

**FOSTERING CREATIVITY AMONG PRIMARY TEACHERS FOR SUPPORTING
ENNUM EZUTHUM CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES**

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the Action Research entitled, “**FOSTERING CREATIVITY AMONG PRIMARY TEACHERS FOR SUPPORTING ENNUM EZUTHUM CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES**” is submitted by me to the State Council of Educational Research and Training, Chennai – 06, is the result of my original and independent Action Research work . This work has not been submitted earlier for completing any Action Research work or other similar titles in this or any other institution. Signature of the Researcher, S.K. SANTHI, Lecturer, District Institute of Education and Training Krishnagiri. Tamil Nadu.



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INTRODUCTION

The Ennum Ezhuthum Mission has been envisioned to improve the quality of teaching and learning in primary classes in Tamil Nadu. The goal of the Ennum Ezhuthum mission is to ensure that all students of classes 1,2, and 3 in government schools in Tamil Nadu can read with comprehension and possess basic arithmetic skills by 2025. The mission also aims to tackle the learning gap caused due to school closures during the COVID-19 lockdown. Towards this, under the academic leadership of the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT), the Ennum Ezhuthum Mission has been launched from the academic year 2022-23 across all districts of Tamil Nadu.

Vision

By 2025, all primary children in government and aided schools in Tamil Nadu will attain basic literacy & numeracy skills.

Mission

Conduct Ennum Ezhuthum in a mission mode from 2022-23.

Play based child centered approach

The play-based child centered activities are outlined in such a manner that it will ensure attentiveness, involvement, focus and engagement of children willingly in the learning process. The children experience, explore and express their ideas about the world around them. The activities are simple-to-conduct, effective, holistic, integrated, inclusive, enjoyable, and engaging. The activities include songs, stories, art, craft, participatory games involving physical movements,

and provide scope for creativity, imagination, playing with concrete objects, observation, noticing, learning in groups, learning in pairs and individual learning.

NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Teachers handling EE classroom are already provided with a list of materials supporting their classroom activities. These materials are to be prepared by the teacher himself/herself. Drawn charts, Puppets, Art and craft items, kit box are some of the materials needed for enriching a classroom activity. This action research helps teachers to foster their creativity and productivity in order to improve their EE classroom activities by training them to prepare various teaching learning materials such as toys, art and craft works.

Creativity in Primary Education:

Creativity in primary education is a vital aspect that fosters innovation, critical thinking, and self-expression. Let's delve into how creativity is nurtured in primary schools:

- i. **Broadening Perspectives:** Creativity extends beyond the arts. It encompasses diverse fields, including mathematics, science, and language. Teachers play a crucial role by demonstrating varied approaches to teaching and learning. For instance, in mathematics, encouraging students to discover rules through constructing objects rather than relying solely on equations promotes creative thinking.
- ii. **Expressive Outlet:** Art allows young learners to express ideas and emotions. Painting, drawing, and other forms of visual arts provide a canvas for creativity.
- iii. **Skill Development:** Exposure to art helps children develop skills like creativity, problem-solving, collaboration, and critical thinking.
- iv. **Identity Exploration:** Primary school is when children begin to explore their identities. Art provides a safe space for them to express themselves and discover their creative potential.
- v. **Integration into Curricula:** Education systems recognize that students need more than just literacy and numeracy. Creativity is now a feature in many international curricula, emphasizing its importance across subjects.

Creativity in primary school education: Teaching with creativity

Teachers strive for variation in their pedagogic approach in the classroom. They also strive to model behaviours for the students to adopt. By demonstrating that there are many approaches to teaching a lesson, just as there are many approaches to learning knowledge and skills in a lesson, teachers who teach with creativity in their classroom find that their students are more motivated and engaged. A fairly straightforward example is as follows. The journey from long addition to the rules of multiplication can be difficult for some students to understand. Asking students to discover mathematical rules through constructing objects rather than writing equations is one example of teaching with creativity. Research has found that, if teachers use multimodal ways in presenting key information in mathematics, students not only feel more creative but also more competent in maths.

A pre-requisite for teaching with creativity is a sufficient level of knowledge and skills in a given subject, as research has demonstrated that teachers who lack confidence in a particular subject or unit of work are more likely to teach from pre-prepared resources like textbooks and worksheets and less likely to experiment with a variety of teaching methods. Most primary school teachers are naturally more confident in some subjects than others. Teachers with a bigger toolkit of options to approach a particular unit of work also feel a greater sense of satisfaction and enjoyment in their teaching.

