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The effects of writing interventions on students` attitude toward  
writing among the 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Form pupils of Tartu Kivilinna School

MA thesis

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## ABSTRACT

The present thesis aims to discover whether giving students opportunities to engage in creative writing increases their attitude toward writing in general. This topic is important as the Estonian curriculum does not include creative writing, which has been shown to boost students' motivation and aid language acquisition. The three main hypotheses were that giving students the opportunity to write freely would lead to an increase in attitude, that an interesting topic would motivate students and that language level influenced the students' perception of writing.

The study was conducted using the Self-Beliefs, Writing Beliefs, & Attitudes Survey (SWAS) as a pre-test, having the students do short creative writing tasks once a week for four weeks and conducting the SWAS questionnaire again to examine whether there were any changes. Group 1, shown videos on socially loaded topics, and Group 2, shown socially neutral videos, were both 7<sup>th</sup> Form groups with similar language levels. Groups 3 and 4, both in Form 9 but the latter being an advanced group, were shown the same videos. The results found in this study can be used to further research student attitude toward writing in Estonia and can possibly help make curriculum changes which benefit students in the future.

The thesis at hand consists of an introduction, two chapters and a conclusion. The introduction discusses why writing interventions are important as well as the situation of creative writing in the Estonian school system. The first chapter, the Effects of Writing: a literature review, discusses the reasons why creative writing is beneficial, the neurology of writing, why students might have issues with it and how attitude towards writing is linked to writing success. The second chapter, Overview of the Methods of the Empirical Study, describes how the study was conducted, the results and what these results might suggest. The thesis concludes with a summarization of the main findings of the thesis.

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## INTRODUCTION

Writing is an important skill that most people use daily. Developing this skill is, however, difficult. During my time as a teacher, teaching students since 2019, I experienced students struggle with writing, and display an aversion to writing in general. This could be due to the types of writing in Estonian schools generally not being very creative and usually consisting of filling gaps, translating phrases or sentences, and writing essays, letters and so on. In other words, the writing is usually either limited in creativity (writing a correct answer in a gap) or highly regulated in structure (letters). Creativity, however, is a very important trait to possess in today`s society as most employers require employees to be creative, take initiative, be quick thinkers and come up with innovative ideas (Tok & Kandemir 2015: 1635-1636). While there are a lot of ways to increase creativity, this thesis will focus specifically on creative writing and how it can influence student attitude toward writing in general.

The Estonian national curriculum for basic schools states that in the third stage of study (Forms 7-9), students must be “proficient in at least one foreign language at a level that allows him or her to communicate in writing and orally and to read and understand age-appropriate foreign-language texts” (Estonian Government 2014). By the end of form 9 in L1 classes, students should be able to find information required for text writing from the library or the internet; pick relevant sources; know the stages of writing; know how to write different texts (term papers, essays, comments, opinion pieces, CVs, applications or explanatory texts) purposefully; mediate texts with appropriate length and precision while referencing the source as well as write their opinion on a text politely and pertinently (Vabariigi Valitsus 2011a: 15-16). By the end of Form 9 in Literature class, students should be able to compile a presentation based on a book, write a comprehensive and coherent

descriptive text or a discursive essay on a literary text which expresses their points of view based on examples from the original texts in a comprehensible, stylistically appropriate as well as morphologically and orthographically correct way in their L1 (Vabariigi Valitusus 2011a: 24). In their L2, students should be able to write on the same level that they can speak at (Vabariigi Valitsus 2011b: 10) and by the end of basic school, that level should be B1.2 for English (Vabariigi Valitusus 2011b: 13). This means that they should be able to write short texts based on familiar topics (Vabariigi Valitsus 2011b: 13); compile a summary using information from different sources; describe an actual and imaginary event; mediate experiences, feelings and events, write a short opinion essay on a familiar topic but may have inaccuracies in conveying their thought or opinions which do not hinder comprehension (Vabariigi Valitsus 2011b: 24-25).

The lack of focus on creative outlets for writing might be due to the Estonian curriculum being quite dense and, in my own experience as a teacher and in the experiences of the colleagues I have spoken to about this topic, not allowing the teachers to delve into topics but rather being forced to pick and choose through the material in order to teach the students everything they need in the exam due to time constraints. The students, being expected to do well on exams in order to get into their chosen secondary or vocational school, are thus not motivated to write creatively when they could be practicing for their exams, especially in Form 9. This kind of focus on grades is not the healthiest and may result in perpetual stress and anxiety in some students. It may also result in them not learning the cognitive skills that would benefit them later in life.

A person`s attitude toward a particular subject can influence how motivated they are to learn or practice it. If a student has a bad attitude towards Russians for example, it will be difficult to motivate them into learning Russian. The same can be said for writing. If a student views writing as only a means to get their point across, they will not be motivated into trying

to use writing to explore deeper thoughts and emotions as well as to learn more abstract and difficult vocabulary necessary for reaching second language fluency on a native or near-native speaker level. The purpose of this thesis is to analyse whether giving students a chance to write on more creative topics will change their attitude towards writing. The chance for writing was given to the students through the use of writing interventions.

Writing interventions are tasks or sets of tasks aimed at developing specific sub-skills of writing the writer in question might have issues with. These interventions are commonly used to help students with dyslexia (DSF 2020) or other specifically writing-related disabilities (Carmichael & Hale 2015) but can be used by anyone. The tasks are usually short, around 5-10 minutes and can be added almost anywhere inside a lesson so that students get practice working on the writing subskill they might have issues with without the task needing to be the main focus of the lesson. Some writing intervention strategies, such as teaching adolescents strategies for planning, revising and editing have been shown to have hugely positive effects on students' writing (Graham & Perin 2007: 466). Free-writing sessions can also be seen as writing interventions and have also been shown to have a positive effect on students' writing (Appoo et al. 2016), which is why free-writing was chosen as part of the method for this study.

The first hypothesis of this thesis is that students are more willing to write if the topic they are writing on is interesting or motivating to them, the reasoning being that the more pleasurable the activity, the more motivated the person should be to do it. The second hypothesis is that the topic itself plays a role in whether the students want to write about it and that there is a difference between student attitude toward socially neutral and socially loaded topics, the reasoning being that if the students do not like the topics they are asked to write about, they might develop a negative attitude toward the writing tasks as well (Ismail et al. 2012), as could be the case for why they dislike writing now. The third hypothesis of

this thesis is that language level plays a role on how students perceive writing, the reason being that higher language level students should be more motivated to express their ideas on different topics (Hyland & Hyland 2006), have more experience with writing (Kellogg 2008) and have less anxiety in terms of making grammatical mistakes (Smith 2013) and so should have a good attitude towards writing.

The present thesis aims to assess whether giving students this creative writing outlet that is missing from the curriculum at the moment, will change their attitude toward writing in general through looking at the effect scores of the pre- and post-test scores for attitude and motivation and how they might be related to one another. Thus, the thesis at hand consists of a literature review, which highlights what writing is, why students have problems writing, how it is linked to attitude, the neurology behind writing as well as the benefits of creative writing, analysis of the data collected with the Self-Beliefs, Writing Beliefs, and Attitudes Survey and discussion of the forementioned topics.

## THE EFFECTS OF WRITING: A LITERATURE REVIEW

The aim of this review is to provide background on how writing is developed, the problems students have with it as well as the benefits of creative writing. The topic of creative writing has been thoroughly researched from multiple perspectives including its role in second language learning (Smith 2013), neurological effect (Zhou 2018), effects on anxiety and depression (Lowe 2006), why students dislike writing (Ismail et al. 2012) and so on. This literature review is based on papers and books written between 1973 and 2016. The literature review discusses students' problems with writing, how attitude towards writing is linked to writing success, the neurological processes behind creative writing as well as how creative writing benefits students.

Before any creative writing can be used or developed, one must develop general writing skills. There are several theories as to how writing skills are developed, but this thesis will look at two of them, the first of which was described by Ronald T. Kellogg in 2008. Kellogg describes the writing skill as being a skill that can be developed as any other and splits it into three stages: knowledge-telling, knowledge-transforming, and knowledge-crafting (Kellogg 2008: 4) where the writer gradually advances from one to the next through time and practice (Table 1). The first ten years, the knowledge-telling phase, consists of the writer's planning being limited to idea retrieval and limited interaction of planning and translating with limited reviewing (Kellogg 2008: 4). Writers in this stage generally think about what they want to write and translate it into text not focusing on or not comprehending what the text actually says during the composition process or how a reader might perceive it as keeping all of this in mind at once would be too much for their working memory (Kellogg 2008: 6). As time goes on and the writer enters the knowledge-transforming stage, the next ten years, they start to have interaction between planning, translating, and reviewing with



the author primarily reviewing their representation (Kellogg 2008: 4). The writer starts thinking about how to best express themselves in their writing, which might mean that the author writes and rewrites their text several times in order to build a representation of what the text says and writing becomes a way of constituting knowledge instead of merely retrieving it (Kellogg 2008: 6-7). The final, knowledge-crafting, stage sees the same interaction between planning, translating, and reviewing with the author reviewing both their representation and text representation meaning they put focus on their ideas, the words in the text as well as how the reader might perceive the text (Kellogg 2008: 4). Developing an expertise in writing takes time and practice and a person might be in one category for their L1 and L2. This idea can be seen in the national curriculum described in the introduction where students in their L1 were expected to be able to relay information from appropriate sources but also to give their own opinions on the topics they were writing about signalling a need for the student to be in at least the knowledge-transforming stage while in their L2 they are expected to write on a known topic, signalling that the students need only be at the knowledge-telling phase. This makes sense as mastery is gained with experience, which the students have a lot more of in their L1 than in their L2.

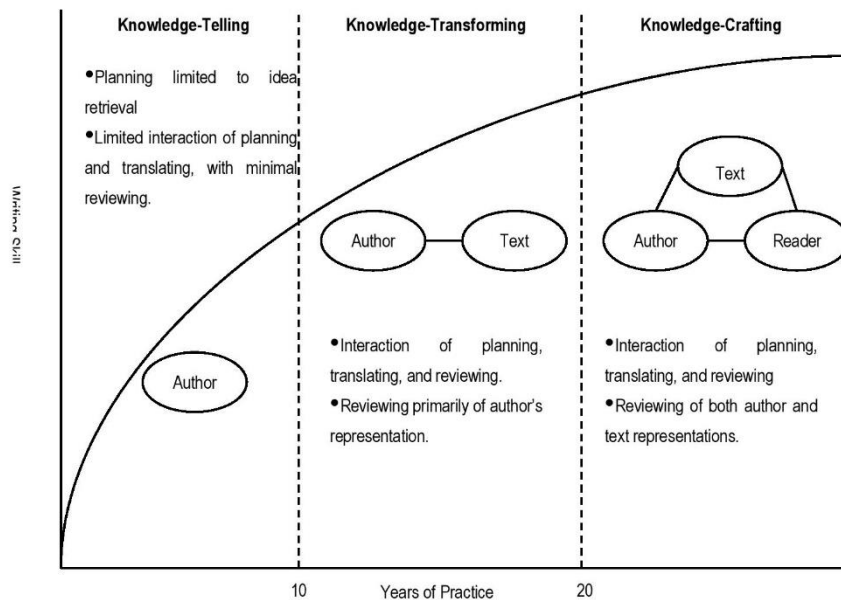


Table 1: Kellogg's model of writing development (Kellogg 2008: 4)

A revised version of the second model for writing development was described by Hayes (2012). This model is more detailed than Kellogg's and describes writing on the control, process, and resource levels. The control level consists of motivation, goal setting and a mix of current plans and writing schemas with motivation being the catalyst to the entire process (Hayes 2012: 371). This suggests that motivation plays a key role in initiating the writing process. The second, process level, describes how the task materials or written plans and/or collaborators and critics propose a plan of action, which the writer translates and transcribes using transcribing technology into a text-written-so-far all while evaluating each step throughout the process (Hayes 2012: 371). The third, resource level, highlights which resources are needed to start writing. These include attention, long-term memory, working memory and reading (Hayes 2012: 371).

