Considerations about creative literary writing: a work proposal for poetry writing in Spanish

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El desarrollo de la competencia comunicativa escrita en la Educación Primaria se trabaja, a menudo, a partir de la escritura de textos muchas veces descontextualizados de las situaciones vitales del estudiantado y cuya finalidad es la aplicación de las normas ortográficas y sintácticas de la lengua en la que se escribe. En este artículo, proponemos un plan de trabajo de escritura creativa y literaria en español para estudiantes del Segundo Ciclo de la Educación Primaria. El objetivo de este es el de ofrecer un marco de composición ameno y al mismo tiempo disciplinado en el que la escritura de pequeños textos poéticos sea una fuente de conocimiento y expresión escrita de textos verdaderamente significativos para el estudiante ya que son la expresión de su propio mundo interior.

Palabras clave: escritura de textos, escritura creativa, escritura literaria, poesía, Segundo Ciclo de Primaria.

In primary education, communicative competence in writing is often worked on by getting students to write texts that have very little to do with their own lives or the world around them and whose sole purpose is to get students to apply the spelling and syntax rules for the language in question. This paper presents a work plan for creative and literary writing in Spanish for third- and fourth-year primary students. The aim is to create an engaging, disciplined framework so that students can write short, genuinely meaningful, poetic texts in which they can express their own inner world and which can become a source of knowledge.

Keywords: writing texts, creative writing, literary writing, poetry, third- and fourth-year primary.

Le développement des compétences en communication écrite dans l'enseignement primaire est souvent travaillé à partir de l'écriture de textes souvent décontextualisés des situations de vie des élèves et dont le but est l'application des règles de l'orthographe et de la syntaxe de la langue dans laquelle ils écrivent. Dans cet article, nous proposons un plan de travail d'écriture créative et littéraire aux élèves du deuxième cycle de l'enseignement primaire. Le but est de fournir un cadre de composition amusant mais en même temps discipliné dans lequel l'écriture de petits poèmes sera une source de connaissances et d'écriture de textes vraiment significatifs pour les élèves puisqu'ils sont l'expression de leur propre monde intérieur.

Mots-clés: écriture de textes, écriture créative, écriture littéraire, poésie, deuxième cycle de l'enseignement primaire.
The crisis of reading and writing

For some years, the announced crisis in reading – and the not so widely discussed crisis in writing – has become a worrisome concern in our educational contexts. The media has widely covered the decline in reading and writing skills that has been revealed by research, poor results in school tests and the perceptions of all of those currently involved in teaching (Edwards, Turner & Mokhtari, 2008). Although the focus is on young people, the problem does not seem to distinguish between educational levels or social sectors of the population. As a result, people no longer read and write as they did in the past; they don't know how to, they don't learn and they aren't even taught how to read and write properly. The society points its finger at schools as the ones behind this problem and it is schools that are called upon to come up with a solution. This perception may be right to a certain extent, but there are some major silences.

Reading and writing are historical social practices. We need to analyse their meaning in specific material and cultural contexts if we are to understand the crisis in reading and writing. This process involves considering the collective assessments built about these practices at certain moments in certain societies, the changes brought about by transformations in other spheres of social life and also the changes in the kinds of ties and interactions in society. These aspects lead to a scenario where the practices of writing culture are undergoing a process of re-identification.

For some decades, we have seen widespread politic, social and cultural transformations that have condensated and expressed a new worldwide configuration. Globalisation proclaims a new scene where national borders are blurred in what has been called the global village. The extraordinary evolution of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) plays the leading role in this new stage, as it has led to an explosion of cultural exchanges worldwide. Today it is possible to communicate instantly with faraway places, and technological and cultural advances have transformed our forms of perception, strategies for thinking and ways of processing information and producing and acquiring knowledge (Noël & Robert, 2003). These new communication and knowledge modalities have had a major effect on the construction of our identities in the form of, for example, rapid, fragmented television images, instantaneous communications with a distant relative, writing and rewriting a text on the screen, international news on a European cable television station, digital photographs sent by email or published on a blog, online games or videogames that let players pretend to be another person or live another life, TV commercials that look like films and great works of literature published as ebooks (Nachmias, Mioduser, Cohen, Tubin & Forkosh-Baruch, 2004).

On the basis of this presentation, it is certainly licit to wonder whether people still read and write as they did in the past. Probably not, but this situation has come about because the scene of academic reading and writing – which was known, learnt and practised by traditional schools (Kress, 2010) until the cultural introduction of mass media – is no longer the unique or even the main site today. Although books and pages have had a central role for promoting knowledge for centuries, today they have to share the stage with other languages and other forms of reading and writing (Jewitt, 2006).

Stages for teaching primary education

Students are often asked to compose a story based on news about their school, teachers or their classmates. Sometimes, we forget how correct, coherent and well-written these models to follow. True to what we are taught during the school years, we use these rules used in the school, but we also need to teach how to write. Writing requires a process, which is not as simple as it seems. Students’ age, the level of the text and the context in which the text is to be used. Writing can be further divided into three stages. Students should be taught how to plan and write when planning to write:

- **Step 1. What to write?**
  1. Brainstorm ideas and the ideas about the subject.
  2. Start writing around the ideas that came to mind.