Introducing creativity to students: Teaching about and for creativity

Creativity is like any other element of schooling: it requires knowledge, skills, application and practice. Experience in schools has shown that short explicit instruction in elements of creativity, integrated into the current classroom subject, is the most effective method of introducing creativity to students. Creativity is not a separate subject, and teaching creativity is more effective if the elements are incorporated throughout the learning process.

When planning lessons, teachers need to think about the physical and social learning environment of the lesson. Does the lesson involve individual work or are students creative in groups? An important part of creativity is that students feel a sense of psychological safety. This means that they are able to ask questions and explore ideas in an open way, without being shut down or criticised by the teacher or fellow students. Primary school teachers are aware that learning takes time for younger students and the safer they feel to explore their ideas and how they think, the better that learning will be.

The second stage for teachers in their planning is to consider the attitudes and attributes that the students will need to demonstrate in order to be creative. Attitudes such as curiosity and openness to new experiences and attributes such as resilience and risk-taking all help students to be more creative.

Thirdly, it is necessary to consider the method of problem solving and the stages of the problem-solving process. With very young students, it is better to focus on just one small element, such as how many ideas they can generate, or how many ways can they record ideas – do they write them, draw them, or record them on video? Which way works best for them with a particular problem in a subject at a particular time? As they mature, students should have the opportunity to experience a variety of elements of problem solving which eventually come together as a complete process.

The final element to be considered is that of the outcomes – the product or the results – of creativity, although it is not necessary to focus only on the final creative product. Primary school students may be considered successfully creative if they ask a specific number of questions. They may demonstrate curiosity or resilience or give constructive feedback to a classmate. If students are asked to show certain creative elements in a presentation, feedback can be given on the individual elements as well as the result. Teachers can give students supportive feedback on all these aspects of creativity. It is also important to remember that all of these micro-components will be built over time, enabling students to become more confident and capably creative.

Elements of teaching for creativity:

- i. A collaborative environment through group work
- ii. The use of pre-existing knowledge (perhaps from a group discussion of what students already know about butterflies)
- iii. The process of recording ideas (for example, post-it notes as a brainstorming tool)
- iv. Exploring how many different types of flying objects the class can make.

1. Encouraging Creative Expression

In the realm of art education, creativity knows no bounds. Whether it's through painting, sculpture, or digital media, students can explore their creativity, self-expression, and unique perspectives.

This creative process enhances students' problem-solving skills, critical thinking, and adaptability in a world that values innovation.

2. Redefining Assessments

Traditional assessment methods can stifle creativity and discourage risk-taking. Art education challenges educators to design projects that foster original thinking and paradigm shifts. These projects engage students in deeply meaningful experiences, moving beyond rote memorisation toward self-discovery and critical analysis

3. Personalised Learning Journeys

Art education tailors the learning experience to individual needs. By recognising each student's unique talents and preferences, art education provides personalised resources and activities, adjusts complexity, and offers real-time feedback.

This personalisation enhances engagement and effectiveness, ensuring students' diverse learning requirements are met.

Creativity plays a vital role in primary education, fostering a rich and engaging learning environment.

Enhancing Engagement and Motivation:

Teachers who incorporate creativity into their classrooms find that students are more motivated and engaged.

By demonstrating various teaching approaches, educators encourage students to explore different ways of learning and understanding concepts.

Mathematics and Creativity:

In subjects like mathematics, creativity can be harnessed effectively.

For instance, instead of merely teaching long addition and multiplication rules, teachers can encourage students to discover mathematical principles through constructing objects.

Research shows that using multimodal approaches in presenting key information in math not only enhances creativity but also boosts students' confidence in the subject.

Creativity in primary schools is crucial for several reasons:

- i. **Fosters Intrinsic Motivation:** Creativity is linked to intrinsic motivation, making children more eager to learn and explore¹.
- ii. **Enhances Cognitive Skills:** Engaging in creative activities can improve problem-solving, critical thinking, and the ability to make connections between subjects¹.
- iii. **Supports Emotional Development:** Creative expression allows children to explore and understand their emotions, contributing to emotional maturity¹.
- iv. **Reaches Diverse Learners:** Creativity can engage students who might not be reached through traditional teaching methods¹.
- v. **Prepares for the Future:** Creativity is increasingly recognized as an essential skill for future job markets¹.

Teachers can promote creativity by using varied pedagogical approaches and encouraging students to explore and take risks in learning. This not only makes subjects like mathematics more accessible but also helps students feel more competent and creative. Moreover, fostering a school environment that values diversity, equity, and collaboration can further enhance creativity.

