

Abstract

Utilizing Inquiry Based Learning to Develop Preparatory School Students' EFL Creative Reading Skills

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The purpose of the study was to develop EFL creative reading skills of preparatory school Students through inquiry based learning. To accomplish this purpose, the present study followed the pre-post, quasi-experimental-control group design. Towards this, the researcher used two groups: experimental and control groups. Conducting the current treatment, a number of sixty EFL third-year students from Sheet El Hawa preparatory school, Kafr Saqr Educational Directorate, Sharkia Governorate, Egypt, were intentionally allocated in two groups, thirty students for the experimental group and thirty for the control one. Characteristically managed a pre and post-testing technique for the purpose of data gathering and analyzing. The researcher designed an EFL creative reading test, creative reading rubric to measure EFL creative reading skills before and after the treatment. Generally, the current study was conducted over a period of six weeks; each task took about 50 minutes to be fully implemented through the second term of the academic year 2022-2023. Finally, the results of the study showed that the inquiry based learning had a positive effect on developing the EFL creative reading skills of the preparatory school students.

Key words: Inquiry Based Learning , EFL creative reading skills

الملخص

الغرض من هذه الدراسة هو تطوير مهارات القراءة الإبداعية لدى طلبة المرحلة الإعدادية وذلك من خلال التعلم القائم على الاستقصاء. ولتحقيق هذا الغرض، اتبعت هذه الدراسة المنهج التجريبي ذو التصميم شبه التجريبي. ولتحقيق ذلك الهدف، اختارت الباحثة عينة من طلبة الصف الثالث الإعدادي من مدرسة شيط الهوي الإعدادية، إدارة كفر صقر التعليمية، محافظة الشرقية، جمهورية مصر العربية، وتم تقسيمهم الي مجموعتين: المجموعة التجريبية ثلاثين طالباً والمجموعات الضابطة ثلاثين طالباً. كما صممت الباحثة استبيان لمهارات القراءة الإبداعية، واختبار مهارات القراءة الإبداعية لتطبيقه قبلًا وبعدياً علي كلا المجموعتين، كما استغرق تطبيق الدراسة الحالية جلستين اسبوعياً لمدة ستة أسابيع؛ استغرقت كل جلسة حوالي ٥٠ دقيقة ليتم تنفيذها بالكامل خلال الفصل الدراسي الثاني من العام الدراسي ٢٠٢٢-٢٠٢٣. وأخيراً، أظهرت نتائج الدراسة أن التعلم القائم على الاستقصاء كان له تأثير إيجابي على تطوير مهارات القراءة الإبداعية لدي عينة الدراسة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: القراءة الإبداعية، التعلم القائم علي الاستقصاء

1-Introduction

With the increasing importance of having knowledge, individuals are directed to seek new and precise information, and for this reason, it is more preferable to reach original and innovative ideas. One of the easiest and definite ways to reach original and new information is reading.

Creative reading is a high-level reading skill and the reconstruction of a text through interpreting it based on individual experiences and imagination (Sever, 2010). In another parlance, the important thing in this type of reading is to notice the invisible meaning in the text (Moorman & Ram, 2019). Therefore, the text is reconstructed in mind through imagination and individuals go beyond the content of the text. Thereafter, comprehension, understanding, questioning and familiarization with content and creativity skills are activated at high-level (Marilyn, 2011).

Creative reading requires thinking and revealing the thoughts of the reader. It happens when the readers add something to what they read from themselves. In the creative reading process, students firstly need to comprehend a text to understand it. Thus, Isiksalan (2018) clarified that the processes of creative reading consist of four stages: creational memory, analogy, unsubstantial analogy and analysis by arranging. Creational memory includes perceptual and cognitive and mental skills (e.g. perceiving, learning, remembering, thinking, contriving and is another concept that would ground analogy, unsubstantial analogy will occur. An arrangement occurs

when a question is handled in a new way. Therefore, persons who accomplish creative understanding will be able to identify unknown words, tell whether the text they read is interesting or not, establish a cause and effect relationship regarding the personal acceptances and beliefs of the characters in the text and make inferences by associating the action states in the text throughout reading.

