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Historias cortas en el aula de inglés: desarrollando las competencias creativas y lingüísticas

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Trabajo de Fin de Máster

Historias cortas en el aula de inglés: desarrollando las competencias creativas y lingüísticas

Short stories in the EFL classroom: developing creative and linguistic competences

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ABSTRACT

This innovative proposal presents a pedagogical model through which to implement the study of short stories and the practice of creative writing within the EFL classroom. The research conducted by psychologists and educators points towards the benefits of introducing creative work and lateral thinking in the educational system as a means of cognitive development. Similarly, literature has been found to have the power to both stimulate the creative abilities of the reader, as well as being a vehicle for linguistic development, becoming a highly useful tool in secondary language classes. With this context, this paper proposes a pedagogical model that integrates creative practice through the lens of an intercurricular content, the literary short story, as a means of favouring the linguistic development of the student as well as making them a more rounded and competent learner as they become the active agents in their own learning process.

Keywords: Literature; Short Stories; EFL; Creative Writing; CLIL; TBLT.

RESUMEN

Esta propuesta innovativa presenta un modelo pedagógico que pretende implementar el estudio de las historias cortas y la práctica de la escritura creativa dentro de la clase de inglés como idioma extranjero. Las investigaciones de psicólogos y educadores resaltan los beneficios de introducir competencias creativas y el pensamiento lateral dentro del sistema educativo, en beneficio del desarrollo cognitivo del estudiante. De la misma manera, la literatura ha sido probada como capaz de estimular estas competencias creativas, además de ser un vehículo para el desarrollo lingüístico, lo que la hace una herramienta muy útil en las clases de segunda lengua. Con este contexto, esta propuesta introduce un modelo pedagógico que integra la práctica creativa desde la lente del contenido intercurricular, mediante la historia corta, con el objetivo de favorecer el desarrollo lingüístico del estudiante, además de convertirlo en un agente activo en su propio proceso de aprendizaje.

Palabras clave: Literatura; Historias Cortas; Inglés como Lengua Extranjera; Escritura Creativa; Instrucción Basada en Contenidos; Instrucción Basada en Tareas.

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1. INTRODUCTION

There has been an interest in recent years towards the implementation of a teaching practice that focuses on competences and in intercurricular topics. Similarly, psychological, and pedagogical research points towards the development of creative and independent abilities in students who, through being made participants in their own learning process, become more competent in their learning and develop their cognitive processes in a more effective way.

Therefore, this proposal is born from the necessity of introducing intercurricular topics in the EFL classroom that will guarantee the linguistic development of the student, all the while making the didactic process more motivating and creative. This paper, then, proposes a model through which to introduce short stories in the EFL classroom. This focus follows recent theories of language learning that revalue the role of literature in the classroom and highlight its pedagogical importance as real material and cultural manifestation. In the same line, this proposal bridges the gap between English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and creative practice through the literary topic, making literature the context and model through which to develop an individual creative practice. Finally, short stories have been chosen for this model, as will be argued, as an easier and more effective way of presenting literature to young students of English.

By uniting the research done on creativity and literature integrated in the EFL classroom, this didactic proposal wants to introduce literature as an intercurricular topic, to benefit from its cultural and linguistic possibilities, but going a step further by introducing creative writing within its steps. The paper will look into the previous literature in order to determine the theoretical basis that will then become the pillars of the pedagogical model that will be developed. Then, using the model as the guiding structure, some projects for different educational years and stories will be designed and presented in order to prove the efficacy of the model, as well as its flexibility. Finally, a discussion on the adequacy of the model and its possible improvements, together with a reflection

about the innovative project itself, will be contemplated at the end of the work, in order to reach the conclusion and assess the proposal.

2. JUSTIFICATION

Despite recent years' tendencies to favour a more communicative approach and teachers' efforts to introduce cultural and communicative competences in the classroom, there still remains a wide gap between second language learners and the communication skills needed to effectively communicate. Research conducted by de Araujo Placido (2017) shows that some of the most frequent problems encountered in English as a Second Language (ESL from here onwards) classrooms were lack of interest in the subject and lack of speaking and creative writing opportunities. Within the curriculum assigned to Compulsory Secondary Education (CSE) students, there is little room for creative and individual production, as well as sparse time to delve into intercurricular projects.

This innovative proposal aims to solve these problems by integrating cultural, creative and intercurricular competences into the ESL classroom through the short story genre. Exposition to real material, much less literature, has not been a priority of the traditional CSE curriculum. However, it could result in a great advantage for ESL learners, as it is capable to develop the four skills – comprehension and production of oral and written texts— all the while motivating the learner through the use of alternative learning methods and ICTs and didactic methodologies that prioritise the plasticity and creativity of students' developing brains.

This project also bridges two pedagogical gaps within two different subjects. On the one hand, in the English classroom, it would allow students to strengthen grammatical and lexical knowledge as well as working with the four skills through cultural and extralinguistic topic focus, helping them to acquire fluency in an indirect way. On the other hand, it fills the blank that short stories and English and international literature have in the Literature subject.

This proposal, if properly integrated, could result in an increase in motivation and fluency on ESL learners, as they get familiarised with a new culturally significant and with high didactic potential genre, and develop their four skills in a new creative and intuitive way.

3. OBJECTIVES

The objectives for this innovative project are, at the forefront, based on competences. The aim is to work on the linguistic, cultural, digital, and learning competences through the use of literary devices and creative writing.

Firstly, this project aims to develop the linguistic competency of students, being as it is an ESL classroom tool. This project wants to help the students develop the four skills, but mainly, following current theories of foreign language learning, it searches to develop the creative skills.

It aims to do so in a metacognitive way, following Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (1978) and the key concepts of lateral or creative thinking (De Bono, 2010), as will be explained in the theoretical framework. In this way, the tool pretends to work with the students' autonomous learning capabilities, prompting them to produce in the target language in their own way and to express themselves.

Finally, the proposal wants to establish a frame of reference for integrating linguistic and literary content in the EFL classroom through innovative methodologies and ICT tools that will not only benefit the process of learning, but will completely transform it to reach a more integral knowledge of the target language, motivating students and helping them become more fluent and readily communicative.

4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this section, a review will be conducted of the theoretical basis under which this pedagogical proposal will operate. This section is organised around the topic in question, short stories, starting from the general framework to which the genre belongs, literature and its value for FLT, to then narrow the focus on the short story genre itself. The aim of this section is to establish the relation between the concepts of creativity and literature and the way these could be possibly integrated in the foreign language classroom, as well as present the possibilities that this specific literary genre has in pedagogy.

4.1. Literature in ESL teaching

4.1.1. Creativity and pedagogy

Sternberg and Lubart (1999) sustain that creativity was a neglected subject in psychology research for a better part of the twentieth century. Only around the 1950s was creativity as a psychological concept started to be contemplated as a worthy line of research, but even with this newfound awareness, the authors point out that only 0.5% of published psychology articles from 1975 to 1994 dealt with the topic of creativity (Sternberg, Lubart 1999, 3). Different disciplines under the psychology spectrum, such as intelligence, were given a priority over creativity in research and therefore in divulgation. As Runco and Albert sustain, "at their beginnings and during most of their histories of development, research and creativity were not viewed as related to one another" (2010, 3).

However, creativity is an intrinsic part of human cognition, as well as a necessary tool. According to psychologists, creativity is "a novel yet appropriate solution to a problem or response to a situation [...], the proactive devising, formulating, or framing of problems themselves" (Moran 2010, 74). This makes

creativity a crucial part of adaptation, survival, and progress, being indispensable for task solving. Our brain is capable of reproducibility, the ability of "reproducing or retrieving traces of previous impressions" (Vygotski 2004, 84). However, this ability alone does not allow the human brain to deal with change. This adaptability comes from our creative ability, which makes our brain an organ that "creatively combines elements of previous experience in new situations and new behaviour" (Vygotski 2004, 85).

This creative ability, then, is necessary for the correct development of the brain. Psychological research on creativity categorises itself in the role creativity has in cognitive, personality, social, and developmental fields (Moran 2010, 74). Cognitively, the research shows that "intellectual abilities, knowledge, and thinking styles combine with other components to produce creative outcomes" (Ward, Knolomyts 2010, 93). New ideas are created from the combination of these exploratory processes with varying degrees of creative potential (Ward, Knolomyts 2010, 94). In the topic of personality, it has been established that different types of personality influence creativity through factors such as brain structures and temperamental differences (Feist 2010, 114). In the social field, creativity is regarded for its value to society, the relationship between the individual skill and its social role, and the way creativity arises socially through history when its social role is positive (Moran 2010, 76).

