

**CREATIVE WRITING FOR EFL: A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

**NYDIA ROCÍO PRIETO VELANDIA**

**UNIVERSIDAD INDUSTRIAL DE SANTANDER  
FACULTAD DE CIENCIAS HUMANAS  
ESCUELA DE IDIOMAS  
LICENCIATURA EN INGLÉS  
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**NYDIA ROCÍO PRIETO VELANDIA**

**A Monographic Research Paper to Hold a BA in Teaching English as  
a Foreign Language, EFL**

**ADVISOR:**

**ESPERANZA REVELO**

**Master of Arts in EFL**

**UNIVERSIDAD INDUSTRIAL DE SANTANDER**

**FACULTAD DE CIENCIAS HUMANAS**

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## RESUMEN

**TITULO:** ESCRITURA CREATIVA PARA EL APRENDIZAJE DE INGLÉS COMO LENGUA EXTRANJERA: UN MARCO TEÓRICO \*

**AUTORA:** NYDIA ROCÍO PRIETO VELANDIA \*\*

**PALABRAS CLAVES:** Escritura, Escritura Creativa, Creatividad, Enseñanza, Inglés como Lengua Extranjera.

**DESCRIPCIÓN:** Este trabajo monográfico pretende proporcionar información preliminar acerca del tema de escritura creativa la cual puede ofrecer nuevas posibilidades para la enseñanza de la escritura en contextos en los cuales inglés es una lengua extranjera. Para construir el marco teórico, se realizó una profunda lectura y análisis de las fuentes bibliográficas disponibles y así construir un documento útil para nuestra área de trabajo. Este trabajo se realizó considerando que la escritura creativa puede ayudar a los estudiantes a mejorar sus habilidades escriturales permitiéndoles practicar la escritura en sus diferentes formas y funciones, y que la escritura creativa es usada como una forma de fomentar la creatividad en el aula de clase. En el presente trabajo, se brinda información sobre la escritura en inglés en contextos en los cuales éste es la segunda lengua -lo cual es útil para nuestro contexto-, los aspectos mas importantes sobre la escritura creativa -como un tipo de escritura y como un campo en los Estudios de Lengua Inglesa en contextos nativos ingleses, en el cual se incluyen algunos aspectos pedagógicos sobre su enseñanza- y una revisión general de la teoría de la creatividad incluyendo algunos aspectos básicos sobre la creatividad en la escritura. Por último, los profesores de inglés en Colombia se pueden beneficiar de un trabajo de investigación que construya un marco de referencia sobre la enseñanza de la escritura creativa, y así establecer las bases para futuras investigaciones y prácticas sobre este tema.

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\* Trabajo monográfico.

\*\* Facultad de Ciencias Humanas. Escuela de Idiomas. Directora: Profesora Esperanza Revelo.

## ABSTRACT

**TITLE:** CREATIVE WRITING FOR EFL: A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK\*

**AUTHOR:** NYDIA ROCÍO PRIETO VELANDIA\*\*

**KEY WORDS:** Writing, Creative Writing, Creativity, Teaching, English as a Foreign Language (EFL).

**DESCRIPTION:** This monographic paper intends to provide background information on the topic of creative writing upon which new possibilities to the teaching of writing in EFL classrooms can be offered. To construct the theoretical framework, a deep reading and analysis of the available bibliographic sources was carried out aiming at providing a document useful for our area of work. This paper was done considering that creative writing can help students to improve their language writing skills by giving them the opportunity to practice different writing forms and functions, and that creative writing is used as a way to foster creativity in the classroom. In the present paper, information about writing in ESL settings, which are useful for EFL contexts such as ours, creative writing -as a type of writing and as a field in the English Language Studies in L1 English contexts, in which some pedagogical aspects about its teaching are presented-, and a general review on creativity theory and some basic aspects about creativity in writing are provided. Finally, EFL teachers in Colombia would benefit from a research project that constructs a frame of reference on the teaching of creative writing, and thus setting the bases for future research and practice on this topic.

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\* Monographic research paper.

\*\* Faculty of Human Sciences. School of Languages. Advisor: Professor Esperanza Revelo.

## INTRODUCTION

Writing is by far the most important development in humankind history. It has allowed human beings from recording history and scientific and social findings to expressing their most inner thoughts and feelings and communicate them to others who are not physically present. Thus, writing opened the door to a new culture: the written culture. Writing became so important in society that it is considered as a fundamental aspect of literacy. That is why, given its importance, one of the main responsibilities for education is to guarantee the students' access to that written culture in its different manifestations, and in this way foster the improvement of their writing skills. This fact is much more important and necessary within the context of learning a second language, given its undoubted need in the globalized world, but unfortunately the teaching of English writing in our country has been focused as a means to the mastery of language or text features, given aside the opportunity to involve students in writing practices with much communicative, aesthetic, and cultural value as well as allowing them to develop their thinking abilities, since writing is not only a means of interaction and communication, but also a thinking activity.

Regarding thinking abilities, nowadays education should make more emphasis in the development of divergent thinking or creativity. According to Gardner (2005), creativity should be an educational objective, it would be one of the kinds of *minds* which teachers should educate for the future. Also, Gabriel García Márquez (2005) states that creativity, the superior expression of intelligence, should be an essential element in education, but “our conformist and repressive education restricts creativity and intuition, [...] and it is against imagination [...]” Instead, he claims for a nonconformist and reflective education which inspires us a new way of thinking, which involves creativity to solve problems and helps us in our desire for personal growth and self-realization. Creativity and

writing are intrinsically related; according to the writing process approach, writing is an art, a creative act, it is also problem solving, which is considered the most creative exercise, and writing is divergent since it ends up in different products. In addition, it is important to state that since long ago, creativity has been said to be distributed to all -to a greater or lesser extent- and that it can be hindered through disuse or it can be built it up by taking on those activities that are more likely to cultivate it as Osborn claims (1953). Thus, if the opportunity to create has to be provided in every school and class, writing is a suitable activity.

Thus, an appropriate way to work on creativity and at the same time develop the students' writing skills is by including creative writing in the English classroom. Though most writing is creative, creative writing is referred to, in broad terms, as to writing which focuses mainly in the imaginative and personal functions of language, which involves students in a creative process that makes them open up their minds and their writing, and which ends up in literary texts, though it can be applied to the mastery of other forms. Creative writing would provide students the opportunity, by fostering their creativity, to be more autonomous, self-confident, able to make decisions and take risks, and in that way educate them for life and not just for the moment. In addition, creative writing would allow students to understand that through it they can communicate, but most importantly express themselves, their feelings and emotions, what they think about the society of which they make part, and they can narrate their personal and social history. Thus, students would have a more active role within the literate society by having the opportunity to interpret reality, take a standpoint, and participate to construct it; students would see the value of being able to put their own words in written. Lastly, creative writing is an opportunity to familiarize students with other forms of expression, to play with language, to activate their imagination, and to develop their writing skills.

In addition, creative writing provides benefits for the language classroom that can go beyond school. For Franz Morrissey (2007), an English professor at University of Berne, there are three areas in which language learners at the

intermediate level and above can benefit from creative writing. First, students express themselves and their own ideas which represent more motivation and commitment to write. Second, creative writing involves playful but rigorous work with language since to produce a particular text, language needs to be correct, it needs to work. Third, creative writing requires greater precision in expression; to say precisely what they mean, students have to be very careful in their use of vocabulary and idioms. Also, Eve Shelnut (1991) teacher of the MFA program at Ohio University, claims that based on her experience, students who write fiction and poetry frequently, while practicing other writing modes, increase their interest in language. Their focus is away from 'being correct' and redirected onto a movement back and forth between the self and the word. Then, words become objects of study; because there is a double focus: the hidden in the student and the objectified in the word, since students search for the objective correlation for a sensation, an image, an idea, a dream. Also, students immersed in creative writing seem to understand, almost intuitively, that here information is conveyed differently than it is in discursive prose; discursive writing can then be viewed as a method of exploring in another way ideas that surface during the imaginative process. Thus, the teaching of creative writing is not an esoteric activity, but a fundamental way of understanding, learning, and changing the world (Moxley,1991); it develop in students a new way of thinking that can transcend the school walls.

Therefore, this paper presents the state of the art in creative writing studies. Here, people involved in the teaching of English as a foreign language will find information on this topic aiming at offering teachers thought-provoking ideas about its importance and applicability in the Colombian context. This, bearing in mind that innovative practices in the teaching of writing are needed. Creative writing would offer, then, more engaging, interesting writing practices for students and teachers as well as providing a strategy to foster students' writing skills and creativity in the English class. First, people interested will find the main writing approaches and writing teaching approaches used in ESL settings as well as some writing research findings important for creative writing instruction, and a view of language important

for the development of writing in context. Then, the notion of creative writing is explored as type of writing and as a field in the English Language Studies in native contexts presenting some pedagogical aspects which are important to consider for the applicability of creative writing teaching in all settings. Finally, a general review of research and theorizing on creativity is presented to end up focusing on some ideas about creativity in writing.

## **1. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

For at least the past 50 years, the EFL context has been primarily concerned with the teaching of basic knowledge about the structure of the language, language skills and sub-skills within a traditional teaching practice sidelining language competence. In Colombia, the results are far from comforting. In writing, for instance, its teaching practices has been characterized by the construction of isolated sentences or by controlled writing activities to reinforce the teaching of grammatical structures, so using writing as aid to learning, mainly of grammar and vocabulary. It could be the reason to the fact that a large amount of people learn English during their school years and when asked to speak or write their competence level is nowhere near expected.

Research on the effects of social factors such as setting, on the second language acquisition process, predicts that in a monolingual context such as ours, teaching EFL in the classroom will inevitably fall into developing good grammar and translation skills in learners, but very poor levels of speaking and writing competence. There is the possibility that traditional teaching practices and a highly structuralist philosophy of language currently used might have led to such results.

Then, as a pre-service EFL teacher I can only but wonder whether there is any prove that innovative practices in the teaching of writing help students improve their language writing proficiency levels. In writing, the process is the most important part of it all. But if so, why is it that the majority of teachers in our context do not use creative writing techniques in the classroom. I think that EFL teachers in Colombia would benefit from a research project that constructs a framework of reference on the teaching of creative writing.

## 2. JUSTIFICATION OF THE RESEARCH

The importance of the research on writing increases everyday. Not only will people in the near future use English to communicate orally with other people and cultures through cyberspace and other instances, but also they will write extensively, both academically and for literary purposes, as the cultural melting pot of globalization pushes individuals into using language as a resource to narrate history. This is a scenario we, people involved in the area of language teaching and learning, should be concerned about. That is why, as students, teachers, and future teachers of English it is important to be well informed on the research on writing taking into account we are in a foreign language context and there is a clear educational goal driving us into bilingual settings.

For this reason, it is necessary to know what is being carried out on this language research field, particularly on Creative Writing. Possibly it can offer thought-provoking ideas for teachers to help their students become language competent in writing by giving students the opportunity to practice different writing forms and functions and thus develop their skills involved in this process. So far EFL practice, particularly in writing, has focused on what we could call the basics of language teaching: grammar, language skills and rhetorics, and vocabulary development within a defined EAP approach. However, in our particular context, there have been no significant efforts dealing with the teaching of Creative Writing skills. Therefore, there is not a known theoretical framework on this topic to serve as reference for the design of creative writing courses. If we are able to anticipate people's need to use language for literary purposes in the future, it is necessary to establish the frame of reference upon which these new possibilities can be offered in EFL classrooms in Colombia.

### **3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

#### **3.1 GENERAL OBJECTIVE**

To construct a theoretical framework on the teaching of creative writing upon which new possibilities to the teaching of writing in EFL classrooms can be offered.

#### **3.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**

- To present the main ideas about writing in ESL contexts.
- To establish the main general aspects about creative writing for EFL contexts.
- To provide the basic theorizing and research concerning creativity.

#### **4. RESEARCH DESIGN**

The present monographic work is a descriptive paper which reviews the available bibliographic sources on the topics of Writing and Creative Writing in native and non-native English contexts. This research aims at providing information on the topics mentioned to set up the bases to determine the extent of its possible future applicability in the teaching of writing in Colombia.

To carry out this research it is important to establish a monographic plan for writing. First, it is necessary to look for the available literature on the topic to be studied. Then, the literature is analyzed taking into account the research objective. Finally, the information is organized to write the final paper providing a document useful for our area of work.

This research paper will be structured starting from a broad perspective. In the first place, research and theories on the teaching of writing in EFL settings will be presented and discussed to come subsequently with the research and theories on the teaching practices of creative writing in native contexts. Thus, a theoretical framework is provided starting from total to particular aspects of the research topic.

## **5. EXPECTED OUTCOMES**

This research, being a monographic work, is expected to be a provider of valuable information for students, teachers and future teachers on the topic of creative writing. Thus, one of the outcomes of this study which hopefully will be achieved seems to settle the basis for future research on the topic, being this monograph the first step of a research project on creative writing.

