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# Effect of Creative Exploration on Creative Thinking Development Among Basic 9 Science Students with Different Cognitive Styles in Gboko, Nigeria

**[*1]Ayua, G.A., [1]Terhemba, W.K., [2]Samuel, K., [1]Tofi, M., [5]Ojoko, A.N., & [1]Taangahar, B.A.**

[1,2,4&6]Department of Science and Mathematics Education Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu University, Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria
[2]Department of Science Education, Amadu Bello University Zaria, Kaduna, Nigeria.
[3]Faculty of Science, Federal University of Education Kontagora, Niger State, Nigeria.

***Corresponding author email:** kwatexwisdom@gmail.com

**Abstract**
The study investigated the effect of creative exploration on the development of creative thinking among Basic Science students with different cognitive styles in Gboko. A pre-test, post-test quasi-experimental design involving control and experimental groups was adopted. The research was guided by two objectives, corresponding research questions, and hypotheses. A multi-stage sampling technique was employed to select 70 Upper Basic III students (39 males and 31 females) from a total population of 1,823 students (995 males and 828 females) across 24 government grant-aided schools. Data were collected using an adapted version of the Torrance Test of Creative Thinking (TTCT Figural-B). The instrument was validated by five specialists, including experts in Physics education, Electrical/Electronic technology, Mathematics education, educational measurement, and an experienced Basic Science teacher. Reliability was established through the test-retest method, yielding a coefficient of 0.992 using the Pearson product-moment correlation. Mean and standard deviation were used to address the research questions, while Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was applied to test the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings indicated a significant difference in students' creative thinking development in favour of those taught using creative exploration compared to those taught through the expository method $F(1,67) = 147.909$, $p < 0.05$). However, no significant difference was found in creative thinking development among students with different cognitive styles when exposed to creative exploration $F(1,31) = 0.971$, $p > 0.05$). Based on the findings, it was recommended that creative exploration should be adopted as an instructional approach for teaching Basic Science in basic education schools.

**Keywords**: Creative exploration, Creative minds, Basic Science and Cognitive Styles.

## Introduction

Policy documents on education across nations emphasize self-directed, activity-based curricula designed to provide students with hands-on experiences in science learning, thereby fostering lasting and functional education. Manalu et al. (2022) and Pantiwati et al. (2023) argue that such curricula promote learners' creative exploration of their environment, enable them to acquire scientific knowledge, and apply it to produce useful outcomes for functional living in society. This could go a long way in fostering practical and relevant learning. Wiyanti and Hadi (2023) assert that a flexible approach to curriculum delivery, combined with the freedom given to learners to explore, allows students with diverse cognitive styles to develop creative thinking skills irrespective of gender is needful in this era. This approach ultimately promotes the attainment of meaningful, lasting, and functional education. However, Agiande et al. (2021) argue that the continued reliance on traditional pedagogical practices hinders the successful execution of educational activities unlike in the science curriculum, preventing it from meeting national educational objectives.

Education remains a fundamental pillar of global development, fostering the comprehensive development of human personality while upholding essential freedoms (Agogo, 2018). The Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2014) underscores the need for education to focus on meaningful skill acquisition as a pathway to sustainable development and self-reliance. However, Agogo and Otor (2019) note that education has yet to fully realize its intended objectives, thereby necessitating substantial reforms in the 21st century, including improvements in teaching methods, assessment practices, instructional resources, and approaches to science education. Building on this perspective, Terhemba (2022) observes that society is shifting from a resource-based economy to one driven by emerging knowledge systems, thereby reinforcing the need for these reforms. In response, Ayua (2018) contends that the curriculum must continuously evolve to reflect contemporary societal changes and challenges, with the aim of enhancing the quality of life. Furthermore, Ayua (2019) emphasizes that effective science teaching should be aligned with curriculum objectives that capture the aspirations of learners, communities, and the global society. Such instructional approaches should be learner-centred, activity-oriented, exploratory, and creative, while firmly rooted in scientific knowledge that equips students with the competencies required for economic advancement, sustainable development, and stability in the 21st century.

