



New Trends and Issues Proceedings on Humanities and Social Sciences



Volume 4, Issue 1 (2017) 406-412

ISSN 2421-8030

www.prosoc.eu

Selected Papers of 9th World Conference on Educational Sciences (WCES-2017) 01-04 February 2017 Hotel Aston La Scala Convention Center, Nice, France

The effect of creative reading and creative writing activities on creative reading achievement

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Suggested Citation:

Kirmızı, S. F. & Kasap, D. (2017). The effect of creative reading and creative writing activities on creative reading achievement. *New Trends and Issues Proceedings on Humanities and Social Sciences*. [Online]. 4(1), pp 406-412. Available from: www.prosoc.eu

Selection and peer review under responsibility of Prof. Dr. Jesus Garcia Laborda, University of Alcala, Spain.

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to evaluate the effect of creative writing and creative reading activities on creative reading achievement. In the collection and analysis of the research data, the quantitative method, and accordingly, the pretest-posttest model with a non-equivalent control group was preferred. The study was conducted with fourth graders studying at elementary schools in the Denizli province in the fall term of the 2015-2016 school year. There were 32 participants in total. The data were gathered through the "Creative Reading Process Assessment Scale (CRPAS)" developed by the researchers. The Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of the scale that consisted of 28 items was 0,88. In the study, a significant difference was revealed between posttest scores of the experimental and control groups, $t(30)=8,83$, $p<0.01$. At the end of the procedure, there was a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores of the control group, $t(30)= 2,67$, $p< 0,01$, and between the pretest and posttest scores of the experimental group, $t(30)= 21,20$ $P<0,01$. According to the results of the study, creative reading and creative writing practices were influential on improving creative reading achievement.

Keywords: Creative reading; creative writing; students; elementary school.

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1. Introduction

Today, reading maintains its importance as the most basic way of accessing information. As a necessity of the age that we are going through, finding the information that we look for within the complex accumulation of knowledge that constantly piles up, and distinguishing the correct information from others have become a significant characteristic. For this reason, students at elementary school level should be instilled with the love of reading, and their reading comprehension skills should be developed. At this juncture, creative reading approach can be mentioned as a method that is based on multifaceted thinking by approaching texts from different perspectives, requires producing constructive thoughts, and is fun to engage in. One of the methods that can be used to trigger creative thinking in elementary school students, ensure their participation in creative processes, and make them read as gaining different experiences is the creative reading method.

According to Incik (2012), creative reading provides readers various activities in the comprehension process, and enables yielding creative ideas and products related to the topic of a text. Creative reading supports the development of creativity as an approach that guides readers in using their imagination. For Adams (1968), creative reading is defined as reading with the aim of reaching the implied meanings and connotations, forming reactions to what is read, and making critical evaluations. In creative reading, readers are expected to go beyond comprehending the text, and state the original ideas that are not explicitly indicated within a text. Readers become active participants of the reading process, and can make additions to what is expressed by the author. Creative reading is based on making children engage in multifaceted thinking through questions such as "what do you think will happen?", "what do you think the characters of the story feel", "have you ever felt like this before?" and "have you ever encountered such as situation before?" in the reading process. Readers combine what the author wants to convey with their own experiences based on what is said between the lines, and in this way, it can be possible to form new meanings and original ideas (Adams, 1968).

Creative reading is a way of reading that includes the process in which activities that help readers focus on what they read are done. This process is entertaining and thought-provoking as well as it requires a certain discipline. Not being distracted while reading, and being able to remember what is read easily and for a longer time after reading are important characteristics of creative reading. During creative reading, readers' mind is involved in creative ideas, which enables to keep the mind on constant alert. In reading activities that are conducted in accordance with the creative reading process, readers reach an idea about the style and type of the text without noticing it.