Also, the idea of this work is to make students, teachers and other interested ones aware of the importance of keeping in constant research through the reading and analysis of the available sources in our field and other related ones to be informed about the theories and trends in a specific aspect of our area of work, and thus be able to apply it while teaching, in this case while teaching writing in the English classroom.

## 6. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Writing in any language involves the knowledge of its graphic symbols, the written code of the language. However, it is widely accepted that writing is not only drawing these graphic symbols, they have to be set following established conventions to form words, then sentences and so on. What is more, these sentences are arranged and linked together in a particular coherent way and due to this order they form a whole, that is, a text. This leads to the widely accepted fact that writing is the encoding of a message the person wants to express, since thoughts are translated into language. Thus, writing is a means to communicate with others that transcends time and space and which involves a writer who produces a text for someone, including the self, and under certain circumstances.

Focusing on the context of learning English as a Second Language, writing is a language skill not easy to develop. That's why; first of all, it is necessary to establish how writing has been approached in L2 contexts. This is only possible to do by looking at the research and theory of L1 composition since "unfortunately, there has as yet been little discussion of the development of coherent and complete theories of ESL separate from the various theories of L1 composition" (Johns, 1990, p.24). These writing approaches are Process Approach, Interactive Approach, and Social Constructionist Approach.

### **The Process Approach**

The most important theoretical component of this approach is the process thorough which the writer, viewed as an originator, creates and produces a text. Faigley in 1986 (cited in Johns, 1990) identified two groups within the process approach; they are the *expressivists* and the *cognitivists*.

During the first decades of the twentieth century Expressivism<sup>1</sup> in writing arose, reaching its highest point of development in the late 1960's and the early 1970's, being its leaders, among others, Donald Murray and Peter Elbow. During these years, the popular trend in the teaching of writing was the individual expression of honest and personal thought. Thus, writing was considered an art, a creative act in which the process (the discovery of the true self) is important as well as the product (the self discovered and expressed). For expressivists, the purpose, the meaning, the form, and even the audience of a text is created by the individual writer, and the content of the text, which resides in the writer's mind -as well as the language-, are presented according to what the writer wants to say stemming from prior experience and the creative urge.

Based on this view, teachers in ESL classes acted as facilitators of classroom activities designed to encourage self discovery, by using journal writing and personal essays, so that the students could write freely and as much as possible, promoting in this way writing fluency and power over the writing act.

The cognitivist approach, on the other hand, was first proposed in 1985 by Flower who identified thinking skills with problem solving in his book 'Problem-Solving Strategies for Writing' (cited in Johns, 1990). Two important notions in this view are *thinking* and *process*, thus, writing is seen as problem-solving since the writer's cognitive process is central. That's why, all the elements involved in writing come from the writer himself, for instance, the sense of audience is developed in the writer's mind considering a good writer someone who is able not to produce, in terms of Krashen (1986), 'writer-based prose' but 'reader-based prose'; it is, a writer who is aware of the readers' needs and interests. The same occurs with

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<sup>1</sup> Expressivism arose as an artistic moment including painting, literature, theatre, film, architecture and music in Germany. Expressivism is based on and looks for the expression of the author's feeling and emotions rather than the representation of the objective reality. In the Expressivism movement, the artist, through his creative strength, distorts reality for an emotional effect; it is a subjective art form in which the author makes visible his subjective interior nature giving aside formal aspects. That's why, for expressivists content is more important than form.

language and content which reside his mind and is expressed based on what he wants to convey. Thus, the goal in this view is to help students become good writers who can solve any problem in the writing process, and so, write effectively.

In the ESL classroom, this approach requires students to go through a writing process in which they plan the text extensively, write translating thoughts into words, and review their work through revising and editing; being this process non-linear but individual and recursive. This approach has had an enormous influence in the ESL teaching of writing.

### **The Interactive Approach**

This view stresses the relationship between the writer and the reader who get involved in a dialog, both taking responsibility for coherent text. Hinds (cited in Johns, 1990) states that this relationship varies among languages. For instance, English is 'writer-responsible' since it is the writer who is responsible for effective communication, while in Japanese, the reader is responsible for understanding what the author intended to say. Thus, an important writing element in this approach is the concept of audience, taken from ESL reading literature, in which the reader is considered to possess schemata<sup>2</sup>, in terms of form and content, which is activated by the text while reading. The language used must be drawn from the schemata shared by the writer and the reader to be considered appropriate and also the content must reside in the writer and reader's minds, so that they are able to establish the coherence and the value of the text. Teachers in

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<sup>2</sup> The term *schema* or *schemata* was first used by psychologist Bartlett in 1932. He argued that the knowledge we carry around in our heads is organized into interrelated patterns. They are like stereotypical mental scripts of scenarios of situations and events, built up from numerous experiences of similar events. Thus, *Schema or Schemata Theory* is based on the notion that past experiences lead to the creation of mental frameworks that help us make sense of new experiences. In reading, the original meaning of the writer is reconstructed by the reader through the use of his mental schema regarding context, theme, and situation.

ESL writing classes, following this view, ask their students to make their topics, arguments, organization, and transitions as clear as possible to the reader.

### **The Social Constructionist Approach**

This view was inspired more than thirty years ago by Kuhn's 'Structure of Scientific Revolutions' (cited in Johns, 1990) in 1970. In this approach, the written product is considered as a social act that occurs only within and for a specific context and audience. In Bruffee's words, "social construction assumes that the matrix of thought is not the individual self, but some community of knowledgeable peers and the vernacular knowledge of that community" (cited in Johns, 1990). In the writing context, for social constructionists, the text, in terms of content and language, is determined for the writer by the 'discourse community' for whom the writer is producing text and the audience is the expert reader who is all-powerful accepting or rejecting the text as consistent with one of the target discourse community. The goal in this writing approach is to help students become an accepted member of an academic discourse community. To do so, teachers must incorporate tasks into the English for Academic Purposes classes so students become academically literate.

To date, there is no single writing theory in which all teachers, theorists, and researchers totally agree. First Language and ESL writing views differ in terms of how they see the writer, the text or the act of writing itself, what results in different kinds of classroom practices. Thus, the teaching of writing depends on which stand the teachers adopt, something that is reflected in its different approaches.

In fact, writing is a complex language skill which is learned through a process of instruction. Unlike speech, writing requires formal learning. First, it is necessary to master the written code and certain structures common to this language format, and then it is necessary "to learn how to organize the ideas in

such a way that they can be understood by a reader who is not present and perhaps not known to us” (Byrne, 1988, p.5). Thus, understanding teaching as “helping a group of people to do what others can already do” as Brooks and Grundy (1990) state, writing instruction implies teaching the students to communicate through this means as effectively as possible since writing is in essence an individual activity which needs to maintain a channel of communication and interpretation on its own.

Teaching writing in the mother tongue and in L2 presents particular differences. Normally, people learn to write in their mother tongue between the age of five and seven while at school, and use writing throughout their education process. In that way, people become part of literate society, which in most cultures is a relevant fact, since from that moment they can write what they think about the others and society itself. However, very few people become proficient writers in their L1 after their school years. On the other side, teaching L2 in Colombia, generally, occurs after people have acquired some knowledge about writing in their L1, so now L2 students have to learn those ‘teachable features’ as Krashen (1986) calls them such as the new script, and the general form and organization of a text in the target language. It is important not to assume that if a student is a proficient writer in their L1, this ability will be directly transferred to L2 writing, though some global strategies will be, formal writing instruction in L2 is required.

Once again, the approaches to the teaching of writing in the L2 are parallel or influenced by those from first language writing instruction, though adapted to the new context. Since 1945 there has been a succession of teaching approaches to L2 writing; once an approach appears, it gains dominance and then loses it while others arise, but no one really disappears. The most influential and used approaches in the teaching of writing in ESL settings from 1945 are Controlled Composition Approach, Free-Writing Approach, Current-traditional Rhetoric Approach, Process Approach, English for Academic Purposes Approach, and Communicative Approach.

### **The Controlled Composition Approach**

This teaching approach is also known as guided composition and traces its roots to Charles Fries' oral approach, precursor of the audio-lingual method. This approach is based on the notions that language is speech, and learning is habit formation. Thus, writing is seen as Rivers (cited in Silva, 1990) states "the handmaid of the other skills, which must not take precedence as a major skill to be developed and must be considered as a service activity rather than as an end in itself". Therefore, writing practice is considered as a reinforcement of oral habits. In this approach, the writer is just a manipulator of those language structures learned which are used in paragraph imitation and manipulation following a model carefully constructed to avoid making errors. The reader is the teacher who acting as an editor focuses on linguistic forms rather than on the ideas expressed. There is no audience or purpose for writing, apart from practicing language features.

In short, this approach focuses on formal instruction and correctness stressing accuracy over fluency or originality. When students have acquired certain language level, they are allowed to do more free compositions extending students' language control and promoting certain writing fluency.

### **The Free-Writing Approach**

In opposition, writing fluency is the central axis of the Free-Writing Approach which stresses quantity over quality of ideas. This approach encourages students to write quickly and as much as possible since "the emphasis is that intermediate-level students put content and fluency first and not worry about form. Once the ideas are down on the page, grammatical accuracy, organization, and the rest will gradually follow" (Raimes, 1983, p.7). With this approach students feel they are actually 'writing' passages and not just doing 'exercises' on writing. These pieces of writing are not corrected by the teacher, but they are just read and

commented. Content and audience are important here since students want to say something to their peers.

### **The Current-traditional Rhetoric Approach**

In 1965 an approach arose as the link between Controlled and Free-writing approaches, it is known as Current-traditional Rhetoric. At that time, the emphasis was placed on students' needs, so this approach was intended to answer ESL students' need of producing extended written discourse. This approach is based on the principles of current-traditional composition instruction paradigm and Kaplan's theory of contrastive rhetoric. The former, as Richard Young states "emphasizes the composed product rather than the composing process; the analysis of discourse into words, sentences, and paragraphs [...]" (cited in Silva, 199, p.13). The latter, suggests doing more pattern drills at the rhetorical level, than at the syntactic level.

Thus, writing in this approach is a matter of arranging sentences and paragraphs into prescribed patterns, and learning to write involves becoming skilled in identifying, internalizing, and executing these patterns. The writer fills the text with given or self-generated content, being the text a set of gradually more complex discourse structures like sentences, paragraphs, sections, etc, This text is then judged by the teacher who establishes its correct construction based on the 'culture writing' of the target language. This approach is also known as the Product Approach or Paragraph-pattern Approach as Hedge (1988) designates it.

### **The Process Approach**

This approach arose from the general audience discontent with the two previous approaches because none of them fostered thought -creative thinking-

and its expression -writing-. This approach was developed by Zamel, among others, who looking at first-language writing research, affirms that “ESL writers use similar strategies to those of native speakers of English” who write through a “non-linear, exploratory and generative process whereby writers discover and reformulate their ideas as they attempt to approximate meaning” (cited in Silva, 1990, p.15). This process occurs within a positive, encouraging, and collaborative environment with guidance and feedback, but not control and time pressures so that students can work on their composing process.

Thus, learning to write is developing an efficient and effective composing process and writing is considered a creative, recursive and complex process in which the writer is responsible for developing text by discovering and expressing meaning and the teacher is responsible for helping students develop strategies to get started, drafting, revising, and editing. This approach offers the writer the freedom to address the situation, purpose, and audience for the text.

The Process Approach to writing does not deny interest in the product. On the contrary, as White (1990) states the aim is to arrive at the best product possible. Since writing in this approach is divergent, there will be different products as there are writers while in a product-based approach writing will converge towards a preconceived text with a predefined-goal and form.

Following the principle that writing occurs through a process, Roger Garrison developed the ‘Garrison Method’ or ‘Conferencing Approach’. This method of writing instruction, according to Chairperson (2003), is designed to provide the greatest amount of flexibility and individual attention for the students. Writing instruction occurs entirely through individual conferences between the writer and instructor on the writer's work as it is in progress involving one-to-one tutoring in the classroom. Thus, learning is developmental rather than remedial since it meets the student at exactly his level and proceeds to the next level of writing development. Here, writer and teacher work cooperatively; the writer is

asked to produce several drafts based on the teacher comments and the teacher focuses only on one aspect of the student's writing at the time, beginning with having enough concrete information, then moving to aspects of organization, and finally to mechanics as Krashen (1986) summarizes it, and until one problem is solved, there is little value in commenting on any other. The conferences help students clarify their intention, audience and meanings.

### **The English for Academic Purposes Approach**

A reaction to the Process Approach comes from proponents of the English for Academic Purposes orientation attempting to construct a new perspective on ESL composition. Some of its proponents like Reid claims that "the [process] approach neglects seriously consider variations in the writing processes due to differences in the individual, writing situations, [...] language proficiency, and cognitive development [level]" (cited in Silva, p.16). Another critique makes reference to the lack of preparation of students for real academic work as Horowitz states "the [process] approach creates a classroom situation with little resemblance to the situation in which students' writing will be exercised [...] and evaluated such as in essay exams" (cited in Silva, 1990. p.16). This alternative proposal focuses on academic discourse genres and on the nature of academic writing tasks, and so it aims at helping students socialize into the academic context.