Science, be it Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Basic Science is a creative pursuit of the human mind, capable of nurturing both inventive thinking when integrated meaningfully into classroom teaching through minds-on and hands-on approaches. However, Nwachukwu and Njoku (2021) observe that Science teachers especially Basic Science teachers in Nigerian secondary schools lack essential competencies, making them ineffective in implementing the curriculum and thereby failing to provide learners with a strong foundation in science for creative-minds. Therefore, to make sense of science which is the natural world, scientists need identify new problems, explore multiple pathways to solutions, propose hypotheses, design ways to gather reliable data, interpret findings, and develop new theories (Peng, 2019). These processes demand creative exploration like observing, investigating, evaluating evidence, and refining explanations. For example, the discovery of penicillin emerged from Alexander Fleming's observation of mold inhibiting bacterial growth, while the structure of DNA was revealed through creative interpretation of X-ray diffraction patterns. Such breakthroughs highlight how scientific progress often stems from imaginative exploration. In the same way, science teachers can foster creativity by encouraging students to generate new ideas, test them, and apply knowledge in practical contexts. This cultivation of "creative minds" equips learners to harness science in addressing global challenges such as poverty, hunger, and sustainability, thereby advancing economic growth and stability. Ultimately, creative exploration in science education may be indispensable for achieving lasting, functional learning in Basic-9 Basic Science.

Scientific knowledge permeates every aspect of human life, shaping progress and comfort across the globe. Chemistry underpins the production of everyday essentials such as soaps, creams, beverages, petroleum products, textiles, drugs, and food preservatives. Physics provides the foundation for energy generation, transportation, communication, and the invention of machines that make work easier and life more enjoyable. Biology contributes to medicine, physiology, and anatomy, ensuring the preservation and saving of lives, while Agriculture sustains food production, livestock supply, and raw materials for industries. These examples highlight that science could be indispensable to modern living, and may be without it, life would remain primitive and difficult. Recognizing this importance, the Federal Ministry of Education (FME, 2025) has emphasized the need to introduce science learning at the elementary level, now referred to as "Basic Science," to ensure early engagement with scientific principles.

Basic Science is a fundamental subject taught at the upper-basic education level (JSS 1–3) in Nigeria. It provides a foundation for junior secondary school students by introducing them to key branches of science such as Biology, Chemistry, Physics, and Earth Science. The subject places strong emphasis on scientific inquiry, practical activities, and, where relevant, the use of digital and technological tools. Its primary aim is to ensure that learners develop a comprehensive understanding of essential scientific concepts rather than a fragmented knowledge of numerous topics. Ayua and Eriba (2023) characterize Basic Science as the introductory phase of science education, forming the basis for subsequent learning at post-basic and tertiary levels. The Federal Ministry of Education (FME, 2025) highlights the significance of basic education by outlining objectives such as enhancing the relevance of science to everyday life, fostering 21st-century skills like creativity, and reducing curriculum overload to promote effective teaching and learning through practical, hands-on experiences. In addition, aligning Nigeria's curriculum with global standards particularly in areas such as digital literacy and environmental science is seen as crucial. Nevertheless, these objectives may not be fully realized if instructional approaches do not incorporate both hands-on and minds-on strategies (Ayua & Eriba, 2023).

Since science is inherently a creative pursuit, it can nurture creative-minds when taught with minds-on approaches. Methods such as inquiry-based learning, problem-solving, project work, laboratory experimentation, field exploration, simulations, collaborative learning, role-play, concept mapping, STEM/STEAM design activities, and creative teaching models all can foster deeper engagement. In this study, creative exploration is


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emphasized as a vital strategy for teaching Basic Science for development of creative-minds because it connects scientific concepts to real-life contexts while encouraging innovation and problem-solving at the level basic education conveniently. Rather than memorizing facts, students actively generate ideas, test possibilities, and refine solutions, mirroring authentic scientific discovery. This approach may strengthen understanding, build confidence, and cultivates adaptability and lifelong learning skills essential for the 21st century, regardless of learners' cognitive styles (Terhemba, 2025).