Finally, and more relevantly to the topic of this dissertation, creativity is also studied through a developmental lens. In this area, psychologists refer to two types of creativity, big-C creativity and little-C creativity (Richards 1999, 684). Big-C creativity is more skilled and nominally reserved to recognised creators that make major contributions in their respective fields; however, little-C creativity is the ability to resolve any situation or problem in a novel way, and thus present in everyone (Russ, Fiorelli 2010, 233-4). This everyday sort of creativity is at the centre of developmental theory, and is seen in children as a necessary skill in their development, as they have to acquire a flexibility of thought that will lead to "creative expressions and problem solving" (Russ, Fiorelli 2010, 235).

This developmental creativity is the one under the sociocultural theories developed by Vygotsky, who believed the child's development as continuous and introduced creativity to the area of education. The plasticity of the child's brain,

which is to say, its ability to change and adapt, is what makes it not only capable of learning, but especially inclined to do so. Through the zone of proximal development (Vigotsky 1978) the labour of the teacher and student is connected, as tasks that would be too difficult for the child to realise can be solved with the guidance of the adult. The theory sustains that "knowledge is a key building block of creative accomplishment" (Tan 2007, 22), and a well-developed pedagogical course will provide students with the materials for them to then utilise creative thought. Furthermore, the interactions between the adult and child will lead to the encouragement for them to solve more complicated problems and develop more complex processes on their own (Russ, Fiorelli 2010, 236).

There are two cognitive processes in creativity that can be utilised in pedagogy and were identified by Guilford in 1968. The first one is divergent thinking, or "thinking that goes off in different directions and that generates a variety of ideas" (Russ, Fiorelli 2010, 236). Educational practices can either encourage standardized learning or convergent thinking, in which there is a right answer, or they can foster divergent thinking, which uses creativity to solve problems in new ways (Sternberg 2007, 4). The other process is the transformation abilities that involve "reorganizing information, breaking out of old ways of thinking, and revising what one knows into new patterns" (Russ, Fiorelli 2010, 236). These abilities conform a creative way of sorting through knowledge in order to, again, adapt to new situations based on prior information.

4.1.2. Literature and creativity

According to Vigotsky (2004), the term imagination refers to the combinatory ability that begets the creative activity (85), and distinguishes culture from the natural world as art is "a product of human imagination and creativity based on imagination" (2004, 86). Literature, then, as a form of act, actively reflects the creative process from which it was born, and writing, as a product of the human creation, becomes an eminently creative process. Al-Marooqi sustains that reading literature makes the reader "go beyond the particular situation,

associating with it their own experiences or those of people they know, thus encouraging creativity and the imaginative identification” (2012, 172).

Literature, as Eoyang (2012) proposes, has the ability to transform our reality from its boundaries and elevate them, amplifying our experience of it. He argues that literature teaches us three skills that are intrinsically valuable: a creative imagination, vicarious sympathy, and capacious intuition (Eoyang 2012, 4). By vicarious sympathy, Eoyang refers to the ability to empathise with the other person. Literature, by means of offering a myriad of points of view and forcibly, by nature of the medium, putting the reader in the place of another individual with different views than their own, has the ability to “expand our ability to imagine the way other people feel [putting] us in touch with our common humanity” (Eoyang 2012, 6). This teaches us both about the world and about ourselves. Similarly, it teaches us capacious intuition, that is, a deeper perception of reality that transcends purely analytical thought (Eoyang 2012, 8).

However, more importantly, literature has the ability to develop a creative imagination. It has the potential, merely by being exposed to it, to foster imagination, to “conceive something out of nothing, to see what is not there and treat it as real” (Eoyang 2012, 4). A creative imagination is not confined to the realm of art, as it is necessary for abstract thought; as mentioned before, creativity is essential for problem solving and adaptation, to develop the cognitive processes necessary to, for example, solve an engineering problem or visualize mathematical concepts. Literature is able to activate this creative imagination via the creation of a habit to look further than what can be seen, conceiving different realities and transforming the observable structures and patterns given by nature into new perspectives.

Art is a motivator for change. As Djikic and Oatey (2014) propose, “the art in fiction is a social influence, but one that helps people to understand and feel, and even change their selfhood” (498). The array of experiences that a person obtains from being exposed to literature and fiction, the visualization of different types of points of views, situations, resolutions, and decisions allows the reader “to live their own lives more creatively, more bravely, and with greater empathy towards others” (Saccardi 2014, 69). The exposition to literature, besides, accumulates an experience and stores a knowledge that can be both recalled

and abstracted, revealing “the interplay between existing knowledge and skill in accessing that knowledge” (Ward 2007, 25). Literature becomes key in creating a basis for which the tr”nsformation abilities proposed by Guilford, reviewed In the previous point, can draw reference from.

4.1.3. Literature and FLT

It has been established, then, that creativity is an inherent part of the human mind and the cognitive development of the child's brain. Similarly, there has been shown that all art, but especially literature, is a very effective tool in initiating and working with those cognitive processes. As a creative manifestation itself, it possesses the power of both creating a change in the individual through the expansion of their selfhood and enabling that individual to create a change themselves, as through this exposition they are able to acquire the skill that allows them to perform their own creative acts.

It is no wonder, then, that creativity and literature are fields that are having a resurgence in the FLT field in the last decades. Ward (2007) sustains that "the ability to closely observe creativity in action seems to foster creativity" (20)—this becomes self-evident in the classroom through the implementation of creative teaching techniques and the focus on creative work. Ward proposes two approaches to creativity in the classroom, teaching creatively and teaching creativity, both of which can be implemented in the FLT class through the topic of literature.

On the one hand, teaching creatively involves "adopting creative approaches to developing lesson plans and engaging students with the material" (Ward 2007, 22). The focus of this technique is on the impartation of knowledge, of content material, but, as it has already been established, the explanation of material and the acquisition of knowledge are indispensable parts in the creative process. By teaching content, students acquire the tools necessary to become independent learners. Similarly, through a creatively-devised teaching method, students are able to develop their own creative capacities, as the creative input

becomes a reference to the students through sheer exposition. Research points towards the notion that "creativity of performance and extrinsic motivation [are] inextricably linked" (Hennessey 2007, 43), and thus students directly benefit from the teaching creatively approach.

However, teaching creatively often goes hand in hand with teaching creativity. Teaching creativity involves designing strategies through which students will be able to develop their own creative competence. Whereas teaching creatively required the direct exposition to material and, moreover, focused on the role of the teacher rather than the role of the student, teaching creativity means being an agent through which the cognitive creativity of the children can develop. This can be done through several methodologies and class techniques, the most basic of which requires creating a classroom environment in which students will be "willing to take the risk of sharing a creative idea" (Beghetto 2007, 110). The role of the teacher through this philosophy becomes that of facilitator and enabler through a "mastery-oriented environment" (Beghetto 2007, 109) through the implementation of policies that allow the children to freely develop their creative competency, as well as through the implementation of procedures and practices that give them the opportunity to do so, recognising different levels of creative output and enabling them to generate new and meaningful creative expressions.

These two methodologies are both necessary and respond to the necessities for which to develop creativity in a person. These are described in the creative system proposed by Shi et al. (2007), as can be seen in Figure 1, in which nine components responsible for creativity are obtained through external experiences –the surroundings, for which teaching creatively is responsible—, which they call the outer world, and through internal processes –fostered by teaching creativity—, which they name the inner world (2007, 68). The outer world is comprised of social environment or macroenvironment, working environment or microenvironment, education, and the creative product. The inner world includes intelligence, knowledge and experiences, attitude, and personality traits (Shi et al. 2007, 68). All of these traits combine with each other in various ways to influence the creative behaviour of a person, and they can be greatly influenced through education.

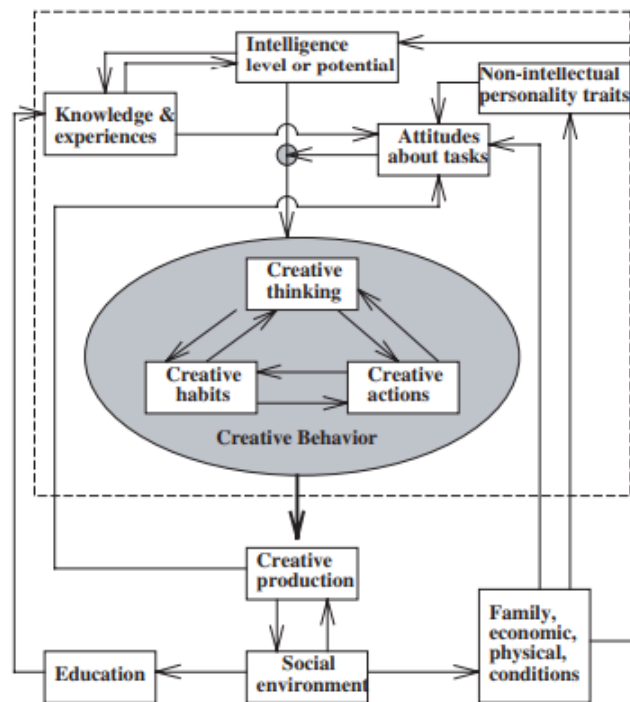


Figure 1. The system of creativity. Shi et al. (2007)

Therefore, it becomes essential to make a focus of creativity in the classroom. Literature, as previously discussed, is one of the most praised ways to do so, especially in the case of linguistics and learning foreign languages. As Al-Mahrooqi states, literature within the EFL context "engages learners emotionally, morally and intellectually, and carries in its language multiple communication means" (2012, 172). In his investigation, Al-Mahrooqi reviews the different teaching methodologies that have been employed in the EFL classroom when introducing literature, distinguishing four approaches that most methodologies are based on: the language-based approach, which focuses on the text's linguistic features; the culture-based approach, which aims to interpret the text in its context; the personal growth approach, which combines the two previous approaches with a focus on the learner's expression; and the integrated approach, which analyses linguistic, cultural and communicative considerations, focusing on the communicative aspect of the text.(Al-Mahrooqi 2012, 173-4).