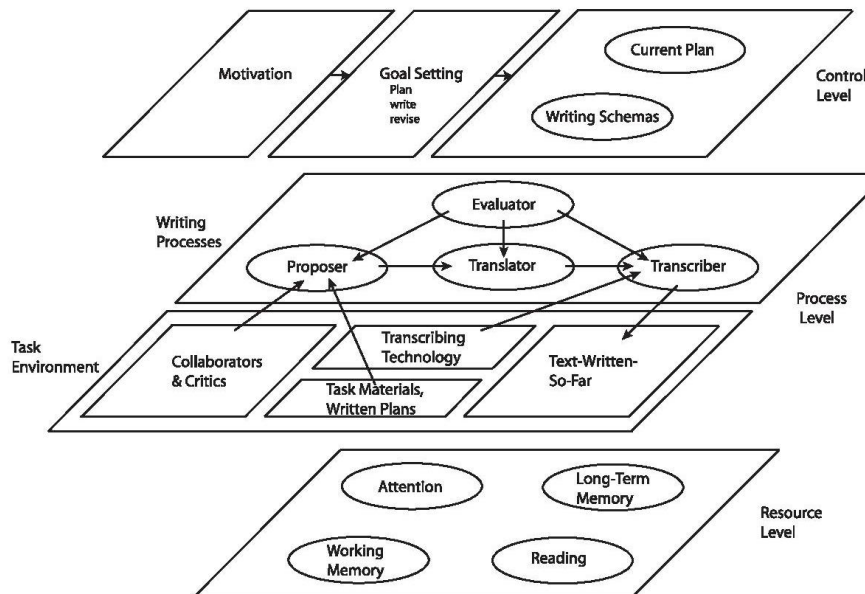


Table 2: Hayes's model of writing development (Hayes 2012: 371)

Kellogg's model has some of the same components in its basic structure as Hayes's model, but it describes writing mainly on the process level. In Kellogg's model, firstly, the writer uses the proposition made by the task, translates it into text and transcribes it. In the second phase, the writer does the same steps but evaluates only the proposition and transcribing part of the process. In the third phase the writer evaluates all three parts of the process as well as the text-written-so-far from the point of view of the reader. Kellogg also writes that working memory is important for developing the writing skill but does not mention any of the other aspects Hayes finds important.

### Reasons behind students' issues with writing

The reasons behind students' problems with writing can be classified into three main subcategories, the first of which concerns student specific views. As Arshavskaya (2015)

used socially sensitive topics in their course, they highlight that some topics might be too difficult for some pupils to write about as they might affect the students too deeply and emotionally (Arshavskaya 2015: 74). Discussing these topics is definitely necessary but I believe the teacher should carefully consider which class they use these topics with, as the result might otherwise be opposite to what the teacher is aiming towards. Moreover, Ismail et al. (2012), whose paper concerns academic rather than creative writing, compile a list of writing-related issues. The student specific problems include lack of interest or laziness and a lack of desire to put in effort into writing (Ismail et al. 2012: 1094), which Fareed et al. also mention as lack of motivation (Fareed et al. 2016: 87). Fareed et al. (2016) mention pupils' lack of ideas and coherence as a problem as well. While lack of coherence can be explained by a low language level, lack of vocabulary, difficulties in grammar and syntax or wanting to finish a piece of writing quickly as well as any of the previously mentioned reasons mentioned by Ismail et al. (2012), a lack of ideas may be due to writer's block or a need for structured writing prompts. Ismail et al. found that students do not want to improvise in their writing and rely too much on structured and guided writing (Ismail et al. 2012: 1094). As mentioned previously, Hyland and Hyland (2006) found that lower-level students tended to take their teachers' feedback into consideration more directly, as apposed to higher level students who used the feedback as a basis for their own ideas (Hyland & Hyland 2006: 89) confirming the previous idea of students in some cases relying on guided writing. Setyowati and Sukmawan also bring out that while the majority of students did not avoid writing, they became more anxious when they knew it was going to be evaluated suggesting that a lot of students might lack confidence in themselves or their writing (Setyowati & Sukmawan 2016: 373) and might require more reinforcement from their peers and teachers. Lastly, out of the student specific problems, Ismail et al. mention pupils' tendency to either rush through their work without revision (Ismail et al. 2012: 1094) or procrastinate doing their work until the

last minute (Ismail et al. 2012: 1095), which Fareed et al. mention as lack of concentration (Fareed et al. 2016: 87). They also add students` lack of vocabulary writing anxiety (Fareed et al. 2016: 86) and lack of exposure to receptive skills and writing practice as issues (Fareed et al. 2016: 87). Lee (2006) found that students` self-perceived writing apprehension was related to, “their composing process, including frequency of blocking, premature editing, poor planning and interpretive strategies, and negative attitudes toward writing based on evaluations from others” (Lee 2005: 360).

The second, much shorter, subcategory of issues concerns teacher specific problems. Ismail et al bring out uninteresting courses (Ismail et al. 2012: 1096) as a problem for students, which suggests the teachers` lack of ability to motivate students or a lack of knowledge what the students might be interested in. They also mention no effective writing guides or resources (Ismail et al. 2012: 1096) as a problem, which suggests lack of effort or skill on the teachers` part to supply these to their students. Leki also brings out that the way students are exposed to the L2 and what methods are used in teaching L2 might affect student attitude in cases where, immigrants have been exposed to informal, conversational L2 and them then needing to then write academic texts for example (Leki 1970: 11). Hyland and Hyland, when discussing teacher written feedback point out that a lot of it focuses on grammar (Hyland & Hyland 2006: 86), is too indirect (Hyland & Hyland 2006: 87) and contains hedging (Hyland & Hyland 2006: 87). These aspects might work well to boost student confidence, but not very well in improving writing as students might not take into account feedback they dislike (Hyland & Hyland 2006: 87) or blindly make changes to their texts without thinking the advice through (Hyland & Hyland 2006: 87). Students` aforementioned reliance on structured and guided writing might also stem from the teacher`s teaching methods. Fareed et al. sum all these issues up as problems caused by untrained teachers and ineffective teaching methods (Fareed et al. 2016: 87). Finally, Lee points out

that students reported negative experiences from first language instruction as impacting their attitude towards second language acquisition (Lee 2005: 360), which means that it is not always the L2 teacher that might have influenced a student`s attitude.

The third subcategory of issues concern how society views creative writing. Wright et. al. (2020) found that, in the U.S. context, where some seventh-grade students were tested on their writing, their motivation to write was significantly lower than that of their sixth and eighth grade peers suggesting how the curriculum is set up might lead to issues for some students (Wright et al 2020: 164). This ties into what Fareed et al. point out, that the examination system does not encourage creative writing (Fareed et al. 2016: 87). They also highlight issues with our society not putting importance on writing (Fareed et al. 2016: 87) and large classroom sizes as well as lengthy courses (Fareed et al. 2016: 87) as contributing to the problem while Ismail et al. credit a lack of time to practice writing during class time (Ismail et al. 2012: 1096) and a need to do it outside of class. This is difficult mainly due to all the aforementioned student related issues with writing.

### Relationship between students` attitude and writing success

There have been several studies done to examine whether there is a correlation between students` attitude toward writing and their success in writing. The topic is important because it shows whether students with positive attitudes toward writing are more successful in writing and in turn can give insight into whether it is important to boost students` attitude in order to achieve better writing.

Hashemian and Heidari (2013) show that, out of the thirty M.A. students studied, those with high instrumental motivation, i.e. they wanted to score well on the test for

example, showed no significant relationship between motivation and success in L2 academic writing, while students with high integrative motivation, i.e. their motivation came from wanting to blend into the second language culture for example, showed higher success in L2 academic writing the higher their motivation (Hashemian & Heidari 2012: 482-483). The same study shows that there is a positive correlation between positive attitude and success in L2 academic writing and a negative correlation between negative attitude and success in L2 academic writing (Hashemian & Heidari 2012: 484). Graham et al. (2007) studied the structural relationship between writing attitude and writing achievement in first and third grade students. Out of the three possible models considered, the first being that writing attitude influences performance, the second being that performance influences attitude and the third being that their influence is reciprocal, it was found that the first model “not only provided a good description of the data, but the direct path from attitude to achievement was statistically significant.” (Graham et al 2007: 532). An interesting idea to note, is that, according to Lee, there was no significant relationship between free writing frequency and writing proficiency (Lee 2005: 362). Moreover, Lee found that students who read more had less apprehension toward writing and had more competence in the conventions of writing (Lee 2005: 361). This, as Lee also notes, “is also consistent with research studies demonstrating the positive influence of reading in the second language on second language writing proficiency.” (Lee 2005: 361).

Sy-ying Lee found that writing apprehension and writer`s block were linked and that that one may raise the other (Lee 2005: 359) but that blocking had a larger impact on apprehension meaning that the block was most likely the cause of the negative attitude. The study found, however, that neither writer`s block nor writing apprehension had any impact on student writing performance (Lee 2005: 359). Montserrat Castillo identifies the common reasons for writer`s block to be lack of inspiration, illness, depression, financial pressure,

and a sense of failure (Castillo 2014: 1043). They highlight students' issues with "academic trait procrastination", meaning that students procrastinate specifically on their academic written assignments, as well as perfectionism (Castillo 2014: 1043) and that it seems to be related to premature editing and a lack of strategies for dealing with complex writing tasks (Castillo 2014: 1043). Peter Elbow writes in their 1973 book "Writing without teachers", that the way to combat writer's block is to just write any and all thoughts that might come to mind in a designated amount of time and leave yourself time to sort through the ideas later (Elbow 1973: 3-4). The reason behind this is that the writer is not immediately pressured into writing well, editing is done later instead of during the planning phase and this method of freewriting is good for relieving writing anxiety, which in some cases causes writer's block (Elbow 1973: 4-7). The goal of Elbow's method is "cooking", in which two conflicting elements interact with each other and one being transformed through the interaction of these elements (Elbow 1973: 49). Cooking can happen through discussing a text with another person (Elbow 1973: 49-50), encouraging conflicts and contradictions in one's own thinking (Elbow 1973: 50-51) and so on. One of the reasons for writer's block could also be people's adaptive or maladaptive ideas of writing. This topic was examined by Montserrat Castello, Lynn McAlpine and Kirsi Pyhältö (2017), who classified adaptive perceptions and actions as those, which are functional and advance the writer's writing goals, such as productivity and a view of writing as a way to create knowledge, while maladaptive perceptions limited the potential of individuals to advance these same goals such as procrastination, such as perfectionism, the perception of the writing as an innate ability and writing blocks (Castello et al. 2017: 1110).