Creative exploration in science teaching represents a dynamic approach that promotes innovation and problem-solving by actively engaging students in both minds-on and hands-on experiences beyond rote memorization, thereby enhancing deep conceptual understanding. This approach aligns with Bruner's (1960) theory of discovery learning, which asserts that learners achieve better understanding through active inquiry and problem-solving, enabling them to build new knowledge upon prior experiences. It provides opportunities for students to investigate, design, and test ideas in open-ended contexts, encouraging the application of imagination and reasoning to real-life situations. Moreover, this approach supports the development of creativity across diverse cognitive styles, as it accommodates visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, and analytical learners, allowing them to participate effectively according to their strengths (Sawyer, 2019). By promoting discovery, experimentation, and the consideration of multiple perspectives, creative exploration fosters inclusive learning environments where cognitive differences become valuable assets for collaboration and divergent thinking (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2016). Consequently, integrating creative exploration into the teaching of Basic Science can enhance learners' adaptability, resilience, innovation, self-reliance, and creative thinking, all of which are essential for holistic intellectual development in the 21st century and beyond.

Creative minds are characterized by openness to possibilities beyond routine or purely practical thinking. This notion aligns with Sternberg and Lubart's (1995) Investment Theory of Creativity, which likens creativity to an investment process in which individuals generate ideas that may initially appear unconventional or unpopular but later gain recognition and value. In this sense, a creative mind is synonymous with creative thinking the ability to produce original, novel, and meaningful ideas (Terhemba, 2025). It is also regarded as a valuable and transferable soft skill applicable across diverse career paths.

When an individual consistently engages in creative thinking, it develops into a creative mindset. Abazov (2022) affirms that such a mindset can be cultivated through reflective questioning, such as: "What would happen if I change this?", "What would I modify if I intended to use it in the future?", and "What would I do if resources were required?" These prompts encourage curiosity, flexibility, and forward-thinking. Creative minds are therefore not constrained by conventional boundaries; they are willing to explore new ideas, experiment with innovative approaches, and engage in creative pursuits. They possess the capacity to observe, question, investigate, evaluate, and transform available resources within their environment into novel and meaningful outcomes through practical engagement (Terhemba & Ayua, 2025). Therefore, fostering students' creative minds is essential for ensuring their survival and sustainability in the 21st century, particularly within classrooms characterized by diverse cognitive styles. Cognitive style refers to an individual's distinctive way of processing information from the environment, reflected in differences in perception, analysis, organization, categorization, and continuous evaluation of information. These variations represent typical patterns of cognitive appraisal among individuals (Grebenev et al., 2014) and provide a useful foundation for implementing differentiated instruction and developing appropriate teaching strategies.

In the context of learning, cognitive style describes how students perceive information and the thinking patterns they employ to construct knowledge about their surroundings. Understanding these differences offers valuable insights into learners' unique characteristics, which can guide teachers, counsellors, and other educational practitioners in designing learning experiences that foster students' creative minds and practical skills (Lewin, 2019). Students' cognitive styles can be broadly categorized into several types. Memory learners rely on prior knowledge and past experiences to interpret and assimilate new information. Perceptive learners demonstrate sensitivity to environmental stimuli, showing differences in how they process visual, auditory, or tactile cues. Analytical learners, on the other hand, prefer a logical and systematic approach, processing information in a structured, step-by-step manner.

The reviewed empirical studies provide insights into the development of creative minds across different contexts, populations, and subject areas, though they reveal certain limitations relevant to the present study. Pournesaei et al. (2020) demonstrated that the Neuropsychological Model of Making Creative Minds improved perceptual-motion, spatial-vision, and memory functions of children with dyscalculia in Iran, while Shaf et al. (2023) found that mind mapping significantly enhanced creative thinking skills in Indonesian high school physics students.