Creative reading, which is known as a high-order thinking skill today, teaches individuals to freely express their feelings and thought. In this respect, creative reading seems to be a necessity in the transition to creative writing. According to Akyol (2006), writings continues to maintain its significance in terms of individual and social aspects today. As individuals' writing skills develop, they are able to do activities such as conveying information and organising and expressing thoughts effectively which leads to a higher-order writing skill. Considering that today's educational understanding aim to raise constructive and creative individuals who read, criticise and have the skill of accessing information, the importance of creative writing comes to the fore. Oral (2008) who states that creative writing refers to individuals' writing down their feelings and thoughts on a topic by using their imagination points out that creative writing is a method that can develop creativity and personality. Oral (2008) argues that equipping students with writing skills is not possible only by making them write instructive texts. Individuals should be given the opportunity to use their views, thoughts, imagination and creativity in their perception and making sense of the outside world. Perceiving the outside world through sense, being aware of details and visualising these details in mind enable students to have originality in writing.

Students are observed to experience certain difficulties in writing practices at schools. For Maltepe (2007), this can be due to not having mutual interaction while writing, difficulties in expressing one's self and the anxiety of making mistakes in applying grammar rules. Writing practices in the tradition education system bore students, limit their thoughts, inhibit their creativity and detract them from being active due to reasons such as pre-determined topics, titles or sub-titles that are followed being

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told by teachers, and texts being restricted to certain patterns and rules. According to Byrne (1988), writing is the language skill in which students usually have the most difficulty. This is due to psychological, linguistic and cognitive problems experienced in the writing process. In order to make students feel more comfortable in writing, and give them opportunities to write down their feelings and thoughts freely, creative writing that is a process-based approach can be employed.

Turkish classes is an important opportunity for discovering and developing the creative potential in individuals. Students' high-order cognitive skills can be developed by using new approaches in reading and writing practices in Turkish classes. At the same time, they are enabled to participate in reading and writing activities willingly and have fun while engaging in these activities through creative reading and creative writing practices.

The aim of this study is to evaluate the effect of creative reading and creative writing activities on creative reading achievement. Four research questions were formed in accordance with the aim of the study:

1. Is there a significant difference between the creative reading pretest scores of the group exposed to creative reading and creative writing practices, and the group exposed to the Turkish course curriculum?

2. Is there a significant difference between the creative reading posttest scores of the group exposed to creative reading and creative writing practices, and the group exposed to the Turkish course curriculum?

3. Is there a significant difference between the pretest and posttest creative reading scores of the group exposed to the Turkish course curriculum?

4. Is there a significant difference between the pretest and posttest creative reading scores of the group exposed to creative reading and creative writing practices?

2. Method

In this study, it was aimed to examine the effect of creative reading and creative writing activities on creative reading achievement. Quantitative method, and accordingly, quasi-experimental model were employed. Experimental studies are those that test the effect of differences formed by the researcher on a dependent variable (Buyukozturk, 2012). Because the students who participated could not be selected randomly and the existing classes were included in the study, "pretest-posttest non-equivalent model with control group" was followed among "quasi-experimental" designs (Basturk, 2012). The independent variable whose effect was examined in the experimental group was creative reading and creative writing practices used in Turkish classes. On the other hand, the dependent variable in both groups was creative reading achievement.

2.1. Participants

The study was conducted with fourth graders studying at an elementary school in Denizli in the fall term of the 2015-2016 school year. One of the two classes in which the participants were studying was randomly selected as the experimental group (n=16), and the other class as the control group (n=16). The study was conducted with the participation of 32 students.

2.2. Data gathering tool

The data were gathered through the "Creative Reading Process Assessment Scale (CRPAS)" developed by the researchers.

A literature review was conducted to form a basis for scale development, and the items were written based on the insights obtained. Expert opinion was taken with regard to the initial form of the items. Based on the expert opinion on the applicability of the scale, and compliance of the items with language rules and students' level, the scale items were revised, and necessary revisions were made. Following

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these steps, the scale was finalised as including 43 items. To identify the students' levels of agreement on these items, a five-point scale including "Always, Often, Sometimes, Rarely, Never" was developed.

Factor analysis was performed on the data obtained from the pilot study of the 43-item scale. Factor analysis is a method that gathers unrelated units that can be tackled together among many related characteristics, but that can be used to explain a phenomenon, and enables defining these units as a factor with a new name (Ozdamar; 2002). The KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) value of the data obtained from the pilot study was examined before performing factor analysis. According to the results of the initial analysis of CRPAS, the KMO value was found as 0,92. KMO value is expected to be higher than 0,60 for suitability of the data for factor analysis. It was decided that the sample was adequate according to the value obtained in this study (Susar-Kirmizi, 2008). Based on this result, it can be stated that the data were suitable for factor analysis (Buyukozturk, 2003). Rotated factor analysis was performed on the data. Following the procedures, 15 items that fell into more than one factor and had a value lower than 0,40 were excluded from the scale that was finalised with the remaining 28 items.