Thus, learning to write is a part of becoming socialized within the academic community and writing is the production of prose which is acceptable in the academic context. The writer is oriented towards academic success to reach certain standards and requirements. The reader is an expert of the academic community who judges the text as appropriate to that community. The text, taking the form of a recognizable genre, is a response to a task type.

## **The Communicative Approach**

Ann Raimes (1983) includes the Communicative Approach derived from this general language learning approach. Since the aim is communication, the purpose of a piece of writing and the audience for it are stressed. This approach “feels that writers do their best when writing is truly a communicative act, with a writer writing for a real reader” (Raimes, 1983, p.9). Thus, writing is a meaningful activity intended to express meaning. The audience is extended; not only is it the teacher but the writer’s peers, too, who can respond, rewrite in another form, summarize, or comment their classmates’ writings. Also, the readers can be classroom outsiders, providing students with context to select appropriate content, language, and levels of formality.

Arthur Brooks and Peter Grundy (1990), based on their teaching experience, also proposed to teach writing communicatively joining communicative practice, an integrated approach, and humanistic principles, thus resulting in “a new approach to teaching writing” (Brooks & Grundy, 1990, p.6). The communicative practice considers principles such as having something meaningful to say; reaching an audience; trying to be understood by others; working in small groups providing more opportunities of communication and collaborative work with possibility for self-monitoring, self-repair, and peer correction; developing register awareness taking into account the relationship of power between reader and writer; and writing naturally. An integrated approach intends to enable learners to transfer naturally between one mode or skill to another, this means using the other skills to write such as using discussions before writing. The humanistic principles invoked are basically seeing the learner as a person with intelligence, feelings, knowledge, and as the main resource for meaning and language; recognizing that the learner should be free from authority, prescription, overt correction, and the imposition of language models; and understanding the vital need to create an environment in which the learner’s self-expression is encouraged and respected.

After describing some of the writing teaching approaches in ESL, it is important to consider that “there simply are no comprehensive theories of L2 writing teaching and it does not seem prudent to assume that theories of first language writing alone will suffice” (Silva, 1990). However, the approaches above mentioned are the most influential in ESL writing teaching. Some of them are opposed to others, but they also present overlapping. It is rare to “find a classroom where a teacher is so devoted to one approach as to exclude all the others. A teacher using a communicative approach or a process approach will still use techniques drawn from the other approaches” (Raimes, 1983, p.11). Thus, there is no one way to teach writing, but many ways or it is common to see an eclectic approach to the teaching of writing in L2 settings.

In addition to writing and writing teaching approaches, it is important to consider writing research findings which enrich the ESL writing theory. The findings presented make explicit reference to the role of the revision stage in the writing process and classroom environment.

L2 writing research started only until the 1980's, always feeding itself on L1 writing research methods and findings. L1 writing research, in turn, can be dated back to the early 1900's, however, it is only after the 1950's when L1 writing research expanded providing a new focus: the exploration of the act of writing itself or in other terms the writing process. In 1971 Emig established the 'composing-aloud' audiotapes and 'writing interviews' as the basic research tools, and case studies as the basic methodology to be used for future writing process research. On the other hand, L2 writing process research derived from writing specialists Zamel and Raimes in 1976 and 1979 respectively who, based on L1 writing development and tendencies at the time, recommended treating L2 writing as a process in the L2 classroom. In fact, according to Zamel “research into second language composing process seems to corroborate much of what has been learned from research in first language writing” (cited in Rowe, 1990, p.39).

One of the most important findings is that there is a writing process which should be taught in the classroom. Zamel in 1982 carried out a research project whose main finding stated that ineffective writers were so, due to the fact that they did not learn how to compose. That is, the lack of composing competence is a source of difficulty in L2 writing. This finding was corroborated by Jones' and Jacobs' research done independently in the same year, as Rowe (1990) states. Thus, teaching the process of writing through tasks reflecting the stages of the writing process is essential in L2 settings.

The revision stage is a common difficulty in L1 and L2 writing. This stage is relevant in the writing process since it concerns getting response to writing and making improvements based on it. This feedback provided by the teacher should build up confidence in the students about their own process, and it should be done throughout the writing process making revision a continuous stage, instead of doing it only at the end. Through revision, writers evaluate, rethink, and rewrite parts of their texts, that makes revision an integral part of the writing process. However, according to research, native and non-native English speakers present problems in this stage as Rowe (1990) suggests.

L1 and L2 writing research have studied the behaviors of skilled and unskilled writers regarding revision. In L1 writing process research, Sommers in 1980 found that unskilled writers assumed that their desired meaning was present in the first draft, so revision was basically rewording and adherence to school-learned rules. While for skilled writers revision was an effort to 'find the line of argument', it is, revision for invention and finding of new ideas, and the first draft was only an attempt to 'define their territory'. Also, Perl in 1979 found that unskilled writers focused much more on form and less on content during revision. Even, unskilled writers had the impression that revising was essentially editing, the application of conscious rules to small points of grammar, mechanics, and spelling. On the other hand, skilled writers did more changes in content during revision (Krashen, 1986). In L2 writing process research, Zamel in 1983 obtained the same

findings as in L1 writing process research. Zamel's unskilled writers revised less focusing on small bits of the essay and editing from the beginning to the end of the process. While skilled writers revised more and were concerned with content first, regarding revision as a means of discovering ideas, and saving editing until the end of the process, as Raimes also found in her research in 1985 (Rowe, 1990).

Based on the research presented and the goal of the writing process approach, Krashen (1986) issues a proposal to develop an efficient composing process. The proposal comprises three key topics which are delaying editing, using writer-based prose, and doing writing practice. Krashen claims that it is important for students writers to separate revision from editing, encouraging students to work only on content revisions at first, increasing fluency, and delaying editing changes until the last draft. One way to do this, is to encourage students writers to produce first writer-based prose, ignoring the reader in initial efforts, giving the writer freedom to generate information without formal considerations while the writer works out his ideas. Then, the writer transforms his text into reader-based prose, which takes the reader into account. This is possible to achieve through reading and much sheer writing practice in classroom time.

In fact, it is a widely accepted assumption that good writers need to read a lot, since it helps to develop awareness of what constitutes good writing, but also writers need to write a lot. However, it is "exacerbated in many classrooms where writing is mainly relegated as a homework activity" (Hedge, 1988, p.11). It is necessary to recognize that students would benefit from classroom practice in writing for which the teacher can prepare tasks to support them in each stage of the writing process. Also, spending classroom time on writing allows students to work cooperatively between teacher and students and among classroom peers, though the goal is to develop writing skills in each student, individual students have much to gain from collaborative writing as Hedge (1988) states.

This fact has lead to another important writing issue to study: classroom environment or classroom context. Not only is it important to work on writing in-

class, but also to provide the appropriate classroom environment to gain the best output from it. Diaz in 1985 was one of the first researchers who studied this issue. She concluded that “when writing instruction is used in secure, relaxed, student-centered contexts, the benefits to the students can go beyond their development as writers” (cited in Rowe, 1990, p.43). Also, Brookes and Grundy (1990) conclude from their teaching experience that it is “important to build an atmosphere that considers writing to be an ordinary task, not beset by anxiety, and one that makes use of language at the learners’ disposal as effectively as possible” (p.24).

Establishing the best learning atmosphere in the classroom could become a difficulty in some settings. Brookes and Grundy (1990) claim that classroom environment is affected by the ‘culture’ of the institution and the country in which it is situated. Thus, the teachers have to make the decision of conforming on the pressures on them or quite deliberately choosing to create an atmosphere in the classroom that is more open and learner-centered. Even, this choice can be seen as a ‘political decision’, since teachers may sometimes choose to be in the van of political change as well as in its wake. In any case, the classroom environment chosen does not have to threaten the whole ethos of the institution. Brooks and Grundy provides the example of the arts class in which it is normal to have a tape with quite music, students walking and talking around at times, and there is trust among students and teachers to observe their work in progress. This class atmosphere should be part of the language classroom, adding time for quietness and calm, since writing is in essence a private and concentrated activity, but always maintaining an atmosphere of openness and trust.

The creation of the classroom context proposed can be supported by Schmidt’s factors to become a good writer and Krashen’s Affective Filter Hypothesis. The two factors proposed by Schmidts are expectation of success in the process of becoming a good writer, and feeling of ‘membership to the good writers’ club’. On the other side, the Affective Filter Hypothesis takes into account affective variables that lead to success in learning, they are integrative motivation

(desire to be members of a language group), high self-esteem, and low or non-existent anxiety (Krashen, 1986). Thus, it is necessary to provide a classroom environment in which success is assured and the affective filter low, so that the student writer is within the appropriate environment to facilitate the process of becoming a good writer.

So far, it has been stated some writing and writing teaching features, now it is needed to establish a view of language for the whole process. Concerning this fact, Whole Language will be presented as Goodman states “Whole Language is a way of bringing together a view of language, a view of learning, and a view of people” (cited in Lukasevich, 1991, p.222). Thus, Whole Language is an integrative view appropriate for the present paper.

Whole Language can be traced back to the middle and late 1970's. It arose when Kenneth Goodman and others' insights into reading as a psycholinguistic process gained increasing recognition, with Yetta Goodman's interest in the development of literacy which merged with related lines of research, and when Dorothy Watson started a teacher support group called Teachers Applying Whole Language (TAWL). However, Whole Language as a theory of learning and teaching became widely known in the United States only until the late 1980's or even the early 1990's (Weaver, 1995).

In spite of its long history, there is still today much concern about what it really means. Based on Kenneth Goodman (1986) , one of its proponents, Whole Language is an approach in which “language instruction occurs across the curriculum guided by the teacher's observations of students engaged in meaningful language use. Whole Language depends on the integration of reading, writing, listening and speaking. The learner uses language for a variety of purposes and audiences, encounters complete pieces of text, produces meaningful types of communication, and learns in a supportive environment that encourages independence and risk-taking”. In other words, Whole Language is “a learner-centered, literature-based approach to language teaching and learning that

immerses students in real communication situations whenever possible” (Froese, 1991, p.2).

Consequently, the fundamental concepts in Whole Language are language, learner, literature and real communication. This approach sees language as a naturally developing human activity, and as a result it is a social phenomenon used for communication purposes. Language is learned holistically in context rather than in bits and pieces in isolation. The learner is central since the instruction is personalized in order to respect the learner’s uniqueness and interests. Literature becomes the primary source of instruction by using textual materials of all kinds. Real communication refers to using language to make sense of the world for interested genuine audiences, whenever possible as Froese indicates (1991).

Three major areas influenced the Whole Language approach: Linguistics, Psychology and Pedagogy. Linguistics provided Whole Language with information about how language is learned. In Whole Language, students learn language through meaningful exchanges with other people in their environment, so thought and language are inseparable basics. Thus, language is learned as part of a social process, or as M.A.K. Halliday calls it, a Social Semiotics<sup>3</sup>. That is, linguistics provided a functional view of language. Psychology, on the other hand, provided insights into how language is used in real time and settings. It has taught that language is used for different purposes and that users are more motivated to correct meaning than to correct form. Lastly, Pedagogy provided effective insights on how to teach language. Insights like learner-centered teaching, collaborative learning and peer tutoring, focus on the process of writing and on the constructive reading process have been basic for Whole Language (Froese, 1991).

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<sup>3</sup> Language as Social Semiotics extends Saussure's observation that "Language is a social fact." For Halliday, "Language as social semiotics" means interpreting language within a sociocultural context, in which the culture itself is interpreted in semiotic terms, it is, as an information system. Thus, Language consists of exchanges of meaning in various interpersonal contexts and it does not consist of sentences, but rather of text or discourse.

At this point, it is important to clarify that Whole Language instruction can be used at any school grade. The basic concern of Whole Language is to develop literacy, however, it is also possible to apply Whole Language at intermediate levels as Gunderson (1991) suggests. Using Whole Language with older students can be more difficult especially because of the attitudes they have developed concerning writing. Typically, these students associate writing with 'school work' and think their writing will be examined and filled with red marks and a grade. Thus, it is best to explain that Whole Language is a different approach to learning and that reading and writing are very enjoyable and important activities. It is relevant to say to them that they will read different books of interest to them and that their writing will not be judged, but valued and shared in a comfortable, sympathetic environment.

It is important to focus on the use of literature in Whole Language instruction. In this approach, literature is central since "a classroom enriched with poetry, songs and stories provides an enriched language learning [experience] for students. Such is the role of literature in Whole Language" (Ralston, 1991, p.81). Thus, the role of teachers is to select stories which have a richer language than the language used by the students themselves so that they can embody those sentence patterns or picturesque phrases in their future written compositions. It is also important to consider the connection between literature and the development of the four strands of the Language Arts program -listening, speaking, reading, and writing-. Listening is improved when students hear stories and poems read aloud, speaking, when they talk about their responses to literature, reading, when they share their stories and novels, and writing, when they explore different models of literature and respond to them (Ralston, 1991).