Overall, Ennum Ezhuthum plays a vital role in nurturing creativity in primary education which is vital for developing well-rounded individuals capable of innovative thinking and adapting to the rapidly changing world.

In conclusion, creativity plays a vital role in early years of life. It is essential for young children to be involve in making their own creativity and enjoy and respect the art of others.

Creativity develops a positive attitude among children towards their learnings. The educator's knowledge and beliefs about creativity also promote the sense of creativity among children. With the help of art, the educators not only to recognize the abilities of the children but they promote children's all.-sided development. Children develop a sense of emotional satisfaction as they explore their ideas through manipulating the clay, drawing using crayons. They developed their autonomy as they make independent choices and decision about the materialthey want to use in art activities.

Encouraging creativity among primary school teachers is essential for fostering innovative and engaging learning environments. Here are some effective strategies:

1. **Curiosity and Exploration:** Encourage teachers to be curious and explore new ideas, resources, methods, and perspectives.
2. **Inspiration Sources:** Explore new inspiration sources together. Teachers can attend workshops, conferences, or collaborate with colleagues to discover fresh ideas and approaches.
3. **Learn from Other Makers:** Research other makers during class. Teachers can learn from artists, designers, and creators in various fields.
4. **Problem-Solving Challenges:** Brainstorm solutions to common challenges faced in the classroom. Encourage teachers to think outside the box and come up with creative solutions.

Fostering creativity is not only about teaching techniques but also creating a supportive and open-minded environment where teachers feel empowered to explore and experiment.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

During the training session on Ennum Ezhuthum, Teachers are provided with a lot of ideas, strategies, games and techniques for handling the teaching learning activities in the classroom. They have a handful of Teaching learning materials as well at the end of the training. This action research covers the gap where the teacher has the difficulty to prepare material/design activity by himself/herself.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To identify the areas of lessons in term 3 that requires more activities.
- To prepare teaching learning materials such as toys, art and craft works.
- To train the teachers on drawing techniques which are helpful in effective classroom practices of Ennum Ezhuthum.

HYPOTHESIS

There is no significant difference between the scores of teachers in pretest and posttest.

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Single group experimental pre and post test

METHODOLOGY:

SAMPLE

25 Teachers from Hosur block

TOOL

An observation schedule to elucidate Teacher's performance.

PROCEDURE

Pretest:

Teachers were given a pretest on areas like drawing, puppetry, crafts work that can be used in their teaching learning.



Pre-planning with HM and Teachers- Identification of need

Intervention:

Having identified the needs of Teachers, it has been planned to conduct workshop for fostering their creativity to help in Ennum Ezhuthum classroom. The workshop consists of three areas which teachers need to focus on.

1. Drawing and painting
2. Creating various art and craft works, toys from trash.
3. Puppetry

Plan for the workshop was done in the presence of Block Education officers Mr. Annaiya and Mr. Raja. Care was taken to draw a plan without disturbing the regular schedule of the school. Took the school campus for conducting the workshop with the help of school Headmaster Mr. Poundurai. Mr. Sureshkumar, the Drawing Teacher, helped the teachers to put the plan into action.



Based on the discussion: Planning of workshop with HM, BEOs and Teachers which includes all three major components of the action research.

Sl. No.	Implementation details	Timeframe (in days)
1.	Pre-Test	1
2.	Line art, stick figures, infographics, handwriting practice, Drawing straight lines and circles on boards, Two dimensional drawings	5

3.	Three dimensional drawings, Natural sceneries and science diagrams	3
4.	Painting techniques – using color pencils, water colors, acrylic paints	4
5.	Painting on charts, canvas, card boards and glass	4
6.	Creating various art and craft works, toys from trash.	4
7.	Puppetry	2
8.	Post test	1
9.	Total	23

Basically, Ennum Ezhuthum is a miniature plan of an ideal curriculum where the activities are designed and embedded to suit all levels of learners. Ideally a teacher doesn't need any other aid to handle the classroom other than the materials/strategies provided. To improvise the ability of teachers to create their own material/ strategy, this workshop has helped a lot. Teachers work in groups to learn the techniques in drawing, painting, puppetry, preparation of art and craft works from low cost materials.

Details of the implementation plan:

1. Training on line art, stick figures

Starting from the simple and easy drawing, the students were given practice drawing line art and stick figures. Art Teacher is the resource person for this drawing practice session. Stick figures showing various actions such as walking, standing, sitting, running, and other play actions were given to draw.