Introducing literature in the EFL classroom, through its creative capacity, has enormous pedagogical potential and benefits for students, especially in base

of its role for communication and negotiation of meaning. Literature has been discussed in the EFL classroom since the 1950s, as the grammar-focused methodologies made use of real material in order to present a model for translation, memorization of grammatical rules and imitation. This view of literature disappeared with the structuralist approach to second language teaching, until in the 1980s the communicative model was first introduced, through which literature was granted a space as a didactic instrument (García 2007, 2-4). The inscription of literature through a communicative approach results in the development of the communicative competence not only through the acquisition of linguistic competences, which are obtained through the practice of receptive skills, but also through the immersion of the learner in the sociocultural dimension of the language, as well as the opportunity to acquire experiences through this vehicle (García 2007, 5).

Literature can be applied to EFL, according to García (2007) due to its universality, its cultural value, the authentic material, the linguistic richness, and its potential to spark creativity through personal relation. The last one has been explained previously, and it is very relevant to the premise of this didactic proposal, but the other three are key to understand the true potential of literature in the language classroom as well as to establish a basis to the effectivity of the proposal. Firstly, literary themes and tropes are both universal and unique. This means that the feelings conveyed and topics treated in literary texts are recognizable to everyone, as they deal with human emotions and fears, but the way in which literature does so will be different each time: "Students become involved in a world that engages their feelings yet is not the world they actually inhabit" (Oster 1989, 86). Literature thus becomes a vehicle for cultural competences and a tool for communication, promoting "cultural and intercultural awareness" (Khatib et al. 2011, 202) and becoming a mirror "that reflects and heightens each learner's perception of the social world" (Floris 2004, 3)

Secondly, literature, within the ESL context has in its favour the matter of authenticity. Bringing appropriate real material to the ESL classroom has many advantages, and, in the case of literature, it becomes a great tool in order to acquire linguistic and sociolinguistic knowledge in a naturalised, inductive, indirect way. Literature, as Khatib et al. sustain, is "rich with innumerable

authentic tokens of language for the development of reading, writing, speaking and listening skills" (2011, 203). It becomes a model for lexical and syntactical structures, stylistic variations, and ways of connecting ideas and concepts (García 2007, 8) that are not usually shown with other pedagogical practices, and offer a natural form to the language with which the student can contextualise the use of the foreign language. As literary texts contain much richer grammatical structures, styles, and lexicon, they are able to help learner acquire "more difficult structures and learn many more vocabulary items in terms of denotative as well as connotative meanings, idiomatic expressions, proverbs, slangs, and colloquialism" (Khatib et al. 2011, 214-5).

4.2. Short stories in ESL teaching

4.2.1. The short story genre

At this point, it has been established that literature has great pedagogical potential within the realm of the ESL classroom, especially due to its value as a tool for the development of creativity. However, there are some problems that can be derived from integrating literature for its cultural, social, and linguistic value, which Petra (2004) exposes. The most common problem is, precisely, the language itself. The language used in literature is, by virtue of the medium, literary, and thus has a different purpose than the language used for everyday communication. This means that this literary language "does not stick to more common usages, but exploits and even distorts the accepted conventions in fresh and unexpected ways" (Lazar 1994, quoted in Petra 2004, 4). The grammatical and lexical structures used in literature can be a great advantage to the development of the student's linguistic abilities, but it can become a hindrance if it does not have enough comprehensible input. Alongside this problem we find the issue of the length of the text, which can become unmanageable in case it is too long and not enough in case only a fragment is chosen for it.

The choice of an appropriate text is important in order to get around these potential problems. For this, short stories could become a solution for both the length and the register used in literature. As Petra (2004) made clear, reading a fragment of a text doesn't offer enough "extended contextual support and repetition" (4), and reading an entire book implies a commitment that classroom time constraints may make the task impossible to undertake. Short stories get around this issue really effectively, as they are written in order to be self-contained enough to stand alone as their own concise world and to captivate the attention of the reader more acutely: "the essence of short story is the integrity and totality of impression: the plot, the topic, the structure, the point are all governed by this aim" (Halász et al 1988, 289).

Furthermore, short stories have a great cultural value as a literary genre of their own right. Short stories can be traced back to the first narratives composed by humans, through the formation of parables and fables, myths, and tales (March-Russell 2009, 2). They bridged the gap between imagination and reality, and their "immediate and accessible form allowed writers to comment upon reality" (March-Russell 2009, 3), relating the short story to the immediate context. Short stories can more effectively breach the barrier between art and real world, as "prototypical short stories are nearer to everyday life than any other genre" (Halász et al. 1988, 290).

They are also subject to the potential of integral oral retelling, an aspect missing in longer literary genres, which makes the short story especially sensitive to communication and context, which will "affect the type of tale, its purpose, delivery and reception" (March-Russell 2009, 2). Characters, settings, plots, conflicts, and themes are more streamlined and direct, which become benefits "for developing communicative competency" (Al-Sha'r 2017, 57). They have a specific themes and structures which are recognizable to every reader, being "modes of writing with a vocabulary of images that have informed cultural thought" (March-Russell 2009, 191) and can offer a wider range of linguistic structures and topics to choose from.

4.2.2. Pedagogical possibilities

Short stories have the same place in ESL that the rest of the literary genres, which have been traditionally more widely utilised. Genres like the novel have been used ever since the first forays of literature in the ESL classroom through the Grammar Translation method (Al-Mahrooqi 2012, 175) and recently, poetry is studied alongside prose focusing on the interpretation of the text (Al-Mahrooqi 2012, 175). Inside English literature classes, the short story genre is greatly favoured and studied in high schools for its pedagogical potential, as it is "a good way to introduce students to critical reading and the vocabulary of literature" (Lent 1981, 55). Short stories deal with the key elements of texts-- characters, settings, theme, plot and aspects of language (Al-Mahrooqi 2012, 174)— more effectively to the foreign reader due to their more compact format, in which the story has to be streamlined and fully formed in a very short word span.

In this way, short stories can approach key linguistic and cultural elements to the ESL student: they would be able to "acquire a vocabulary of literary terms [...]; discover patterns of theme and image [...]; see how authors address social and personal concerns" (Lent 1981, 56), as well as acquire communicative competences as students learn "to communicate what they acquire to their peers" (Al-Sha'r 2017, 56). The motivation created with the possibility of communication and negotiation of meaning, as well with the incentive of literature itself, results in a heightened creative performance, as there is more willingness to take risks and experiment in a motivational atmosphere.

Short stories, as well, have an advantage in their application to the classroom because of their format. This advantage does not only manifest in practical terms, as it is easier to deal with short format literature than with long format literature given the educational system's time constraints, but it also manifests in cognitive terms. Djikic, Oatley and Moldovenau (2013) conducted an experiment that proved that people increased their levels of empathy more after reading a fictional short story than after reading a nonfictional essay. Across several experiments undertaken in the last decade (see Kid and Castano, 2013), it has been proved that literary fiction has more potentiality to change people's beliefs and sense of self than nonfiction: "recent research has pointed to the conclusion that fiction, and particularly artistic fiction, is an agent of self-change" (Djikic, Oatley 2014, 500). These studies on short stories show us how "both

language and fiction influence reader's life perceptions" (Al-Sha'r 2017, 57), and thus how they are indicated for competency-driven learning.

Finally, as short stories are more easily streamlined into the ESL classroom, they make the creative competence and productive skills easier to apply through the cultural competence and the intercurricular crossover of material with the literature class. Students will be able "not only to have continual chances to perceive the world from a new standpoint, but also of experiencing their own language, culture and self from another perspective" (Lutzker 2015, 134), as short stories provide a frame of reference that is actionable to students, that they can replicate with their own experiences. With the adequate teaching methodology and student response, short stories can help the student not only to acquire the linguistic content that they are required as well as go beyond it, but also to acquire the ability to critical and creative thinking through the exposition to art and its different perspectives, as well as approach the students to cultural and communicative competences.

