

THE USE OF CREATIVE WRITING AS A TOOL TO TEACH ADDITIONAL LANGUAGES

O USO DA ESCRITA CRIATIVA COMO FERRAMENTA PARA O ENSINO DE LÍNGUAS ADICIONAIS

EL USO DE ESCRITURA CREATIVA COMO HERRAMIENTA PARA LA ENSEÑANZA DE LENGUAS ADICIONALES

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ABSTRACT: Creative Writing (CW) has not been extensively researched in Brazil. For this reason, the main purpose of this article is to investigate some possible uses of Creative Writing in language classes as an additional language (HELLERMAN, 2008). Based directly on the Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT), this article is divided into three parts. The first part analyses the modern concepts of writing as a process (MURRAY, 1980; ELBOW, 1981; FLOWER & HAYES, 1981). The second part discusses some aspects about CW, knowing that CW does not have fixed and stable features in today's world (POPE, 2005; HYLAND, 2012; MALEY, 2012). The last part is dedicated to share some possible CW contributions to be used as tools to learning, but especially to teach languages as an additional language.

Keywords: Teaching additional language; Creative Writing; Creative Writing as a process.

RESUMO: A Escrita Criativa (EC) não tem sido extensivamente pesquisada no Brasil. Por esta razão, o principal objetivo deste artigo é o de investigar alguns usos possíveis da Escrita Criativa nas aulas de língua como língua adicional (HELLEMAN, 2008). Baseado diretamente na Teoria Histórico-Cultural e de Atividade (THCA) este artigo está dividido em três partes. A primeira parte analisa os conceitos modernos de escrever como um processo (MURRAY, 1980; ELBOW, 1981; FLOWER & HAYES, 1981). A segunda parte discute alguns aspectos sobre EC, tendo em mente que a EC não tem características fixas e estáveis hoje em dia (POPE, 2005; HYLAND, 2012; MALEY, 2012). A última parte é dedicada a compartilhar algumas possíveis contribuições da EC como ferramenta para a aprendizagem, mas sobretudo para o ensino de línguas como língua adicional.

Palavras-Chave: Ensino da língua adicional; Escrita criativa; Escrita Criativa como um processo.

RESUMEN: La Escritura Creativa (EC) no ha sido ampliamente investigada en Brasil. Por esta razón, el objetivo principal de este artículo es de investigar usos posibles de EC

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en las clases de lengua como lengua adicional (HELLERMAN, 2008). Basada directamente en la Teoría Histórico-Cultural y de Actividad (THCA), este artículo se divide en tres partes. La primera parte se analizan los conceptos modernos de la escritura como un proceso (MURRAY, 1980; ELBOW, 1981; FLOWER & HAYES, 1981). La segunda parte se discuten algunos aspectos acerca de las características de EC, teniendo en cuenta que EC no tiene características fijas y estables actualmente (POPE, 2005; HYLAND, 2012; MALEY, 2012). La última parte está dedicada a compartir algunas de las posibles contribuciones de EC como herramientas para el aprendizaje, pero sobre todo para la enseñanza de lenguas como lengua adicional.

Palabras Clave: La enseñanza de lenguas adicionales; Escritura Creativa; La Escritura Creativa como un proceso.

INTRODUCTION

Why is writing important in today's world? Writing helps you organize your inner thoughts. You can better understand facts, inferences and even opinions that are posed to you. This kind of organization can also help you develop your ability to apprehend what it is relevant in a specific issue and then ask questions which will make you and others reflect more deeply upon today's world.

Furthermore, writing can foster your ability to explain abstract and concrete ideas as well as anticipate your reader's needs. This kind of anticipation evinces your intellectuality, flexibility and maturity to tally more profoundly with different forms of thinking and concepts of knowledge.

Writing also allows you to be aware of and assess your cognitive skills such as memorizing, synthesizing, calculating, etc. Developing cognitive skills is fundamental to be socialized and acculturized nowadays. The practice of writing can stimulate you to think beyond the box and about the limitations of your thoughts and others' thoughts. In a democratic world, writing means participation and communication.

Moreover, writing is not a natural skill. People are not born knowing how to write appropriately in a specific language (mother, second, foreign or additional one). Writing is construed social, cultural, historically and with a more proficient peer (VYGOTSKY, 1993). Writing should be practiced constantly throughout people's lives, not only in their school years. Hence, writing should be seen more as a process than as a final product. However, what does writing as a process mean?