One of the important aspects of attitude and motivation in writing, in my opinion, is attitude towards feedback and a writer's motivation to seek it. While I did not use feedback as a part of my study, for a couple of different reasons, it has been shown have positive as



well as negative effects on student attitude. Hyland & Hyland (2006) discuss the effectiveness of teacher written, oral, peer, self, computer-mediated and corpora-based feedback. They found that, when discussing teacher written feedback, findings in this field “have been conflicting, largely due to the widely varying student populations, types of writing and feedback practices examined and the diverse research designs employed.” (Hyland & Hyland 2006: 85). They state that teachers “have to weigh their choice of comments to accomplish informal, pedagogic, and interpersonal goals simultaneously while taking account of likely student reactions,” (Hyland & Hyland 2006: 85). They also discuss the issue of negative feedback and its effect on students as well as the negative effect of overly positive feedback (Hyland & Hyland 2006: 86). In short, feedback can be effective when given honestly and in a way that encourages students to think for themselves, not just having them copy the teacher’s corrections. The same concerns on the effectiveness of written feedback have been raised regarding teacher oral feedback as Hyland and Hyland point out that while some L2 language learners seek out writing conferences to gain oral feedback, some students might have social inhibitions about engaging with and questioning authority figures (Hyland & Hyland 2006: 89). They also found that generally, less able students followed their teachers’ suggestions more closely while more able students were more likely to use them as a starting point, suggesting that a major component of the teacher’s choice in feedback should take into account the language level of the learners (Hyland & Hyland 2006: 89). Waller and Papi (2017) surmised that students, who had an incremental view of writing intelligence, i.e. writing is a skill that can be bettered with practice and experience, sought out feedback for their writing (WCF) while students who had an entitic view of writing intelligence, i.e. writing skill was fixed and unchangeable, avoided getting feedback on their writing (Waller & Papi 2017: 62). The same notion was expressed by Setyowati and Sukmawan (2016), who studied Indonesian students’ attitude

toward writing and found that students with a negative attitude toward writing found it difficult and stressful as well as thought that there was little they could do to improve while students with a positive attitude felt that writing was interesting, challenging, and fun (Setyowati & Sukwaman 2016: 372). These findings show that feedback can be effective when teachers have found out their students views and can tailor their feedback to each student`s writing view, preference and language level.

### Benefits of creative writing

The benefits of creative writing can be classified into four main subcategories, the first of which concerns benefits to students` grammar. Smith discusses that creative writing is a good tool for non-core vocabulary study (Smith 2013: 14) and encourages cognitive awareness of emotional and expressive vocabulary (Smith 2013: 14), which are essential to effective self-expression. Moreover, creative writing helps pupils notice rhyme and meter patterns which might be missing in the learners` first language, as was the case with Smith`s Japanese learners (Smith 2013: 15-16). They also note that creative writing helps pupils learn to express themselves figuratively, which indicates higher language competence (Smith 2013: 17). Learning grammar through writing can be a good way to change pupils` understanding that grammar is overwhelmingly difficult and can motivate pupils into learning it.

The second subcategory concerns pupils` cognition. On this topic, Smith only writes that, “creative writing, in particular poetry, provides a means of combining meaning-focused and form-focused tasks” (Smith 2013: 13), both of which are important for language acquisition and both of which are needed to boost pupils` cognition. Ekaterina Arshavskaya, whose creative writing tasks consisted of pupils researching and writing about critical social

issues such as women`s rights etc., points out research which found that creative writing helps promote more sophisticated thinking (Arshavskaya 2015: 68). Tok and Kandemir (2015) agree with her, stating that creative writing is effective in increasing pupils` writing achievement (Tok & Kandemir 2015: 1640). Arshavskaya also emphasizes that “by infusing L2 writing curriculum with critical discourse, L2 writing instructors can help students develop critical consciousness and empathy and promote students` exploration of the nature of knowledge and power” (Arshavskaya 2015: 70). Having pupils familiarize themselves with social issues not only boosts their vocabulary and ability to discuss upon these topics effectively, but also teaches them empathy and helps them understand the world better.

The third subcategory of benefits of creative writing concerns pupils` perception of themselves and writing. Arshavskaya points out findings, which conclude that writing is a good motivational tool for pupils who are culturally quieter or are uneasy speaking out in English (Arshavskaya 2015: 68). Hyland & Hyland (2006) also point out that a large part in student motivation was played by teacher feedback (Hyland & Hyland 2006: 83). The feedback had to be understandable, yet indirect in order for the students not to simply copy it into their writing as was found to be the case with students who had lower language levels (Hyland & Hyland 2006: 85, 88). Hyland and Hyland point out that some learners sought out writing conferences originally meant for L1 writers, while others felt socially inhibited from delving into meaningful discussion over their writing with the teacher who was seen as an authority (Hyland & Hyland 2006: 89). This finding is in line with Arshavskaya`s, which was mentioned before. Leki (1970) emphasizes, that due to the affective variables present in teens, making them intensely self-conscious and psychologically vulnerable (Leki 1970: 17), learning can take place, but should be done in an environment which “seeks to minimize fear, nervousness, and self-consciousness” (Leki 1970: 17), which might inhibit them from taking in L2 input. Smith also agrees that when given creative writing tasks, pupils have

more motivation while still learning L2 grammar rules (Smith 2013: 17). Setyowati and Sukmawan (2016) found that those students who had a positive attitude towards writing saw it as a way to get more knowledge on certain topics and as “a way to share ideas with other people as a means for self-reflection to express themselves and to solve their personal problems.” (Setyowati & Sukmawan 2016: 372). Tok and Kandemir, also bring out that creative writing has a positive effect on pupils` writing dispositions (Tok & Kandemir 2015: 1635).

The fourth subcategory of benefits of creative writing concerns its effect as a therapeutic tool. King et al. (2013) studied how creative writing might play an important role in mental illness recovery. The eleven participants of this study had diagnoses of schizophreniform disorders, major mood disorders, and/or personality disorders (King et al. 2013: 448) and the researchers proposed that creative writing contributed to the development of personal identity, repair of symbolic functioning, and that it can remediate cognitive functioning (King et al. 2013: 450). They found that there was no evidentiary link between writing and recovery, though they did find some suggestive evidence (King et al 2013: 450). They state that the most beneficial parts of writing are the techniques the person develops during the process, for example the enhanced capacity to develop and sustain a coherent narrative (King et al.: 450), the ability to make use of locally- or informally-available resources (King et al.: 451) as well as optimized cognitive remediation benefits (King et al.: 451). This is because “the development of writing technique requires the development of cognitive procedures starting with basic processes, such as concentration, and then learning rules and more complex decision-making concerning style and form” (King et al.: 451). Lowe (2006) states that writing can benefit, but also worsen one`s mental health as while writing itself can be fulfilling, the inability to put words to paper might be very frustrating (Lowe 2006: 60). They also state that writing can influence one`s physical health. Bottling

up long-term stress and constantly confronting upsetting experiences may weaken the immune system (Lowe 2006: 61). Once the participants in this study wrote about their traumatic experiences for four days, their bodies showed evidence of an enhanced immune response (Lowe 2006: 61). Lowe argues that this is not because “getting something off one’s chest” makes one feel better but that writing influences how one thinks of things (Lowe 2006: 62). The writing probably helped people better understand their traumatic experience and the emotions it elicited, changed thought patterns to moderate intrusive thoughts about the trauma (Lowe 2006: 62) as well as helped to gain a deeper self-understanding (Lowe 2006: 63). Gillie Bolton describes the type of writing Lowe’s participants did in “The Therapeutic Potential of Creative Writing”. In the chapter “The Healing Pen”, they write that all one needs is a blank piece of paper, one’s favourite writing tool and “a willingness to trust [one’s] hand to write whatever comes, in whatever order, in whatever way, without worrying about spelling, punctuation or even sentencing and paragraphing” (Bolton 1999: 16). They also bring examples of why writing can be healing, including it being fun and stimulating (Bolton 1999:16), helping express important things (Bolton 1999: 16) and enabling to create something beautiful (Bolton 1999: 17). They argue that life, unlike an essay, is extraordinarily muddled and that the content and process of creative writing, being formless, helps express that (Bolton 1999: 20).

## The neurology behind creativity and its effect on creative writing

The effects of creative writing can be seen on a neurological level. The brain forms neural pathways to move information from one region of the brain to another (PennState 2021). The neural pathways that are used more often, get reenforced and they get easier for the brain to use. This is how habits are formed as the brain develops its “default” pathways

(PennState 2021). Thus, it can be surmised that the neural pathways created and used while creative writing, especially if they benefit the person in other areas of life outside writing, are beneficial and should be encouraged. Shah et al. (2011) discuss the neural correlates of creative writing. They found, using an MRI, that brainstorming activates the part of the brain (the inferior frontal gyrus) associated with, “a flexible and divergent verbal thinking style quite similar to verbal fluency. Hence, they enable the verbal concept for composing the story.” (Shah et al. 2011: 1095). According to the study, the same part of the brain is essential to planning a story (the left dorsolateral prefrontal cortex and anterior cingulate cortex) associated with higher cognitive control as well as considered critical for creativity, maintaining working memory, cognitive flexibility and divergent thinking (Shah et al. 2011: 1095) as well as cognitively demanding tasks and selection processes. They also saw that during creative writing, when compared against copying, as well as during brainstorming, the areas in the brain associated with visual imagery (Shah et al. 2011: 1097), the occipital lobe, as well as semantic memory access and processing (Shah et al. 2011: 1097), the bilateral temporal poles, were activated. The parts of the brain associated with maintaining a high working memory load and creativity were also activated (Shah et al. 2011: 1097) suggesting that the brain was engaged in several tasks and trying to remember several sentences or ideas at the same time. These results:

*suppose that these frontal regions [shown to be activated during creative writing] are critical cognitive writing areas with respect to the high working memory load of the task itself, the required self-critical attitude of the writer [Ortheil, 2005], and because of general connections to areas with stored domain-specific knowledge, which is required for creative emergence [Heilman et al., 2003] (Shah et al. 2011:1097)*

The results found by Shah et al. show that, contrary to mainstream belief, it is not only one side of the brain that is responsible for creativity, but rather the entire brain. This was also found by Zhou (2018) who looked at the neuroscience of creativity and discussed its implication on education policy. They state that creativity involves the whole brain. “The

right and left hemisphere play a critical but disparate role at different stages of the creative process” (Zhou 2018: 22). Zhou states that people who are highly creative are biologically different from those who are less so (Zhou 2018: 23). This means that some students might have biological reasons behind not liking creative writing, though Zhou also states that as this is not very well researched, it is not yet known whether the biological differences of the brains of creative and non-creative people are inherited or developed later in life (Zhou 2018: 23). There is substantial evidence, however, that enhancing creativity via targeted cognitive education is possible (Zhou 2018: 25), showing that the brain has a certain amount of neuroplasticity, the ability of neuropathways to re-route and re-create new and potentially better applicable pathways (PennState 2021).