Literature usage also provides the opportunity to achieve other goals in the Whole Language classroom. Some of these goals, suggested by Ralston (1991), are to provide pleasure for learners, to stimulate the imagination, to promote creative expression, to develop a sense of imagery, to explore a variety of literature

styles, to acquire a sense of story, and to recognize the functions of language. Also, using literature gives the opportunity to do some follow up work like creative thinking activities, discussions, written work, participation, and language-play activities.

A topic important for this research paper is the relationship between reading and writing present in Whole Language instruction. In this approach, both oral and written language are kept whole rather than been fragmented into isolated parts. Students read for enjoyment and learn to write to communicate rather than to practice writing features (Staab, 1991). It does not mean that the language arts are taught sequentially. On the contrary, Whole Language teachers believe that they should be learned in a more natural, holistic fashion. Even, in Whole Language classrooms, students' writing is often the first material they read; their first reading program is their own writing (Gunderson, 1991).

Thus, reading and writing are considered to be related and mutually reinforcing activities. This two facets of the language arts often develop concurrently since a learner who is engaged in either composing or comprehending must construct meaning through print as Tierney and Pearson claim (cited in Shapiro, 1991). Also, correlations have been found between these skills; good readers tend to be good writers and the higher the reading level, the more syntactically complex or mature their writing is as Loban found (cited in Shapiro, 1991). This relationship is well known and crucial in Whole Language instruction.

To focus more on this research paper, the role of writing in Whole Language is now presented. In general terms, writing in this approach is consider as a facet of language activity that includes all forms of oral expression as well as the reading of literary and factual texts. When writing, students create their texts in order to make meaning, at first for themselves and then for others. The most important concern is that students learn to express their own thoughts in their own language,

to realize the power of the written work that makes their thoughts visible Butler (1991) suggests .

Whole Language defines writing as authorship. As James Moffet states, authorship “lies in the writer’s transcription of some focused and edited version of inner speech” (cited in Butler, 1991, p.99). Thus, in Whole Language the student writes down a selected and edited version of all the thoughts that he holds in his mind. Consequently, the teaching of writing in Whole Language stresses the subject matter, especially first-hand content such as feelings, fantasies, memories, and reflections and then go beyond to interviews, stored information or the writing of others, rather than the craft of writing itself such as sentence and paragraph construction.

The mainstay in Whole Language is the conference/process approach. This approach is developmental and totally focused on the learner. By using it, the student is allowed to experience his own writing process in his development as an author holding throughout a sense of ownership. The student can choose freely the topic, the writing materials, and the way to compose and publish, but most important, he decides the writing purpose and audience since in Whole Language the writing practiced in the classroom must achieve a language function<sup>4</sup>, whether it is to help the writer to understand his own thoughts and feelings or to communicate them to other audiences. The teacher during the conference, which is a close interview with the student, helps him to clarify the writing purpose, provides strategies for invention and discovery, works as a co-editor at the level of meaning as well as form in the last stage, and above all, monitors the development of the student as a writer by using a checklist on the student’s writing folder or collection of the student’s writings (Butler, 1991). Thus, the main goal of the

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<sup>4</sup> Michael Halliday provided one of the best expositions of language functions. He used the term “function” to mean the purposive nature of communication and outlined seven different functions of language: a) instrumental; b) regulatory; c) representational; d) interactional; e) personal; f) heuristic; g) imaginative. These seven different functions of language are neither discrete nor naturally exclusive. A single sentence or a conversation might incorporate many different functions simultaneously.

conference is to help students make the best of a piece of writing, seeing it as work in progress that is valued and worth sharing.

The conference occurs within the writing workshop environment. Writing workshops make reference to a specific time and space to work on the writing process. It is common to establish a writing center in the classroom which is stocked with a variety of writing materials and references to help the students write independently so that they engage in a variety of writing activities according to their individual writing processes (Butler, 1991). Thus, the writing workshop provides an informal environment in which writing is an integral and valued activity and provides greater choices to writers who can decide the topic to write about. During the writing workshop the conference with the teacher or peers occurs. It is an opportunity for the teacher to encourage students work and help them in their needs, and for their peers it is a way to be a co-editor to help their classmates make improvements on their writings.

A way to establish ownership in students' writing is dealing with various forms of personal writing. It arose from James Britton who suggested that the foundation of 'expressive' writing is necessary for growth into the use of more formal demands of 'transactional' and 'poetic' modes of writing (cited in Butler, 1991). Expressive writing refers to the language of every day speech; it is language used to express ideas close to the person, without the constraints of specific formats and conventions, this personal expression is based on the students needs, experience and perceptions. With Expressive writing students can see the value of language as a means of clarifying experience and working through feelings, and as an emotional release. Expressive writing can take the form of journals (diaries) and learning logs in which students write about their learning of other areas of the school curriculum.

With the process or workshop to writing, students will be encouraged and able to make a variety of responses to their readings in all content areas. These responses are forms of imaginative writing used to experience the principal

functions of language according to Claire and Karen Smith (cited in Butler, 1991). These functions are to entertain, to inform, to control, to persuade, and to communicate personal feelings; these functions can then take the shape of stories, poems, journals, plays, letters, reports, advertisements, invitations, recipes, and notes.

The assessment on Whole Language emphasizes the process, though the product is also important. Formative assessment focuses on the process of composing, the act of organizing ideas that form the base of a composition, as well as the process of writing, the actual recording of the composition and involves all the steps of the writing process to produce a piece of writing. This kind of assessment is used to monitor the students' progress and provides the feedback necessary for their development as writers. On the other hand, summative assessment relies on the product, which is a marked composition. However, the final grade is not based on a single, perfect composition, but on the writing folder which is a way of record keeping of the students process; this is known as portfolio assessment. The grade is given according to the entries, the interest of the students to write, but not on a final, expected version of a piece of work (Froese, 1991). Assessment is done not only by the teacher, but also by the students themselves and by their peers during the conference.

Up to here, some general aspects of writing have been established, now it is necessary to explore the notion of creative writing, the actual focus of the present paper, first, as a a type of writing, and then as a field in the English language studies.

Several writers have proposed typologies of writing, one of them is James Britton. In his model he holds that all writing starts as expression. This expression has two extremes: people can say something in order to get something done, or they can create something by saying. In the first case, people are carrying out a transaction: persuading, informing, thanking, inviting, applying, etc. Traditionally, most school writing has this transactional nature. Here, language is used to

organize and communicate facts and ideas; this is known as transactional writing. On the other side, the creative aspect of writing deals with times when people want to say something about themselves and their worlds. This creative writing is poetic, and it allows students to shape their experiences, and through this process of shaping, to show much of what they feel about their experiences; this is the poetic writing type. Finally, Britton (cited in Taylor, 1996) maintains that the way in to writing lies in the expressive. That is, all writing can start out being informal, chatty, and exploratory. As people grow in maturity as writers, they will be better able to turn this expressive writing into transactional writing or poetic writing. 'Expressive Writing', thus, can be practiced at the beginning of a creative writing course; it can be a useful way to arise ideas to develop later.

Larry Watson (cited in Balhorn, Dieterich, Mahon, and Stephens, 2002), teacher of writing at University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point and award-winning creative writer, considers creative writing not only as a type of writing, but as an opportunity to approach it differently. For him, the difference between creative writing and other types of writing has to do with audience. When a poem or story is made it is meant to be read, so the writer tries to do things to it so that it will be readable and enjoyable. When he is making a poem or a story or a novel - examples of so-called creative writing- he is thinking first of all, what is it that this 'thing' needs to be the best 'thing' it can be. It seems to him that the fundamental difference between creative writing and other kinds of writing lies in the question: 'What is it that the audience needs?' In addition, creative writing is generally regarded as writing which allows an experimental and aesthetic relationship with language, unlocks the imagery, and allows the conscious practice of the creative abilities by activating divergent thinking in which associative processes work to produce new, different alternatives to a given reality. Creative writing gives great value to reading, understanding it as a process inherent to writing, which in turn, involves much revision and rewriting of texts.

It is important to take into account that creative writing can refer not only to fiction or literary genres. Independently of the type of text, all writing is in essence creative since it involves an inventive phase, of course, giving aside those writings done by copy and paste which are not creative at all. Bishop calls this kind of writing 'creative non-fiction', its difference with creative writing is that in non-fiction the register is different, language is much literal than literary, vocabulary is technical, and there is no emphasis on aesthetic quality, but on communicative quality only. Also, some of the processes involved in creative writing can be applied to other forms of writing as Shelnutt (1991) states. However, the term creative writing is basically applied to literary genres.

Now, giving aside creative writing as a type of writing, it is important to refer to it as a field in the academic context.

Creative writing emerged over the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> as a means of integration of the two main functions of English departments: the teaching of writing and the teaching of literature. Then, it was absorbed by literary studies, however, with time, creative writing started to separate from them and it has been established as an independent subject area in English Studies. The reason for the creative writing's long inability to arise as an academic discipline had more to do with the unwillingness of powerful and conservative poets, novelists, and dramatists than with the subject itself and how it is taught. Many writers view creative writing as something that has stepped, just by chance, into academe. Thus, the standard view has been that academic inquiring into creative writing, specifically of the sort that has to do with investigation, should be avoided. However, Bizzaro (2004) argues that most creative writers possess certain skills that have become increasingly valued over the past thirty years by writing researches. For him, these research methods are different enough from those of scholars of literary or composition research; this difference assigns data, proof, or evidence to mean disciplinary status in English departments. Bizzaro (2004) considers important that creative writing teachers teach these skills to their

students. These skills, which serve like 'those markers of professional difference' as he calls them, arose from the close study creative writers did about what they do when they teach academic creative writing courses and what they do when they write their poems, stories, essays, and plays.

Bizzaro (2004) asserts that there are six skills whose use is unique to the field of creative writing. First, creative writers are readers; they are very skilled at reading different kinds of texts, from literary texts to gather information about technique, to various other texts to gain material for their writings. Second, creative writers understand people; though they cannot teach this skill directly, they can describe what they do while observing, interviewing, and overhearing people so they can find their subjects from other people's experiences. Third, creative writers understand the importance of history; they value and know how to interpret primary and secondary history sources not only from his own critical point of view, but also from the current events of society. Fourth, creative writers believe in the writing process; they know that writing is a meaning-making activity that will lead them to the discovery of significance in much that is observed and analyzed. Fifth, creative writers understand audience; they know how to address diverse communities of readers and how to meet their need to know and understand. Finally, creative writers are skilled at employing different genres; they know how to address audiences by using genres appropriate to the information they want to communicate.

Thus, creative writing becomes a teachable and researchable subject in which students must learn how to use those skills to conduct the research they must do as creative writers and in that way prepare themselves to become writers, and also start researching on pedagogy and practices of creative writing. According to Bizzaro (2004), such research serves as the basis to disciplinary status in English departments.

However, for many years in recent time, there has arisen a new difficulty for creative writing within the English Studies; creative writing has stood on the

opposite side of composition, one of the most important areas in English. This is mainly due to the rhetoric theories they come from. Cain (1999) states that for many compositionists, expressivist rhetoric is opposed to functionalist rhetoric, of which they make part. In functionalist rhetoric, the form and correctness of a text are more valued than the expression of individual meaning, while creative writing is seen to loosen, even discard concerns of textual features favoring 'authentic' discourses that come from directly within the writer. However, Cain (1999) argues that such a view of creative writing is no longer prevalent taking into account creative writers' ongoing concern with form, technique, and genre, it is, what has been named as 'craft'.

In turn, craft has its roots in New Critical<sup>5</sup> approaches to textual analysis, tagged 'formalism' by later critics. According to Cain (1999) Formalist critics see the 'text itself', isolated from social or rhetorical contexts, as the source of meaning. In the formalist view, the author does not determine what and how a work means; instead, the formal text properties, their artfulness or 'craft', offer meaning. Thus, while creative writing may not work as 'functional' in the same ways as some composition practices have and continue to, it nevertheless still values form, though in a somewhat different way. If functionalism values form as the 'dressing up' of pre-existing meaning, formalism values form as the reflection of meanings found in the empirical world. Therefore, because formalism has heavily influenced creative writing, it cannot be argued that creative writing has been primarily determined by expressivism only as Cain (1999) states.

What is more, Lardner (1999), citing Fulkerson, argues that composition has much to gain from creative writing in terms of axiology. Fulkerson defines axiology as "a conception about what constitutes 'good writing'; what teachers want student writers to achieve as a result of effective teaching". Taking into account the rhetoric theories which creative writing and composition come from; Lardner states that

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<sup>5</sup> New Criticism was a dominant trend in English and American literary criticism of the mid twentieth century, from the 1920s to the early 1960s. Its adherents were emphatic in their advocacy of close reading and attention to texts themselves giving aside 'extra-textual' sources.

'good writing' in composition is solely textual and somehow 'forgets' about the writer of the text. In creative writing 'good writing' is viewed as an activity which leads to change the writer's and other's lives, as well as writing that allows people to "represent our visions of culture" and thus "we need new processes and forms if we are to express ways of thinking that have been outside the dominant culture" states Bridwell-Bowles (cited in Lardner, 1999). Thus, 'good writing' in creative writing stresses meaning and form.