5. STATE OF THE ART

As broached on the previous section, literature and its relationship to ESL teaching and to the development of creative and communicative competences has not been broadly contemplated thorough classrooms for the most part of the twentieth century. According to Al-Mahrooqi, the language-based approach has been the principal approach to teaching literature in the EFL classroom (2012, 173), and continues to be popular despite the reductive nature of it. Teaching literature through this methodology can be actually counterproductive to its final purpose, the acquisition of second language grammatical and lexical notions, as it is less attractive to the student and fails at motivating them to participate in the reading activities. This makes the acquisition of competences more difficult and the approach as it is based on a deductive approach to language learning.

There are numerous linguists, even those who participate in the communicative approach to teaching a foreign language, that disavow the use of literature in ESL classrooms, claiming that it is inaccessible and complex to teach (Divsar and Tahriiri 2009). However, many studies have proved that the difficulties that arise from teaching this intercurricular content in second language classrooms can be evaded when using different methods of literature teaching. In Al-Mahrooqi's investigation, the four different literature teaching methods were tested through interviews with participating students. The researcher asked each participant "to tell [...] about how literature was taught in the courses she took [...] and how student experiences and background knowledge, vocabulary and grammar were handled" (Al-Mahrooqi 2012, 176).

These interviews revealed that the enjoyment and usefulness of the literature classes relied heavily on the teaching method used. Those teachers that delved into the cultural side of the text, for example, did not create a motivating atmosphere for students, as their role was "merely to receive [the teacher's] interpretation dutifully and to keep listening" (Al-Mahrooqi 2012, 177). As the teacher did not give room for personal interpretation and student participation, students perceived their role in the class as pointless, and the participants in the research indicated they "learned the least" (Al-Mahrooqi 2012,

177). The research conducted by Divsar and Tahriri on the effectiveness of the integrated approach to literature used a control group that received the same content that the experimental group, but with a content-based approach. The results revealed the inadequacy of this model in facilitating “socio-cultural competence and interpretative capabilities” (Divsar, Tahriri 2009, 112).

Secondly, the profile of teacher that follows the language-based approach was also reviewed by the participating students. As previously mentioned, this style of literature teaching does not help the student acquire neither the linguistic nor the cultural content that literature provides; participants “felt that instruction on vocabulary and vocabulary lists did not always translate into active knowledge and use of the words” (Al-Mahrooqi 2012, 177), failed to motivate students and keep them engaged, and did not break the breach between the student and the text by not involving them “in the process of constructing meaning or of negotiating it inside the classroom” (Al-Mahrooqi 2012, 177). This method relegates the cultural and literary content of the text, focusing instead on the linguistic aspects, but, as the study demonstrates, the approach itself renders the focus ineffective.

Finally, these studies have demonstrated that the use of an integrated approach to literature teaching leads to more effective learning of both linguistic structures and sociocultural and literary notions. This method was celebrated by students as it involved them in the analysis, resulting in effective negotiation of meaning, as well as engaging their own culture in order to establish cultural connections. This involvement led to motivation, prompting students to engage with the text in deeper ways, which made classes more effective. This approach “sets up conditions for a crucial part of language learning – the ability to infer meaning by procedural activity” (Divsar, Tahriri 2009, 109).

Several procedures have been developed following this integrated approach. According to Divsar and Tahriri’s research and its results, teaching literature through the integrated approach follows three phases. Firstly, students have to go through a preliminary phase, in which the text is broached. This phase “provides linguistic activities and aims at building comprehension” (Divsar, Tahiri 2009, 106), establishing a first connection with the text and making sure there is enough comprehensible input so that communication is not broken and the

student can approach the text. Then, the student enters the content-cultural phase, which “provides students with certain aspects of target culture and literature” (Divsar, Tahiri 2009, 106), so that they are able to localise the text in its sociocultural context in order to develop the cultural competence. Finally, students approach the synthesis phase, in which they evaluate and engage with the text in a personal way, including “expression and exchange of students’ reactions to the literary text and their understanding” (Divsar, Tahiri 2009, 106). These three phases integrate the language-based approach, the culture-based approach and the personal growth approach to create an integrated model of teaching literature in ESL that results in effective communication and the development of students’ linguistic and cultural competences.

Khatib, Derakhshan and Rezaei (2011) also developed a task-based approach to teaching literature. This approach is, similarly, integrated, and looks for what the authors call “whole literary engagement”, in which “task is defined as a piece of language that linguistically, physically, emotionally, intellectually, socially, critically, meaningfully, creatively, [...] motivationally, and experientially involves learners in the process of learning” (Khatib et al. 2011, 216). This procedure also counts with three phases within a task-based learning method: pre-task activities, during-task activities, and post-task activities. The pre-task phase aims to contextualise the students with the task and the text and introduce key vocabulary items, as well as giving students authentic listening exposure through songs or oral retellings of the text. During-task activities include the analysis and discrimination of the text’s information, taking notes, predicting and inferencing, and acting the story through roleplays and dramatization. Finally students summarise the story and evaluate the story. Post-task, students reflect on the task itself through self-evaluation and relating the story to their own cultural backgrounds.

Both methodologies are effective, but current research in introducing literature in the EFL classroom fails to integrate the many beneficial pedagogical potentials of the focus of creativity for second language learning. In this field, there are different approaches that allow a person to develop their creative abilities. Read (2010) sustains that, in order to achieve independency and foster creative thinking, the teacher must consider seven considerations, or pillars. The

first one is to build up positive self-esteem, necessary for students “to engage in the kind of fluent and flexible thinking, as well as the willingness to take risk, that characterise creativity” (Read 2010, 30). The second pillar is to model creativity yourself, which responds to previously mentioned notions of showing examples in order to create a base for creativity, engaging the zone of proximal development. Pillar three preaches to offer children choice, which teaches them responsibility and autonomous thinking. The fourth pillar prompts to use questions effectively in order to guide the creative process. Pillar five is to make connections, between contexts and between content, as “seeing relationships between things generates ideas and underpins creative thinking” (Read 2010, 34). The sixth pillar is to explore ideas, which is integral to the creative process, with a focus on giving validity to students’ voices. Finally, the seventh pillar to promote creativity wants to encourage critical reflection, as “it is only through critical reflection that children can assess the validity and value of their own creative work” (Read 2010, 35).

Carson (2011) proposed a model with which to identify and develop each person’s creative abilities. This model, called CREATES, is based on the current research on creative psychology that has been discussed in the theoretical framework chapter, and it proposes a set of "brain activation patters" (Carson 2010, 13) designed to foster the creative capacity. The model follows seven steps: connect, reason, envision, absorb, transform, evaluate, and stream. Whereas the model is a theoretical framework through which creativity can be developed individually, its methodology and steps create a solid basis for the application of creative development in the ESL classroom. Each of the steps focuses on one type of creative skill, which allows everyone to develop their creative potential. The inclusion of these steps in a pedagogical model will result in an effective creative skill development.

The connect skill refers to the ability to establish connections between different things or concepts, making easier the use of the cognitive process of divergent thinking. The reason skill refers to recalling previous information in order to solve a problem, which develops executive functions. The envision skill makes use of visual thinking, rather than verbal, and focuses on imagery, visualization and imagination. The absorb skill allows the person to be open to

new knowledge, and is necessary in order to process information to then channel into creativity. The transform skill starts from a real situation and searches for a solution to that problem; Carson refers to it as the link between emotional mood and creativity, in which the person can “transform negative energy into works of art” (Carson 2011, 14). The evaluate skill refers to critical thinking, processing information received in a critical way. Finally, the stream skill responds to the manifestation of this creativity.

As mentioned, there are no current models that integrate literature-teaching and creative development in the EFL classroom, despite the existence of plenty of research that points towards the effectiveness and benefits of both approaches. The result of combining these two approaches, which, as established, have many commonalities in between them, is yet to be studied. However, this proposal attempts to elaborate a combined model, making use of both fields’ advantages, in order to introduce the intercurricular topic in a way that benefits students’ cultural and linguistic competences and that simultaneously allows them to develop their creative skills.

6. INNOVATIVE PROPOSAL

6.1. Elaboration of the model

In this section, the aim is to create a model that can be adapted to most literary texts, to create a system of reference for which all short story sessions can be developed. This model will focus on developing cultural, linguistic, technological, and creative competences. Current research in literature, linguistics and creativity, presented during the previous sections of this work, has been contemplated in the development of this proposal. This model will be used to then propose a didactic application through the exposition to different short stories, to integrate language teaching and personal development.