Creative reading includes five aspects. The first aspect is creative interpretation. It involves reconstructing reading materials. The second one is creative inquiry that deals with how to ask questions. The third is creative integration that focuses on combining words, concepts and images of a story into new words or perceptions in the readers' mind. The fourth is creative application that involves looking for various situations that may relate directly or indirectly to what has been read. The last aspect is creative criticism. It deals with the process of separating facts from opinion and drawing conclusion that may differ from the author. In order to read creatively, students should be capable readers with various levels from simple decoding of words into internal concepts to the active engagement of the text and building complex mental worlds to model textual elements. Thus, creative reading is the abilities to go beyond the text to be involved inside and outside it to pose questions and bring new ideas to what is read (Holden, 2004).

2-Context of the Problem

The problem of the current study could be emphasized through the following ways:

- a) working as an EFL teacher, the researcher observed a gross lack in EFL creative reading skills among preparatory stage students.
- b) reviewing the previous studies that tackled creative reading skills (Ebrahim, 2016; Qudah, & Sa'di, 2020). These studies revealed that there is a profound weakness in creative reading skills among EFL students.
- c) conducting interviews with EFL teachers in some preparatory schools. They confirmed that most students have a low level of creative reading skills among preparatory stage students.
- d) conducting a pilot study on a group of 20 students, enrolled in the 3rd year sheet Al Hawa preparatory school, Kafr Saqr, Sharkia Governorate, Egypt. The pilot study consisted of an EFL creative reading test. Results of the test indicated that the majority of the piloted creative reading skills were poor.

As a result, the researcher suggests utilizing inquiry-based learning to develop preparatory stage students' EFL creative reading skills.

Inquiry-based learning focuses on developing learners' reasoning skills and raising their inspiration and motivation (Ernawati & Lestari, 2020). In addition, Arauz (2013) defines it as a cognitive educational theory and a teaching practice. It can be described as a process which involves students in different activities such as exploring, investigating, searching for information, discovering seeking solutions under the guidance of the teacher.

According to Caputo (2014), the inquiry-based learning has six phases: planning, retrieving, processing, creating, sharing and evaluating. These phases are essential for reflecting on the process. Together they contain together the affective and cognitive domains related with metacognition. Moreover, reflecting to the method is important to all stages in the inquiry model.

Planning Phase: At this phase of the inquiry process, inquirers practice some active procedures such as:-

- 1- Experiencing a sense of optimism about the tasks.
- 2- Understanding the main goal of inquiry-based learning projects which is Developing students' learning to learn skills.
- 3- Meeting the need or interest about a topic.
- 4- Determining the main problem that needs to be resolved.
- 5- Choosing the needed inquiry questions.
- 6- Investigating their questions.
- 7- Finding the information they need to know regarding a specific topic.
- 8- Presenting information to a specific audience.
- 9- Setting criteria for assessing their research product and process.

At this stage it is essential also for educators to give certain courtesy to students with little or no background knowledge of a topic to help building their success and progress .This can be accomplished by;

- 1- Providing those students with information and background knowledge.

- 2- Motivating students to learn more.
- 3- Enhancing students' productive inquiry.
- 4- Involving students in topics or themes.

Retrieving Phase this is the second phase of the inquiry process where the inquirers think deeply about the needed information and their prior knowledge (Johnson & Adams, 2011). This process of thinking and searching about information needs a considerable time before students' being able to decide for their inquiry. This is a challenging process for the endurance of students in searching information as at the beginning of this process students are enjoyable, active and attractive but they become bored and frustrated when they cannot find the information particular to their inquiry or cannot handle the unrelated information as the amount of resources increases. To overcome this feeling of frustration, teachers have to practice some activities:

1. Training students to use suitable skills and strategies to select relevant information phase which is reflected through explaining what students got from the exploration.
2. Helping students to adjust and modify inquiries and training them that these feelings are ones that all inquirers experience.
3. Helping students to understand that the information they find is not objective facts.
4. Encouraging higher thinking such as comparing, contrasting and synthesizing data.

Processing Phase this is the third phase of the inquiry process which is emphasized by finding the attention for the inquiry. This phase is also concerned with determining which information from the available resources is suitable for the focus of the topic. Selecting information needs a certain concentration to be able to select from the too little information or the excessively information.