In spite of the differences between creative writing and composition, in the past few years, specialists in both fields have called for increased collaboration between them, though respecting their individual status as disciplines. The reason for this collaboration is that creative writing and composition also share values and practices. Dawes and Friend (2003), for instance, state that "creative writing and composition hold a common position in relation to a shared object -the study, practice, and teaching of writing-", and that "both teach students thinking skills, the element of craft, general persuasive writing skills, and an appreciation for literary works". Also, they claim these two fields might learn much from each other and work cooperatively to the point that first-year composition curricula should expand their horizon to include creative genres as well as academic ones, thinking that students would find such courses more engaging and more relevant. However, the attempts done to establish this collaborative work have been very few mainly because still many creative writing programs keep 'an elite literary aesthetic' that disregard composition specialists as 'intellectual lightweights or mere technicians', while many compositionists are skeptical of modes of engagement with language that has to do with imagination, artistry, and pleasure. Though, the lack of previous models of this kind of union can make risky cross-disciplinary efforts, it also offers a new field for experimentation.

One of such experiments was done, precisely, by Kwame Dawes and Christy Friend teachers of creative writing and composition, respectively. Both of them teach at the University Of South Carolina where the English department

houses both and MFA program in creative writing (creative writing has been mainly linked at the university level with this kind of major) and a PhD major in composition and rhetoric. They joined to teach the course 'Creative Writing: Theories and practices' to students from the two majors as well as English Education students. This course ended up with students gaining more interest in each other's field of writing, and also it fostered interesting intersections between writing, teaching, aesthetics, principles of communication, in essence: interdisciplinarity as they comment. However, one of the main problematic topics in the course referred to the question of who should teach creative writing, an important question for this paper.

Kwame Dawes (2003) states that, though the majority of practitioners in the creative writing field think that the best teachers of creative writing are those who are good creative writers themselves, it is a partial truth. This belief is based on the facts that at university the hiring system of writers to teach at the MFA program depend on their success as writers, and that learning from a 'master' is considered to be central to become a successful writer. However, he brings into consideration that in fine and performing arts the best acting coaches, for example, often cannot act to save their lives. Thus, he claims that there are two legitimate kinds of teachers in creative writing from whom students can learn different things. One of them is a senior writer or 'mentor'; this sort of teacher serves as a model, a guide who can teach from experience. This writer understands the business side of writing and the emotional challenge of working through blocks and anxieties. At the same time, there is another kind of writing teacher who is essentially a gifted coach, who has studied the business of craft and excels at guiding writers towards developing this craft. These teachers are credible since they are known to be responsive readers and guides. They must have a solid understanding of the writing process and the factors that shape a writer's work in different genres. In any way he considers that, a teacher's success resides not so much on publication credentials but on teaching skills. These skills can be learned, thus, if it is believed that teachers can be trained, then creative writing teachers, too.

Regarding how to teach creative writing, the writing workshop has been traditionally used as a pedagogical strategy. According to Bernard (2002) “workshops translate into practice the insistence of composition theory that students need to imagine themselves writing to an audience other than their teacher; they also show students the difficulties and rewards of negotiating responses to and assessments of someone else's writing, and ultimately develop in them the skills and self-confidence necessary to evaluate their own writing”. He considers that if teachers are adequately prepared for workshops and facilitate them, these workshops would really impact student writing, students' conceptions of themselves as writers, and instructors' understanding of their roles as teachers of writing. One of the benefits of the writing workshop is that it provides students with peer-feedback, Bernard (2002) claims that those responding to their classmates' writing are exposed to variety of writing qualities, styles, and techniques that they acquire valuable training in critical analysis, learn to apply their critiques of others' writing to their own work, feel themselves participating in a community of writers, and benefit from collaboration.

Bernard (2002) proposes a kind of workshop in which each student acts as a workshoppee, respondent, and facilitator of each workshop paper. Before the workshop process starts, he considers important to discuss with the students the rationale, procedures, and objectives of the workshop as a pedagogical and compositional tool, since this kind of strategy needs students self-involvement and positive attitude to work effectively. As workshoppees, the paper of a student is taken as material for the workshop, the student has to make copies of his paper for his classmates and teacher and hand it in a class period earlier. As respondents, each student prepares a written response with a copy for the teacher who gives credit only to those responses that provide helpful feedback to improve a piece of writing, then based on these responses students discuss in class. As facilitators, each student leads the discussion of that paper through questions based on the written responses students have made and handed in to the facilitator a class period earlier.

According to Larry Watson (cited in Balhorn et al., 2002), it is important to include during the workshop process free-writing activities, writing exercises that help students open up and improve their paper, and reading. He starts workshops with some inspirational writing by doing free-writing so ideas start arising. Also, he does some exercises that have to do with techniques like point of view exercises, dialog exercises, moving characters around, etc. as well as activities that help students foster their imagination and confidence. In addition, he argues that it is necessary to include reading as material for discussion and as models, since he thinks students may write poorly because they have not had much experience writing the kinds of things teachers ask them to write. Finally, students need, throughout the workshop, to see models of 'ways of writing'; different ways of making drafts, for instance, writing them very slowly or very fast, so that they can find a way of writing that works for them.

Another concern regarding the creative writing workshop is the appropriate size of respondents so that the workshop works in the best way. Bernard (2002) claims that whole-class workshop respondents provide students with much greater amount and variety of feedback on their work and creates a more unified system in which students see themselves as an important part of the class. On the other hand, Gray (1999) argues that if the respondent of a paper is a panel of no more than three students, whose membership changes with each paper, and the teacher, a writer will have more focused feedback to work with to improve his writing quicker and more effectively. In addition, Gray provides other suggestions for the creative writing workshop. For example, he considers important to shift the emphasis from searching for failure to recognizing success whenever possible, a paper in a workshop may need just minor changes only. Also, he states that teachers should become more involved in workshops; taking time to go over plot, characterization, voice, setting, point of view, diagramming stories, etc. anything else that will help students be better writers, and that it is important to focus sometimes on why to write and on how writings are conceived and nurtured.

For Wendy Bishop,<sup>6</sup> creative writing can be taught in the classroom for all students in the K-12 curriculum. However, she thinks that students often see that creative writing is just fun. This is because teachers have not presented it as the complex. In a writing classroom, and much more in one of creative writing, it is vital and necessary to take into consideration the cultural and linguistic background of the students. Although there are students who do not speak or write the 'standard English' required in education, which is a reason and a goal of language teaching, there is no doubt that each student has a complex language and literary heritages from his own community. This cultural and linguistic richness should not be neglected in the writing classroom, on the contrary it should be reinforced, but sometimes it is not even considered; "we spend most of our time telling students what they do not know about language, pointing to the glaring five percent that they do not do right; for example, form verb endings, punctuate sentences, spell words, and we forget to acknowledge the 95 percent of language skill that is already in action" (Bishop, 1991).

However, it is also necessary to be aware of those language aspects students have learned at school that can interfere their development in creative writing. For instance, the need to formulate a theses statement beforehand -even in an invention exercise- or write the expected five-sentence paragraph, are learned-rules that can block student writers. According to Bishop, this occurs because rules are accumulated piecemeal, out of context; in that way writing in general becomes difficult, and creative writing in particular, seems impossible to imagine. That's why, Bishop suggests to start a creative writing class by asking students to contribute their existing understanding of writing rules, or in pedagogical terms the instruction should be meaningful, so that during the course teachers and students discuss the ways in which those rules work or not for them

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<sup>6</sup> Wendy Bishop was a poet, essayist, and professor of English at Florida State University. She specialized in composition and rhetoric and in creative writing (poetry and nonfiction). Bishop held a PhD in English/Rhetoric from Indiana University of Pennsylvania. She was the author and editor of a number of books, essays, and articles on composition and creative writing pedagogy and writing research as well as poems and stories and several chapbooks of poetry.

in a particular writing situation. Thus, students learn that rules need to be flexible, set according to a writer's goal, audience, and intended product.

Bishop claims that the main problem resides in the way creative writing has been taught. Teachers have used a skills-based instruction or product-based instruction in which students learn forms and formulas and try to imitate difficult authors without placing such writing exercises in context. "Conventions are taught primarily as the means to an end; as 'product rules' conventions used to sort out successful new writers from less successful writers". On the other hand, by using a process-oriented creative writing pedagogy, conventions would be taught from a different perspective. "Conventions are explored in order to understand the way a community of readers agrees about text features [...], students are encouraged to learn what constitutes successful entry into the community of academic creative writers of either stories, poems or plays. They examine conventions as a core pedagogical strategy, and they write" (Bishop, 1991).

Another aspect to take into consideration is the fact that in schools creative writing has been taught as an 'extra' activity. "Creative writing has occupied an odd position in the English curriculum" (Shelnutt, 1991). On one side, creative writing is 'taught' as a separate segment of writing instruction by a specialist who comes to school sporadically; this makes students see the 'artist' as someone 'gifted', with a 'rare talent' instead of someone with an enormous interest in language and expression. On the other side, creative writing is seen as a kind of 'reward' done after more 'traditional' writing activities, after more 'serious' work that deserves little time by students and teachers.

With a process-oriented instruction, students experience by themselves the whole process of writing. Creative writing instruction should be structured "in a way that allows them [students] to investigate the full process of discovering (invention exercises and writing to discover), shaping (revision as an opportunity to push against and then conform to genre boundaries), and publishing (editing and proofreading before sharing with a public of classmates, teacher or parents)"

(Bishop, 1991). Besides, the writing class should incorporate collaborative interactions with other classmates including speaking, listening, drawing, and reading, as well as time for the study of spelling, grammar, and punctuation. What is more, it is necessary that students start viewing writing as a process of discovery more than an act of transcription; “in writing we discover who we are through the process of writing”, and as result we end up with a text arose from that process (Shelnutt, 1991).

To understand the need for process in creative writing instruction, it is worth looking at the practices of professional writers aiming at encouraging drafting and revision in the classroom which allow the students to open up their writing, take risks, and avoid closure. Most professional writers devote much time to the early stages of writing which are generative, even to the point of helping determine form. This sense of discovering and exploration is missing in a product-based instruction; students cannot experience the changes that occur during the writing process, instead they focus on producing a perfect product based on an author. Thus, to start introducing this generative stage in the writing classroom it is suggested to include drafts of professionals or student writers as classroom models. These models should be transparent enough so that “students can see and talk about the writers’ choices and changes on the word, sentence, paragraph, or full-text level, and extract from them effective writing techniques. Also, it is worthy to provide students with samples of their teacher’s writing in progress or ask students to compare two versions of a professional writer’s work” (Bishop, 1991). In addition, Bishop proposes to ‘work into the rules’, which consist of breaking the rules excessively and purposefully, so students can understand what the convention is all about, and thus promote drafting and at the same time deal with those rules students have acquired in past writing experiences.

In order to work on drafting and revision, which are closely related, it is necessary to delay closure. It is important for student writers to explore the space between initial draft and final shaped form; students need the opportunity to

explore alternatives by discovering what they mean to say and by examining different new directions. A way to do so, proposed by Winston Wheathers (cited in Bishop, 1991), is by exploring an alternative grammar of style or Grammar B. He claims that “we keep our stylistic options within the confines of one grammar only that has the characteristics of order, unity, consistency, etc”, but student writers tend to forget exploring Grammar B options (like using longer, more complex sentences, changing the point of view or the synchronicity, arranging lines differently, etc.) which enable them to push the conventions of Grammar A and still be accepted as a proficient writer, in that way Grammar B writing is likely to be considered ‘creative’ or experimental writing.

Thus, one of the main challenges to carry out in a creative writing classroom is to rethink revision. Most students and teachers view revision as a step on the way to finishing, as a preparation for closure. It is essential to see revision as “a way to open up material and draw more edges into the material, as opposed to sanding the material down so that you end up with something smooth, polished, and featherless” states the poet Clayston Eschelman (cited in Bishop, 1991). In effect, the creative writer needs to resist the irresistible call for closure, and those who resist longest and most flexibly may be considered by others as most creative as Bishop claims since they have more time to explore more alternatives. Thus, the intention of Wendy Bishop is to teach students to see creative writing as a process which is in fact creative. A process that comprises discovering, drafting, revising a draft by exploring new alternatives, final shaping, and production of a polished text. A process that needs to include Grammar B revision exercises and other strategies to enhance divergent thinking by pushing the limits of a writer’s developing text; this makes the process to be creative. Also, it is important to allow time for the process to occur since students need time to think and write, ‘finish’ and start again as well as allowing each student to learn from one another through discussions, conferences, peer review, journal entries and intensive writing exercises.