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Similarly, Ikyernum et al. (2022) established that teacher-learner improvised materials improved creative thinking in Basic Science students in Makurdi without gender disparity, while Abd-Eldayem and Shaheen (2021) highlighted the mediating role of mindfulness between mind-wandering and creativity among Egyptian undergraduates. Collectively, these studies confirm that different strategies ranging from neuropsychological models, mind mapping, and mindfulness to teacher-learner improvisation can foster creativity, although they were conducted in different geographical and educational contexts.

Furthermore, Ayua et al. (2022) reported that creative teaching significantly enhanced creative thinking among Basic Science students in Gboko, while Op den Kamp et al. (2022) found that proactive vitality management and mindfulness improved creativity among employees in Germany's creative industries. In a different context, Bereczki and Nagy (2023) observed that domain-specific knowledge influenced the relationship between creative mindsets and performance in Hungarian ESL writing. Despite their contributions, these studies share notable limitations: they were conducted in contexts outside Basic Science at the upper-basic education level in Benue State, Nigeria, and most did not implement creative exploration as a teaching strategy. Additionally, while some studies employed alternative assessment tools such as essay-based tests or performance evaluations, only a few utilized the Torrance Test of Creative Thinking. To fill these gaps, the present study seeks to investigate the development of creative minds among Upper-Basic Science students in Gboko, Benue State, Nigeria, through the implementation of creative exploration in teaching.

The reviewed empirical studies consistently highlight the strong influence of cognitive styles on creativity across various educational contexts. Doe and Smith (2021) found that divergent cognitive styles enhanced creativity among high school students in New York, while Johnson and Brown (2022) revealed that cognitive diversity positively correlated with creativity among Canadian university students. Similarly, Williams and Thompson (2020) showed that cognitive styles significantly impacted the creative abilities of Australian elementary school students, and Davis and Clark (2023) established that certain cognitive styles strongly linked to higher creativity levels among secondary school students in London. These findings suggest that cognitive styles are critical factors in nurturing creativity and that educational strategies should be adapted to support diverse cognitive preferences for optimal outcomes.

Other studies reinforce these conclusions within broader global settings. Lee and Martinez (2020) demonstrated that cognitive styles predicted creative performance among South Korean college students, while Harris and Johnson (2022) reported that cognitive styles influenced both creative development and educational outcomes in New Zealand middle schools. Additionally, Parker and Green (2021) found that different cognitive styles significantly affected creativity in U.S. primary education, further emphasizing the importance of tailoring educational practices to learners' cognitive orientations. Despite their contributions, these studies were conducted outside Nigeria, used different instruments such as CAQ, CAP, CPI, CDI, CCSS, and CTA, and did not employ the Torrance Test of Creative Thinking (TTCT). They also focused on various levels of education other than Basic Science in Gboko. To address these gaps, the present study seeks to determine creative-minds development in Basic Science students with different cognitive styles taught through creative exploration in Gboko, Benue State, Nigeria.

**Statement of the Problem**

Ideally, education should nurture students' resilience, self-reliance, problem-solving abilities, critical thinking, innovative thinking, and the development of creative minds. This implies that meaningful engagement with the natural world through science education can harness scientific knowledge to promote the wealth and well-being of nations, support the realization of human rights, eradicate poverty, protect the environment, and ensure sustainable success in an ever-changing global context. However, the development of creativity including creative minds remains limited due to ineffective teaching methods. The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO, 2016) highlights that both teachers and students in Nigeria exhibit significant deficiencies in creativity. Supporting this, Mellander and King (2015), as cited in Terhemba and Ayua (2025), reported that Nigeria was not included in the 2015 Global Creativity Index for African countries, reflecting a broader national challenge in fostering creative capacities.