The model that will be proposed here adapts the previous models to the context of the classroom, having into account the pedagogical and cognitive needs of students, as well as their curricular requirements. In order to guarantee this, Read's (2010) seven pillars of creativity-teaching have been taken into account, as they provide a consciously pedagogical framework for the development of these competences. Similarly, Khatib et al. (2011)'s task model for whole literary engagement has been integrated into the model, as it effectively integrates literature into the EFL classroom, as well as the integrated approach proposed by Divsar and Tahiri (2009). With them, Carson's (2012) CREATES model has been applied, as it provides ways to integrate creativity in a way that is engaging and actionable, specifically design to work on the creative competency.

In order to integrate these four models into a new didactic methodology that will be able to develop the aforementioned competences, I propose a four-step model into which different techniques of language learning can be integrated. This model, following Khatib et al.'s, is thought of as a language and content integrative task, which also seeks to follow the integrated approach to literature teaching in EFL. However, in order to make space for creative work, the three-steps model that both studies propose has been added an additional step.

In this step, embedded between the second and the last one, the student will be able to apply the linguistic and cultural content learned in the previous steps, through the exposure and analysis of the literary text, into a creation of their own, with which they will be able to work on their productive skills. Given these notions, these are the four steps that the model integrates:

- Step 1- Setting. In this step, students will be given the necessary input to perform the productive parts of the task. They will acquire linguistic and literary notions, necessary for the understanding of the text as well as for their own cultural and linguistic formation. This step will include activities aimed at engaging the student with the task at hand, involving the Create tool from the CREATES model as well as the “positive self-esteem” and “model creativity” pillars. This step will work with receptive skills in a communicative way.
- Step 2- Plot. During this step, students will access the text through independent or collective reading, as well as analyse and establish connections between the text and the linguistic and cultural reality. These activities should aim to be as interactive as possible in order to help the students engage with the material and foster their critical thinking. This step targets the Reason and Absorb tools from the CREATES model, as well as the “model creativity”, “make connections” and “critical reflection” pillars.
- Step 3- Action. This step focalizes the main creative output of the students as well as the final product of the task itself. During this step, students will transform what they have learned in the previous steps into a creative product that will merge the cultural, literary, and linguistic competences with the creative competence. The aim of this step is to use the tools of Transform, Envision, and Stream from the CREATES model, as well as the “offer choice”, “make connections”, and “explore ideas” pillars, to create a meaningful piece of work based on the literary content students have dealt with in the previous steps, to reflect on the creative work itself and to let them freely develop the productive competences.
- Step 4- Resolution. This is the final step of the task, targeting the Evaluate tool and the “positive self-esteem” and “critical reflection” pillars. In it,

students will be prompted to reflect on the educational process, self and peer evaluating their performance during the process, as well as sharing their experiences from the productive and receptive parts of the task. It is imperative during this step, as well as the previous ones, that students are engaged and their free individual expression is encouraged and valued, so that the communicative competence can be used properly within the cultural context presented through the short stories and the creative context presented by the task.

This model can be integrated into most types of literary texts, but it is especially devised for short stories. Because of their pedagogical possibilities, explained in the theoretical framework section, they work better in the ESL context to fully develop the linguistic and cultural aspects that literature presents. The task-based approach, similarly, makes the integration of these real materials more motivating, effective, and leaves space for the creative competence to be not only entirely developed, but established as a pillar, giving students' personal points of view an essential place in the learning process and a necessity for the completion of the task. Students, following this model, should feel like they comprise an essential part of the language class and like they have space in the literary practice, approaching the discipline to them.

6.2. Description of the proposal

The proposal described in this work is a suggestion of a pedagogical intervention with which to introduce the short story genre as a means to develop creative, communicative, and linguistic competences in the ESL classroom. It will follow the current legislation for Compulsory Secondary Education and Baccalaureate as well as the theoretical framework and the model proposed for including the extracurricular subject of literature in ESL classrooms.

The intention of this proposal is to provide a model for integrating literature in the ESL classroom. Therefore, this model could be followed anytime within the academic year, acquiescing to the possible curricular and time restrictions that

may happen. This proposal describes three tasks, arranged to be implemented in the three different educational levels found in any Spanish secondary education centre. These tasks are thought to be conducted at the end of a term, as will be explained in the following section. However, an activity following this model could be introduced in each didactic unit, instead of term, as long as it integrates the linguistic content required by the current normative in an effective way.

6.3. Activities

6.3.1. Legal introduction

This didactic proposal is elaborated following the Organic Law 8/2013, of 9th December, for the improvement of the educational quality (LOMCE, 2013), through which the curricular objectives, competences, contents, methodologies, and standards and criteria for evaluation and promotion of compulsory secondary education are established.

This proposal, following the propositions of the preamble and the second chapter of the LOMCE (2013), wants to promote lifelong learning by introducing cross-curricular topics and focusing on learning through competences. Similarly, regarding the interest towards technology developed in recent years, the proposal wants to make use of ICT tools, blending them seamlessly into the linguistic practice in order to significantly improve the learning process of students.

The pedagogical contents used to elaborate the activities in the proposal have been taken from the 19/2015 Regional Decree of 12th June, which establishes the curriculum for Compulsory Secondary Education (2015), as well as the 21/2015 Regional Decree of 3rd July (2015), which establishes the curriculum for Baccalaureate (2015). These decrees are based on the 1105/2014 Decree of 26th December for the Compulsory Secondary Education (2014).

6.3.2. Contextualisation

This proposal is devised to be implemented in the 2nd and 4th years of Compulsory Secondary Education and the 2nd year of Baccaureate. The model described can be adapted to any year of Compulsory Secondary Education and Baccaureate, through the selection of different short stories appropriate to each level of linguistic and curricular needs. These years have been selected as representatives of different levels of instruction, to show the range of linguistic levels in which the model proposed can be implemented.

This didactic proposal could be carried out in any educational centre that offered Compulsory Secondary Education and Baccaureate. Ideally, the program proposed would be an implementation to the English subject through all of the levels, so that the efficacy of it is fully explored. This centre, because of the ICT focus of the tasks, should have the necessary technological means to guarantee the correct development of the activities proposed.

Finally, as the reality of educational centres is that students have a wide range of capabilities and, in many cases, special needs, there will be a section that contemplates the different realities lived in the classrooms to accommodate every student, on top of the ethos of the model which aims to adapt to different cognitive processes.

6.3.3. Objectives

This didactic proposal contemplates the following stage objectives, included in the Article 23 of the LOMCE (2013), in which the stage objectives for Compulsory Secondary Education are described:

- a) To assume their duties responsibly, to know and exercise their rights with respect for others, to practise tolerance, cooperation and solidarity among individuals and groups, to exercise dialogue by strengthening human

rights as common values of a plural society and to prepare for the exercise of democratic citizenship.

b) To develop and consolidate habits of discipline, study and individual and teamwork as a necessary condition for the effective performance of learning tasks and as a means of personal development.

c) To value and respect the difference between the sexes and the equality of rights and opportunities between them.

d) To strengthen their affective capacities in all areas of their personality and in their relations with others, as well as to reject violence, prejudices of any kind, sexist behaviour and to resolve conflicts peacefully.

e) To develop basic skills in the use of information sources in order to acquire new knowledge with a critical sense.

g) To develop an enterprising spirit and self-confidence, participation, critical sense, personal initiative and the ability to learn to learn, plan, make decisions and assume responsibilities.

i) To understand and express themselves in one or more foreign languages in an appropriate way.

j) To know, value and respect the basic aspects of one's own and others' culture and history, as well as artistic and cultural heritage.

l) To appreciate artistic creation and understand the language of the different artistic manifestations, using different means of expression and representation.

The specific didactic and linguistic objectives are defined in detail in each of the activities developed.

6.3.4. Competences

As previously mentioned, this didactic proposal, following the pedagogical mandates established by the LOMCE (2013), aims to use a methodology based

on developing the competences established for the curriculum of Compulsory Secondary Education, specified in the Article 2.2. of the 1105/2014 Decree of 26th December for the Compulsory Secondary Education (2014). The teaching and acquisition of these competences will be the basis for the proposal:

- Linguistic competence (LC). This competence is the result of oral and writing practice and it involves lexical and grammatical competences acquired through their use in different communicative situations.
- Digital competence (DC). This competence is the result of a correct integration of ICT in the classroom. Students are intended to acquire a degree of dexterity and independence in using the technologies available to them to enhance their educational experience.
- Competence on learning to learn (LTL). The main objective of the educational system is to allow students to take initiative in their own learning experience, developing strategies and solutions of their own to the different problems presented through the educational process.
- Social and civic competences (SCC). This competence seeks to use the students' ability to use their knowledge and attitudes towards society to interpret social events and problems, as well as to elaborate solutions and to develop a social consciousness and sense of ethic.
- Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship (SIE). This competence refers to the students' ability to transform ideas into action, through problem solving, initiative, and awareness of their reality.
- Cultural competence (CC). This competence requires the students to be aware and appreciative of different cultural manifestations, developing their imagination, creativity, and social awareness.