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, cognitive education is possible. Zhou brings up examples of creativity training that have been shown to be effective. These include puzzle based open-ended tasks and improvisational activities for example (Zhou 2016: 25). Bane (2010) explained why students might have problems with creative writing and how to combat these issues. Bane explains that the brain is typically divided into three major systems including the brain stem or “lizard brain”, which maintains body functions; the limbic system or “leopard brain” responsible for our capacity for emotions and fight-or-flight instincts, and finally the cerebral cortex or “learning brain”, which gives us the ability to problem solve, use language and reflect on and modify our behaviour among other things (Bane 2010: 43). They explain that the part of the brain called the Reticular Activating System (RAS) determines whether the limbic system or cerebral cortex is in control and that control is given to the cortex when we relax (Bane 2010: 43). This makes sense as evolutionally, in a fight-or-flight scenario we have to maintain focus on the issue causing this response and therefore have no need for symbolic, logical or creative thinking, which the cerebral cortex provides (Bane 2010, 43). As the cerebral cortex cannot explain

behaviour initiated by the limbic system, we can have a reaction to something without knowing the cause for the reaction (Bane 2010: 44-45). This can lead to students having a stress response reaction toward writing initiated by the limbic system and others thinking they are just lazy or lack willpower and that perpetuating the limbic system response even more as the student anticipates not being able to write (Bane 2010: 45). Bane also describes how the fight-flight-freeze response occurs in relation to writing. The freeze response, when prolonged, is typically called writer's block or the inability to put any words to paper, the fight response typically includes excessive criticism, negative self-talk, self-hate, perfectionism, and self-sabotage behaviours (Bane 2010: 46). This can also manifest in refusing to hear suggestions for revision, criticizing others and denying need for improvement (Bane 2010: 46-47). The flight (or flee) response is usually considered the most common, as people tend to want to escape or avoid uncomfortable situations. The flee response, in regard to writing, can manifest in distractions, the inability to sit still, creating other tasks that must be completed first, overscheduling or overcommitting to other priorities and procrastination (Bane 2010: 47). To combat this shift into the limbic system, Bane suggests breathing deeply for 5-10 minutes as one would do in yoga for example and states that researchers have success in relieving stress and anxiety through mindfulness meditation. This success was seen by researchers as brain scans of test groups showed less activity in the prefrontal lobe responsible for inhibiting the limbic system compared to people who practiced meditation daily for eight weeks (Bane 2010: 48). Bane also suggests playing relaxing music in class and aerobic exercise as well as a writing technique described by Robert Olen Butler as dreamstorming, where one sits or reclines in their writing space in a trancelike state and free-floats and free-associates as this reduces the need to be very speedy in generating ideas, which can be a source of anxiety and abandoning traditional critique sessions (Bane 2010: 48). Bane also suggests establishing rituals like eating lemon drops,



lighting candles, or playing a particular piece of music when writing as the limbic brain is also soothed by the familiarity of rituals (Bane 2010: 49).

Learning to write is a process and the process of writing encompasses several components. There are lots of reasons ranging from student-specific, teacher-specific, and society-specific, which explain why students do not have a great attitude toward writing, though it has been shown that there is positive correlation between students' positive attitude and writing achievement as well as that creative writing can benefit students' grammar, cognition, self-perception and can also be therapeutic in some cases. The reasons for this can be explained through looking at what happens in the brain during creative writing and how writing affects the brain.

## OVERVIEW OF THE METHODS OF THE EMPIRICAL STUDY

### Participants

The aim of the study was to examine whether giving students creative writing tasks changes their attitudes toward writing in general as specifically creative writing can be linked to raising student attitude by boosting their motivation to write. These students were chosen as a convenience sample as they are all students enrolled in my course, who have, to my knowledge, no previous experience with L2 creative writing. As the two other aims of the study were to examine whether the topics the students wrote about or their language level had any effect on their attitude, the study was carried out in four ESL classes with two classes consisting of 7<sup>th</sup> Form students (14 in one and 17 in the other) and two consisting of 9<sup>th</sup> Form students (16 in one and 17 in the other). While the two 7<sup>th</sup> Form classes were relatively similar in language level, one of the 9<sup>th</sup> Form was an advanced group. The 7<sup>th</sup> Formers have two 70-minute lessons and the 9<sup>th</sup> Formers have one 70-minute and one 40-minute lesson a week.

All of the students` parents were notified of the study and asked for permission to collect data on their children`s opinions via *Suhtlus*, a messaging platform connected to *Stuudium*, the electronic journal Tartu Kivilinna School uses to keep track of student attendance and grades. The students were asked to answer the Self-Beliefs, Writing Beliefs, & Attitude Survey (SWAS), do four writing tasks in class once a week for four weeks and then answer the SWAS questionnaire again. Because only the students who had done both surveys and the four writing tasks were chosen for the study, the researcher had to ask for the names of each student on both surveys and each of the writing tasks. To ensure anonymity no students are mentioned by name in the study, no examples of student writing

will be given and the groups will only be referred to be Form, not the corresponding letter of the class.

### The Self-Beliefs, Writing Beliefs, & Attitude Survey

The study consisted of a pre-test using the Self-Beliefs, Writing-Beliefs, & Attitude Survey (SWAS), which is a survey validated by Katherine Landau Wright, Tracey S. Hodges and Erin M. McTigue in 2019 (Wright et al. 2019). The same survey was used in 2020 to measure students` attitude towards writing, although the researchers did not measure changes in attitude, but average attitude towards writing, beliefs about self as writer and beliefs about writing scores between grades in the U.S. (Wright et al. 2020). This survey was chosen because it measured student attitude and motivation, the change of which, the present thesis aims to measure. An article describing the validation of the survey was found through Google Scholar by the researcher in early February and the authors of the validation paper were contacted, as the paper did not have the survey itself as an appendix. Within a week, the researchers provided the survey (Appendix 3) as well as instructions on how to administer it (Appendix 5). The survey was then reformatted as a Google Form (Appendix 4).

The SWAS measures four aspects of writing motivation: self-concept, self-efficacy, beliefs about writing and attitudes toward writing. The self-concept and self-efficacy scores can be added to measure beliefs about self as a writer and all four aspects make up a writing motivation score. The survey consists of thirty statements. The students had to answer whether the statement is a lot like them, a little like them, a little different from them or very different from them. Each answer was then given a point value between one and four. Each statement answered is coded as a number between 1 and 4. “A lot like me” is coded as 4, “A

little like me” is coded as 3, “A little different from me” is coded as 2 and “Very different from me” is coded as 1. Four out of the 30 statements are reverse coded, meaning that answering “Very different from me” needs to be coded as 4 et cetera. Adding together the scores of the different statements gives us a sum to measure each of the four aspects. The scores are then divided by the maximum score possible to get the construct average. Because all four aspects have a different number of corresponding statements, the maximum score for each statement is different. While the survey was carried out in full, as the survey measured self-concept, self-efficacy, beliefs about writing, attitude towards writing, beliefs about self as a writer as well as gives a writing motivation score, only the section of answers concerning attitude toward writing and the writing motivation score were analysed as attitude and motivation were shown in the literature to be highly linked. This was measured in the survey by statements 1 and 3, which are both reverse coded, as well as statements 4, 13, 17, 24, 25, 28 and 29. As this aspect has a maximum score of 36, the sum of the scores is divided by 36 to get the construct average.

The survey itself was formatted into Google Forms and distributed as a form to students throughout the first week of February. There were several reasons for this. Firstly, having the survey in electronic form made sure that the post-test could be administered online, if needed due to changes in Covid-19 restrictions as well as minimized the chance that the possible change in conducting method would not itself skew the results. Secondly, it made analysing the data easier as it saved time on manually transferring the data into an electronic platform. Finally, it saved time on the overall process of conducting the surveys among the students as well eliminating the need for printing, sorting, handing out and collecting the sheets of paper. The interventions were carried out in Quizizz as four weeks was seen as too long of a period to ensure contact lessons due to the changing nature of Covid-19 protocols. The videos for the intervention were shown on a projector in class or

showed through Google Meet and the students were asked to write their thoughts in Quizizz as an open answer. The reason for this was that Quizizz allowed me to ensure that even if classes were remote, I could see that the students were doing the assignment, which would not be the case with Google Forms, for example. As there was a school break at the end of February, the last of the four weeks fell into the first week of March. As I did not want the result of the post-test skewed by having the students take it right after writing, I waited until the second lesson of the first week of March to carry it out.

### The process of the study

After the pre-test was conducted, the students were shown a video once a week for four weeks. For the writing interventions, sixteen videos were chosen (Appendix 1 and Appendix 2). This was because the original plan for this thesis was to give the students a pre-test, have them write for 5 minutes once a week for eight weeks and then do the post-test. Due to time constraints and the possibility that the period might be interrupted by the school going into distance learning, the goal was changed to having the students write for three minutes once a week for four weeks. Eight out of the sixteen videos were on socially loaded topics (Appendix 1) and eight on socially neutral topics (Appendix 2). After that, a random number generator was used to pick four neutral and four loaded videos.

The first 7<sup>th</sup> Form group was given a 3-minute writing intervention once a week for four weeks with four of the videos from Appendix 1. The second 7<sup>th</sup> Form was given the same interventions during the same timeframe with the videos from Appendix 2. Both 9<sup>th</sup> Form classes were given the same interventions during the same timeframe with videos selected from amongst the videos shown to the 7<sup>th</sup> Form students. After the four weeks, a

post-test consisting of the same Self-Beliefs, Writing-Beliefs, & Attitude Survey (SWAS) was conducted among the students.

The videos, which ended up getting picked from the first set, were Victim blaming, LGBT+ short film, Physical disability and Deafness From the second set, Charlie Chaplin, Good deeds, Kitchen and Found a stick were chosen. For the 9<sup>th</sup> formers, a random number generator was used to pick videos from amongst the videos already chosen for the 7<sup>th</sup> Formers. These ended up being Found a stick, Victim blaming, Deafness and Charlie Chaplin. The videos were shown in the order they were picked from the random number generator.

The classes were chosen to investigate two different hypotheses. The first pair of classes are in the 7<sup>th</sup> Form. Both classes are similar in language level. One of the 7<sup>th</sup> Form groups got four randomly picked videos from amongst a set of videos discussing socially loaded or relevant topics such as disabilities, LGBT+ acceptance etc. The other 7<sup>th</sup> Form class got four randomly picked videos from neutral topics. With the 7<sup>th</sup> Formers, I wanted to see whether the students would respond better to more light-hearted or thought-provoking topics and whether the difference in topic would influence their writing motivation in different ways. The two 9<sup>th</sup> Form classes were different in language level and were given four randomly picked videos from the set of eight that were randomly picked for the 7<sup>th</sup> Formers. This was to ensure that the results were not going to be skewed by new videos. With the 9<sup>th</sup> Formers I wanted to see whether the students' language level affected their baseline attitude toward writing and, if that were the case, whether their attitude change would be significantly more stark compared to that of the students in the same age-group.

Only the scores of students who completed all four of the writing tasks as well as the preliminary and post-questionnaire will be used in this thesis. The quality of the completion

of the writing tasks will not be considered a disqualifying factor as the students are getting writing practice regardless of its quality. Based on these criteria, the first 7<sup>th</sup> Form group ended up consisting of 10 students, the second 7<sup>th</sup> Form group consisted of 9 students, the first 9<sup>th</sup> Form group consisted of 6 students and the second 9<sup>th</sup> Form group consisted of 7 students.

## Analysis of the preliminary empirical data

The data that was collected for this thesis concerned the attitudes toward writing part of the Self-Beliefs, Writing Beliefs, and Attitudes Survey. For the purposes of data analysis, the mean, Standard Deviation (SD) and Cohen`s D were found. The mean or the average, was found by calculating the total for attitude or motivation in each group and dividing the sum by the number of people in the group (Glen 2021b). The standard deviation refers to how much the data is “spread out” around the mean (Glen 2021d). The preliminary and concluding standard deviations for each group were added to find the pooled SD (Table 3), which shows the weighted average of Standard Deviations for two or more groups (Glen, 2021c). The means and pooled SD were then used to find Cohen`s D (Table 4), which is one of the most common ways to measure effect size (Glen 2021a). As there were fewer than 50 participants in each group, the correction factor was added to the formula when calculated. The  $M_e$  and  $M_c$  in the formula signify the means and  $N$  signifies sample size. The rule of thumb for interpreting Cohen`s D is that small effect is around 0.2, medium effect is around 0.5 and large effect around 0.8 (Glen 2021a). Finding the effect size is important as it gives a better understanding of whether the changes seen between the preliminary and concluding data are statistically significant. If they are, it can be concluded that the writing interventions have had a significant effect on student attitude and motivation.

$$SD_{pooled} = \sqrt{\frac{(SD_1^2 + SD_2^2)}{2}}$$

Table 3: The formula for pooled Standard Deviation (Glen 2021c)



$$d = \frac{M_E - M_C}{\text{Sample } SD \text{ pooled}} \times \left( \frac{N-3}{N-2.25} \right) \times \sqrt{\frac{N-2}{N}}$$

correction factor for  
small samples <50

Table 4: The formula Cohen`s D with the correction factor (Glen 2021a)

### Results of preliminary empirical data

The preliminary mean score for attitudes towards writing of the first 7<sup>th</sup> Form group (Group 1) was 0.569 and the standard deviation (SD) was 0.21 (Table 5). The mean score for the second 7<sup>th</sup> Form group (Group 2) was 0.636 and the SD was 0.19 (Table 5). The mean score for the first 9<sup>th</sup> Form group (Group 3) was 0.477 and the SD was 0.12 (Table 5). Finally, the mean score for the second 9<sup>th</sup> Form group (Group 4) was 0.626 and the SD was 0.13 (Table 5).