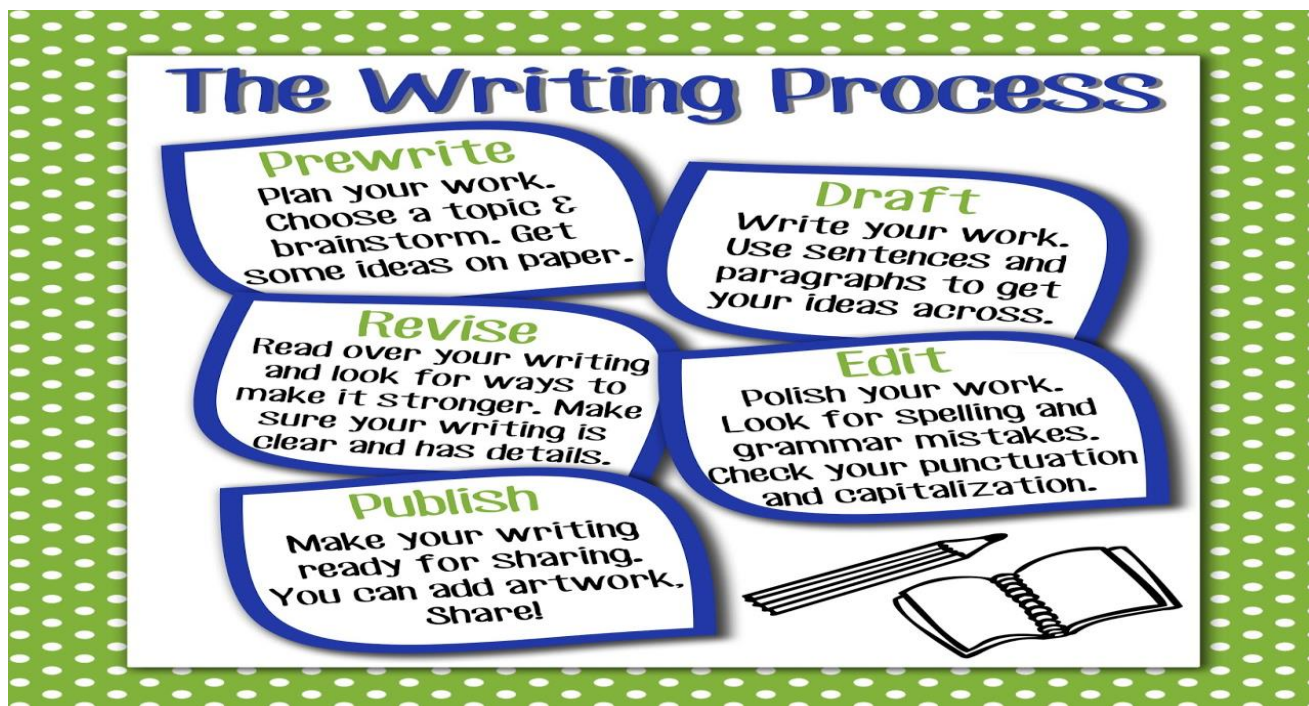
WRITING AS A PROCESS

Writing as a process is a kind of approach, i.e., a set of correlative assumptions dealing with the nature of Language Teaching and Learning. An approach to teach and learn an additional language is also axiomatic and describes the nature of the subject matter to be taught (RICHARDS & RODGERS, 1999). Moreover, there is a lot of criticism about it.

Writing as a process researchers (RICHARDS & RODGERS, 1999) criticize directly writing as a product approach, because the latter is strongly influenced by behaviorism. The writing as product approach entails writing as a (a) habit formation (imitating textual models), (b) an unteachable skill (GRABE & KAPLAN, 1996), and (c) grammar as the main tool to acquiring good writing (ZAMEL, 1976).

Writing as a product researchers (ZAMEL, 1976; GRABE & KAPLAN, 1996) also criticizes the writing as a process approach. For them, writing as a process does not give much importance to the the product (the object), but to the act of constructing this product. According to Grabe (1996), the writing as a process teacher distances himself from focusing on the final product correction and then focuses more on helping his students to understand the steps of writing.