- **Step 2. Who is the audience?**
  1. Think about who will be reading the text. Students may not be the only ones to use the text.
  2. Write an outline and list the ideas that you have in mind.

- **Step 3. How will the text be read?**
  1. Will the text be read aloud?
  2. Do they need to listen to it to understand it?
  3. Will the text be read by the audience?
  4. Is the language correct?
Stages for writing texts in primary education

Students are often asked to write texts, e.g. a composition about their holidays, a short tale, news about their family or a description of their schoolmates or relatives. But, as teachers, we often forget to teach the necessary processes students should follow to produce correct, coherent work, or we forget to give models to follow as guidance. Although it is true that writing is the last skill to be taught during the learning process and is the least used of the skills in the natural use of language, it requires thorough planning for structuring messages and correcting texts, as well as more diverse contexts throughout primary education.

Writing requires a sequenced production process, which should necessarily consider students’ age, interests and ability (Camps, 2003). The following methodological considerations should be taken into consideration when planning any writing programme:

1. Brainstorming comes first: write down all the ideas about the subject to be written. Afterwards students should decide which ones to use.
2. Write an outline to set the text in context and outline the general idea.

Step 2. Who is our reader?

1. Think about the person who will read the text. Students should think of the reader every time they check the text.
   • Will they understand the written text?
   • Do they have the necessary information for effective communication to take place?
   • Is the language suitable for the reader?

Step 3. The draft

1. Write the first draft trying:
   • Not to lose the storyline.
   • To use grammar properly.
   • To order the paragraphs.

Step 4. Final text

1. Rewrite the text paying careful attention to spelling and presentation.

Creative literary writing and the role of teaching: writing poems

Creative composition is a product of students’ literary skill. Creative writing can be defined as an action that aims to satisfy the need to create through personal feelings and opinions. Furthermore, the writer wants to project, to experiment and to handle language in a unique way. A particular feature of creative writing is that the audience is the author plus any other interested party. Forms of writing include myths, comedies, tales, anecdotes, gags, novels, essays, letters, songs, jokes and parodies (Hayes, 2011).

Alonso (2001) also defines creative writing as the ability to write or read texts with an aesthetic-literary purpose. Both abilities refer to the activities done by a subject who performs or produces literary texts, i.e. demonstrates knowledge of the communicative conventions and cognitive operations taking place while reading or writing literary texts.

In these terms, creative writing instructors should explain that their role in creative activities is different to other activities. The aim is to run literary workshops with an inspirational, imaginative and creative atmosphere to encourage learners to become communicators who are ready and willing to express themselves for pleasure and who feel the need to write their
A work plan for writing poems: methodology, objectives, first results

One of the main goals of the project is to develop new models for teaching writing, particularly through the use of poems. This approach aims to engage students in creative, expressive, and imaginative writing processes, fostering their ability to express their ideas and emotions through language. The project is based on the idea that poetry can serve as a tool for personal and social development, allowing students to explore themes of identity, community, and the human condition.

The methodology includes the design of writing workshops and activities that focus on developing creativity and expression, as well as the textual features of written works. These workshops aim to provide students with the opportunity to experiment with different writing styles and techniques, encouraging them to think critically about the construction of meaning in their writing.

The project team has been working with experienced poets and educators to develop a series of writing tasks and exercises that are tailored to different age groups and learning levels. These activities are designed to be inclusive and accessible, ensuring that all students can participate and benefit from the creative process.

Below, we present a sample of the writing tasks and exercises that have been developed as part of the project.

Writing Task 1: Describe a Place

Instructions: Choose a place that is significant to you, either a physical location or a mental space. Write a poem that captures the essence of this place, using descriptive language and imagery. Consider how the place makes you feel and what memories it evokes.

Writing Task 2: Write a Dialogue

Instructions: Select a theme or topic that you are interested in. Write a poem that is a dialogue between two characters, exploring this theme from different perspectives. Consider the dialogue's tone and style, and how the characters' voices are reflected in the poem.

Writing Task 3: Free Verse

Instructions: Write a free verse poem that does not follow any conventional rhyming or meter. Focus on the flow and rhythm of your words, allowing the poem to develop in a natural, spontaneous manner. Consider how the poem's form reflects its content.

The project team is committed to implementing these and other writing tasks in a variety of educational settings, with the goal of empowering students to express themselves through creative writing.
implementing communicative competence in writing.

Below we present a plan for creative writing that gets third- and fourth-year Spanish primary students (aged 8–10) to compose short poetic texts.

The aims of the plan are as follows:

- To learn to write short poems in Spanish in third- and fourth-year primary education.
- To foster an interest in writing in a format that is different from most written productions at school (dictation, notes, stories).
- To improve students’ understanding of the features of poetic language and the structure of a poem.
- To acquaint students with writing poetic litanies (Rodari, 1989, p. 19) in order to get them to appreciate the pleasure of writing short poetic texts.