As was mentioned previously, motivation was closely linked to attitude. This is why the preliminary scores for motivation will also be discussed in Table 6. The preliminary mean score for motivation in Group 1 was 0.633 and the standard deviation was 0.16 (Table 6). The mean score for Group 2 was 0.686 and the SD was 0.14 (Table 6). The mean score for Group 3 was 0.586 and the SD was 0.06 (Table 6). Finally, the mean score for Group 4 was 0.669 and the SD was 0.12 (Table 6).

Group	Mean	Standard deviation
Group 1	0.569	0.21

Group 2	0.636	0.19
Group 3	0.477	0.12
Group 4	0.626	0.13

Table 5: Distribution of means and standard deviation for attitude between the four groups

Group	Mean	Standard deviation
Group 1	0.633	0.16
Group 2	0.686	0.14
Group 3	0.586	0.06
Group 4	0.669	0.12

Table 6: Distribution of means and standard deviation for motivation between the four groups

### Concluding data

The concluding data was drawn based on the findings of both the preliminary and post-test data (Table 5). The data shows that in Group 1, the mean remained the same between the two tests, though the standard deviation became smaller by 0.06 (Table 7). The mean of Group 2 rose by 0.021 and the SD rose by 0.01 (Table 7). The mean of Group 3 rose by 0.032 and the SD rose by 0.04 (Table 7). The mean of Group 4 fell by 0.035 and the SD fell by 0.01 (Table 7).

The data for motivation shows that, in three out of the four groups, motivation declined (Table 8). In Group 1, the mean of motivation declined by 0.006 and the SD became smaller by 0.01 (Table 8). In Group 2, the same mean declined by 0.013 and the SD remained the same (Table 8). In Group 3, the same mean declined by 0.007 and the SD rose by 0.03 (Table 8). Finally, in Group 4, the same mean rose by 0.002 and the SD became smaller by 0.02 (Table 8).

Group	Preliminary mean	Concluding mean	Preliminary SD	Concluding SD
Group 1	0.569	0.569	0.21	0.15
Group 2	0.636	0.657	0.19	0.20
Group 3	0.477	0.509	0.12	0.16
Group 4	0.626	0.591	0.13	0.12

Table 7: Distribution of both the preliminary and concluding means and standard deviation for attitude between the four groups.

Group	Preliminary mean	Concluding mean	Preliminary SD	Concluding SD
Group 1	0.633	0.627	0.16	0.15
Group 2	0.686	0.673	0.14	0.14
Group 3	0.586	0.579	0.06	0.09

Group 4	0.669	0.671	0.12	0.1
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Table 8: Distribution of both the preliminary and concluding means and standard deviation for motivation between the four groups.

For attitude in Group 1, Cohen's  $d$  was 0 as the means were equal. Cohen's  $d$  in Group 2 was 0.08, signifying that the interventions had a very small positive effect on the attitudes of students. In Group 3, Cohen's  $d$  was 0.15, which showed that the group had the most significant positive change. Cohen's  $d$  in Group 4 was -0.2, signifying a small negative effect on the attitudes of students.

For motivation in Group 1, Cohen's  $D$  was -0.03 signifying a very slight decrease in motivation. In Group 2, Cohen's  $D$  was -0.07 signifying a slightly bigger, yet still quite insignificant decrease in motivation. In Group 3, Cohen's  $D$  was -0.04 and finally, in Group 4 it was 0.01, signifying a slight increase in motivation.

### Changes in attitude and motivation by Group

The information in the tables that are presented below have been sorted by the smallest score of the pre-test to the largest score in the post-test. This was done to ensure that people could not identify the students by alphabetical order.

In Group 1, there were a few students whose attitude increased throughout the process as shown by the orange line in the graph below (Table 9). Most of the students however, showed a decrease in their attitude towards writing, zeroing out the group as mentioned in the previous chapter. It is interesting to note however, that while the highest score was seen in a student whose post-test showed a decrease in their attitude, the lowest

score was shown by a student whose attitude increased dramatically suggesting that writing interventions might decrease attitude toward writing if the student already has a good attitude towards it beforehand.

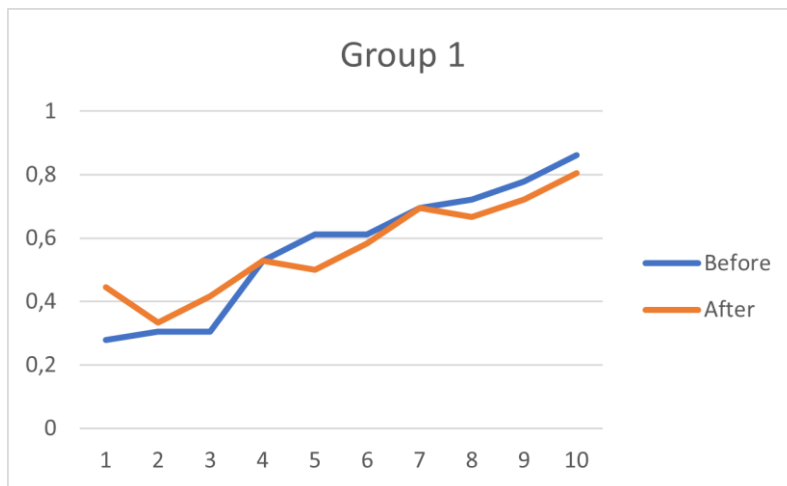


Table 9: The pre-test and post-test attitudes of Group 1

In Group 2, there were also students whose attitudes got better and those whose attitude became worse after the writing interventions (Table 10). Compared to Group 1 (Table 9), the difference between the lowest and the highest scores were not that drastic. There were students whose attitudes changed more, but most of them remained similar to the ones they had in the pre-test. It is interesting again to note that two out of the three highest pre-test scorers showed a decrease in their attitude toward writing and two of the lowest pre-test scorers showed an increase in their attitude.

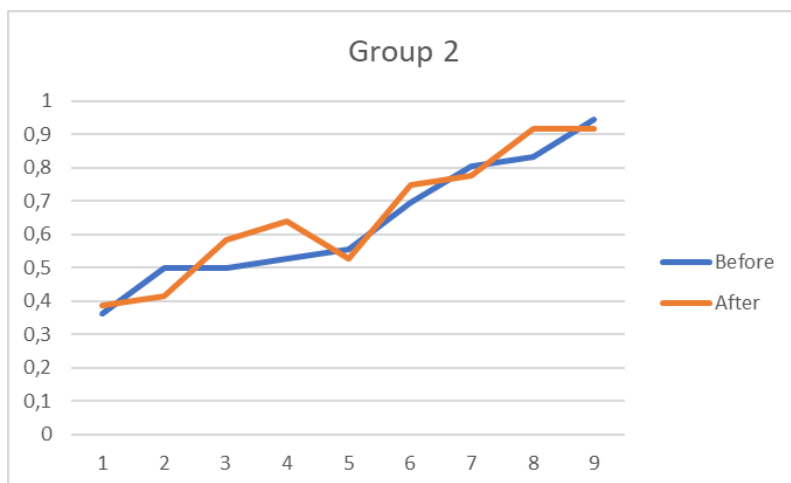


Table 10: The pre-test and post-test attitudes of Group 2

In Group 3, two of the students showed a large increase in their attitude toward writing, but all in all the group remained rather close to their original views (Table 11). Most of the students in Group 3 showed rather low pre-test scores, which is reflected in them having the lowest preliminary mean (Table 5). Looking at the results for the lowest and highest scoring students, their attitudes decreased in both cases.

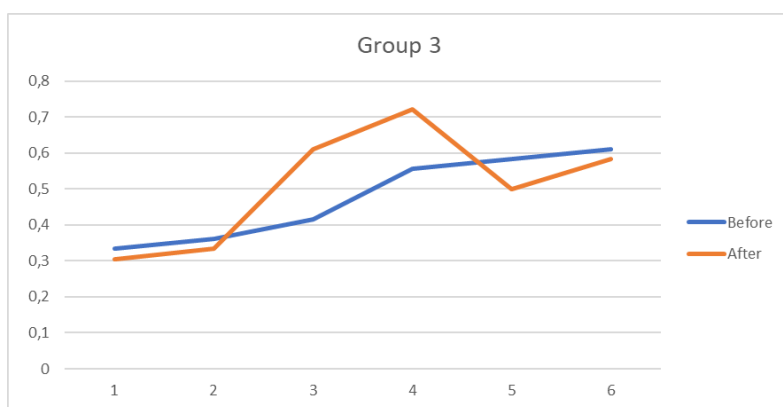


Table 11: The pre-test and post-test attitudes of Group 3

In Group 4, which had students with the highest language level, it can be seen that in most cases, the interventions brought on a decrease of the students` attitude toward writing. Out of the seven pupils, only three displayed a positive change resulting in the group getting a negative Cohen`s d value. However, as seen in two of the previous groups, the lowest scoring pre-test showed an increase in their attitude toward writing, while the highest pre-test scorer showed a decrease.

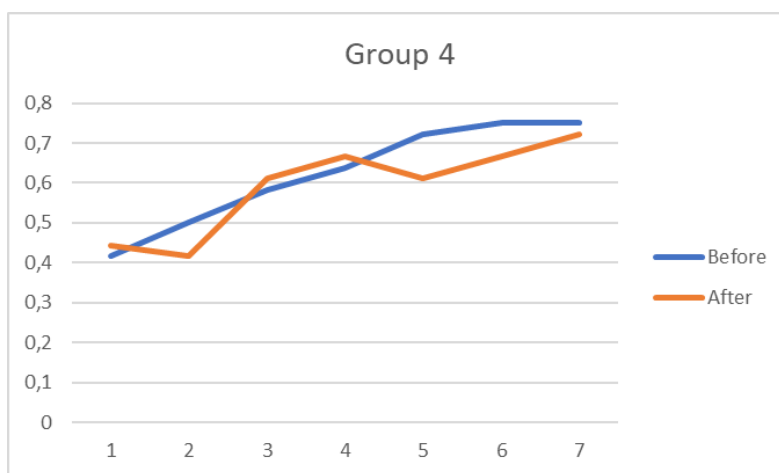


Table 12: The pre-test and post-test attitudes of Group 4

### Comparison of student motivation and attitude scores by Group

As motivation was shown to be the catalyst to writing (Kellogg 2008), it was important to examine how it was linked to attitude. For this, the students preliminary and post-test attitude and motivation scores of each group were put into joint tables (Tables 13-16) to give a better view of any overarching trends. The students` attitude and motivation scores was put into a joint table, which will not be added to protect student privacy, and sorted by preliminary attitude from lowest to highest. In these tables, motivation was shown

as columns and attitude as lines to make it easier to distinguish between the two. The colouring was randomly selected by MS Word, in which these tables were made.