These researchers investigate mainly the processes of writing in objective texts. According to the chart of Madeline Contraire (2013), there are basically five steps of writing as a process: Prewrite, Draft, Revise, Edit and Publish. These five steps are summarized as follows:



Available on < <http://magicandmarkers.blogspot.com.br/2013/08/okay-here-goes.html>>.

Accessed on 15/05/2016.

Moreover, this writing as a process organization may not be applied to any type of textual genre. This is the case of literary and creative texts. Especially for Creative texts, what should be then the steps of Creative Writing as a process?

THE STEPS OF CREATIVE WRITING AS A PROCESS

1. **Presentation:** Introduction of a specific literary genre and some of its subgenres. This is also the idea generation moment. Students should use this step of the Creative Writing as a process to apprehend better the main features of a certain literary genre as well as its main purposes and audience. The teacher can use different types of tools, i.e., any type of resource that can be used to accomplish something, in order to guide his student's writing path. These tools can be charts, logs, diaries, notebooks, story webs and flowcharts. They may help each student choose what kind of literary genre they may adopt, what they may discuss, who their audience may be and why they are writing.

2. **Rough Draft (Sloppy copy):** This Creative Writing as a process moment is when students get their hands dirty. This is their first contact with the writing support (paper,

computer, canvas, etc.), due to that students should not pay much attention to punctuation, grammar or neatness. The main goal of the rough draft step is to make students concentrate on their ideas, eliminating or, at least, diminishing their worries, fears or Creative Writing blocks of committing grammatical as well as textual organization mistakes such as capitalization, paragraph structure, subject-verb agreement, collocations, cohesion, prepositions and so on and so forth.

3. Peer Editing 1: This is one of the most important process writing moments. At this step of students' writing development, they should share their rough drafts with their peer readers (also known as beta readers) so their peer readers can provide them with constructive suggestions in order to improve their respective texts. A very productive exercise for this step is to use *wh-questions* (what, why, to whom, etc.) to instigate everybody's curiosity about the text reading along with promoting a more profound understanding of each other's story outline. The peer readers may discuss with their respective writers their Creative Writing texts so that they may come up with better choice of words, develop the writer's style, enhance their literary voice, make the plot clearer, deepen character's traits, actions and reasons and many more.

4. Revising: At this step of the writing path, students should reflect more deeply upon their peers' Creative Writing comments as well as their respective teacher (s)'s Creative Writing feedback in order to add, remove or clarify loosened details, i.e., parts which do not fit properly into their Creative Writing text (s). Although I have been talking about creative texts, not everything should be accepted. The acceptance of a certain literary text is a mutual agreement between the writer and the reader. Otherwise, any text is worth reading which is not true. For this reason, any writer needs time to think about their writing choices. Thus, most of this step ought to be conducted by the students alone. It is a type of private Creative Writing moment. Therefore, the role of the teacher here is to provide their students with considerable feedbacks for further consideration.

5. Editing: This part is not only about eliminating mistakes, but it also deals with grammar and spelling correction. Furthermore, the student does not need to do it all by himself. He can also have his peer help in order to correct the mistakes that he cannot pinpoint or simply does not know. The teacher can also provide his students with

references focusing on each student's discrepancy regarding standard grammar and spelling.