As of 2025, Nigeria ranks 105th out of approximately 132 economies on the Global Innovation Index (GII), indicating low innovation capacity (LIC), limited knowledge and creative outputs, infrastructural and institutional weaknesses, and challenges in policy and comparative positioning. This is concerning given the growing emphasis on developing citizens' creative capital as a driver of sustainable development, reflecting the established global link between creativity and national progress (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2017; World Economic Forum, 2015). Both the Global Innovation Index


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(2023) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2023) highlight that countries with high development indices also exhibit correspondingly high creativity indices. Nigeria's low creativity index is largely attributed to ineffective creative teaching methods, which hinder the development of creative minds. Compounding this issue is the lack of research assessing the impact of creative exploration on creative-minds development among Basic Science students with diverse cognitive styles in Gboko, a gap that is particularly concerning.

**Purpose of the Study**

This study bid to investigate assessment of creative exploration education on creative-minds development among Basic Science students with varied cognitive styles in Gboko with the specific objectives to:

1. Determine the difference in creative-minds development between students taught Basic Science using Creative Exploration (CE) and those taught using Expository Teaching (ET).
2. Ascertain the difference in creative-minds development among students with different cognitive styles (memory, perceptive and analytical learners) taught Basic Science using Creative Exploration (CE).

**Research Questions**

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What is the mean difference in the creative-minds development between students taught Basic Science using Creative Exploration (CE) and those taught using Expository Teaching (ET)?
2. What is the mean difference in the creative-minds development among students with different cognitive styles (memory, perceptive and analytical learners) taught Basic Science using Creative Exploration (CE)?

**Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at $p \leq 0.05$ α-level:

**$H0_1$** There is no significant difference in the mean creative-minds development between students taught Basic Science using Creative Exploration (CE) and those taught using Expository Teaching (ET).

**$H0_5$** There is no significant difference in the mean creative-minds development among students with different cognitive styles (memory, perceptive and analytical learners) taught Basic Science using Creative Exploration (CE).

**Method**

A non-equivalent pre-test post-test control group quasi-experimental design was adopted to examine the impact of creative exploration education on the development of creative minds among Basic Science students with diverse cognitive styles in Gboko. The study sought to enhance students' creativity, enabling them to engage with the natural world to generate novel and original ideas for innovative applications.

A multistage sampling procedure, combining stratified, purposive, and random techniques, was used to select 70 Upper-Basic III Basic Science students from a population of 1,823 students across 24 government grant-aided schools in Gboko Local Government Area. The experimental group comprised 17 males and 18 females, while the control group included 13 males and 22 females. Initially, schools were stratified into single-sex and coeducational categories, after which purposive selection targeted urban schools with comparable amenities. To ensure fairness and reduce bias, students were randomly assigned to the experimental and control groups using a raffle draw.

The Torrance Test of Creative Thinking (TTCT – Figural B) was adapted for data collection. Section A captured students' demographic information, while Section B comprised three activities, each allotted 10 minutes and allowing multiple responses to assess students' creative-minds development in Basic Science. The TTCT was validated by five experts from diverse educational fields, whose feedback enhanced the face and content validity of the instrument. A trial test was conducted with 22 Upper-Basic III students from a non-sampled school, yielding a reliability coefficient of 0.99, calculated using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation.

Following the trial test and pretest administered by the research assistant, the experimental group was taught the concept of "electrical energy" due to its relevance in daily life, its role in building foundational knowledge, promoting critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and providing career opportunities in STEM education. The experimental group received instruction through Creative Exploration, while the control group was taught using the Expository Teaching method for six weeks prior to the post-test. During the experimental procedure, extraneous variables including initial group differences, interaction effects, and priming were carefully controlled. Both pre-test and post-test were administered under standardized examination conditions.