Because of the nature of the activities planned for this proposal, the Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology (MSTC), which allows students to apply their mathematical and scientific knowledge to interpret the reality around them, as well as gaining awareness of their surroundings, does not get explicitly developed in this practice. However, due to the flexibility of the model proposed, a task that made use of this competence could be easily implemented, through a careful selection of materials and activities.

6.3.5. Methodology

The methodology applied through the entire proposal has been previously reflected in the theoretical parts of this work, and focuses on recent ESL theories; henceforth, the main methodological approach chosen for this pedagogical proposal is communicative. The intention of the model, as well as its application, is to work on the student's abilities to generate personal linguistic output through different creative channels in order to foster communication and creativity and to work on linguistic competences through a focus on meaning and occasional focus on form. This pedagogical proposal collects different ESL methodologies, such as Content and Language Integrated Learning and Task-Based Language Teaching, and integrates them under a model that fosters intuitive work, inductive learning, and lateral thinking, as it has been demonstrated to benefit the cognitive processes of the student (De Bono 2010).

The task-based approach, which has been present in language teaching since the 1980s (Shehadeh 2005, 13), is chosen as a methodology for this proposal as it is its purpose to allow learners to develop the language they have through the implementation of a context in which to negotiate, modify, rephrase, and experiment with the second language (Richard, Rodgers 2014, 228). Similarly, due to the nature of the proposal, the tasks described integrate intercurricular content through a content-based instruction, making the subject matter central to the task by providing authentic materials that require students "to synthesize facts and ideas [...] as a preparation for writing" (Brinton et al. 1989, 2). The tasks described do rely on game-based learning occasionally as a means of motivating students towards the acquisition of their learning outcomes.

6.3.6. Activities

a) The Selfish Giant

This task is based on the short story “The Selfish Giant”, a traditional fairy tale adapted by Oscar Wilde in 1888 in the book *The Happy Prince and Other Tales*. The fairy tale genre and the accessibility of the language makes this story perfect for younger students of ESL; this story can be introduced in the 2nd year of CSE. This task’s aim is to consider the actions described in the fable and invent different endings changing key parts of the story, creating a Choose Your Adventure story using the website Inklewriter¹—the task is intended to occupy two sessions.

For the “Setting” step, the activities will be focused on introducing the genre of the moral fairy tale, or fable, and the necessary lexical and grammatical information for students to understand the story in question. This explanation can include further grammatical contents dealing with past tenses, as used in the story, but for the sake of this task it has been assumed that this grammatical explanation has already been delivered during the course and students are recalling past information. This step would occupy the first half of the first session. The first ten to fifteen minutes would be used to bring the literary genre closer to the context of the students: for this purpose, students will be asked to think of fables and fairy tales that they know. As a warm-up activity to engage with the creative competence and activate background language, they will perform a collective storytelling activity, in which each student will have to tell a sentence from a fable following the previous students’ sentence, in order to tell the whole story by the end. This is a fun game that tests students’ ability to recall previous knowledge, use the language to communicate and synthesise and to intuitively follow literary structures. The following ten minutes will be devoted to introducing necessary linguistic terms with the help of a Kahoot. The terms discussed in this section will be included in a worksheet for students to consult.

In the “Plot” step, students will be introduced to the tale. In order to further help the students achieve the literary experience of fables, as well as practice receptive skills, the tale will be orally performed by the teacher, as oral storytelling has an important role in the development of the kid and helps foster a creative and motivating class environment. This choice also allows students with special

¹ <https://www.inklewriter.com/>

needs to connect better with the lesson and acquire the content, as it suits different paces and engages better with younger students than simply reading a text. This will occupy the rest of the first session; afterwards, and while it happens, the teacher should engage the students with the story, prompting them to think about the contents discussed and asking for their opinion. At home, students will be asked to log into Perusall², a website where teacher materials can be uploaded and accessed by students. In this website the story will be uploaded, along with some further comprehension questions that will guide students to the development of the final task, as can be seen in the Annex (Figure 1).

The “Action” step will constitute the final product of the task, and will be done in the second in-class session. The answers of students to the previous part will be discussed in class and the task will be introduced: creating alternative endings using Inklewriter. In groups, students will be assigned a part of the story in which a choice can be made between two different actions, and they must write an alternative ending to the story by changing the story action. This has the purpose of engaging their linguistic practice through creative writing, as well as discussing cultural notions through the observation of values and morals and the way the actions done by an individual affect the world.

Finally, for the “Resolution” step, students will showcase their work in class by projecting and reading their parts out loud at the end of the session, in order to observe the creative work of their peers and see the different consequences and literary possibilities. To finish with the task, students will be asked to fill on a self-assessment sheet in which they will reflect on the contents acquired during the task and their own performance in it.

The didactic objectives for this task are as follows:

- To familiarise the student with the fable genre of short stories
- To discuss moral values
- To consider the elements of the fable
- To draw parallels between the target and the native culture
- To engage creativity by considering alternative scenarios

² <https://app.perusall.com/>

The linguistic objectives considered for this task are:

- To be able to comprehend literary language
- To express hypotheses and opinions
- To engage active oral comprehension
- To acquire advanced lexical structures
- To be able to create short pieces of literary writing

The contents included in this activity, treated through the short story, have been taken from the 19/2015 Regional Decree of 12th June (2015) and correspond to both the subject of ESL at 2nd CSE level and the subject of Castilian language and literature, as this task is based on an intercurricular model. They will be exposed based on skill blocks, as in the ESL subject, but those of the Literature subject are enmeshed in the corresponding parts.

- Block I. Comprehension of oral texts. Students will be able to employ comprehension strategies, recalling previous information through the engagement with their target culture and latent knowledge. They will be able to identify textual types and formulate hypotheses on content and context. They will also contemplate sociocultural and sociolinguistic aspects, such as non-verbal language and register, through the oral performance of the story. The communicative functions present in this task are engagement in personal and social relations, description and narration, and establishment of communication. From the literature subject, students will be able to comprehend narrative texts.
- Block II. Production of oral texts. Students will employ production strategies to plan and execute their oral discourse, whose communicative functions focus on narration, communication, negotiation of meaning and expression of opinion. Students will make use of both linguistic and paralinguistic resources to make their message understood.
- Block III. Comprehension of written texts. Students will employ comprehension strategies such as mobilization of previous information treated in class to understand the written short story and the questions provided, being asked to formulate hypotheses and make use of the communicative functions to describe, narrate and express their opinion.

They will be able to read, comprehend and interpret literary and narrative texts, as well as make use of TICs to obtain information.

- Block IV. Production of written texts. In the final task, students will need to use planning and execution production strategies in order to perform the task making use of their communicative competences. They will need to produce a creative text and express it clearly, adjusting to the task type, as well as consider sociocultural notions of genre and register. They will engage in communicative functions through description, narration and expression of their opinion. They will be able to write narrative texts and have an interest in written composition as a means of communication.
- The lexicon used will be both of common use and literary. The syntactic-discursive structures will focus on the expression of affirmation, negation, interrogation and exclamation, the expression of time and logical relations, and expression of manner, in order to realise the task with the appropriate language; as well as background knowledge on past tenses.

b) The North Pole Workshops

This task is based on the short story “The North Pole Workshops”, written by Mari Ness and published in Issue 43 of *Uncanny Magazine* (2021). *Uncanny Magazine* is a highly awarded online Science Fiction and Fantasy literary magazine that publishes periodically pieces of poetry, fiction and non-fiction from different authors. It is important that, in choosing material to create an activity on, said material needs to be interesting and relevant to the student. All literature can create an interesting subject matter, but it is a good idea to consider current material that can more easily relate to student’s cultural reality. The choice of sources like this magazine guarantees both literary quality and an up-to-date, interesting and motivating subject matter. This story is accessible but makes more use of specific thematic lexicon as well as literary resources such as humour and irony, which makes this story appropriate for 4th year of CSE. This story plays with form, taking the shape of an automatic voicemail. As it is, leaves the part of the interlocutor open to interpretation; the task, therefore, is to guide the student to create their own story, imagining what happens at the other end of the line, interacting with the story but exploring their own interpretation and

working on their creativity by using story prompts provided at random by the website LearnHip³. This task can take place in three sessions.

For the “Setting” stage, students will need to get familiarized with the subject matter and the flexibility of form that can happen in short stories. For this, the first session, they will play with the possibilities that changing form and genre has in the meaning of a story. In groups, they will all be assigned the same story plot. However, each group will write a different story following a different direction; they should write it in verse, in a certain genre, from a character’s perspective, from an object’s perspective, from the end to the beginning, etc. The prompt will be thematically relevant to the short story, activating thus background knowledge on the topic. A sample of this activity can be found in the Annex (Figure 2). This activity will occupy the first session, and students will upload their stories to Perusall and read them to the class.