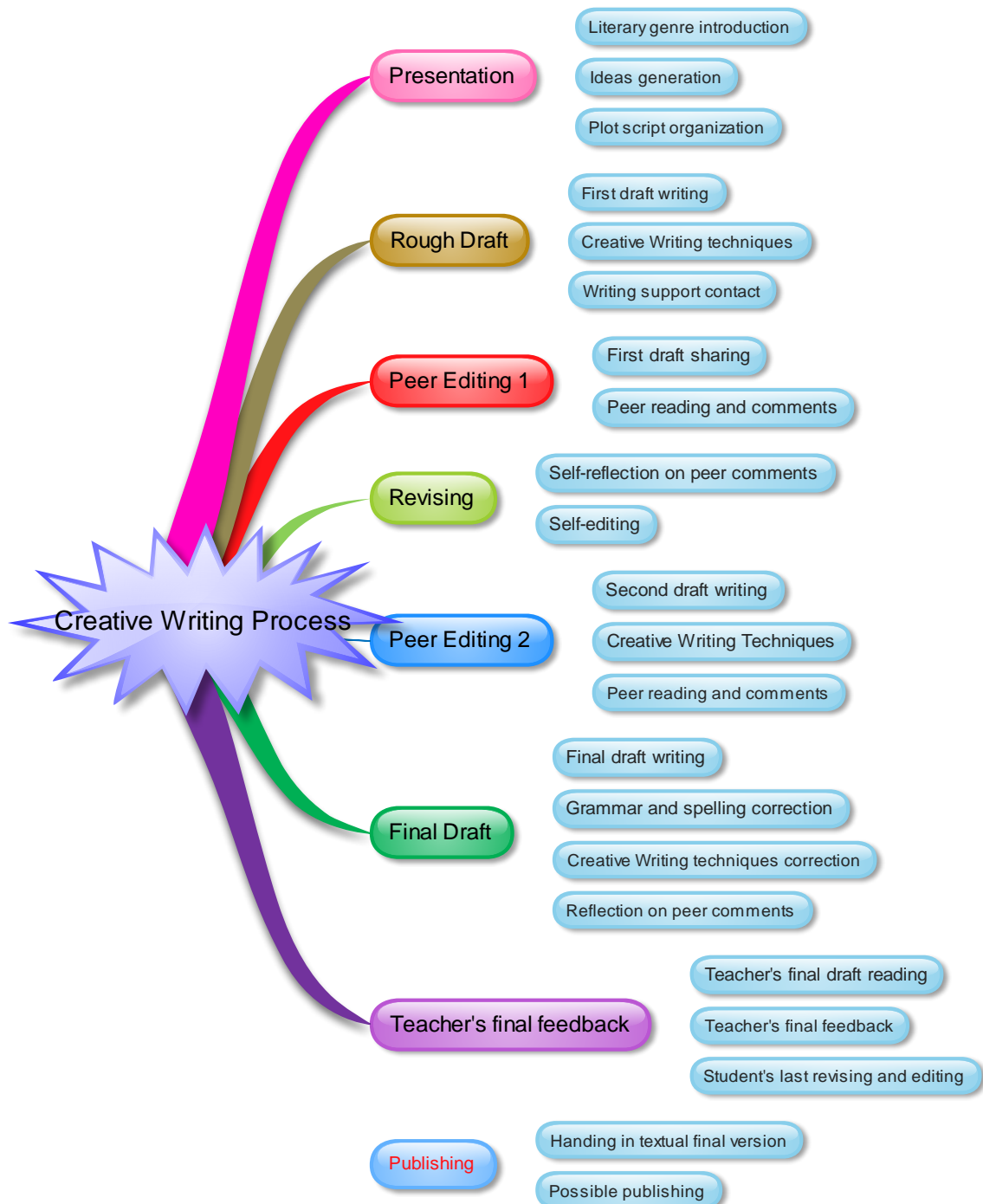
6. Final Draft: This is a very close part to the conclusion (or partial conclusion depending on the activity given) of the object (here it is the "final" draft of each student's text). He reflects once more on his writing choices and on his peer second comments.

7. Teacher's final feedback: At this moment, the student should provide his teacher with his "final" draft based directly on the final draft step. The teacher reads the student's final draft and jots down comments. After that, teacher and student should set up a feedback meeting in order to discuss the "last" loosened content and textual details. Then the teacher offers last comments on his student's draft along with preparing him to the last step.

7. Publishing: The student has achieved the last part of the writing path. The role of the student here is to provide his teacher with a final version of his writing. People usually write literary texts to be read. Therefore, teachers should motivate his students to share his literary work. This may be a very tricky moment, because many students may feel uncomfortable to do it. Thus, the teacher should sympathize with his students' choices. However, the teacher can still motivate his students with motivational techniques such as sharing his own literary texts, promoting literary contests or other writing events (writer's meeting, story reading, personal portfolios, etc.). With more comfortable students, the teacher can help them publish their literary work on websites specialized in amateur's publications.

The above writing steps can be summarized as follows:

Picture 2 – The Creative Writing Process



Made by the author

These writing steps can be applied to any kind of textual genres, although depending on the genre, the teacher has to take into consideration particularities in order to help better his students. For instance, literary genres require a specific kind of thinking and analyzing his constructions due to its formal as well as content structures.