In Tables 13 and 14 containing the info from Group 1 and Group 2, the higher the attitude, the higher the motivation suggesting that more motivated students had better attitudes toward writing, though in both cases, the higher motivation students experienced a drop in their pre- and post-test motivation scores as well as attitudes. In most cases, the motivation and attitude scores were quite close to each other, but there was one notable case in Group 3, where the student with the lowest attitude had a significantly higher preliminary motivation than attitude. In Tables 15 and 16, related to Group 3 and 4, the contrast between the lower and higher motivation students was not as clearly visible, as their SD scores tended to be lower than the ones of Group 1 and 2 (Table 7; Table 8). Though the motivation and attitude scores of the highest motivated students in Groups 1 and 2 were quite high, Groups 3 and 4 experienced more consistent levels of motivation and quite consistently stable attitudes throughout the groups as a whole.

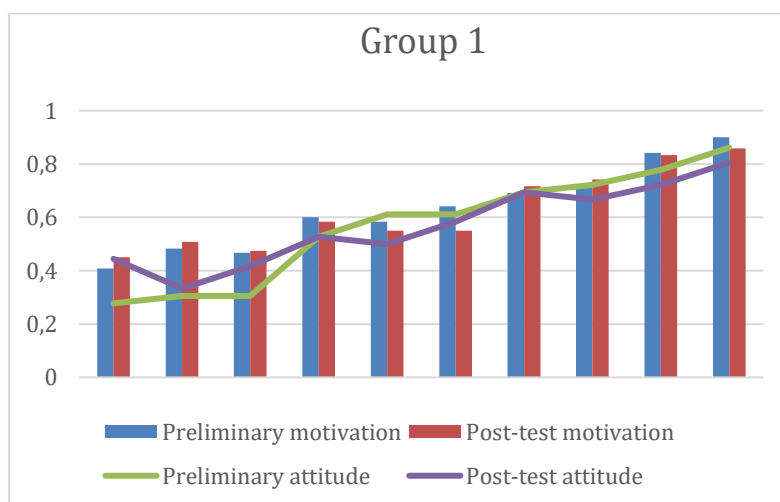


Table 13: Preliminary and post-test attitude and motivation in Group 1



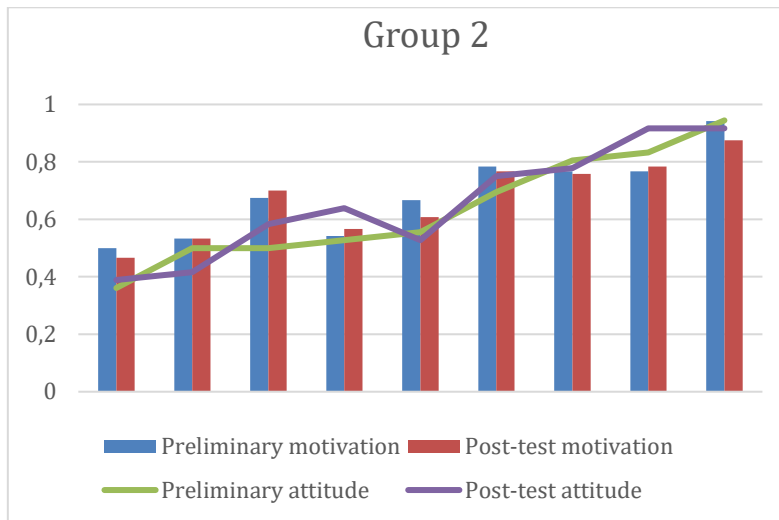


Table 14: Preliminary and post-test attitude and motivation in Group 2

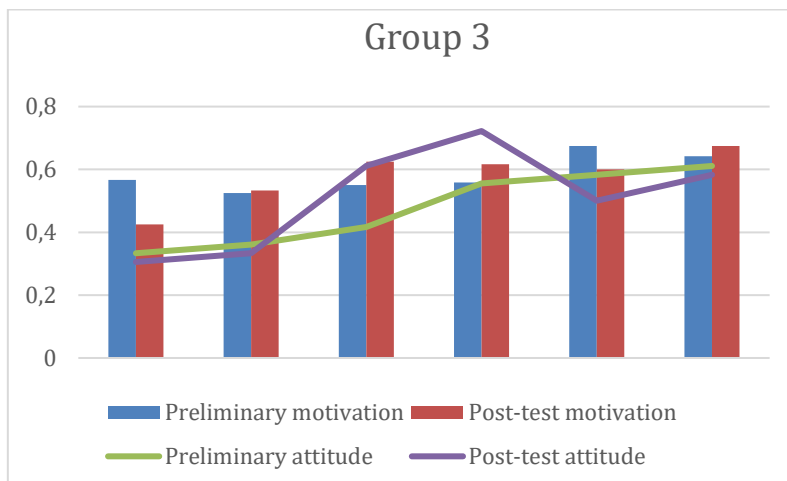


Table 15: Preliminary and post-test attitude and motivation in Group 3

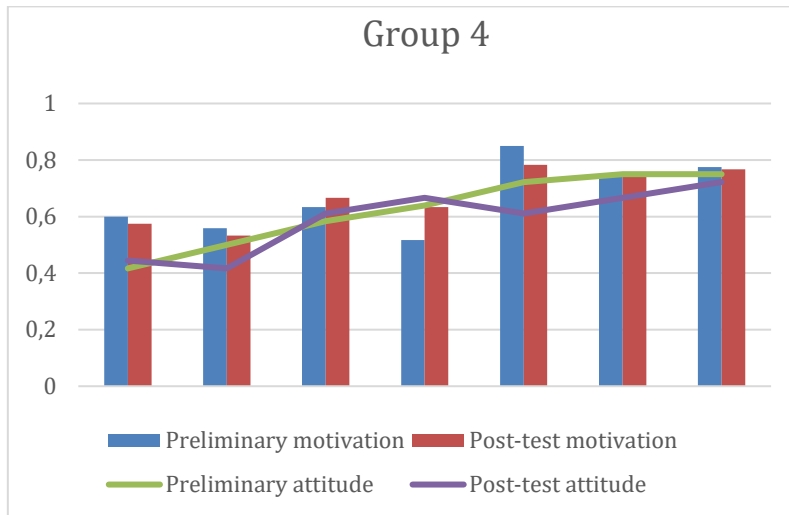


Table 16: Preliminary and post-test attitude and motivation in Group 4

## DISCUSSION

The first hypothesis of this thesis was that students are more willing to write if the topic they are writing on is interesting or motivating to them. The study found that the effect scores of the four-week writing interventions had an overall minimally positive or negative effect on student attitude as well as motivation, with only Group 3 showing a statistically small improvement in attitude (0.15) and Group 4 showing a statistically small decrease in attitude (-0.2). This result could have several explanations, the first being that the study did not include any introductory lessons into what creative writing is and how to do it as was the case in Appoo's 2016 study, which saw students' attitude improve. The second possibility could be that, due to the time constraints, the attitudes did not have a chance to improve yet as the five weeks, including the break where the students were not writing, between the pre- and post-test might have been too short a time to be able to see any change. It could also be that the break in the middle of the process might have disrupted the work rhythm for the students as well as any cumulated attitude change and brought the proverbial week-count to the start again. The third possibility could be the lack of feedback to students' writing, which might have decreased the motivation of result-oriented students (Waller & Papi 2017)) as well as eliminated an important aspect from Hayes' process level (Hayes 2012). For highly-motivated students or goal-oriented students, giving feedback might have been vital to change their attitude as they could have seen their writing improve as the weeks went on. Throughout this study, the students wrote without pressure to achieve good writing, perhaps motivating lower-level students who otherwise would have been given more constructive criticism than praise. This could explain why the lower-attitude students experienced an increase in their attitude scores, while the students with already high attitudes experienced a decrease. The fourth reason might be that students might have preferred a platform other than Quizizz to do the writing interventions in as the platform did not allow them to go back

and reread what they had written and required them to write on their phones, at least in class, which some students might have found tedious, decreasing motivation and attitude toward the specific task. The fifth potential reason for these results could also be the effect of the Covid-19 induced distance learning, which began about half-way through the study and continued well after as well as a general end-of-school-year lack of motivation. The final reason, however, would only explain why the students' motivation decreased but would presumably have little effect on attitudes toward writing. As discussed previously in the thesis, students might have a modicum of student, teacher, or society specific problems with writing and any and all of these could be an issue for individual students.

The second hypothesis was that the topic itself plays a role in whether the students want to write about it and that there is a difference between student attitude toward socially neutral and socially loaded topics. This hypothesis was tested on Groups 1 and 2, who were shown four videos with socially loaded topics or four videos with socially neutral topics respectively. The results of both groups suggest that the socially neutral topics had a slight positive effect on student attitude compared to no effect as seen on Group 1 (Table 7) suggesting that the students might have enjoyed the neutral or fun videos more than the videos on loaded topics, the themes of which might have needed further discussion before writing (as was seen with the video "Asking for it", which multiple students even in the 9<sup>th</sup> Form wrote they had not understood). Additionally, it could be that the topics I found interesting and thought-provoking might not have been seen as such by the students of that particular group. In Group 1, half the students showed an increase in motivation while in Group 2, the motivation scores were consistently higher than in Group 1, but only three students showed an increase in motivation compared to the pre-test. Both groups showed an overall decrease in motivation. This might suggest that Group 2, while overall more highly

motivated, might not have found the topics of the videos interesting enough to motivate them.

The third hypothesis of this thesis was that language level plays a role on how students perceive writing. This hypothesis was tested on Groups 3 and 4, who were shown the same videos, a mix of socially loaded and neutral, but Group 3 consisted of slightly lower-level students than Group 4. The results showed an increase in attitude for Group 3 but a decrease for Group 4 (Table 7), but a decrease in motivation for Group 3 and an increase for Group 4 showing the two groups' scores as being inversely proportional. Group 3 saw some very high increases in attitude (Table 11), perhaps from students gaining confidence in their writing through knowing it will not be read, which could be a sign of an entitic view of writing (Waller & Papi 2017) or a student with anxiety toward teacher feedback (Hyland & Hyland). It is interesting to note that in both groups, writing attitude increased in the students who were in the middle of the attitude scale (Table 11; Table 12). The students in Group 4 showed higher motivation overall than Group 3, which could be sign that the students with higher language levels saw writing in a more positive light than the students in Group 3. Group 3, however, saw an increase in motivation from four out of the six students studied (Table 15), while Group 4 saw motivation increase in two students out of seven (Table 16). The reasons for this decrease in motivation have already been mentioned above.

An interesting phenomenon present in three out of the four groups, specifically groups 1, 3 and 4 was that the student(s) with the lowest pre-test attitudes had their attitude increased throughout the study, but the student(s) with the highest pre-test attitudes in all four groups. This could be a sign that students who do not think very highly of writing might benefit from practicing it but students who already think of themselves as being good at writing, might find this type of writing less challenging or might be better motivated by

getting to choose their own topics for writing. The same phenomenon was not seen with the motivation results.