For the “Plot” stage, done in the first half of the second session, students will be exposed to the short story and discuss its content and form. Similarly to the previous task, they will be provided a transcript of the story with some blanks that they will have to fill in as they listen to the story, which has been recorded and performed by Matt Peters on the *Uncanny Magazine Podcast*, 43B (2021). Periodically, before each section of the story, the teacher will check on the students on whether they understand the story, correcting the blanks, and questioning them about the story. Directed questions shall be used in this stage, as Read (2010) proposes, to guide the student towards the creative output as well as understanding the story: what is special about the story, how is the situation unique, what kind of world does it build.

Finally, for the “Action” stage, students will consider the following question: what is happening at the other end of the line? To write this short story, students will be both helped and challenged by making use of story prompts provided by the website LearnHip. In it, the student is dealt eight cards at random, each one portraying a simple image. Students must use at least two of these cards to imagine a scenario in which the character needs to use the North Pole consumer help. The story will be written individually, but, in pairs, students must discuss

³ <https://learnhip.com/storycards/>

their cards and help each other come to a hypothetical scenario. Students will work on the prompt in class and finish their stories as homework, uploading them into Perusall.

In the “Resolution” stage, done in the final in-class session, students will share their stories and partake in a final reflective activity; they will sort their stories thematically using the number commands explored in the original short story; that is, they must categorise their incident following the sorting method shown in the short story. This is done so that they reflect in the type of plot they have chosen to explore. Finally, they will conduct a self-evaluation to reflect on the learning process and the task itself.

The didactic objectives for this task are the following:

- To learn about style and genre in literature
- To be able to discuss and hypothesise based on a text
- To write and create cooperatively
- To use their linguistic and cultural knowledge to create a piece of writing

The linguistic objectives developed are:

- To express hypotheses and opinions
- To understand humour
- To associate genre and language
- To recognize literary styles
- To explore thematic vocabulary

The contents that this task deals with have been taken from the ESL and Castilian language and literature curriculum for 4th of ESO, as specified in the 19/2015 Regional Decree of 12th June (2015).

- Block I. Comprehension of oral texts. Students will be asked to use comprehension strategies such as mobilisation of previous information, identification of textual type, and formulation and reformulation of hypothesis during the oral reading of the short story and, as indicated in the Literature subject, they will be able to comprehend, interpret and value literary oral texts. They will also appreciate sociocultural aspects

such as register and cultural values, and they will distinguish communicative functions such as description, narration, expression of knowledge, orders and formulation of suggestions and conditions.

- Block II. Production of oral texts. Students will employ production strategies such as planification and execution, especially in expression and negotiation of meaning, in order to carry out the discussion and the oral activities planned. They should be able to compensate their linguistic shortcomings through linguistic, paralinguistic and paratextual proceedings in order to complete their task. The communicative functions used will be focused on discussion and maintaining personal and social relationships through description, narration, expression of knowledge and doubt and formulation of hypotheses.
- Block III. Comprehension of written texts. Students will use comprehension strategies to understand the short story and the activities provided, such as mobilisation of information, identification of textual type, distinction of types of comprehension, and formulation of hypotheses, which will make them able to read, comprehend, interpret, and value literary written texts. The sociocultural and sociolinguistic aspects of the text are also regarded during the task. The communicative functions included in the written story and activities are description, narration of events, offering of information and instructions and formulation of hypotheses and suggestions.
- Block IV. Production of written texts. Students, for the realisation of the written parts of the task, must be able to employ production strategies dealing with production and execution, especially making use of previous knowledge and readjusting the message to the genre asked. They will make use of sociocultural aspects such as social conventions and cultural attitudes and values. They will engage in communicative functions through their texts, such as description, narration of events, petition of help and information, expression of doubt and intention, and formulation of suggestions, wishes, conditions and hypotheses. These will make the students able to employ their knowledge to write their own literary texts with creative intent.

- The lexicon treated in this activity will be both of common use as well as culturally specific to the topic at hand, discussed through the “Setting” activities and the reading of the short story. The syntactic-discursive contents included are the expression of logical relations, especially those of cause and time; interrogatives and expression of existence, space, time and mode, as necessary for the description of the situation prompted by the task.

c) *The Premonition*

For this task, students will explore the short story “The Premonition”, written by Joyce Carol Oates in 1992 and included in the collection *Haunted: Tales of the Grotesque*. This story is considered one of Carol Oates’ best short stories, and she is renowned for her work in this genre. This story is a grotesque, gothic, and mysterious tale in which the character, following a premonition, visits his sister-in-law the week before Christmas, fearing that something bad has happened to them on account of his older brother. It is a longer story and requires a higher dominion of the language, but despite these problems it is accessible as well as very entertaining and motivating on due to its suspenseful plot, short ensemble of characters and literary language. The task devised for this short story is though for a 2nd Bacculaureate level and focuses on the understanding of the plot and genre via the elaboration of a short play and a four-panel comic on the Pixton⁴ website. This task will be done in four sessions.

For the “Setting” stage, students will explore the mystery genre participating in a murder mystery. This activity, that takes place in the first session, has as an objective to situate the students into the genre, activating their creative and rational thinking skills, as well as generating contexts in which negotiation of meaning is needed. Students will take on different roles and ask their peers for information in order to solve the mystery.

The “Plot” stage will be split into two sessions and will be intermeshed with the “Action” stage. Due to the length and nature of the short story, its reading will

⁴ <https://www-es.pixton.com/>

be split into two parts. As Soukup (1998) proposes, this story's structure is divided into two main parts, dividing the text between the establishment of the setting and the resolution of the plot, including the subversion of the expectations laid in the first part of the story. Because of this, students can approach the text in two parts, given to them in two sections, and will have two main activities. They will read the first part at home, which will prompt a discussion in class on the possible endings of the story, based on critical reading and the expectations derived from the text and the genre. In this second session, students will organize in groups of five, as many characters as there are in the story, depending on the ending they think will play out, and organize a short play to portray their ending. This will be written in class with the help of the teacher as well as notions derived from their Universal Literature classes, finished at home and performed the next session. Then, the last part of the story will be posted and students will read it at home, performing a comprehension activity based on localising as many "premonitions" –instances in which the author foreshadows the resolution of the events— they are able to find. Finally during the third session, in their groups, they will synopsise the story in a four-panel comic strip, where each of the panels corresponds to each part of a story: setting, action, climax, and resolution. In such a story, longer and full of information, it becomes a great cognitive challenge to be able to summarise the bare bones of the story.

For the "Resolution" part, in the fourth and last session, students will discuss the story in class, share their comic strips and realise both a self-evaluation, similar to the previous ones, and a peer-evaluation based on how successfully their comic strips condense the information provided by the short story.

The didactic objectives in this task include:

- To understand the structure of short stories
- To analyse the mystery genre
- To learn to search for information, both on the text and with other people
- To be able to extract the main ideas from a text
- To create collaboratively and cooperate for a goal

- To interpret the text

The linguistic objectives for the task are:

- To understand the meaning of certain linguistic structures
- To be able to analyse the text
- To be able to recognise double meanings and foreshadowing
- To condense information provided in a longer text
- To be able to transform the text into different textual formats

The contents regarded for this task are those included in the ESL subject for 2nd of Baccalaureate. This task also makes use, as previously alluded, of the concepts and contents explored in both the Castilian Language and Literature and Universal Literature subjects, in order to establish intercurricular relations and integrate literary and linguistic concepts in a creative way. These contents are specified in the 21/2015 Regional Decree of 3rd July (2015) and are included in the task as follows:

- Block I. Comprehension of oral texts. This task does not have an explicit listening activity, but orality is a key part of it through discussion, performance and teacher-student and student-student interactions. Because of it, students should employ comprehension strategies such as mobilisation of previous information, identification of textual type, and formulation and reformulation of hypotheses. Sociocultural and sociolinguistic aspects are at the heart of the dramatical performance, and the focus of the task is to engage with communicative functions such as social relationships, description, narration and exchange of information, personal expression, and organisation of the discourse.
- Block II. Production of oral texts. For their oral performances, students will have to employ production strategies of planification and execution, fitting the oral text to the interlocutor or audience and expressing themselves clearly and coherently, readjusting the message to the context. They will also need to use linguistic, paralinguistic and paratextual procedures to make their message understood. Sociocultural and sociolinguistic aspects will be necessary to grasp for their oral performances and will be discussed in the creation of the

dramatic text. Finally, the communicative functions are essential: social relationships, description, narration and exchange of information, personal expression, establishment of communication and organisation of the discourse.