Literary genres have specificities and should be taught and learned differently in comparison to more argumentative textual genres, for example. A short story is not written as a scientific article, a poem vocabulary may have words that will sound displaced in a newspaper column and a novel is much bigger than a medical prescription.

Teaching language with literature or literature with language courses are usually centered on students' understanding of the content and/or on the grammar of a certain literary work. Nevertheless, this is not the only path to teach and learn literature with language and/or vice-versa. Although it is not so common in Brazil, another option is *Creative Writing*. But what is Creative Writing (CW)?

WHAT IS CREATIVE WRITING (CW) THEN?

Creative Writing (CW) does not have a fixed and stable concept. Actually, there are many current concepts which range from fiction to non-fiction studies. Ken Hyland (2002, p. 25) attests that "(...) we can see creative writing as any writing, fiction or non-fiction that occurs outside of everyday professional, journalistic, academic and technical forms of writing". Hyland (2012)'s point of view is much divulged today. There are many CW courses which focus on Webwriting, Journalism, Food Writing, Travel Writing, Biographies, etc.

However, typically speaking, Creative Writing is usually comprehended by its fictional studies such as characterization, plot development, plot initiation and finalization, spatialization, temporalization, climax structuralization, metaphors and metonyms applications, and many more.

Creative Writing has very broad meanings in today's world, because of that the teacher should be able to choose which kind of writing he is going to deal with in his classes. All in all, Creative Writing classes should be zoomed in developing student's creativity and self-expression.

Creativity and self-expression may be better practiced with literary texts, because these types of texts are more receptive and susceptible to them. Non-fiction texts are more restricted and a little bit more stable. They have different functionalities, audiences and their structure are more constrained. All depends on each teacher's intention, textual genre experience and rationale to his classes.

Moreover, Creative Writing can also divert students' writing time, further their artistic expression, explore sociocultural and historical writing values, motivate student's imaginative potentiality, clarify their creative thinking, analyze identity questions and also improve their speaking, listening, reading and writing abilities. But how can the teacher do that?

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Poetry

Poetry is used to express something out of the ordinary, not mundane. For this reason, the poetry language is usually more decorated and self-centred. Its main features range from rhymes, rhythm, intonation, specific verses and stanzas. It can follow a traditional style (haikus, ballads, sonnets, etc.) or have a free style (no verses and stanzas restriction). Although there is narrative poetry, they are not common today.

Poetry can be a useful tool to teach Creative Writing in English, because it promotes students' self-expression and different thematic debates. Students can choose to use a specific type of poem or write freely. They also become more aware of pun of words and the English consonantal and vocalic sounds. For students with big difficulties in writing poems, teachers can work in class with the following acrostic poems website:

Picture 3 – Acrostic Poems



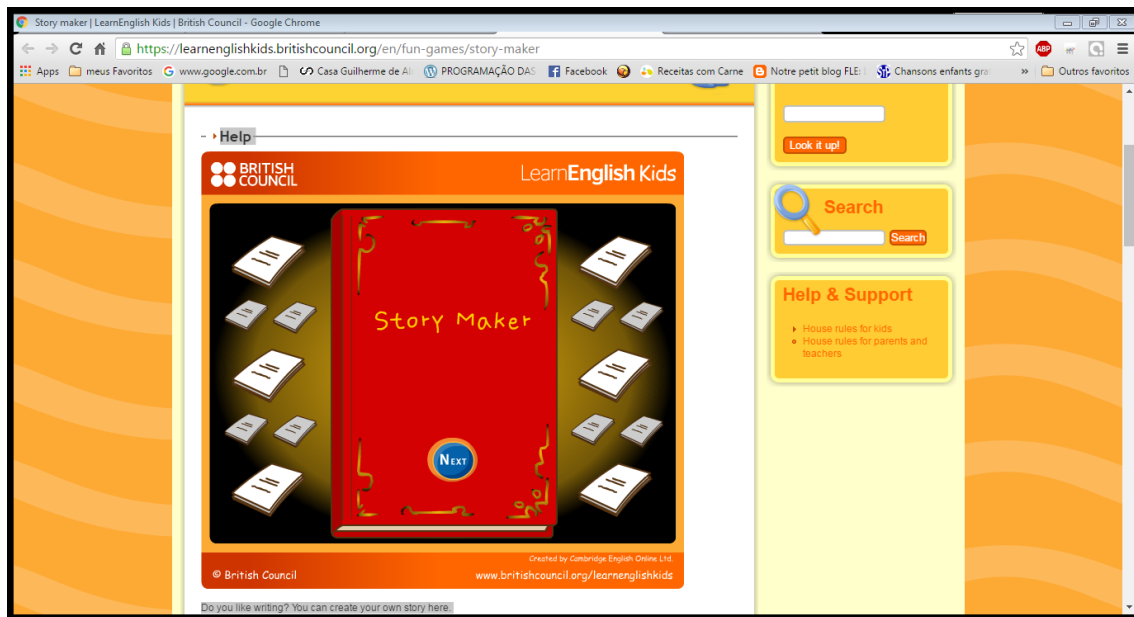
Available on <<http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/acrostic/>>. Accessed on 30/05/2016.