2. Drawing straight lines and circles on boards, Two dimensional drawings

Teachers find it difficult to draw lines and circles on boards, especially when they tried to give handwriting practice. Here they were trained to draw lines and circles using thread. Keeping a loop of thread pointed with a chalk piece a flawless circle is drawn in a minute. While drawing lines they need to dip the thread in color powder, keep it tight on both the ends, the mark is made on the board to draw the line.

3. Three dimensional drawings, Natural sceneries.

Teachers were trained to draw three dimensional drawings, Natural sceneries. This practice helps them to get a knowledge to draw in proper size and proportions.

4. Painting techniques – using color pencils, watercolors, acrylic paints.

Color theory and technique of working with colors is considered as a very basic skill for painting. Teachers were provided with color pencils, watercolors, fabric pints etc. Combination of colors, and appropriate usage of colors has been taught to the students.

5. Painting on charts, canvas, card boards, glass and pot painting

Drawing materials such as card boards, blackboard, charts, glass and pot were given to them. They try to make use of the drawing medium given to them. They learnt to use different combinations of colors on different materials.

6. Creating various art and craft works, toys from trash.

Teachers and students were asked to collect waste materials and low-cost materials for making craft works and toys. Miniatures of animals, insects, carts, flower vase etc. were made with aesthetic sense.

7. Puppetry

Clothes, threads, and paper were used to make puppets. Teachers prepared puppets that can be used for their classroom practices.



Materials procured for the workshop.



Workshop on preparation of art and craft materials

Materials prepared









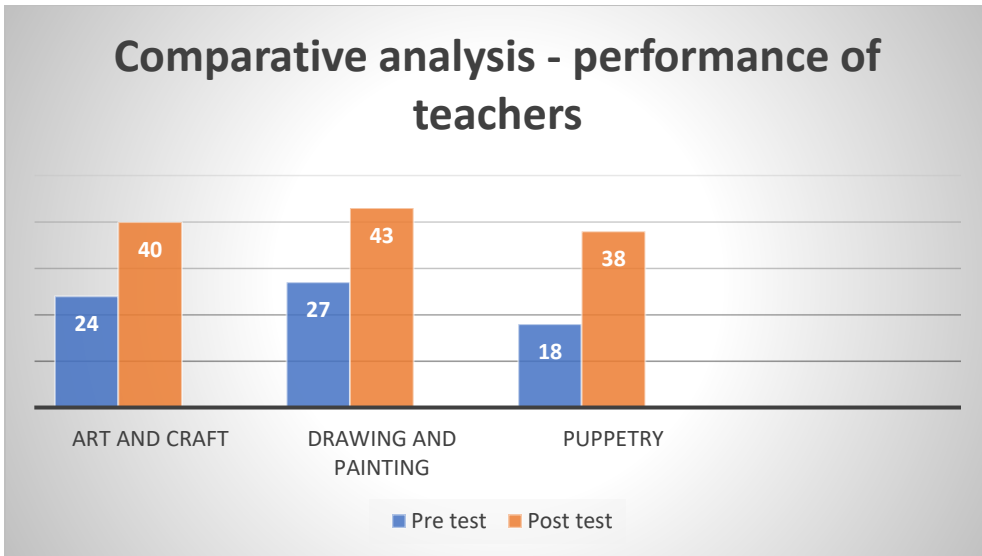




Data analysis:

Pre test and post test were based on the performance of teachers in the area of creativity. Hence the scores are based on the observation of their capabilities in the focus areas of workshop. Scores were tabulated and analysed to assess the outcomes of the workshop.

S.No.	Details	Pre test (Mean value)	Post test (Mean value)
1.	Art and craft	24	40
1.	Drawing and Painting	27	43
2.	Puppetry	18	38



It is evident from the post test scores that the performance of teachers has significantly increased when compared to the pre test scores. In Art and craft area, the mean pre test score of the teachers is 24 while in post test it is 40. In Drawing and Painting area, the mean pre test score is 27 while in post test it is 43. Finally in Puppetry also the mean pre test score is 18, while the post test score is 38.

Conclusion:

Ennum Ezhuthum is already giving a lot of scope for the creativity. Whereas this action research is a humble try to fill the gap identified. Creativity plays a major role in primary education in enhancing the ability of a child. There are many other areas that can be focussed on in the perspective of creativity of a teacher. Collaborative learning helps teachers to improve themselves in the strategic approach.

Recommendations:

1. Creativity plays a major role in primary education, thus new ideas of teachers must be highlighted and disseminated among other teachers.
2. Teachers can try out different ideas/techniques to engage students.
3. Experiential learning helps students to attain a life long learning.
4. Ennum Ezhuthum success stories should cover the teachers who are creative in their approaches and techniques in their classrooms with their own ideas.