This phase explains the result of the used reading comprehension strategies. Providing deeper understanding about the text is considered a critical part at this phase. Students use their own words to reflect on the ideas of the text using experience and evidence from the text to support their ideas. Moreover, explanation to the reading passage and giving comments on others' explanations is critically appraised to assess and compare others' own answers.

Creating Phase this is the fourth step where students organize their information. Student's ability to contain all their new learning in their product and their competence to result in too much information will help encourage them and raise their confidence. Teachers play an active role in this phase to build student success through teaching students the skills and strategies that allow them to restrict or focus on their information. Teachers also teach learners the positive audience skills which can support students through this phase.

This phase is necessary to improve reading skills be accomplished through familiarizing the students with the text, helping them apply. This improvement can their understandings to

new concepts, comprising several questions and answering questions. Through answering questions randomly the teacher can enhance students' use of the appropriate terms to connect their understandings from the explanations and remind students of alternatives.

Sharing Phase at this state, students become satisfied with their product, new skills and understandings and willing to share it as a result of getting enough supports throughout the inquiry process. Students feel that they have done well on their assignment and this leads them to reflect their experience to others.

Evaluating Phase this is the last phase of the inquiry process. In order to reach successful outcomes in inquiry, the instructor must provide the students with opportunities to reflect on the original brainstorming session and examine the development of their focus. It is essential that the students make use of learning tools such as rubrics and checklists to evaluate their products and processes. Students are also encouraged to work collaboratively at this stage to edit each other's product. It is important to note that evaluation must not only emphasize on the final product or be too summative as this may result to students become more skillful.

3- Statement of the problem

In the light of reviewing the previous discussion, the pilot study and the researcher's experience in EFL teaching, it could be stated that experimental participants had weakness in EFL creative reading skills. The researcher proposed to overcome such difficulties with

inquiry based learning. This study was an attempt to develop EFL creative reading skills of preparatory stage students.

4- Questions of the study

The study attempted to answer the following main question:
What is the effect of utilizing inquiry based learning to develop preparatory school students EFL creative reading?

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

1. What are the creative reading skills targeted for (3rd year) preparatory stage students?
2. What is the actual level of students in creative reading skills of (3rd year) preparatory stage students?
3. How can inquiry based learning be designed to develop creative reading skills of (3rd year) preparatory stage students?
4. To what extent is the inquiry based learning effect on developing the students' creative reading skills?

5- Delimitations of the study

The current study was delimited to the following:

- 1- A group of third year preparatory stage students from Sheet Al Hawa School, Kafr Saqr Educational Directorate, Sharkia governorate, Egypt as they lack creative reading skills.
- 2- Some creative reading skills which were approved by the jury members and suitable for students.
- 3- Some units and lessons from Student's book and Workbook: New Hello English for preparatory schools year three.

4- During the second semester of the academic year 2022/2023.

6- Instruments of the Study

The following instruments were used in the current study:

- 1- A creative reading skills questionnaire as a pre requisite to choose the targeted skills.
- 2- A creative reading skills test as a real instrument.
- 3- Rubric.

7- Purpose of the study

This study aimed at making use of inquiry based learning to enhance EFL creative reading skills of preparatory stage students.

8- Significance of the study

The results of the study were expected to be useful to:

- 1- **EFL Students** as it
 - improved their EFL creative reading skills.
 - provided them with a suitable environment void of stress or anxiety to practise EFL creative reading skills.
- 2- **EFL Teachers:** It provided them with guidelines for using inquiry based learning to enhance students' creative reading skills.
- 3- **EFL Supervisors:** It uses inquiry based learning to set training courses for EFL teachers.
- 4- **EFL Curriculum designers:** They consider inquiry based learning on designing and preparing EFL textbooks.
- 5- **EFL researchers:** It guides other researchers to conduct further studies on developing EFL skills through using inquiry based learning activities.

9- Definition of Terms

Creative reading

Creative reading is a high-level reading skill and the re-construction of a text through interpreting it based on individual experiences and imagination (Sever, 2010).