Short Stories

Short stories are more straightforward than poetry, thus they are less decorated, but not less expressive. They are frequently written in chunks of sentences, namely paragraphs. They tend to not have line breaks and follow a logic sequence, i.e., they have beginning, middle and ending. With a few characters and normally just one setting, their plot leans to reach a climax or a twist by their ending.

There are many advantages to motivate students to write short stories: 1) they can understand the basic elements of narrative; 2) they can create their own stories; 3) they can read better canonic short tellers; 4) they learn to write more coherently and 5) their writing become more focused and concise. The British Council website is a free accessible resource to ignite students' plot outline:

Picture 4 – The Story Maker



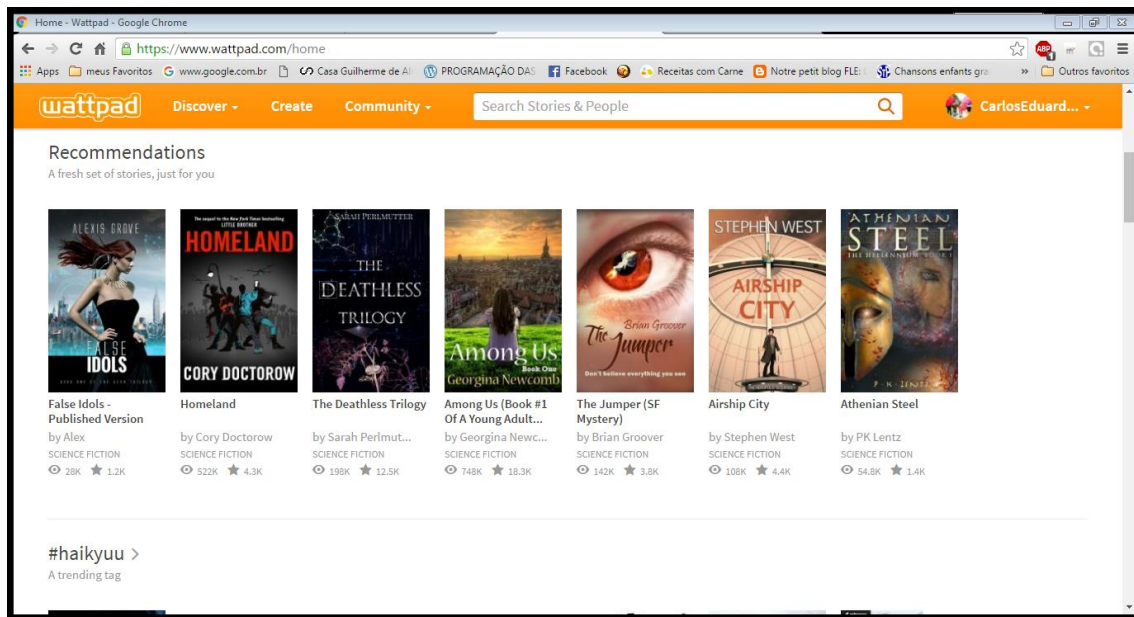
Available on <<http://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/en/games/story-maker>>. Accessed on 30/05/2016.

Fanfictions

Fanfictions are short stories created by fans and anti-fans. The main function of fanfictions is to rewrite an existent story with a new perspective. For example, if a fan does not like the ending of a story, he can rewrite this story adding a new ending. If he is an anti-fan, he can rewrite the story to ridicule or criticize the “original” story, i.e., the story used as an inspiration for his rewriting.

