to discover their strengths and weaknesses in writing skill. It also promotes linguistic as well as personal growth. To improve the rural students English, schools should encourage English teachers to converse in English. It should motivate the students to read newspapers, magazines, and journals to enrich their skills. Writing skill is essential in improving communication.

Conclusion

This paper emphasizes on teaching creative writing through pictures, which can be used as a medium to teach different types of creative writing. The aim of this research is to improve the creativity and writing skill of rural students. Teachers can use pictures in stimulating children's creativity. It also strengthens their confidence and makes them realize their potential in writing. The researcher of this article concludes that the picture aided learning strategy improves students' attitude towards learning process and their behaviour in writing task. It increases students' participation in giving ideas, asking questions, discussing with their teachers and friends. There will be an overall improvement in students' writing ability. Hence this article brings forth the idea that teaching creative writing through pictures can turn out to be a useful one.

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