In our context, teaching English as foreign language at primary, secondary, and university levels, the challenge is even greater; it is not only to rethink revision, but writing and creative writing as a whole. Writing in English has been taught mainly aiming at the practice of language features or text patterns, with little time to work in class, and focusing on accuracy of the expected product, but the process of writing, as a process of discovery and learning, has been almost neglected. This could be the reason why students feel frustrated, scared or apathetic to write. On the one hand, students think that writing is just an obligatory classroom exercise in which they have to complete assignments successfully and meet the teacher's expectations. Sometimes, these assignments do not provide them the opportunity to communicate their own ideas of interest, and thus they do not have much commitment to write. On the other hand, probably due to bad experiences in the past, students are scared to write, they do not trust their own capacities and abilities to think and imagine, this makes students 'misuse' information technology tools to 'cut and paste' other people's thoughts. Thus, it is necessary that in the teaching of writing students get involved in meaningful communication that helps them foster their personal and language development.

That's why, to maintain students engagement in writing it is important to change the focus of *what* to write and most importantly *how* to approach the writing process. Students would feel better if they wrote about topics of real interest and concern to them, their lives, and their learning, involving students in authentic communication with a real reader. However, it is more important how to handle the writing process; students should be involved in a process of exploration and discovery, meaning, and enriching exchange. students need to experience the stages of the writing process, from drafting to publishing, to discover and explore their ideas, and the relations that can be established among related concepts, and thus put them on paper in the best form. Also, according to Peyton (1990), it is important to consider how the students' writing is received and responded to during the process. The teacher should provide instructive, thoughtful feedback that makes students develop their writing and their thinking, a feedback that makes

them feel engaged in a dialog in which the teacher is interested in what the students want to say, and that makes students not feel it is just an assignment to get a good grade. This response should use language slightly beyond the students' level to promote language learning. Also, it is important that students see their teacher not only as the reader, but also as a writer engaged in the same process as theirs.

In relation to creative writing, the challenge is more exciting. The classroom is a very important place in which the students' growth and development for life occurs. That is why, it is essential that students write in English not only reports, essays, and summaries, but also offer them other opportunities to explore their thinking and writing skills; it is by including creative writing in the English instruction. Through creative writing, students can engage in their own imagination, something necessary nowadays, and reawake their inner trust, autonomy, and interest to write. "When students block themselves at the onset of starting to write", states Peyton (1990) it is "because of their sense of failure to connect what they experience and their capacity of expressing it in language, in fact they are saying that their writing experience at school has undermined their view of themselves as people with experiences, thinking, and capacity to create". According to Shelnutt (1991) by including creative writing into the English class, students learn that language is a viable and powerful vehicle to interact with society while enriching their interior lives, to facilitate the students' development as readers and original thinkers, people who understand the arts and their significance to society. Above all, the most important thing is that students would write creatively, not only to end up with literary texts, but also students would be involved and experience the creative process of writing, which then can be applied to the mastery of other forms as Shelnutt (1999) states.

Finally, another important component to consider in the creative writing workshop is evaluation and grading. Rief (2006) claims that evaluation of writing should highlight the strengths of process, content, and conventions, and give the

writer the tools and techniques to strengthen their weaknesses. Understanding the process in which students engage while crafting a piece of writing, the process itself, is as important as the final product, exhibited through a polished, best draft. "Asking students to verbalize that thinking through a process paper (How did this writing come to be? Where did you get the idea? What did you do, and why, as you went from one draft to the next? What problems did you encounter? How well did you solve those problems?) shows teachers the multiple strategies writers use and teaches students to pay attention to that process so they become more independent as they develop skills as writers" Rief (2006) proposes. For grading, it is important to consider that good writing is not defined by one set of criteria, but differs depending on the kind of writing. In the case of creative writing, evaluation and grading are more difficult than in other kinds of writing since the creative process is so personal that it is impossible to compare it with another one, though texts must accomplish certain basic requirements previously stated to gain certain quality. A useful tool for evaluation and grading is the students' writing portfolio, based on it teachers can have a record of students process, and thus give a grade according to the students engagement, interest, and progress, rather than only based on the quality of their 'final' writings.

It is important to take into account that creative writing should be included in the teaching of English at all levels. Creative writing is not only for MFA majors or K-12 curriculum classes, but also for English majors. According to Lloyd-Jones (cited in Miller and Jackson, 2007) all English majors should practice writing in several modes and for different audiences and purposes, with an awareness of the social implications and theoretical issues these shifts raise. Translating this into our context, creative writing should be part not only of Literature majors, but also of English classes at primary and secondary education, and at the university level in ELT programs, especially. All the strategies to work on creative writing in the k-12 curriculum presented by Bishop are well applicable to the ELT programs where students have a higher level of language which may enrich the creative writing process or in primary and secondary curricular classes taking into account

students' language level. In addition, it is important to bear in mind that creative writing is used to develop writing skills, to provide self-realization, and to allow the fostering of creativity in the educational field.

This need to include creative writing in the teaching of English is also claimed by the British Council. It occurred during the conference on the teaching of literature named 'Creative Ways: from critical reading to creative writing' in Oxford, 2000 (British Council, 2000). The conference brought together teachers of literature, teachers of writing, and professional writers from all over the world to explore the possibilities of improving the understanding of literary texts by using creative writing techniques. Some of the questions that arose this conference were: Are we encouraging a full range of writing as well as reading practices in our students? How much can an awareness of the creative process and an active engagement with the making of texts help to develop students' critical skills? What is the relation between critical and creative thinking in the teaching of English Literature at the beginning of a new century? Over the course of the week, drawing on the experience and expertise of the wide range of participants, themes like the need to pay particular attention to modes of writing that encourage active participation in the making and re-making of texts -including the use of imitation, parody, adaptation and other forms of re-writing-, a discussion of the implications of such approaches for everything from curriculum planning and choice of texts to classroom strategies and task-design, and a forum on the opportunities and obstacles facing the development of 'creative writing' in its widest sense, especially where English is not a first language, were included in the conference.

As a result of this conference a teaching pack called 'Creative Ways' was created. It can be used not only for students of literature, but also for all English learners. Even, this teaching pack is uploaded in the website of the Colombian Ministry of Education intended to be used as writing practice for students from 9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> grade. This teaching pack aims to bring a spark of creativity into the teaching and learning of writing. It explores creative ways into understanding texts

and offers activities guaranteed to activate the creativity of students in the classroom (BBC, 2001). There are six sessions dealing with the themes: Weaving Texts (largely a starting point for many of the activities proposed), Images (working with simile and metaphor to make texts come alive), Stories and Effects (looking at how to write stories, which are aimed at creating an impact), Characters (developing protagonists or poetic voices different from one's own), Re(construction) (working with gaps in texts and ways to fill them, probably the most clearly literature-study oriented section), and Experience and Observation (mining memories and developing autobiography into something that goes further than 'mere' reminiscence).

Within the theoretical background of creative writing, it is important to consider the component of the theory on creativity. Thus, some general main concepts about this topic are presented which lead to more focused theorizing of creativity in writing.

There has been a broad range of study concerning creativity since early years; though, creativity research began in deep in the 1950's. However, unlike many phenomena in science, there is no single, authoritative perspective or definition in creativity, neither there is a standardized measurement technique. Today creativity research covers a wide scope of studies in different fields, from neurology to philosophy; though most of the research and theorizing on creativity has been done by psychologists. That is why, no matter the field on which creativity is being studied, there is always reference to research and ideas from psychology. This fact is not uncommon in the educational field where a great amount of work from psychology has been integrated into education, and in the case of creativity it is not different; for education, all research on creativity is relevant, even if it is not conducted in a classroom, given the importance of the integration of creative skills into the curriculum (Runco, 2004).

Research on what is defined as 'exceptional human capacity for thought and creation' is divided into three overlapping periods, each of which with a different

point of emphasis, these are genius, giftedness and creativity as Ryhammar and Brolin (1999) report. Systematic study of this human capacity is said to have begun with Sir Francis Galton's Hereditary Genius in 1869. After that, hundred studies were done concerning the concept of genius, defined on the basis of acknowledged achievement. This line of approach remained prevalent into the 1920s. However, during this last decade, the concept of intelligence began to become increasingly popular. Terman's studies of highly intelligent children, then, initiated a shift of emphasis from genius to giftedness, which was defined on the basis of various mental tests. After the Second World War the focus was not on genius, instead, there were a great number of studies, often consisting of repeated measurements, of highly intelligent persons. During the 1950s there was a further change, the focus now became creativity, which came to be defined by a varied criteria, including performance in mental tests and acknowledged achievement. This change was expected, since there was a great need for fresh thinking in science, industry, business and art.

In the early 1950s creativity research began in earnest. However, in previous years there was a number of empirical personality studies, based on a psychoanalytical foundation and diverse cognitively experimental investigations. These were, though, somewhat disparate studies of creativity and made little explicit use of the concept; instead concepts such as 'originality', 'creative capacity', 'problem solving capacity', 'productivity' and 'mental capacity' were used. It was the American psychologist and intelligence researcher J.P. Guilford in 1950 who first offered a proper discussion of the concept of creativity. He showed that certain phenomena could not be explained by using intelligence tests and, by drawing attention to aspects of cognition that had been overlooked, he was able to establish the importance of divergent thinking. In that way the term 'creativity research' was grounded (Ryhammar and Brolin, 1999).

According to Runco's report (2004), creativity has been studied from four different lines of approach which are related to Rhodes' classification of person,

process, press, and product. The first line of approach focuses on the person who creates, it is a personality approach. As discussed by Diakidoy and Kanari (1999) the manifestation of creativity depends on the personality of the individual. Characteristics such as imagination, self-confidence, autonomy and independence are necessary for creativity. Another important characteristic of the creative person is intrinsic motivation; the creative person tends to follow intrinsic interests, and those tasks that are intrinsically motivated tend to be free evaluations and constraints which can inhibit creativity. In general terms, according to Brolin (Ryhammar and Brolin, 1999), the creative person is described as having a strong sense of motivation, deep commitment, intellectual curiosity, independence in thought and action; such a person is attracted to, and stimulated by, obscurity and complexity, has great sensitivity and has a large capacity for emotional involvement. However, most of the personality research has been criticized as Ryhammar and Brolin (1999) point out since the choice of person to be subjects of study relied on the eminence and productivity, and research results are presented in the form of a list of qualities which can be superficial and not always correlated with creative behaviors.

The second line of approach is categorized as cognitive and focuses on the creative process. The creative process has been studied considering it as an aspect of intelligence, as a problem solving capacity, or as an associative process as Ryhammar and Brolin state (1999). In relation to intelligence, although Guilford in 1950 had stated that “creativity is not equivalent to intelligence” (cited in Gardner, 1995), since intelligence is considered to be convergent thinking while creativity is categorized as divergent thinking, some researchers continue working under this assumption, but this view is no longer prevalent nowadays as Runco (2004) declares. Moreover, as shown in Russo’s study (2004) creativity goes beyond intelligence and involves overlapping variables. This researcher describes creativity as a multivariate thinking process which involves numerous cognitive abilities like developing novel ideas, exhibiting flexibility of the mind, and divergent thinking.

In relation to problem solving, a concept relevant for this capacity is, in fact, divergent thinking. According to Russo (2004) problem solving is the most complex of recognized intellectual activities as creative production and as means to arrive at it since it is based on both creative and critical types of thinking. Besides, Guilford (cited in Diakidoy and Kanari, 1999) states that concepts such as problem solving and divergent thinking, which is to say, thinking in various directions in order to arrive at several alternative solutions to a problem, are both aspects of a total conceptual system of creativity.

In relation to the associative process, Rothenberg (cited in Ryhammar and Brolin, 1999) establishes that in the creative person's way of thinking his experiences and feelings are activated and associated in the work of creation. His study concludes that there are two thought processes of association that are essential to creativity, namely thinking in opposites or extremes (Janusian thinking), which goes towards modulation, and visual imagining, which in the end leads to unity and fusion (homospacial thinking). Even, Runco (2004) states that in the associative processes, divergent thinking and problem solving seem to be involved.

The third line of approach, press, has been used to make reference to the stimulation of creativity. The term press was proposed by Harry Murray to describe pressures on the creative process or on the creative person, in Rhodes' words (cited in Runco, 2004) "press refers to the relationship of human beings and their environment". Thus, based on the idea that creativity should and can be influenced, and the stimulation of creativity has been equated to the enhancement of the ability to generate ideas, of originality, and of problem solving powers as established by Ryhammar and Brolin (1999), different kinds of studies have been carried out taking into account various elements of the environment. On the one hand, creativity can be enhanced by using appropriate activities. According to Guilford (cited in Diakidoy and Kanari), 1999) creative thinking skills can be

improved with specific practices, especially those that involve problem solving and divergent thinking.

On the other hand, it is important to take into account the environment itself in which the activities are carried out; as shown in Diakidoy and Kanari's research (1999), environmental factors have great importance in respect to the manifestation of creativity. They propose that "the environment should provide opportunities for intrinsic motivation, autonomy, discovery learning, choice in assignments, and correction of own mistakes". In addition, Amabile (cited in Runco, 2004) supports this position and identifies other situational influences such as freedom, autonomy, good role models and resources (including time), encouragement specifically for originality, freedom from criticism, and norms in which innovation is prized and failure not fatal.

