

## Secondary school students' creative writing and academic achievement in English

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### ABSTRACT

Earlier creative thinking was an endangered thing in educational field. This was constrained due to curriculum and assessment issues in institutions. Slowly a shift towards to creative writing in classrooms is paving its way. Everyone has the capacity to show creativity. But the teaching-learning environment does not give enough scope for creative thinkers. This paper makes an attempt to find whether there is any significant relationship between creative writing and academic achievement in English. 250 XI standard students studying in and around Chennai district were taken as sample for the study. Dr. Baqer Mehdi's English version of Verbal Test of Creative Thinking was used for the present study. Half yearly examination English marks were taken for academic achievement marks in English. 't' test and Pearson's Correlation were done to find significant difference and relationship between variables taken for the study.

**Keywords:** *Creative writing, Academic achievement, English language*

“Creativity is facilitated by a wide variety of inputs, processes and outputs” (Maley, 2011). This reveals that creativity encourages divergent thinking and enables to think that a question can have many answers. Wallas (1926, 2014) outlined a four-stage process of creativity – Preparation, Incubation, Illumination, and Verification. After the initial preparation stage, the conscious mind stops thinking of the problem allows the unconscious mind to take over in the incubation stage. A sudden idea/solution illuminates in the mind during illumination stage and the mind tries to verify, elaborate on the insight gained in the verification stage. Creativity in language is important for survival because language is the most efficient vehicle used for carrying out the process of thinking. Carter (2004), opines, “...linguistic creativity is not simply a property of exceptional people but an exceptional property of all people.” So, it can be said that creative thinking in English is present in every person which paves way for creative writing.

Achievement tests have been in practice for many years to identify students' strengths and weaknesses. It refers to the students' level of accomplishment in various subject-matter areas. The consequences of achievement tests are important to the person who takes them. The measure of success serves as a measure for achievement.

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### Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference between male and female XI std. students in their creative writing.
2. There is no significant difference between English and Tamil medium XI std. students in their creative writing.
3. There is no significant difference among XI std. students in their creative writing studying in different types of schools.
4. There is no significant difference between male and female XI std. students in their academic achievement.
5. There is no significant difference between English and Tamil medium XI std. students in their academic achievement.
6. There is no significant difference among XI std. students in their academic achievement studying in different types of schools.
7. There is no significant relationship between creative writing and academic achievement in English.

### SCIENTIFIC TOOLS, MATERIALS & METHODS

250 XI standard students studying in and around Chennai district were taken as sample for the study. Personal variables – gender, medium of instruction and type of management were considered to be presented in this paper. Dr. Baqer Mehdi's English version of Verbal Test of Creative Thinking was used for the present study to test linguistic creativity. Half yearly examination English marks were taken for academic achievement marks in English. 't' test and Pearson's Correlation were done to find significant difference and relationship between variables taken for the study.

### Analysis, Interpretation and Discussion

**H<sub>0</sub> 1.** There is no significant difference between male and female XI std. students in their creative writing.

*Table 1 't' test between male and female students in their creative writing.*

Variable	N	Mean	SD	t  Value	P Value
Male	125	36.34	12.605	0.897	0.371
Female	125	34.86	13.345		

It is evident from table 1, that there is no significant difference between male and female students in their creative writing as P value is greater than 0.05. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted.

**H<sub>0</sub> 2.** There is no significant difference between English and Tamil medium XI std. students in their creative writing.

*Table 2 't' test between English and Tamil medium XI std. students in their creative writing*

Variable	N	Mean	SD	t  Value	P Value
English	150	43.71	7.575	18.025	0.000*
Tamil	100	23.44	9.390		

\*Significant at 0.05

Table 2, indicates that there exists a significant difference between XI std. students studying in English and Tamil mediums as P value is lesser than 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis is

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rejected. The mean value of English medium students is higher than Tamil medium students. The reason is that Tamil medium students do not have fluency and flexibility in English important components of creative thinking though they have originality. They are not able to express their ideas in English as they are exposed less to English vocabulary. Teachers have to take responsibility of training students in spoken and written English by designing topics of students' interest.

**H<sub>0</sub> 3.** There is no significant difference among XI std. students in their creative writing studying in different types of schools.

**Table 3 ANOVA values of creative writing – Management wise.**

Source of Variation	Df	SS	MS	'F' Value	P Value
Between	2	15346.350	7673.175	71.316	0.000*
Within	247	26575.650	107.594		
Total	249	41922.000			

\*Significant at 0.05

In table 3, there is a significant difference in creative writing among students studying in Government, Government-aided and Matriculation schools since P value is less than 0.05. Hence the following post-hoc tests were conducted.