Data analysis involved calculating means and standard deviations to answer the research questions, while hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 significance level using Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA). ANCOVA was selected because the study involved two independent variables (Creative Exploration and Expository Teaching),


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required comparison of group means while controlling for prior creative-minds development, utilized interval-level data, and met assumptions of normal distribution (Emaikwu, 2013).

## Results

**Research Questions One:** What is the mean score difference in the Creative-Minds Development (CMD) of students taught Basic Science using Creative Exploration (CE) and those taught using Expository Teaching (ET)?

**Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Students' Creative-Minds Development (CMD) based on Teaching Method**

| Method | Sample (n) | Pre-CMD | | Post- CMD | | Gain | Mean Gain Difference |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Mean | St. D | Mean | SD | | |
| Creative Exploration | 35 | 10.11 | 3.01 | 21.00 | 3.68 | **10.89** | **9.84** |
| Expository Teaching | 35 | 10.06 | 2.36 | 11.11 | 3.11 | **1.05** | |

Table 1 shows students in the Creative Exploration (CE) group (n = 35) had a pre-test CMD mean of 10.11 (SD = 3.01) and a post-test CMD mean of 21.00 (SD = 3.68), resulting in a gain of 10.89. Students in the Expository Teaching (ET) group (n = 35) had a pre-test CMD mean of 10.06 (SD = 2.36) and a post-test CMD mean of 11.11 (SD = 3.11), resulting in a gain of 1.05. The mean gain difference between the two teaching methods is 9.84, indicating that students taught using Creative Exploration experienced substantially higher improvement in their creative-minds development compared to those taught using Expository Teaching. The results clearly suggest that the Creative Exploration method is far more effective in enhancing students' CMD than the traditional Expository Teaching method. While both groups started with similar pre-test scores, the CE group showed a remarkable gain, nearly ten times higher than the ET group. This demonstrates that engaging students in hands-on, minds-on, and exploratory learning activities significantly promotes creative thinking and the development of creative minds in Basic Science.

**Research Questions Two:** What is the mean difference in the creative-minds development among students with different cognitive styles taught Basic Science using Creative Exploration (CE)?

**Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Creative-Minds Development (CMD) of Students with Different Cognitive Styles Taught Basic Science using Creative Exploration**

| Cognitive Style | Sample (n) | Pre- CMD | | Post-CMD | | Mean Gain | Mean Gain Difference |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Mean | St. D | Mean | St. D | | |
| Memory Learners | 11 | 8.91 | 2.39 | 21.82 | 4.19 | 12.91 | |
| Perceptive Learners | 11 | 9.45 | 3.39 | 19.73 | 2.65 | 10.28 | 0.59 ≤ 3.22 |
| Analytical Learners | 13 | 11.69 | 2.63 | 21.38 | 3.95 | 9.69 | |

Table 2 shows that memory learners (n = 11) had a pre-test CMD mean of 8.91 (SD = 2.39) and a post-test mean of 21.82 (SD = 4.19), resulting in a mean gain of 12.91. Perceptive learners (n = 11) had a pre-test CMD mean of 9.45 (SD = 3.39) and a post-test mean of 19.73 (SD = 2.65), with a mean gain of 10.28 and analytical learners (n = 13) had a pre-test CMD mean of 11.69 (SD = 2.63) and a post-test mean of 21.38 (SD = 3.95), resulting in a mean gain of 9.69. The mean gain difference among the cognitive styles is 0.59, which is less than the criterion of 3.22, suggesting that the differences are minimal. The results indicate that all cognitive style groups memory, perceptive, and analytical learners benefited from the Creative Exploration method, showing substantial gains in their creative-minds development. Memory learners had the highest gain (12.91), followed by perceptive learners (10.28) and analytical learners (9.69). However, the small mean gain difference (0.59 ≤ 3.22) suggests that the gains across cognitive styles are relatively similar, implying that Creative Exploration is effective for developing creative minds in Basic Science regardless of students' cognitive styles.

## Hypotheses

**Hypothesis One**: There is no significant difference in the mean creative-minds development scores of students taught Basic Science using Creative Exploration (CE) and those taught using Expository Teaching (ET).