Operationally, creative reading skills can be defined as the ability of the EFL 3rd year preparatory school students to understand the subject matter and words correctly, comprehend literary meanings, integrate past experiences with ideas, discover covert meanings and connections through symbols, develop new ideas and apply these to new fields.

Inquiry-based learning

According to Branch and Oberg (2004), inquiry-based learning is a process where students are involved in their learning, formulate questions, investigate widely and then build new understandings, meanings and knowledge. That knowledge is new to the students and may be used to answer a question, to develop a solution or to support a position or point of view. The knowledge is usually presented to others and may result in some sort of action.

Operationally, inquiry-based learning is the ability of EFL 3rd year preparatory school students to formulate questions and investigate them widely to build new understandings, meanings and knowledge of reading tasks.

10- Review of literature

- Creativity in EFL reading

To Isiksalan (2018), in creative reading, the readers are aware of their own learning process, follow with their self-control and use a series of learning strategies. Creative reading includes synthesizing, integration, application and broadening of ideas. It can be a natural extension if the teacher asks for elaboration of divergent predictions. It has taken place when a story is dramatized, set to music and interpreted through the visual arts or theme. Students can be encouraged to rewrite a scene, the story climax or add deduction for their own invention.

According to Incik (2012), creative reading provides student-readers various activities in the understanding process, and allows creating creative ideas and products related to the topic of a text. Creative reading provides the development of creativity as an approach that directs readers in using their imagination. Creative reading aims at reaching the implied meanings and connotations, forming reactions to what is read, and making critical evaluations. In creative reading, student-readers are expected to go beyond understanding the text, and state the original ideas that are not clearly indicated within a text. Student-readers become active learners in the reading process, and can make additions to what is expressed by the author.

Creative reading captures the imagination. It is an art because it produces new thoughts and ideas. Moreover, it takes curiosity into consideration through different strategies for example; creating a "book hook" which stimulates students' curiosity. The teacher here

puts a group of books in a box and picks up each book separately by showing the cover and hooks the students with a question then the teacher asks them to offer one or two sentences about the book with just enough information about certain elements such as characters, places and so on (Small & Arnone, 2011).

- **The perception of inquiry based learning**

Inquiry based learning enables students to learn through engagement in a real situation. It is in a way that altogether develops both problem-solving methods and disciplinary knowledge skills as it sets students in the active role of problem-solvers facing with a weak-structured condition that introduces the kind of issues they are likely to have as future agents in their workplace. Inquiry-based learning starts with the introduction of a weak-structured problem on which all learning is centered. The problem is one that students may face as future professionals. Individually, students are responsible for their own learning and instruction. Most of learning process happens in small groups. The teacher's role is more like that of a facilitator of student learning, being at different times as a resource, instead of being a provider of information (Exline, 2004).

Besides, the students are more implicated as they are engaged as a problem-solver, decision-maker, rather than being just a passive-thinker. Inquiry based learning is the act of acquiring knowledge or skills through asking for information. It starts by posing questions, problems or situations rather than introducing facts directly to students. It involves students in making observations; posing

questions; examining sources; gathering, analyzing interpreting, and synthesizing data; proposing answer, explanations and predictions; communicating findings through discussion; applying findings to the real situation, and following up new questions that may appear.

According to Amri and Ahmadi (2010), inquiry based learning is a student-centered and teacher-guided instructional approach that engages students in investigating real world questions. Inquiry-based learning supplements traditional instruction by providing a vehicle for extending and applying the learning of students in a way that connects with their interests within a broader objective framework. Students acquire and analyze information, develop and support propositions, give solutions, and design technology and arts products that explain their thinking and make their learning apparent.

In addition, Sanjaya (2011) states that inquiry based learning is an approach that consists of some activities of learning that focus on the process of how to think analytically to search and find the answers of the problems while reading. The thinking process is usually done through questions and answers between the teacher and the students. It means that this approach emphasizes the students to find the answers by themselves therefore; the students are required to be active in finding the answers of reading text, especially, descriptive text.

11- Method and procedures

Design -

The current study adopted the quasi-experimental design using two groups, experimental and control.