**Table 3.1 Post- Hoc Test values of creative writing – Management wise.**

Management Type	N	Mean	Management Type	N	Mean	P Value
Government	100	28.61	Government-Aided	100	35.36	0.000*
Government-Aided	100	35.36	Matriculation	50	50.06	0.000*
Government	100	28.61	Matriculation	50	50.06	0.000*

\*Significant at 0.05

In table 3.1, there is a significant difference in creative writing among students studying in Government, Government-aided and Matriculation schools. The mean value of creative writing of students studying in Government-aided schools is higher than those studying in Government schools. Like-wise, the mean value of creative writing of students studying in Matriculation schools is higher than those studying in Government and Government-aided schools. The reason may be students studying in Matriculation schools are made to think in English unlike their counterparts who think in their mother tongue and then translate it into English. Moreover, teaching in matriculation schools is in direct method while teaching in government and government aided schools is in bilingual method. At times, English is taught in mother-tongue too because of which students studying in those schools are not linguistically creative than those studying in matriculation schools.

**H<sub>0</sub> 4.** There is no significant difference between male and female XI std. students in their academic achievement.

**Table 4 't' test between male and female students in their academic achievement**

Variable	N	Mean	SD	t  Value	P Value
Male	125	54.06	14.639	0.332	0.740
Female	125	53.42	15.784		

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It is evident from table 4, that there is no significant difference between male and female students in their academic achievement in English as P value is greater than 0.05. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted.

**H<sub>0</sub> 5.** There is no significant difference between English and Tamil medium XI std. students in their academic achievement.

**Table 5 't' test between English and Tamil medium XI std. students in their academic achievement**

Variable	N	Mean	SD	t  Value	P Value
English	150	62.41	12.239	15.471	0.000*
Tamil	100	40.72	8.370		

\*Significant at 0.05

Table 5, indicates that there exists a significant difference between XI std. students studying in English and Tamil mediums as P value is lesser than 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. The mean value of English medium students is higher than Tamil medium students in their academic achievement in English. The reason may be that teachers teaching English for Tamil medium students teach the language in the mother tongue and as a result student think only in their mother tongue instead of thinking in English. Hence, they are unable to write properly in English. Enough practice is not given in writing skills. So, they are unable to express their ideas in English as they are exposed less to English vocabulary.

**H<sub>0</sub> 6.** There is no significant difference among XI std. students in their academic achievement studying in different types of schools.

**Table 6 ANOVA value of academic achievement in English – Management wise.**

Source of Variation	df	SS	MS	'F' Value	P Value
Between	2	12279.446	6139.723	33.541	0.000*
Within	247	45213.130	183.049		
Total	249	57492.576			

\*Significant at 0.05

In table 6, there is a significant difference in academic achievement in English among students studying in Government, Government-aided and Matriculation schools since P value is less than 0.05. Hence the following post-hoc tests were conducted.

**Table 6.1 Post- Hoc Test values of academic achievement – Management wise.**

Management Type	N	Mean	Management Type	N	Mean	P Value
Government	100	49.90	Government-Aided	100	50.57	0.937
Government-Aided	100	50.57	Matriculation	50	67.74	0.000*
Government	100	49.90	Matriculation	50	67.74	0.000*

\*Significant at 0.05

In table 6.1, there is a significant difference in academic achievement in English between students studying in Government-aided & Matriculation schools and those studying in Government & Matriculation schools. The mean value of academic achievement in English of students studying in Matriculation schools is higher than those studying in Government-aided schools and Government schools. The reason may be students studying in

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Matriculation schools are exposed to English language more than their counterparts. Teachers teach them strategies to remember the language and also teach them according to their learning style while that is not the case in Government and Government-aided schools.

**H<sub>0</sub> 7.** There is no significant relationship between creative writing and academic achievement in English.

**Table 7 Correlation between creative writing and academic achievement in English**

Variable	N	'r' value	Significance
Creative writing	250	0.743**	0.01
Academic achievement			

The 'r' value between creative writing and academic achievement in English is 0.743 and is significant at 0.01 level. This shows that there is a positive correlation between creative writing and academic achievement in English. This is an indication that if students' creative writing in English increases academic achievement in English too increases. The onus lies on the language teachers to make students think creatively and perform better academically.

### CONCLUSION

This paper highlights the relationship between creative writing and academic achievement in English. This shows that creative writing in English class is not limited to the gifted and talented. Teachers should be encouraged to allow creativity to flourish and to foster it in students as well. Creativity is very much a part of learning and using a language. Developing creative writing would enable students to perform well in compositions, paragraph writing, letter writing and comprehension thereby enabling them to perform academically well. Moreover, it would enable them to comprehend poems. Creative writing, thus, enriches their thinking skills in all possible ways.

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### Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

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