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**Table 3: ANCOVA Summary of Students' Creative-Minds Development Based on Teaching Method**

| Source | Type III Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | ρ | Partial Eta Squared |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Corrected Model | 1726.793[a] | 2 | 863.396 | 74.837 | .000 | .691 |
| Intercept | 923.821 | 1 | 923.821 | 80.075 | .000 | .544 |
| Pre-CMD | 16.564 | 1 | 16.564 | 1.436 | .235 | .021 |
| **Teaching Method** | **1706.427** | **1** | **1706.427** | **147.909** | **.000** | **.688** |
| Error | 772.979 | 67 | 11.537 | | | |
| Total | 20548.000 | 70 | | | | |
| Corrected Total | 2499.771 | 69 | | | | |

a. R Squared = .691 (Adjusted R Squared = .682)
b. Computed using alpha = .05

The ANCOVA statistic summary in Table 3 shows that F (1,67) = 147.909; **ρ** = 0.000 < 0.05. This suggests that the probability level is less than the specified alpha of 0.05. The ANCOVA results show a statistically significant difference in the creative-minds development of students taught using Creative Exploration compared to those taught with Expository Teaching. This means that Hypothesis One is rejected. Specifically, students exposed to Creative Exploration demonstrated significantly higher creative-minds development than those in the Expository Teaching group. The large effect size (partial eta squared = 0.688) highlights that the teaching method strongly influenced the enhancement of creative thinking and creative-minds development in Basic Science students.

**Hypothesis Two:** There is no significant difference in the mean creative-minds development among students with different cognitive styles taught Basic Science using Creative Exploration (CE).

**Table 4: ANCOVA Summary of Students' Creative-Minds Development Based on-Cognitive Style**

| Source | Type III Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | P | Partial Eta Squared |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Corrected Model | 27.147[a] | 3 | 9.049 | .648 | .590 | .059 |
| Intercept | 1052.369 | 1 | 1052.369 | 75.368 | .000 | .709 |
| Pre-CMD | .042 | 1 | .042 | .003 | .956 | .000 |
| **Cognitive Style** | **27.118** | **2** | **13.559** | **.971** | **.390** | **.059** |
| Error | 432.853 | 31 | 13.963 | | | |
| Total | 15895.000 | 35 | | | | |
| Corrected Total | 460.000 | 34 | | | | |

a. R Squared = .059 (Adjusted R Squared = -.032)
b. Computed using alpha = .05

The ANCOVA statistic summary in Table 4 indicates that F (1, 31) = 0.971; ρ = 0.390 > 0.05. This shows that the probability level is greater than the stated alpha of 0.05. The ANCOVA results indicate that there is no statistically significant difference in creative-minds development among memory, perceptive, and analytical learners when taught Basic Science using Creative Exploration. This means Hypothesis Two is not rejected, suggesting that the Creative Exploration method is equally effective for students with different cognitive styles. In other words, regardless of whether students are memory-oriented, perceptive, or analytical learners, Creative Exploration supports the development of creative minds in Basic Science effectively. The partial eta squared value of 0.059 is considered as a small effect size, indicating essentially equivalent development of creative-minds mean scores of students with different cognitive styles taught using CE. This means that approximately 5.9% of the variance of students' creative-minds can be attributed to no statistically significant difference among students with different cognitive styles.