In this respect, Russo (2004) refers to the educational context. He states that teachers are able to create some specific methods and tasks that they think more likely to elicit creative responses such as open-ended tasks, divergent-thinking tasks, and unfamiliar tasks, carried out within the appropriate environment for the occurrence of the creative process. Moreover, Walsh and Kogan (cited in Runco, 2004) emphasize the immediate classroom environment and feel that "creativity is inhibited by several common classroom conditions and instructions like test-like activities, and it is released when activities are presented in permissive and game-like fashion".

Another important element of the environment makes reference to the group of people with whom the person is working. In the appropriate environment, the members should feel challenged by the goals, operations and tasks; feel free to take initiatives, to collect information and interact with others, and to support new ideas and initiatives. Also, there should be much debate going on in an open and prestige-free atmosphere where tolerance of uncertainty is prevalent, which makes people prepared to take risks as Amabile states (cited in Ryhammar and Brolin, 1999). On the other hand, Ryhammar and Brolin (1999) suggest that the

immediate social environment can impede creative production, factors such as expected evaluation, rewards determined in advance, time pressure, supervision, competition, and restricted choice with regard to working material or line of approach can have an effect on the people's attitude, and in that way on the creative process, though these factors are just potential inhibitors.

Based on aspects from the process and press approach to creativity, Ryhammar and Brolin (1999) include another line of approach, it is the social-psychological, which is a more encompassing model. This approach focuses on social interaction affected by physical surrounding and other individuals. It started to be used in the 1980's, and Gardner is one of its representatives, he (cited in Ryhammar and Brolin, 1999) claimed in 1985 for a more integrative and interactive approach to creativity. According to Ryhammar and Brolin (1999) the interest of this approach is in the mechanisms that govern the interplay between experience, behavior and the person's environment or situation and systems thinking. This means that creativity is regarded as existing within the larger system of social networks, problem domains and fields of activity. Other findings within this approach, and the educational field show (Runco, 2004) that creativity within the classroom appeared to be supported by teachers' experiencing a high degree of freedom and debate and to be hindered by the presence of a high degree of emotional tension and a lack of openness in the teachers' and students' contact with one another.

Within this approach, Gardner's theory of creativity is placed and it focuses on the individual immersed in a group. His creativity theory is based on Csikszentmihalyi's. He develops an interactive perspective of creativity. He identifies (cited in Gardner, 1998) three elements or nodes which are central when considering creativity: The person or *individual talent*, the *field* in which the individual works, and the *domain* surrounding the individual and his products. Thus, creativity is the interactive process of these three elements. According to this perspective, the creative process occurs in the following way: The first element, the

*individual*, dominates a field of work and offers variations. The second element, the *field*, is where the individual works taking into account its rules, possibilities and limitations. The third element, the *domain*, is the social group of people and institutions which has expertise and experience so they can judge the merit of the individual and his creation. Thus, creativity occurs if an *individual* within a *field* is recognized by its *domain* as creative.

Gardner uses Csikszentmihalyi terms differently so they can be applied in the educational context. For him the elements in the creative process are: a *human being*, an *object or project* in which the person is working, and *other individuals* who participate with him in the process (Gardner, 1998). The *human being* who carries out cognitive processes in his mind (the student), *the project* he is doing (the activities) which allows the individual to show creativity in a field, and *the other individuals* (classmates and teachers) who offer to the individual affective and cognitive support in the process and give value to his final work or product.

Also, he establishes other ideas and issues regarding creativity. 1) an individual is creative in only one field, not in all of them. 2) creativity, in its first level, involves problem solving, later it involves new products' elaboration and discoveries. 3) creative outcomes are so, when they are accepted as that by a particular group. In addition, Gardner (1998) considers the study of creativity from four different levels of analysis. 1) *subpersonal* which analyzes if creative individuals have special genetic characteristics; although there is not data about it, this level should be taken into account. 2) *personal* which focuses on the individual from two perspectives his cognitive processes and his social, affective, and personality aspects. 3) *impersonal* which states that an individual is not creative in an abstract way; this is shown in a specific field. 4) *multipersonal* which states that the individual is not alone, he is surrounded by other individuals and institutions who value his work.

To continue with Runco's report, the forth line of approach focuses on the products, it is, the outcomes of the creative process. Based on this approach,

Diakidoy and Kanari (1999) define creativity as “a characteristic or ability that results in products that are novel (unusual) and appropriate (useful and of high quality)”. Therefore, according to this definition, what is recognized as creative is in essence what might be thought of as exceptional creativity, a characteristic or ability possessed by a few individuals only. Following Simoton’s position (cited in Runco, 2004) the assumption in the product approach is that outcomes (e.g. publications, paintings, poems, designs) can be counted, therefore it is just the quantity of one’s effort that is measured. The problem with this approach is that it often informs only about productivity and not about creativity, this can be quite misleading because what it takes to be productive may differ from what it takes to be creative.

Following this approach, Torrance (1970) proposes ways of creative production. Among these, creative writing is included as a product of creativity. He develops some abilities to score on creative outcomes, these are: Fluency, which involves the production of many ideas as possible encouraging free expression; Originality, which involves the production of clever or uncommon responses to a specific situation; Sensitivity, which implies being sensitive to some kind of environmental stimuli which helps the person to develop an idea; and Elaboration, which has to do with working out the implications of ideas. However, he warns that the nature of creative writing is not easy to deal with. With children, writing must be delayed until they are older to avoid error, there is not fixed standards to evaluate this type of work, and the *best* compositions are not likely to be written in a scheduled time. Nonetheless, creative writing is a way to work on creativity as a process and as a product.

In creative writing it is common to ‘play with language’ during the creative process. Luis Fernando Ospina (1992), a psychologist and a teacher at Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, states that, during the International Congress on Creativity held in Bogota in 1990, Literary Games are useful strategies to develop creativity in writing. These Literary Games are based on the association principle. Different

kinds of stimuli are presented to help arise the associations. Among the diverse set of stimuli, sensory stimulus are used like visual, auditory, tactile, etc. The remembrance of experiences, dreams, anecdotes, daily life situations, as well as re-writing of texts, 'corrections', etc. are also used. All of this is done with the purpose of stimulating associations among these various aspects, which can lead to reveal a personal unconscious emotional complex that surprises and illuminates the person with new ideas. This kind of 'method' is used to develop literary creativity.

There are three 'aims' in the usage of Literary Games, according to Ospina (1992). First, it is used to facilitate free expression; due to the game-like structure of the method it is easier for any person to participate. Second, free expression is used as a path that leads towards something creative. Third, in later stages of the process, they are used to give rise to artistic aptitude and sensitivity, and literary skills. Thus, Literary Games point to facilitate expression, creation, and art; though the emphasis given to one of these aspects depends on the people involved, the emotional moment, or class environment.

Literary Games are structured in a way that intentionally develops creative aptitudes. This is done through the technique called focusing. Some of these aptitudes are fluency (number of ideas that arise), flexibility, (being able to go from an idea category to another), originality (producing new ideas), curiosity (organizing ideas into more inclusive schemes), analysis (going from the whole to the parts), elaboration (reshaping the idea or product), imagination (producing images), fantasy (making fiction, giving aside reasoning and facts), day-dreaming (dreaming awake), visualization (recreating visually), symbolization (being affected by symbols). Thus, the purpose of all the procedures used in focusing is to facilitate the development of the different aptitudes which are part of the divergent thinking system (Ospina, 1992).

The associative process has been related to the production of ideas since early times. Association of ideas is a phenomenon by which imagination gears

itself to memory and causes one thought to lead to another. Its power has been recognized for over 2000 years. Plato and Aristotle stressed it as a cardinal principle of human psychology. Association works harder for those whose imaginative urge is more intense and whose minds are better stocked. First-hand experiences like personal contacts, and travels provide rich fuel, second-hand experiences, that come through reading, or listening, are also important. The ancient Greeks laid down on the three laws of associations: contiguity, similarity, and contrast. These laws have been linked to the figures of speech: Similes and metaphors are based on similarity; associations that work through partial identity are also the base of other figures like synecdoche, when a part suggests the whole, and metonymy, when one word suggests another; and based on contrast is the irony, when it is used the opposite of what is meant to convey (Osborn, 1993).

For German Rey (1992), a psychologist and a sociologist, associations are central in the creative process. However, associations are not thought just as an analogy, but as a fundamental problem of creation of new meanings. The challenging factor of a metaphoric statement, he claims, is to see a relationship in a place where the common vision does not perceive any. Metaphors are semantic innovations close to active solving of a problem. For him, metaphors should be used as model to study what is occurring in the mind; they show somehow the thinking process of creation.

In the creative process of making associations, imagination plays a central role. Osborn (1953) argued long ago that creativity is imagination inseparably coupled with both intent and effort. That is why, for writing creatively, imagination should be at its highest point since as Egan (cited in Barber, 2003) states it is the source of novelty, originality, and generativity. Barber (2003), during the International Conference of Imagination and Education, claims that imagination is 'mind in flight' in which process emotions and reasoning are interwoven. On the one side, when a person is imagining, he is making images in his mind of himself or others projected in situations in the past, present, or future, this is linked to some

kind of emotion. Even, emotions are so linked with imagination that Egan (cited in Barber, 2003) wonders if they are necessary elements in imagining or if emotions are what makes imagining more effective. In any case, there is no creative process without a person emotionally involved in it. On the other side, imagination also depends of rational thinking. Reason is brought to judge the new ideas imagination arises; the 'soundness' of an idea is evaluated to see if it fits effectively with the outside reality and the inside reality of the story or poem. This is, imagination shapes ideas and its associations.

Thus, in creative writing, imagination is a crucial aspect as well as an increasing progress of language skills; these two aspects are entwined in the creative process. Bailin (cited in Barber, 2003) states that although imagination is expressed through language, it is actually the other way round: language is in fact what is developing the imagination. Then, as language skills increase, imagination gains more place and can transcend those skills, here creativity appears since the writer can go beyond the given and produce and show original or novel ideas. As a result of this interrelation, it is possible for a writer to have a distinctive handling of language, for instance, new combinations of words, unusual juxtapositioning, rhyme, pattern, metaphors, etc., which allow him to show his imagination more vividly, and thus awake and involve the reader in the same or different emotions and meanings.

Finally, Barber (2003) states that students' imagination can be foster in the classroom. According to Barrow (cited in Barber, 2003) imagination must be developed indirectly, taught within contexts, in a way that exposes students to the unfamiliar aiming at widening their experience. In addition, Barber claims that people is always telling themselves stories in their minds, searching for creative ways to solve problems, predicting the future, changing in their minds the past, thus, teachers can use these inclinations as a starting point to initiate creative writing in the classroom giving students a stimulating idea and not long before they will take it and run their imagination to start writing them down.

## **7. CONCLUSIONS**

Creative writing should be taught through a process-based methodology. Within this process, it is important to allow students time to consider the topics that really interest them so they can write with passion and create a voice for his intended audience and purpose. Also, students need time to experience the whole writing process in class so that they can benefit from teacher and peers help at each step, and thus be able to gain useful techniques for future independent writing. Students need to see that writing is a recursive process in which they can move back and forth to develop their ideas, giving emphasis to the revision stage. In fact, teachers should focus on this step of the writing process since here students not only can develop meaning, but also creativity. At this moment, it important to include those activities like Grammar B options, imaginative exercises, literary games, etc. which are likely to help students open up their minds and their writing. Also, it is important to teach students to work on editing only at the end, as a step to publishing, which in turn, should motivate students to produce 'good writing' since there is a real audience for it. In addition, it is relevant that during the process students get constructive feedback within the appropriate workshop environment and peer or teacher conferences to improve their writings.

Creative writing is reading. Reading provides students with models to imitate, to learn about specific genre features, to know what it is considered to be good literary text, and to appreciate literature. In addition, it is helpful for students to read each others' papers in progress to learn from them and appreciate their classmates writings. That is why, it is important to establish a classroom environment free from criticism, in which students have no fair to participate and error is not appointed, but success is praised. In creative writing, speaking and listening make also part of the writing process.

Creative writing changes students' attitudes and conceptions about writing. Writing is not longer considered as privilege activity of few, talented people - writers-, but it is considered as a right everybody has to express themselves. Creative writing gives students the opportunity to show and develop their communicative and literary skills by writing about their lives, their social surrounding, and everything that interest them and want to express. Creative writing is not in opposition with EAP aims and practices, on the contrary, creative writing can help it by using it as a strategy to foster students' writing and language skills, which is important for any kind of writing. Creative writing helps to develop vocabulary usage, coherence, cohesion, genre features, creation of a style and voice, interest in reading, sheer revision, and above all, thinking and originality, important aspect in all writing context and for all types of writing. That is why, it is important to think in the establishment of creative writing as a serous proposal to work on writing in the classroom. This should be based on the agreement of the whole school or teaching program, for instance, taking the form of a writing workshop, to avoid seeing creative writing as an 'extra' or not 'serious' activity. However, it could be also worthy to start by including it in the English classroom as a writing practice to evaluate its effects. Also, it is necessary that teachers see themselves capable to carry out the process, though interested in learning more about it so the process works in the best way.