The study shows that students react in both positive and negative ways to this style of writing intervention. It could imply that, while there are students who like creative tasks and would benefit from creative writing, there might also be students who might benefit from a different style of writing intervention and those who might enjoy the structure of the essays and gap-fill tasks etc. done in the classroom today and do not respond well to not having that structure. While, in some cases, any writing aversions might come down to teenage laziness, in others it may be a sign of a fear of failing, low self-esteem, perceived problems with self-expression in L2 writing and so on. It cannot be denied that there were students in the study who were already more motivated than others. It might be a sign of their higher levels of intrinsic motivation in general, a sign they enjoy writing or a sign they enjoyed the tasks and were motivated to write about them. The fact that most of the students who were more highly motivated and had a high attitude towards writing in the beginning had their motivation and attitude decline might show a wish for validation of their skills or it could be a sign of the student being motivated to improve their writing but not getting the feedback to aide in that goal. This need for validation might stem from the result-oriented school system which grades students and for a lot of students unfortunately, a good or bad grade is a marker to them of their worth as a person as they are expected by their parents and teachers to get high marks, which decreases student motivation and attitude towards writing and can develop into a dislike of school in general as well as several other mental problems such as depression and anxiety. The emphasis on good marks has led most students not to study for self-betterment, but to cram for a test and then forget everything in order to study for the next one. Writing, however, is a skill which needs long-term and consistent practice as well as nurturing to achieve greatness as demonstrated by Kellogg (2008). It is, in the end,

no wonder that students with this mindset would respond negatively to creative writing, in which, there are no right and wrong answers and which you cannot study for to get better at. Wright et al., using the SWAS questionnaire, found that students tested on their writing, were less motivated to write than their peers (Wright et. al. 2020), suggesting that perhaps students should be allowed to write for their own benefit in Estonia as well, as at the moment both the basic school final examination in Estonian and in English require the students to write. Though it is unimaginable that we do not evaluate students` skills in a whole subskill of language, perhaps evaluating student progress through a writing process would be more beneficial to student mental health instead of evaluating one or two end-products. Instead, writing practice should be integrated into the current system in a way that allows for this skill to be sustainably nurtured and developed. These are important details to think about when making curriculum changes as they could end up counterproductive in some cases. It might be beneficial to, in further studies, ask the students why they feel the way they do towards writing in order to make changes that benefit the highest number of students.

### Limitations of the study and suggestions for further research

The study had three major limitations in time; having to be applicable for both contact and distance learning and a small sample size. Ideally, the study should have taken place over a month or even two months to give students the time necessary for changes in attitude to set in and show up and students should have been given feedback as well as a chance to review and work on their writing in order to stimulate cognitive thinking. While the first of these could have theoretically been achieved by prolonging the study period, the density of the Estonian national curriculum would have made the second change very difficult to implement, especially with the Form 9 students needing to prepare for basic school final

examinations. There was also no time to properly introduce the concept of creative writing, which most of the students probably were unfamiliar with before the study. As mentioned in the previous section, Quizizz might not have been the ideal tool to use for the writing interventions as it required students to mostly write on their phones, which might be tedious and not the best for reviewing texts before submission. It was necessary to use however, to ensure that the students were writing for the length required at the same time as their peers under monitored conditions. The third limitation could have been the very small sample size as trends tend to be seen more clearly with more participants and the impact of one potential outlier would have been smaller.

One recommendation for further study would be to replicate the study on a larger scale to see whether the results of this study reflect on just the specific groups examined or are the same with other groups under similar circumstances. It would be especially interesting to examine whether the phenomenon that students with the lowest preliminary attitudes see an increase in attitude and those with the highest preliminary attitudes see a decrease holds up on a larger scale or is just a phenomenon in these specific ESL groups. The assumption, going into the study, was that socially difficult topics would be more motivating for students to write about and therefore increase their attitude more as they would allow the students to write on important topics, rather than silly ones and that higher language-level students would be more motivated to do this sort of writing as they possessed the skills to express themselves in their writing more readily than their peers who maybe would not have had the vocabulary to fully make their feelings and ideas known in their writing. The results of this thesis however, saw no increase in attitude for socially difficult topics, a slight increase for the neutral ones, an increase in attitude for the 9<sup>th</sup> Form group with the lower language level and a decrease for the one with the higher language level suggesting that lower-level students would benefit more from the writing interventions than



higher language-level students and that neutral topics where students could more easily pick what they wanted to write about, might be more beneficial in increasing student attitude toward writing. The second recommendation would be to use the Self-Beliefs, Writing-beliefs, and Attitudes Survey to see how self-concept, self-efficacy and/or beliefs about writing impact attitudes toward writing and the overall motivation score and which have the highest positive or negative effect. The assumption, based on this thesis would be that motivation might be affected by self-concept and attitude toward writing the most as self-concept, or what mindset you have going into writing, has been shown to be an important factor for writing success (Waller & Papi 2017) and this thesis shows that in most cases the attitude scores of the students are very similar to the motivation scores and in most cases, a decrease or an increase could be seen in both at the same time. The third recommendation would be to research, using the SWAS, whether doing creative writing tasks regularly had an impact on the description and informal letter the students are required to write for their basic school final examination in English or, in cases where they have not picked English as their elective exam, whether doing creative writing tasks in their L2 had an impact on the essays they are all expected to write in the basic school final examination in Estonian. The assumption is that, if negative student experiences in L1 classrooms could affect their experiences in the L2 classroom (Lee 2005), the same might be true in the opposite direction but regarding positive experiences. Seeing as how, while not all students take the English basic school final examination, they do have to take the Estonian basic school final examination if doing creative writing in L2 classrooms can be shown to increase students' results in that examination, it might give the incentive to change the curriculum to include teaching creative writing.

## CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis was to examine whether giving students the chance to write in a creative and less structured way, would increase their attitudes toward writing in general. The hypotheses for the thesis were that giving students motivating topics to write about would increase their attitudes; that the topic itself played a role in whether the students wanted to write about it and that language level affected student attitude.

The study found that the four weeks of writing interventions, conducted in the style of this study, had an overall minimal effect on student attitude and motivation. It also showed that socially neutral topics had a slightly more positive impact on students' attitude than socially loaded ones which had no effect on class mean, and that lower-level students saw an increase in attitude while higher language-level students saw their attitudes decrease. A link between attitude and motivation could also be seen. An interesting phenomenon where the lowest pre-test attitude students of almost all groups saw an increase of attitude in the post-test, yet the highest preliminary attitude students saw a decrease, was also noted.

This study shows that creative writing does have an effect on students attitude toward writing, that socially neutral topics increased student attitude and were more effective and that the technique of writing interventions benefited lower language-level and lower-attitude students the most.

The present study could be used in the future as a basis to create a larger-level study into the writing attitudes of Estonian basic school students and to perhaps start a conversation with the aim of changing the Estonian curriculum to include creative writing which was shown to benefit students in some cases. This change in curriculum might help students not only in their L2 classes, but also in their L1 ones, perhaps even inspiring students to become writers themselves in the future.

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## APPENDICES

### Addendix 1

1. Physical disability Time stamp: 0.00-3:23

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/3XA0bB79oGc?feature=oembed>

2. Appearance related bullying

[https://www.youtube.com/embed/IYhIj\\_IT-EU?feature=oembed](https://www.youtube.com/embed/IYhIj_IT-EU?feature=oembed)

3. Victim blaming

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/JO-HI1hGcpM?feature=oembed>

4. LGBTQ+ short film time stamp 0.15-3.53

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/GgfvMHeOiqQ?feature=oembed>

5. Service animals time stamp 0.13-3.44

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/07d2dXHYb94?feature=oembed>

6. Deafness Time stamp 0.00-3.12

[https://www.youtube.com/embed/Fzn\\_AKN67oI?feature=oembed](https://www.youtube.com/embed/Fzn_AKN67oI?feature=oembed)

7. Autism

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/t17Ckqb5Dbc?feature=oembed>

8. Self-discovery

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/cPAbx5kgCJo?feature=oembed>

## Appendix 2

1. Twin babies “talking”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lmGdb0H6VAs>

2. Found a stick dog

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GUGraMnVJb0>

3. Coca cola commercial 0.00-2.22

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yg4Mq5EAEzw>

4. Charlie Chaplin

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=79i84xYelZI>

5. Good deeds 00.00-2.54

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zcruiov45bl&fbclid=IwAR2w3IyBDxE0Goe7H4HwhNrRCgfrRRTrmINndGV1Kl7eIszSKsZi0Qj2uj\\_A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zcruiov45bl&fbclid=IwAR2w3IyBDxE0Goe7H4HwhNrRCgfrRRTrmINndGV1Kl7eIszSKsZi0Qj2uj_A)

6. Kitchen

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GgiK-HWKPjw&fbclid=IwAR0qmemxZp5\\_hXcGH3pYUQ5xwPVyWqPrgKGEjLSYXKoE5BA0egED833CF2o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GgiK-HWKPjw&fbclid=IwAR0qmemxZp5_hXcGH3pYUQ5xwPVyWqPrgKGEjLSYXKoE5BA0egED833CF2o)

7. Meeting the Obamas

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=likheQDJXlw&fbclid=IwAR1vXztMTgANx-xZTUJRTkdLOJFz\\_ULXkzk546l8kZAvOhASVTwRH24NAck](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=likheQDJXlw&fbclid=IwAR1vXztMTgANx-xZTUJRTkdLOJFz_ULXkzk546l8kZAvOhASVTwRH24NAck)

8. Fairy-tale inspired song

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WRZba7AoCbA>

## Appendix 3

**Self-Beliefs, Writing Beliefs, and Attitude Survey**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

We would like to learn more about how students feel about writing. Please circle how well each statement below sounds like you. Each statement may be a lot like you, a little like you, a little different from you, or very different from you.

Let's practice with the following statements:

	A Lot Like Me	A Little Like Me	A Little Different From Me	Very Different From Me
I like to eat spinach	4	3	2	1
I like to eat chocolate	4	3	2	1

**Great! Now let's start the survey!**



		A Lot Like Me	A Little Like Me	A Little Different From Me	Very Different From Me
1.	I wish we wrote less in school	4	3	2	1
2.	I don't get good grades in writing because I'm just not smart enough	4	3	2	1
3.	I don't like having to rewrite my paper	4	3	2	1
4.	I would rather write a story than do homework	4	3	2	1
5.	When writing it's easy for me to think of the right words to say	4	3	2	1
6.	When my class is asked to write an essay, report, or story, mine is one of the best	4	3	2	1
7.	I enjoy checking my writing to make sure the words I have written are spelled correctly	4	3	2	1
8.	I feel confident in my overall writing abilities	4	3	2	1
9.	Writing helps me learn	4	3	2	1
10.	When writing a paper, it's easy for me to decide what goes 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and so on	4	3	2	1
11.	I feel confident sharing my writing with my friends	4	3	2	1
12.	In comparison to my other school subjects, I am best at writing	4	3	2	1

	A Lot Like Me	A Little Like Me	A Little Different From Me	Very Different From Me
13. Overall, I have positive feelings about writing	4	3	2	1
14. When I write a paper, it is easy for me to come up with ideas	4	3	2	1
15. When I get a good grade on a writing assignment, it's because I got lucky	4	3	2	1
16. When I'm proofreading, it's easy for me to catch my mistakes	4	3	2	1
17. I think it would be fun to be an author who writes books	4	3	2	1
18. I don't mind when the teacher asks me to go back and change some of my writing	4	3	2	1
19. I believe it is very important to be a good writer	4	3	2	1
20. I know that I will do well in writing this year	4	3	2	1
21. I am confident in writing for many purposes (persuade, inform, entertain, or express)	4	3	2	1
22. Finishing every writing assignment is very important to me	4	3	2	1
23. I think it would be great to become an even better writer than I already am	4	3	2	1

	A Lot Like Me	A Little Like Me	A Little Different From Me	Very Different From Me
24. I think it would be fun to have a job as a writer for a newspaper or magazine	4	3	2	1
25. I like writing long stories or reports at school	4	3	2	1
26. I feel most successful if I see that my writing has really improved	4	3	2	1
27. When I get a good grade on a paper, it is because I tried really hard	4	3	2	1
28. Writing can be a lot of fun	4	3	2	1
29. I like to write	4	3	2	1
30. I can write good papers because writing is easy for me.	4	3	2	1

## Appendix 4

## The SWAS

\*Required

1. Name: \*

---

We would like to learn more about how students feel about writing. Please pick how well each statement below sounds like you. Each statement may be a lot like you, a little like you, a little different from you, or very different from you. Let`s practice with the following statements:

2.