In its final version, the scale consisted of 28 items; 11 items in the first factor, 7 items in the second factor and 10 items in the third factor. These factors were respectively named as "thinking about what is read", "connecting different parts of a text", and "prompting creativity and imagination during reading". The Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient was found to be 0,88 after the factors were identified.

2.3. Data gathering procedure

In the experimental group, creative reading and creative writing practices were implemented within the Turkish classes for two hours per week throughout 14 weeks. For one hour every week, the text in the Turkish coursebook was read in accordance with the creative reading method and was supplemented with creative reading activities. In the second hour, creative writing activities were done after creative reading. In the control group, the regular Turkish curriculum of the Ministry of National Education was used. The "Creative Reading Process Assessment Scale (CRPAS)" was administered to the students in the control and experimental groups as the pretest and posttest. The creative reading scores received in the scale were evaluated as creative reading achievement, and analyses were conducted on these data.

2.4. Data analysis

The data were analysed using SPSS 22.0. Arithmetic mean and standard deviations were calculated for creative reading scores of the students in the experiment and control groups, and t-test was performed to determine whether the differences between groups were significant.

3. Findings and Interpretation

In this section, the findings obtained in the study are presented in four sub-sections with regard to the research questions.

3.1. Findings for the first research question

The first research question of the study reads as "Is there a significant difference between the creative reading pretest scores of the group exposed to creative reading and creative writing practices, and the group exposed to the Turkish course curriculum?". In order to answer the first research question, the pretest scores of the experiment and control groups were examined. Arithmetic mean and standard deviations of the students' scores in CRPAS were calculated to reveal the creative reading achievement of the experiment and control groups, and t-test was conducted to see whether intergroup differences were significant. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Comparing Creative Reading Achievement of the Experimental and Control Groups in the Pretest (t-test)

Scale	Groups	Tests	N	\bar{X}	Ss	sd	t	Significance
CRPAS	Experimental group	Pretest	16	56.12	5.92	30	0.55	.58
	Control Group	Pretest	16	55.06	4.89		P>0.01	Difference not significant

According to the results presented in Table 1, there was no significant difference between the arithmetic means of the experimental (\bar{X} =56,12) and control (\bar{X} =55,06) groups in the pretest regarding their creative reading achievement, [t= 0.55; p>0,01]. It can be stated that the creative reading achievement of the students in the experiment and control groups was close to each other prior to the implementation.

3.2. Findings for the second research question

The second research question of the study reads as "Is there a significant difference between the creative reading posttest scores of the group exposed to creative reading and creative writing practices, and the group exposed to the Turkish course curriculum?". In order to answer this research question, the posttest scores of the experiment and control groups were examined. Arithmetic mean and standard deviations were calculated for creative reading scores of the students in the experiment and control groups after the implementation, and t-test was conducted to see whether the differences between groups were significant. The results of the analysis regarding the second research question are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Comparing Creative Reading Achievement of the Experimental and Control Groups in the Posttest (t-test)

Scale	Groups	Tests	n	\bar{X}	Ss	Sd	t	Significance
CRPAS	Experimental Group	Posttest	16	109.75	8.20	30	8.83	.00
	Control Group	Posttest	16	67.18	17.44		P<0,01	Difference significant

The results presented in Table 2 show a significant difference between the arithmetic mean of the experimental group (\bar{X} =109,75) and the control group (\bar{X} =67,18) after the implementation, [t= 8,83; p<0,01]. It was found that the posttest scores of the experimental group were higher than those of the control group. After the implementation during the research process, the creative reading achievement of the experimental group students showed a significant increase compared to that of the control group students. In this case, it can be argued that creative reading and creative writing practices are effective in enhancing students' creative reading achievement.