Creative writing is a thinking activity. When writing creatively, students involve critical and associative thinking, imagination, memory, and language functioning. During the creative process students make associations of ideas, interpret and analyze reality, imagine new situations, remember past experiences, produce new meanings, and assess their writing at every moment to see if it is clearly organized, if language works effectively, if it represents the intended image or idea, if it involves the reader, etc. While a student thinks about his writing, his writing develops his thinking abilities. Thus, creative writing helps students become thoughtful citizens, who through his writing examines, supports, debates, changes,

and then refine his beliefs, feelings and thoughts by linking themselves with their culture and history.

Creative writing, above all, fosters creativity. Although it is not possible to teach directly creativity, it is possible to teach for creativity. This involves encouraging students to be creative and rewarding creative behavior. Education should not just focus on teaching and practicing those aspects to succeed in the workplace like writing summaries or Cvs, etc. it also should foster the development of creative people; creative writing provides this opportunity in the English classroom. Also, creative writing helps people to value the arts as a means of communication and understanding of culture and as a provider of knowledge that cannot be learned and presented in any other way. And most importantly, when people develop creativity, one of the benefits of learning to think creatively is that once learned, it can be used in other circumstances throughout life. Creative writing helps people understand that there is not a 'single' correct answer and that individuality is right. Creativity helps people to challenge themselves to do better and to see things in new, different ways. Creativity improves the quality of people's lives, and thus the quality of society.

## 8. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Art:** Term used to describe a particular type of creative production which implies some degree of aesthetic value.

**Attitude:** It is a complex mental state involving beliefs, feelings, values and dispositions to act. It makes reference mainly to the emotional capacity for effective performance. It is, a personal motivational predisposition to respond to persons, situations, or events in a given manner that can, nevertheless, be changed or modified.

**Axiology:** It is the study of value or quality. It is often thought to include ethics and aesthetics -philosophical fields that depend crucially on notions of value- and sometimes it is held to lay the groundwork for these fields, and thus to be similar to value theory.

**Composition Studies:** (also referred to as "Composition and Rhetoric," "College Composition," or simply "Composition") is the professional field of writing instruction, especially at the college level in the United States. Many composition scholars study not only the theory and practice of postsecondary technical writing instruction, but also the influence of different writing conventions and genres on writers' composing processes.

**Discourse Community:** This term links the terms discourse, a concept describing all forms of communication that contribute to a particular, institutionalized way of thinking; and community, which in this case refers to the people who use, and therefore help create, a particular discourse. Each discourse community has its own unwritten rules about what can be said and how it can be said.

**English for Academic Purposes (EAP):** It entails training students to use language appropriately for study. It therefore is a challenging and multi-faceted

area within the wider field of English language learning and teaching (ELT). In common with all language teaching, EAP tutors teach vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar and the four language skills -reading, writing, speaking and listening-, but try to tie these to the study needs of students.

**English Studies:** It is an academic discipline that includes the study of literatures written in the English language, English linguistics (including English phonetics, phonology, syntax, morphology, semantics, pragmatics, corpus linguistics, and stylistics), and English sociolinguistics (including discourse analysis of written and spoken texts in the English language, the history of the English language, English language learning and teaching, and the study of World Englishes). More broadly, English studies explores the production and analysis of texts produced in English. It is not uncommon for academic departments of "English" or "English Studies" to include literature, linguistics, composition studies, literacy, cultural studies, creative writing, critical theory, gender studies/ethnic studies, media studies, rhetoric and etymology, and various courses in the liberal arts and humanities, among others.

**Formative Assessment or Evaluation:** Process of ongoing feedback on performance. The purposes are to identify aspects of performance that need to improve and to offer corrective suggestions. In other words, formative evaluation focuses on the process and it does not need to make a judgment.

**Genre:** A type or category literary composition marked by particular conventions of style, techniques, format, and content. Mystery, fantasy, epic poetry, narrative, drama are types of genres.

**Imagery:** It refers to mental images, products of imagination, used to create a picture in an audience. Such images can be created by using figures of speech such as similes, metaphors, personification, etc. Thus, imagery makes use of language to convey to the reader a sense of really experiencing a piece of writing.

**Intrinsic Motivation:** Motivation or desire to do something based on the enjoyment of the behavior itself rather than relying on or requiring an external reinforcement.

**K–12:** It refers to the North American designation for primary and secondary education. It is also used in Australia. The expression is a shortening of Kindergarten (5 or 6-year-old) through 12th grade (generally 17 or 18-year-old), the first and last grades of free education in the United States and English Canada.

**Language Arts:** They refer to the class of art forms, including novels, poetry, songs and others, that focus on the creation of art works which are primarily language based. Language arts focuses on listening, reading, writing, speaking.

**Literature:** In general, the term denotes high quality written work including poetry, novels, plays, short stories etc. It makes reference to all creative writing of recognized artistic value.

**Meaningful Learning:** Theory of learning proposed by Ausubel. Here learning is a process controlled by the learner in which new information is related to an existing relevant aspect of the learner's knowledge structure. In other words, the learner connects the new piece of information to information already known.

**Metaphor:** It is an implied comparison achieved through a figurative use of words; the word is used not in its literal sense, but in one analogous to it.

**MFA:** It stands for a Master's degree in Fine Arts. Fine Arts, in turn, usually refer to the classical notion of the arts (e.g. painting, sculpture, architecture, poetry, fiction, music).

**Rhetoric:** In its broadest sense, it is the theory and practice of eloquence, whether spoken or written. Spoken rhetoric is oratory. Rhetoric defines the rules that should govern all prose composition or speech designed to influence the judgment or the feelings of people. Rhetoric focuses on the rules and conventions that enable

language and other sign systems to convey meaning, and to present a message in the most effective way.

**Summative Evaluation:** Method of judging the worth of a program at the end of the program activities. The focus is on the outcome. This evaluation is typically quantitative, using numeric scores or letter grades to assess learner achievement.

**Thought or thinking:** It is an internal mental process that uses information as input, integrates that information into previous learned material to understand and produce knowledge. It allows human beings to model the world, and so to deal with it effectively according to their goals, plans, ends and desires.

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## APPENDIX

### PART ONE:

Wendy Bishop presents some ideas to carry out activities on Grammar B revision. These options are for lengthening or changing sentences that, while not suitable for every level (advance level is suggested), indicate the type of guided revision that can be tried:

- Recast work into longer sentences through combining or elaboration. (if students easily write ten-word sentences, ask for twenty-word sentences, and so on.)
- Recast work into prose that alternate types: a long (labyrinthine) sentence, followed by a single-word sentence, followed by another long sentence; setting sentence patterns of any kind asks writers to pay a particular kind of stylistic attention to their work.
- Change time order and logical order: change the order of the paragraphs. Arrange events out of order or have them occur simultaneously (synchronic writing) in a piece of writing that formerly moved logically from past to present (diachronic writing). Try adding white space between the paragraphs, perhaps numbers, to indicate that change should be expected.
- Scramble the sentences within a single paragraph.
- Cut and paste sections of poems and/or prose together. Use a method - picking every second or third or fifth sentence throughout a story- and then repeat.
- Genre collage: Pick and choose between different pieces of writings (a few lines from a poem, followed by a journal entry, followed by ...)
- Sections can be arranged thematically.

- Sections, if arranged arbitrarily, may lead to unexpected connective writing.
- Multivoiced writing: write a dialog between two voices (actual and latent) in a piece. To a current piece add a narrator who will interrupt and comment on the events of the work. Insert comments or narratives into the old text, creating an interrupted or digressing work.

## **PART TWO:**

‘Creative Ways’ is a teaching pack based on materials developed by the British Council in co-operation with the BBC World Service. Creative Ways, a series of six radio programs, was inspired by the British Council’s 15th Oxford Conference on Teaching Literature Overseas held in 2000. Each activity in the teaching pack is composed of three sections. First, one or two ‘Warm-ups’ are presented, in which the topic of the section is explored primarily as an oral activity, usually in a rather experimental and possibly playful manner. Then, a set of activities under the heading ‘Working with the Broadcast’ are presented. Here there are a number of questions about the broadcast which can be used as simple comprehension questions, and also as a starting point for discussion. However, this part can work without using the episodes. In that case, there are some activities that either directly reflect what the teachers and writers presented at the Conference or on the program, or activities that make use of the issues they raised. Finally, a set of activities presented under ‘Developing the Skills’ are included. Here, the ideas and text presented are developed further or in different directions. These can be used either to provide a more detailed understanding of the topic presented in the section or as a starting point for some original writing on the part of the students. It is not necessary to cover all the activities, nor do they have to be dealt with in the order they are given.

It is possible to download it from the web page:

[http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/download/books\\_notes/creative\\_ways.pdf](http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/download/books_notes/creative_ways.pdf).

In the website of the colombian Ministry of Education it is in the link of Colombia Aprende: <http://www.colombiaprende.edu.co/html/home/1592/channel.html>:

>Mundos de Aprendizaje

>>Lenguas Extranjeras

>>>Recursos

>>>>Creative Ways:

<http://www.colombiaprende.edu.co/html/docentes/1596/propertyvalue-27747.html>

### **PART THREE:**

Anthony V. Manzo in “Teaching for creative outcomes, why we don't, how we all can” proposes some creative thinking activities to carry out in the English language classroom:

- Word creation. Language is constantly changing. To help students to be participants in our living language, provide occasional exercises such as the following:

Define the made-up word squallizmotex; explain how your definition fits the word.

If dried grapes are called raisins, and dried beef is called jerky, what would you call these items if they were dried: lemons, pineapple, watermelon, chicken?

- Unusual uses. Have students try to think of as many unusual uses as they can for common objects. Objects may vary from a "red brick" to "used toys." Ask students to identify objects that challenge inventive thinking.
- The "what ifs"-or, Circumstances and consequences. "What if" statements build what could be called extant comprehension, or abstracted

understandings of the physical world and the social order. Insights and understanding are gained merely by asking, What if ...

Sharon A Maroney in "It's in the bag: A dozen language arts activities to promote active learning" proposes some creative activities to apply in writing:

➤ Writing a Newspaper Story:

This activity will be more successful if students have previously studied the components of a newspaper story and have experienced locating the "who, what, where, when, and why" within actual newspaper stories. In this activity, each student, pair, or group of students is given a paper bag that contains a scrambled set of elements of various newspaper stories. These scrambled sets are prepared ahead by finding the "who, what, where, when, and whys" from various newspaper stories. Each item is taped or copied onto an index card. Included in each bag is a scrambled set of 10 cards, containing two of each of the who, what, where, when, and why. The students are directed to write a fictitious newspaper story using all cards or as many as they can.

➤ Getting To Know You! Asking and Answering Questions:

Each group of students is given a brown paper bag that contains a set of getting-to-know you questions, with each question written on a separate index card. These questions are designed to uncover personal information about the students. The students are directed to pick one question card from the bag and then take turns asking each member of the group the question on their card. This activity is used as a starting point to develop in students ideas from their writing. Some of questions could be:

1. How would your parents have described you as a child?
2. What was your favorite toy as a child?
3. What were you most proud of as a child?
4. If you could live anywhere in the world where would you live?
5. What nicknames have you had in your life?
6. What is your favorite possession?
7. What is the funniest thing that has ever happened to you?
8. What is the scariest thing you've ever done?
9. What would be your perfect meal?
10. With what fictional hero/heroine do you most identify?
11. What are you good at?
12. If you had to be someone else instead of yourself, who would you be?
13. Who is your best friend and why?
14. What is one thing you hate to do?
15. What in life is most important to you?
16. What are two things that you would like people to say about you?

➤ Time Traveling: Creative Writing Skills:

This activity might be more successful if students have been involved in the study of predictions of life on Earth in the future. Students will be asked to imagine life hundreds of years from now. Pairs or groups of students will then be given a paper bag containing a present-day item and are asked to create a story of what future archaeologists might conclude upon discovering this item. Items that can be used include the following:

A floppy disk  
 A fish bowl  
 A potato peeler  
 A ruler

A candle  
 A neck tie  
 A chalkboard  
 Etc.

Finally, Haggard in Anthony V. Manzo's paper has suggested four steps to further integrate constructive thinking into the standard school curriculum.

1. Pose a stimulating question. In other words, ask for constructive thought.
2. Brainstorm. Initial responses can be generated in small groups, following standard brainstorming ground rules: All responses are permitted, without criticism; as many ideas as possible are listed; unusual, even "wild," ideas are not discouraged; and new ideas can and should be formed by combining ideas already mentioned.
3. Compare ideas. After brainstorming, each small group should share their ideas with the class for review and evaluation. Students may wish to choose the "funniest" or the "wildest" response generated by each small group. At this point also, ideas are assessed for "reasonableness," or practicality. It is important to point out that all creative solutions are at best just "possibles" until tried and proved.
4. Fuse to curriculum. The whole point of a thinking curriculum is to transfer new knowledge and power to personal problem solving. That process is more likely to occur when real problems are allowed to surface and are the forces behind reading, learning, and thinking.