Participants -

Participants of the study were 60 EFL students enrolled in the third year, sheet Al Hawa preparatory school, Kafr Saqr, Sharkia Governorate, Egypt. They were assigned into two groups: experimental and control with 30 participants in each group. The experimental group was taught using the inquiry based learning, whereas the control group was instructed in the traditional way.

To prove the homogeneity between the two groups in the creative reading skills before experimentation, the creative reading skills test was pre-administered to both groups in the second semester of the academic year (2023). They were equivalent before carrying out the experiment as shown in table (1).

Table (1) Comparing Both Groups Pre Results in The EFL Creative Reading Skills Test.

Skill	Group	N	M	S.D	df	t-value	Sig
Overall EFL creative reading skills	Control	30	16.1	4.2	58	.08	.11*
	Experimental	30	17.2	4.6			

*Non-significant.

- The study procedures

The following procedures were conducted :

- 1- Reviewing literature and previous studies related to the study variables.

- a- The independent variable: inquiry based learning to frame the study experiment.
- b- The dependent variable: Creative reading to crystallize the targeted skills.
- 2- Designing instruments of the study:
 - a- Designing a creative reading skills questionnaire to identify the most important skills for EFL students.
 - b- Designing a creative reading skills test.
- 3- Submitting these instruments to the jury members.
- 4- Designing the inquiry based learning strategy containing creative reading portion in the student's book and workbook. .
- 5- Submitting the strategy to the jury members.
- 6- Choosing the study participants from Sheet Al Hawa third year Preparatory School and dividing them into experimental and control groups.
- 7- Pre administering the study instruments to both groups.
- 8- Teaching the experimental group by using inquiry based learning and the control group through regular instruction.
- 9- Post administering the study instruments to both groups.
- 10- Comparing the pre to the post results statistically of both groups.
- 11- Interpreting results, providing Conclusions, recommendations and suggesting for further studies.

12- Results of the study

1. The experimental group outperformed the control one on the creative reading posttest as a whole and its sub-skills. Hence , the

significant differences are due to exposing this group to the inquiry based learning.

2. The obtained results proved significant differences between the pre and the post administrations of the creative reading skills test to the experimental group favoring the post results.
3. The inquiry based learning proved to be statistically and educationally significant in developing participants 'creative reading skills.

13- Recommendations

Based on the findings drawn in the current study the following points would be recommended:

1. EFL teachers should develop preparatory school students' creative reading skills through using attractive activities to involve the students in practising creative reading skills in classrooms.
2. Inquiry based learning should be used as a frame for developing creative reading skills for all the educational stages and it can be adopted to develop other language skills.
3. EFL students should be provided with training sessions to be engaged in fruitful inquiry and work as members of a large group or sub-groups in reading sessions to enhance EFL creative reading skills in particular and reading skills in general.
4. EFL teachers should concentrate on real- life situations and daily issues as sources for classroom reading to motivate students to participate in creative reading tasks.

5. EFL teacher should care for students' interests and opinions in selecting reading topics.
6. Students should be provided with opportunities to participate in classroom inquiry in pairs and small groups to improve their reading skills so that they could improve their EFL creative reading skills as well.
7. Design EFL curricula which help build the students' character to master leadership skills; problem-solving, decision making, team building, time management and task performance.

14- Suggestions for Further Research

Based upon the conclusion and the recommendations, the following areas for further research can be suggested:

- 1- The relation between inquiry based learning and learners' linguistic attitudes.
- 2- The relation between inquiry based learning and other EFL skills (e.g. speaking and writing).
- 3- Conducting studies to find the effect of inquiry based learning on improving EFL creative reading skills for different stages (primary, secondary and university).
- 4- The relation between online tasks and EFL creative reading skills for preparatory school students.
- 5- Further research is needed to investigate the effect of inquiry based learning on developing grammatical competence in EFL context.

15- Implications of the study

The findings of the present study raised a number of pedagogical implications as follows:

EFL learners:

- The study results proved that inquiry based learning activities had a positive effect on the creative reading dimension of EFL. So, such activities can provide EFL learners with the chance to utilize them individually, in pairs, or in groups, in and out of class.

EFL teachers and course designers:

The collected information could be important to EFL teachers whose aims are to develop EFL learners' creative reading skills.