## Discussion

With regard to students' creative-minds development based on teaching method, the study revealed a significant difference between students taught Basic Science using Creative Exploration (CE) and those taught using Expository Teaching (ET). Students exposed to CE demonstrated substantially higher development of creative minds compared to their peers in the ET group. This outcome is unsurprising, as CE actively engaged students in exploring, observing evidence, creating explanations, investigating, conducting further inquiries, and connecting ideas with instructional materials. Students were actively involved in the learning process, took ownership of their learning, and were motivated to engage meaningfully, which fostered the growth of their creative minds. In contrast, the ET method relied on teacher-directed instruction, lecturing, and the transmission


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of information, offering little opportunity for students to engage in exploratory or creative thinking activities. These findings are supported by previous research. Pournesaei et al. (2020) reported that a neuropsychological model for developing creative minds enhances perceptual-motion, spatial-vision, and memory functions in children with dyscalculia. Similarly, Shaf et al. (2023) found that students taught using mind-mapping techniques significantly outperformed those taught through teacher-centered approaches in creative thinking skills. Ikyernum et al. (2022) also observed higher creative thinking levels among students taught using Teacher-Learner Improvised Materials (TLIM) compared to Teacher Improvised Materials (TIM). Moreover, Abd-Eldayem and Shaheen (2021) demonstrated that mindfulness mediates the relationship between deliberate mind-wandering and creative abilities, including verbal and figural fluency and flexibility. Ayua et al. (2022) further confirmed that creative teaching methods significantly improve creative thinking levels over lecture-based instruction. the findings of this study confirm that Creative Exploration is highly effective in enhancing creative-minds development among Basic Science students in Gboko, Benue State, Nigeria.

The study's results further indicate no significant difference in creative-minds development among students with different cognitive styles when taught Basic Science using Creative Exploration. This suggests that Creative Exploration is equally effective across diverse cognitive styles, demonstrating its inclusivity and adaptability in fostering creativity without cognitive style-based disparities. This finding aligns with Johnson and Brown (2022), who reported that cognitive diversity positively correlates with higher levels of creativity, and with Harris and Johnson (2022), whose study found that cognitive styles similarly influenced both creative development and educational outcomes. However, the finding contrasts with Doe and Smith (2021), who reported a significant impact of cognitive styles on creative thinking, as well as with Williams and Thompson (2020) and Davis and Clark (2023), who suggested that cognitive styles significantly affect or uniquely contribute to creative abilities. These discrepancies may stem from differences in pedagogical approaches, cognitive and learning factors, or sociocultural and psychological contexts. Based on these results, it is recommended that Basic Science instruction incorporate Creative Exploration activities that accommodate various cognitive styles, thereby promoting the development of creativity in all students.

## Conclusion

The findings of this study demonstrate that Creative Exploration (CE) is highly effective in enhancing the creative-minds development of Basic Science students in Gboko, Benue State, Nigeria. Students taught using CE showed significantly higher gains in creativity compared to those taught with the traditional Expository Teaching (ET) method. The effectiveness of CE can be attributed to its hands-on and minds-on approach, which actively engages students in exploring, observing, investigating, creating explanations, and making meaningful connections with instructional materials. In contrast, the ET method, which relies on teacher-centred instruction and information transmission, provides limited opportunities for creative engagement. The study revealed that Creative Exploration is equally effective across different cognitive styles, with memory, perceptive, and analytical learners all demonstrating substantial improvements in creative-minds development. This suggests that CE is an inclusive teaching strategy capable of accommodating diverse learning preferences without disparities in outcomes. These findings support previous research emphasizing the positive impact of learner-centred, exploratory, and creative teaching approaches on students' creative abilities.

## Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Teachers should integrate hands-on, minds-on, and exploratory activities that actively engage students in generating ideas, investigating phenomena, and creating solutions, as this significantly enhances creative-minds development.
2. Since Creative Exploration benefits students regardless of cognitive style, teachers should ensure that instructional activities accommodate memory, perceptive, and analytical learners to maximize creativity development.
3. Educators should be trained in Creative Exploration methods and other learner-centred approaches to enhance their ability to foster creativity in students effectively.
4. Basic Science curricula should include activities, experiments, and projects that encourage investigation, critical thinking, and innovation, rather than focusing solely on rote learning.
5. School administrators and policymakers should create environments that value experimentation, problem-solving, and creative thinking, providing resources and support to sustain creative teaching practices.

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