*Mark only one oval per row.*

	A lot like me	A little like me	A little different from me	Very different from me
I like to eat spinach	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like to eat chocolate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Great! Now let`s start the survey!

The survey

## 3. The statements \*

Mark only one oval per row.

	A lot like me	A little like me	A little different from me	Very different from me
I wish we wrote less in school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I don't get good grades in writing because I'm just not smart enough	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I don't like having to rewrite my paper	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would rather write a story than do homework	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When writing, it's easy for me to think of the right words to say	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When my class is asked to write an essay, report, or story, mine is one of the best	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I enjoy checking my writing to make sure the words I have written are spelled correctly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel confident in my overall writing abilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Writing helps me learn	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When writing a paper, it's easy for me to decide what goes 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and so on	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel confident sharing my writing with my friends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In comparison to my other school subjects, I am best at writing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall, I have positive feelings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## about writing

---

When I write a paper, it is easy for me to come up with ideas



---

When I get a good grade on a writing assignment, it's because I got lucky



---

When I'm proofreading, it's easy for me to catch my mistakes



---

I think it would be fun to be an author who writes books



---

I don't mind when the teacher asks me to go back and change some of my writing



---

I believe it is very important to be a good writer



---

I know that I will do well in writing this year



---

I am confident in writing for many purposes (persuade, inform, entertain, or express)



---

Finishing every writing assignment is very important to me



---

I think it would be great to become an even better writer than I already am



---

I think it would be fun to have a job as a writer for a newspaper or magazine



---

I like writing long stories or reports at school



---

I feel most successful if I see that my writing really has improved

---

When I get a good grade on a paper, it is because I tried really hard	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Writing can be a lot of fun	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like to write	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can write good papers because writing is easy for me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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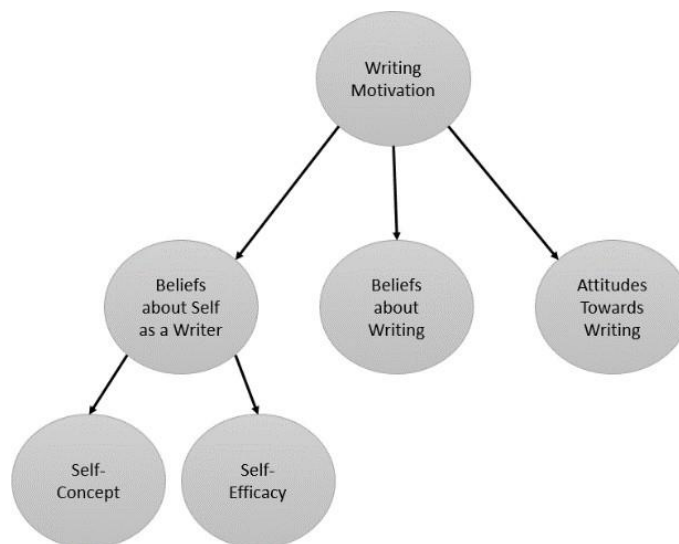
Google Forms

## Appendix 5

### Self-Beliefs, Writing Beliefs, and Attitude Survey (SWAS)

#### Overview

The SWAS measures students' overall motivation towards writing, as well as three sub-constructs of writing motivation (see figure on right). Each construct is scored on a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 indicating poor motivation and 4 indicating strong motivation for writing. The "Beliefs about Self as a Writer" sub-construct is further delineated into two contributing factors: Self-concept as a writer and self-efficacy for writing. Each of these constructs is defined in the table below.



Citation: Wright, K. L., Hodges, T. S., & McTigue, E. M. (2019). A validation program for the Self-Beliefs, Writing-Beliefs, and Attitude Survey: A measure of adolescents' motivation toward writing. *Assessing Writing*, 39(1), 64-78. doi: 10.1016/j.asw.2018.12.004.

Construct	Definition
Writing Motivation	The variety of reasons a student chooses to engage in or avoid writing tasks.
Beliefs about Self as a Writer	The students' beliefs about themselves as a writer and their writing abilities
Self-Concept	The students' composite view of themselves as a writer (e.g., they see themselves as a good writer)
Self-Efficacy	The students' view of their writing skills (e.g., they believe they have the skills to overcome challenging tasks)
Beliefs about Writing	The value students place on writing and becoming a skilled writer
Attitudes Towards Writing	A student's relatively stable pre-disposition towards writing

#### SWAS Administration Instructions

- 1) Hand out SWAS to students. Tell them to write their names at the top.



- 2) **Say:** *We would like to learn more about how students feel about writing. Please circle how well each statement below sounds like you. Each statement may be a lot like you, a little like you, a little different from you, or very different from you. Let's practice with the following statements. I like to eat spinach. Is that a lot like you? A little like you? A little different from you? Or very different from you? Circle the number below your response.*
- 3) Make sure students circle a response.
- 4) **Say:** *Good job, let's practice one more. "I like to eat chocolate". Is that a lot like you? A little like you? A little different from you? Or very different from you? Circle the number below your response.*
- 5) Once it is clear students understand the instructions, they may begin the survey on their own.

### SWAS Scoring Instruction

Record student's selection for each item below. Items marked with an \* are negatively worded and thus must be reverse coded – that is, if the student selected a 1, record it as a 4; if the student selected a 2, record it as a 3; if the student selected a 3, record it as a 2; if the student selected a 4, record it as a 1.

Add the student scores for each construct (as well as the combined constructs of *beliefs about the self as a writer* and *writing motivation*) and divide by the total possible scores. To date, there are not any published norms for this assessment; however, you can use students' relative scores to identify areas of strength and areas for growth.

Construct	Self-Concept	Self-Efficacy	Beliefs about Writing	Attitudes towards Writing

Items	*2. _____ 5. _____ 6. _____ 8. _____ 12. _____ 14. _____ 21. _____ 30. _____	10. _____ 11. _____ *15. _____ 16. _____ 20. _____ 27. _____	7. _____ 9. _____ 18. _____ 19. _____ 22. _____ 23. _____ 26. _____	*1. _____ *3. _____ 4. _____ 13. _____ 17. _____ 24. _____ 25. _____ 28. _____ 29. _____
Sum of Items				
Sum/ Possible Score = Construct Average	_____/ 32 =	_____/ 24 =	_____/ 28 =	_____/ 36 =

**Beliefs about Self as a Writer Construct Average:**

\_\_\_\_\_(Sum of Self-concept) + \_\_\_\_\_ (Sum of Self-Efficacy) = \_\_\_/ 56 = \_

**Writing Motivation Score:**

\_\_\_\_\_(Sum of Self-Concept)

\_\_\_\_\_(Sum of Self-Efficacy)

\_\_\_\_\_(Sum of Beliefs about Writing)

+ \_\_\_\_\_(Sum of Attitudes toward Writing)

\_\_\_\_\_/ 120 = \_\_\_\_\_

# RESÜMEE

TARTU ÜLIKOOL  
ANGLISTIKA OSAKOND

**Kaisa-Liina Näär**

**The effects of writing interventions on students` attitude toward writing among the 7th and 9th Form pupils of Tartu Kivilinna School**

**Kirjutamisalase sekkumise mõju õpilaste suhtumisele kirjutamisse Tartu Kivilinna Kooli 7ndate ja 9ndate klasside õpilaste näitel**

magistritöö

2021

Lehekülgede arv: 70

Käesoleva magistritöö eesmärgiks oli uurida, kas loovkirjutamise võimaluse andmine õpilastele parandab nende suhtumist kirjutamisse tervikuna. Eesti põhihariduse õppekava ei sisalda loovkirjutamist, kuigi on leitud, et see tõstaks õpilaste motivatsiooni ja aitaks kaasa keele omandamisele.

Antud magistritöö kolm hüpoteesi on:

- 1) õpilastele loovkirjutamise võimaluse andmine parandab nende suhtumist kirjutamisse;
- 2) huvitav teema motiveerib õpilasi kirjutama;
- 3) õpilaste keeletase mõjutab nende suhtumist kirjutamisse.

Magistritöö valimisse kuulus kaks rühma 7. klasside õpilasi ja kaks rühma 9. klasside õpilasi. Protsessi alguses tehti õpilastele eeltest. Selleks kasutati küsimustikku, mis uurib õpilaste kirjutamisuskumusi ja -suhtumist (*Self-Beliefs, Writing Beliefs, & Attitudes Survey*). Õpilased said neli nädalat järjest üks kord nädalas loovkirjutamise ülesande. Enne loovkirjutamise ülesande saamist näidati õpilastele videosid. Esimesele 7. klassi grupile näidati videosid, mille teemaatika võib tekitada vaatajates mõningal määral ebamugavustunnet (puuetega inimesed, LGBT+ suhted, vägivalda õigustamine). Teisele 7. klassi grupile näidati neutraalseid videosid (koer, kes kannab oksa; kaks isikut köögis vestlemas jt). Mõlemad grupid on ühtlase keeletasemega. 9. klasside gruppidele (3. ja 4. grupp) näidati valikut eelnimetatud videotest, kummastki teemarühmast kahte. 9. klasside grupid on erineva keeletasemega. Video vaatamisele järgnes kirjutamine, õpilastel oli võimalus kolme minuti jooksul kirja panna video vaatamise ajal tekkinud mõtteid. Protsessi lõpus, viiendal nädalal viidi läbi järeltest. Selleks kasutati sama küsimustikku nagu eeltestiski. Eesmärgiks oli uurida, kas nelja nädala jooksul on toimunud muutusi õpilaste suhtumises kirjutamisse ja nende motivatsiooni tasemes.

Antud uuringu meetodikat ja tulemusi saaks kasutada, et uurida üldisemalt Eesti

õpilaste suhtumist kirjutamisse. Pikas perspektiivis võib uuring aidata kaasa põhikooli õppekavasse loovkirjutamise lisamisel.

Antud magistritöö koosneb sissejuhatusest, kahest peatükist ja kokkuvõttest. Sissejuhatuses arutletakse, miks kirjutamisalased sekkumised on olulised ja milline on loovkirjutamise hetkeolukord Eesti koolisüsteemis. Esimeses peatükis arutletakse loovkirjutamise kasulikkuse üle ja tuuakse välja peamised neuroloogilised protsessid, mis toimuvad ajus loovkirjutamise ajal, arutletakse põhjuste üle, miks õpilastel on kirjutamisega probleeme ja kuidas suhtumine kirjutamisse on seotud kirjutamiseduga. Teises peatükis antakse ülevaade uuringu käigust, selle tulemustest ja mida need tulemused võivad tähendada. Magistritöö lõpeb kokkuvõttega uuringu peamistest tulemustest.

Märksõnad: inglise keel võõrkeelena, loovkirjutamine, suhtumine kirjutamisse, motivatsioon

**Lihtlitsents lõputöö reprodutseerimiseks ja lõputöö üldsusele kättesaadavaks tegemiseks.**

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Kaisa-Liina Näär

17.05.2021

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Kaisa-Liina Näär

17.05.2021

**Lõputöö on lubatud kaitsmisele.**

Djuddah A.J. Leijen

17.05.2021