- The study identified a number of necessary creative reading skills that EFL teachers and course designers should take into consideration. For example, it draws EFL teachers' attention to focus on inquiry phases to enhance their students' creative reading skills. However, future research could shed light on more different skills.
- The present study offers English course designers some activities, prescribed for the preparatory stage some activities which develop learners' EFL creative reading skills and help them find solutions to the problems they face. So, these activities can be taken into account.

- Another contribution of the present study is that it might help EFL teachers to understand how to adopt inquiry based learning activities to develop creative reading skills.

EFLresearchers:

- As the study showed that inquiry based learning could develop EFL third-year preparatory school students' creative reading skills, it could be considered a support for EFL researchers who are interested in the field of inquiry based learning and creative reading skills. In other words, a new line of examination could be stemmed out of this research.
- If developing EFL creative reading skills is the aim, the instruments of the current study may help researchers or teachers assess these skills.

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Appendix (A)**The EFL creative reading skills test****total****Time: 50 minutes****score: 40 marks**

Name:..... Class:..... School:

.....

Read the following passage, then answer the questions:**Little Red Riding Hood**

One day there was a little girl named little red riding hood. She was asked by her mother to deliver cake to her grandmother. When she was heading for her grandmother's house, little riding hood met a wolf. "Where are you going, a little girl?" The wolf asked. "I'm willing to give this cake to my grandmother" replied little riding hood. The wolf had an evil plan that he wanted to eat them both. Then he ran through a shortcut to her grandmother's house. After arriving to grandmas' house, he knocked on her door. When Grandma opened the door, the wolf caught her and locked her in a closet. The bad wolf then wore Grandma's clothes and laid in bed, waiting for Little Red Riding Hood. When little riding hood arrived, the wolf in disguise told her to come in. little riding hood did not realize that it was the wolf. Then the wolf ate a little riding hood and her grandmother. After eating them, the wolf fell asleep beside the river. Suddenly, a woodcutter came; he saw a large wolf's belly and knew what had been done by the wolf. Then he saved them by releasing them out from the belly of the wolf and filled the wolf's stomach with a big stone. Then he threw the wolf into the

Answer the following questions:

1- Suggest as many suitable titles as possible for the story.

(Flexibility)

2- What are the main characteristics of the Little Red Riding Hood?

Express your opinion.

(fluency)

3- If you were in the place of the Little Red Riding Hood, how will you act?

(Elaboration)

4- Summarize the ideas of this story.

(Flexibility)

5- Add some new ideas of this story

(fluency)

6- Suggest some different ends for the story.

(Originality)

7- Why did Little Riding Hood do not realize the wolf who in disguise as her grandma?

(Elaboration)

8- Give new names to the three main characters of the story.

(Originality)

The Good Stepmother

The old witch locked Hansel in a cage and set Gretel to clean the house. She planned to eat them both. Each night the children cried and begged the witch to let them go. Meanwhile, at home, their

stepmother was beginning to wish she had never tried to get rid of the children. "I must find them," she said and set off into the forest.

Many hours later, when her feet were tired from walking and her lips were dry from thirst, she came to the cottage belonging to the witch. The stepmother peeped through the window. Her heart cried out when she saw the two children. She picked up the broom leaning against the door and crept inside. The witch was putting some stew in the oven when the stepmother gave her an almighty push. The witch fell into the oven and the stepmother shut the door. Children, I have come to save you, she said hugging them tightly. I have done a dreadful thing. I hope in time you will forgive me. Let me take you home and become a family again. They returned to their home and the stepmother became the best mother anyone could wish to have, and of course they lived happily ever after.

Read the following passage, then answer the questions:

1- What are the morals of the story? Give at least two.

(Flexibility)

2- Suggest another end for the story.

(Originality)

3- Give suitable titles to the story.

(Flexibility)

4- Put yourself in stepmother's shoes. Will you do what she had done? Why?

(Elaboration)

5- If you were Hansel, would you do what he had done? Why?

(Elaboration)

6- What are the main characteristics of the Witch? Express your opinion.

(fluency)

7- Give new names to the Witch and the Stepmother.

(Originality)

8- Generate new ideas of the story.

(fluency)