This academic activity is carried out during the third and fourth years of primary education. In the third year, the main actions are based on compiling songs and other text formats, mainly oral, such as ditties, riddles and lullabies. Students are asked to recite these compositions with the goal of becoming acquainted with popular poetry and its three main elements: stanza, verse and rhyme. This helps contextualise the production of poetry from its essential concepts: the stanza as a product of the final creation, the verse as a part of the creation and rhyme as the main essence of the creation. Digital resources are very helpful tools for teachers looking for activities involving attentive and rhythmical listening of oral poems as models to be followed.

Once they have learnt the textual features in their third year, fourth-year students are asked to write poems about three key moments.

Firstly, as stated before, a poetic model is introduced. We do not deal with only one kind of stanza and verse. The aim is to introduce different formats of poetic compositions accessible to third- and fourth-year primary students: Christmas carols, folk songs, riddles, rhyming couplets, tercets, quatrains and simple ballads. Some examples implemented in the classroom are detailed as follows:

![La bicicleta](image)

El ferro sigue el carril
por el atí casi plano,
como el pere sigue al jí
y el otorío a su verano.

Eduardo Polo

After the models are introduced and explained, the writing and the collective re-writing phase gets under way with texts that students have read previously. The writing and working conditions mentioned in the previous paragraph should be born in mind. It is extremely positive to use poetic litanies in the initial stage of writing to spark students’ interest in writing poetic texts from multiple combinations of words referring to personal experiences or feelings. Poetic litanies are short compositions through which children and young people can offer their own vision of the world by using a set of verses to make up a short poem. A sample of litanies is shown as follows:
The experience of such writing poetic texts enables us to draw several conclusions. First, once they begin to read poetic texts in the classroom, third- and fourth-year primary students can understand what a poetic text is and can see how this type of written production expresses feelings and personal emotions. Secondly, this process consolidates the handwriting skill first introduced at preschool and in first- and second-year primary. Writing poetic texts is different from writing traditional academic texts such as dictations and free essays. Students welcome the chance to produce texts that encourage them to be creative. Thirdly, we would like to stress the ideas of writing litanies, as they are a very easy way to write poems as creative-literary writing; in addition, they allow 8- to 9-year-old students to express basic elementary feelings such as happiness and sadness.

Conclusions: creative writing, a marvellous challenge

Teaching students to read and to write is, of course, one of the most arduous and challenging tasks in the field of education, but it is also one of the most rewarding. Watching students pick up their pens to compose their first text or seeing teenagers writing a poem or commenting on a text they have read in class are immensely gratifying experiences. They show that we have fulfilled our teaching function of ensuring students can exercise their right to access written culture.

Within the linguistic system, written language performs important communicative functions, particularly in terms of acquiring and systemising knowledge. Curriculums, methodologies and lesson sequences have to resolve a fundamental contradiction between the contents even if those skills they show or exercise written texts.

Currently, there are many studies in the field of linguistics that show the grammatically meaningful text is not necessary for a referential knowledge and established standard: we can speak or write with a lack of precision of language. From a language structural point of view, the paradigm of modern linguistics is the hierarchy and its differenciability.

Written language and its written system, possess an appropriate system.

References


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writing poetic texts and conclusions. First, poetic texts in the fourth-year primary what a poetic text is and of written production and personal emotions. Consolidates the handed at preschool and in primary. Writing poetic texts traditional academic and free essays. Stanzas to produce texts creatively. Thirdly, we are to write litanies, say to write poems as an addition, they allow the students to express basic emotions such as happiness and

The writing range

and to write is, of course, a challenge, but it is also thrilling. Watching students produce their first text or a poem or comment on what they read in class are impressions. They show that the function of encouraging them to achieve their goals is meaningful.

System, written language, communicative acts of acquiring and Curriculums, methodologies have to resolve the tension between the contents every student should learn and the skills they should acquire to compose satisfactory written texts after learning such contents.

Currently, the fundamental aim of methodology in the area of language is to promote grammatical competence at the expense of meaningful function, multiple uses and the necessity relationship between grammatical and referential knowledge. Repeatedly using pre-established structures does not mean students can speak or write properly, but rather that they lack precise forms of expression in the use of language. Knowledge is never modelled by language structures; every acquisition is a paradigm of meaningful structures whose mechanism implies a higher level of organisation, hierarchy and adaptation of the message.

Written language can also become a dynamic system, provided that teaching finds the appropriate systematic way to implement contents, principles and rules, delimit the categories and concepts with which they operate and externalise written expression to boost meaning and expressivity. We encourage teaching and working on creative literary writing designed to produce meaningful texts that express students' own world. Above and beyond a school task, writing is a skill or, in other words, an escape route, and it should be a pleasure for our students. If they are to acquire the necessary skill to enjoy this activity, as well as find it satisfying, there has to be a process involving hard work and effort, continuous reflection, exploration, the study of technical rudiments and contrasting and discussing work with other writers. This is the philosophy that inspired our work plan for writing poems: the need to offer an engaging yet disciplined framework within which students can enjoy producing writing and others can enjoy reading it.

References


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