In Creative Writing classes, fanfictions can help overcome student’s writing block or initiate a story. This can happen, because the students do not need to start from scratch, they already have developed characters, settings and plots that may facilitate their writing. Fanfictions are easy to be published, because ficwriters (fanfiction writers) cannot profit from their texts and there are many fandoms (fanfiction communities) that publish freely any ficwriter’s literary work. The most famous fandom is Wattpad:

Picture 5 – Fanfictions

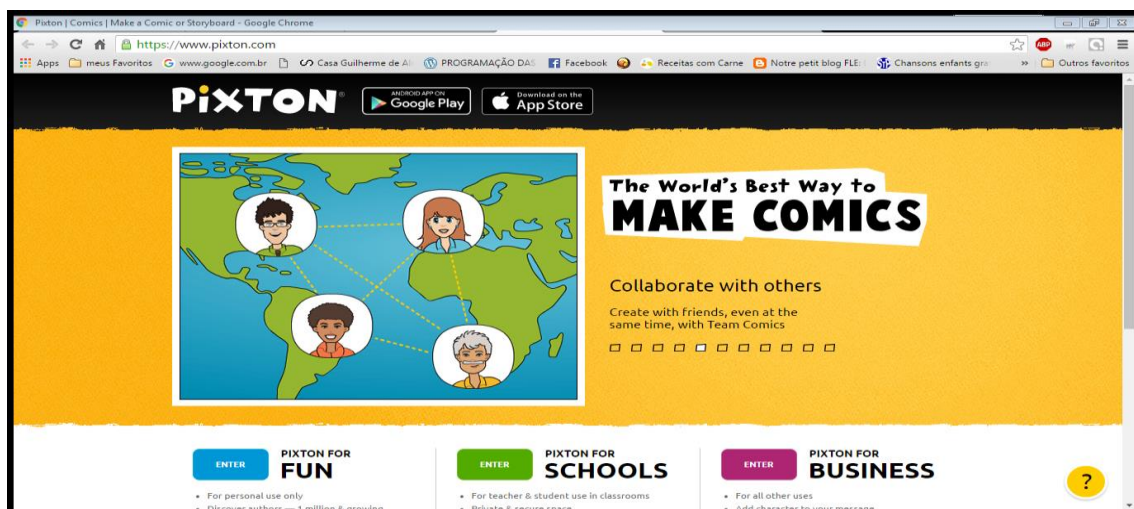


Available on <<https://www.wattpad.com/home>>. Accessed on 30/05/2016.

Comic Stories

Comic stories mix static images with implicit or explicit stories. The former does not have writing, thus the stories are comprehended by mainly the static images. The latter combine static images with writing. The writing is usually presented in balloons. Each balloon has a specific function and it is used to express more dramatically an idea.

Picture 6 – Comic Books



Available on <<https://www.pixton.com/>>. Accessed on 30/05/2016.

Fictional Biographies

Fictional biographies have the same structure of biographies, but they are based on fictional characters. These characters can already exist (Macbeth, Sherlock Holmes, Spiderman, etc.), they can be fanfictional characters (Queen Macbeth, Black Spiderman, Gay Sherlock Holmes, etc.) or they can be created by students in Creative Writing classes for their own fictional stories.

Picture 7 - Facebook



Available on < <https://www.facebook.com/>>. Accessed on 30/05/2016.

CONCLUSION

There is a plethora of possibilities to improve the second language students' process writing by using Creative Writing (CW) as a tool to accomplish it. This involves not only receptive linguistic skills (listening and reading), but also productive linguistic skills (speaking and writing). There are many Creative Writing website encompassing different types of textual genres (literary, argumentative, objective, etc.). Thus, the

second language teacher can utilize them in order to make his classes more attractive as well as develop his students' self-expression and creativity.

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Pictures

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Picture 2 – The Creative Writing Process. PLACIDO, C.E.A. 2016

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Picture 5 – Fanfictions. Available on: <<https://www.wattpad.com/home>>. Accessed on: 30/05/2016.

Picture 6 – Comic books. Available on: < <https://www.pixton.com/>>. Accessed on: 30/05/2016.

Picture 7 – Facebook. Available on: < <https://www.facebook.com/>>. Accessed on: 30/05/2016.