3.3. Findings for the third research question

As for the third research question, an analysis was performed on the data regarding the students' creative reading scores before and after the activities conducted in accordance with the Turkish course curriculum in the control group. The results of the analyses on the pretest and posttest scores for creative reading achievement in the control group are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Comparing Creative Reading Achievement of the Control Group in the Pretest and Posttest (t-test)

Scale	Tests	N	\bar{X}	Ss	Sd	t	Significance
CRPAS	Pretest	16	55.06	4.89	30	-2.67	.012
	Posttest	16	67.18	17.44		P>0.01	Difference not significant

As is seen in Table 3, there was no statistically significant difference between the pretest (\bar{X} =55,06), and posttest scores (\bar{X} =67,18) of the control group that were obtained before and after the

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implementation, [t= -2,67; p>0,01]. In other words, it was found that the students' creative reading achievement did not show a significant change through the activities included in the Turkish course curriculum of the Ministry of National Education.

3.4. Findings for the fourth research question

The arithmetic mean of the students' creative reading pretest and posttest scores were calculated in the experimental group in which creative reading and creative writing practices were implemented in the research process. T-test was then performed to see whether the difference between the pretest and posttest mean scores was significant. The results of the analyses are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Comparing Creative Reading Achievement of the Experimental Group in the Pretest and Posttest (t-test)

Scale	Tests	N	\bar{X}	Ss	Sd	t	Significance
CRPAS	Pretest	16	56.12	5.92	30	-21.2	.00*
	Posttest	16	109.75	8.20		P<0,01	Difference significant

As is seen in Table 4, the students' posttest mean score (\bar{X} =109,75) was higher than their pretest mean score (\bar{X} =56,12) in the experimental group. The findings also showed that there was a significant difference between their pretest and posttest scores [t= -21,2; p<0,01]. In other words, when the data obtained before implementing the creative reading and creative writing practices and those obtained after the implementation were compared, an improvement was observed in the students' creative reading achievement. The creative reading and creative writing practices implemented in the experimental group were effective in enhancing the students creative reading achievement.

4. Results and Suggestions

In the analysis of the pretest scores, no significant difference was revealed between the experimental and control groups. The creative reading achievement of the students in the experiment and control groups was found to be close to each other prior to the implementation.

With regard to the creative reading achievement of both groups at the end of the process, a significant difference was revealed in favour of the experimental group in the posttest scores [t= 8,83; p<0,01]. The posttest mean score of the experimental group (\bar{X} =109,75) was found to be higher than that of the control group (\bar{X} =67,18). After the implementation during the research process, the creative reading achievement of the experimental group students was higher than that of the control group students. At the end of classes delivered through methods in accordance with the Turkish course curriculum, the creative reading achievement of the students did not improve.

As for the pretest and posttest results of the control group, no significant difference was revealed between the students' pretest (\bar{X} =55,06) and posttest mean score (\bar{X} =67,18), [t= -2,67; p>0,01]. Based on this result, it can be stated that the students' creative writing achievement did not change with the activities included in the Turkish course curriculum.

As for the pretest and posttest scores of the experimental group, there was a significant difference. A significant increase was revealed between the creative reading scores before the creative reading and creative writing practices were implemented and the scores after the implementation, [t= -21,2; p<0,01]. Creative reading and creative writing practices were effective in enhancing creative reading achievement in students.

Similar to the research findings, Torrance (1970) stated that creative reading practices that are applied by teachers at schools would be beneficial, and listed the activities that can be done during creative reading practices in four steps. These steps were indicated as visualising what is read in mind, going into details in a text, restructuring what is read, and going beyond what is read. Similarly, Martin and Cramond (1983) asserted that when creative reading is experienced by elementary school students, they enjoy the act of reading. In addition, they stated that students do not encounter sufficient amount

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of creative reading activities, and creative reading should be integrated into school curriculum. Adams (1968) also indicated that creative reading should be included in the school curricula at every level in order to improve effective reading skills in children.

The following suggestions are offered based on the results of the study: As a result of the study, it was revealed that creative reading and creative writing practices increased creative reading achievement in elementary school children. Accordingly, creative reading and creative writing practices should be included more intensively in elementary schools, particularly in the Turkish classes. Seminars should be organised for teachers to be more conscious about creative reading activities.

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