- Block III. Comprehension of written texts. Students will engage in the analysis of written texts, for which they will need to use comprehension strategies such as mobilisation of previous information, identification of textual type, distinction of types of comprehension, and formulation and reformulation of hypotheses, all included in the short story. They will need to regard sociocultural and sociolinguistic aspects to analyse the story properly. They will observe and recognise the topics and forms included in literature. The communicative functions contemplated in the text are description and narration, exchange of information, establishment of communication and organization of the discourse.
- Block IV. Production of written texts. For this section, in order to carry out the task, students will need to employ production strategies to plan and execute written texts on literary topics and works. They will need to plan their texts by mobilizing their competences and using the adequate linguistic resources. Similarly, they will need to execute their texts regarding their expression, readjusting the message to the task, and making use of previous knowledge, as well as integrating the sociocultural and sociolinguistic aspects in their final production that they have regarded in the story. The communicative functions at work in this task are description, narration, exchange of information, formulation of hypotheses, establishment of communication and organization of the discourse.
- The lexicon used in this task and at this level will be both common and more specialised due to the nature of the story, and includes the description of people and objects, time and space, situations, and interpersonal relationships. Within the syntactic-discursive contents, while considering most in the creating of a proper creative text, there will be a focus on the expression of logical and temporal relationships and of mode and modality.

6.3.7. Materials

All of the tasks devised make use of different ICT tools, such as Inklewriter, Pixton, and LearnHip. They all have in common the centrality of the Perusal website, as a means to incorporate all of the pieces of the lesson in a virtual space that students and teacher both can have access to. Because of this focus on digital resources, students and teacher alike need to have access to different electronic devices. A classroom computer, speakers and projector should be available, and students need to have a personal electronic device provided by the school, such as a computer or tablet. The different texts will be provided by the teacher and, in the development of different activities, it is advisable that the short stories can be accessible online through an electronic device for better accessibility and easier class adaptation.

A material which has not been aforementioned but can be integrated thorough the whole proposal as need arises is the website for the Creative Thinking in Literacy & Language Skills project (2014), co-founded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union. This project investigates the teaching of creative thinking and it is full of resources that can be useful in order to develop the activities. For example, in case students find coming up with creative ideas, teachers can try implementing the tools for creating ideas mentioned on the website CreatingMinds.org, which is collected in the project's website. This resource is mentioned here as a supporting tool in the implementation of the model and activities proposed.

6.3.8. Assessment

The assessment for these activities is thought to be formative and summative. It is important to keep the assessment formative in order to monitor student learning and provide continuous feedback. This rapport between student and teacher will both benefit the student's learning process, as they are aware of

their strengths and weaknesses, and improve their motivation, as they perceive that all of their effort has an impact on their mark. The formative assessment will be conducted through the activities that conform the task, outside of the final product: the “Setting”, “Plot”, and “Resolution” stages. Each of these activities will have a mark out of ten, which will be collected for the final 60% of the task mark. The “Resolution” stage mark will be collected through peer and self-evaluation, following a rubric provided by the teacher. Similarly, inside this percentage, there is a 10% that is devoted to class participation and attitude, in order to further encourage student participation.

Nonetheless, being a task-based project, evaluation will also be summative, as the activities carried out during the process are steps toward the final production. For this reason, the summative assessment will amount to 40% of the mark and will be realised following a rubric that students will have access to, so they are aware of the contents and competences they will be evaluated on. The evaluation sheets, which will be used by teacher and students, are based on the learning standards and evaluating criteria established for each educational level in the 19/2015 Regional Decree of 12th June (2015) and the 21/2015 Regional Decree of 3rd July (2015). A sample rubric of the evaluation sheets, made with the website Rubric-Maker⁵, can be found in the Annex. Additionally, these rubrics can be transformed into surveys for student self-assessment. A sample of such a survey was done through the website Pointerpro and can be accessed through the link provided⁶.

6.3.9. *Special needs*

As mentioned in earlier sections, this model has the ability to be accommodating to different types of pedagogical needs, as well as providing options for very different types of creative work to fit under the same task. However, as with every pedagogical intervention, every student must be taken into account. These activities already have into account students with special needs; all short stories are provided in various formats so as to help students

⁵ <https://rubric-maker.com/>

⁶ <https://s.pointerpro.com/nndcquz>

acquire the notions provided regardless of their cognitive needs. Grammar and lexicon needed to understand the stories will be explained and provided within the Perusall area, as well as further documentation and examples for students to access if they need it for performing the tasks. The teacher will provide additional support to any student in need, and group and pair work is preferred as it helps the students be more motivated as well as supported.

7. DISCUSSION

The development of this model was the result of personal reflection and a reaction to what I saw in current classrooms during the length of my internship. Literature has a great pedagogical power that goes underutilised, especially in ESL classrooms, where it usually does not get introduced in any depth because it is considered difficult, hard to understand and not relevant to students (Floris 2004, 1). Short stories are a specially underutilised genre, that could resolve many of the problems that introducing literature in the ESL classroom presents: they are a shorter type of fiction that can support many different genre and stylistic devices that make them both easier to read and more interesting to students.

This proposal entails an innovative pedagogical model that will make the approach of literature to ESL students easier, as well as integrate curricular contents in an effective way. Using this method, students will be able to use their critical and lateral thinking in order to develop their creative, communicative, literary, and linguistic competences, while doing a project that is motivating and whose end result they are in control of. Making students a part of the entire process, as well as rewarding their work thorough the task, will drive them to have the interest to make the most of the task, learn inductively and be creative with their use of the language.

This model can achieve the objectives defined in the beginning of this paper: working in the linguistic content inductively via the introduction of literary content and integrating literature and language in a way that works creatively with students' productive skills. However, there are some possible setbacks to this proposal that I would like to address.

Firstly, it is important to acknowledge the physical limitations of a real classroom. When making didactic proposals such as this one, we operate under idealistic conditions in which the procedure will be realised smoothly and without mishaps. The reality of the classroom is much different. One of the most notable aspects of this proposal is its tie to ICTs, in search for developing the digital competence and making students independent and resourceful, while making the material more accessible and up to date. However, this focus on technologies

needs to be supported by the centre: the students and the classroom need to be supplied with individual electronic devices, and there must be an internet connection in both the centre and the students' personal homes (or a place accessible to them after class hours). This could prove a problem, as not all high schools have access to these resources, and render the activities proposed unusable. However, the model still works without such a focus on technology, and the tasks can easily be devised to accommodate a number of classroom situations.

Similarly, the model lends itself to be adapted to different curricular and individual needs. The activities developed do not have a heavy focus on form, but this can be introduced easily, making the short story task a step towards the acquisition of explicit grammatical or lexical material. The activities can be devised according to the curriculum of any centre, and can have different focus depending on the curricular needs of the classroom or centre. In the same way, they can accommodate a number of diverse individual situations that require special attention, as the model aims to be open to different types of cognition and stages of development. The level of the activities is easily adaptable so that they can be implemented at any level.

Furthermore, it is necessary to acknowledge that this model will work best when implemented as a yearly program as opposed to an isolated practice. The development of linguistic and creative competences is a process, and including activities thorough the yearly curriculum will guarantee better results than the occasional implementation of a short story. This will also solve a potential problem, which is that of students' unfamiliarity with the type of task. A continued practise will make the students more accustomed to working with texts within tasks, making the linguistic content easier to assimilate and their lexicon richer through exposition, and will consequently facilitate their lateral thinking through making it a habit.

To finish the discussion, I would like to direct attention to the ways in which this didactic proposal could be perfected. The fact that there is no model or pedagogical theory that focuses specifically on short stories means that this model is a necessary innovation, but it also makes it conjectural. Further research should be conducted in the intersection between ESL and short stories, to

understand the ways short fiction can help foreign language learners, as well as figuring out class methodologies in order to develop this concept. To date, there is no research on the cognitive and pedagogical difference on the student between long-form literature and short stories. Such research would clarify the effectiveness of this model, as well as guide its adaptation to the classroom. Finally, while creativity and lateral thinking in the classroom is becoming more widely understood as an important part of the educative and developmental process, there is still a lack of established practice on implementing creative writing within ESL classes (De Araujo 2017, 194). Further research and pedagogical models should be conducted and implemented in order to determine the best way in which to work on creative and literary competences within the linguistic context of an ESL classroom.

8. CONCLUSION

At the beginning of this pedagogical project, it was noted that there existed a need in EFL classrooms to integrate creative processes into the second language practice. Despite the currently growing research on creativity and its effect on cognition, as well as its implementation in education, there still remains a lack of activities dedicated to creative development in the EFL classroom. Moreover, in spite of the links between literature, creativity and second language learning, there is still a methodological void for the implementation of these separately recognised pedagogical practices, as well as for the introduction of short stories into the EFL classroom as a valid and beneficial second language practice.

This proposal, therefore, was developed in order to respond to this necessity. The model introduced in this paper works against a background of growing interest for learning through the focus on competences and integrating content in the second language practice. There needs to be a period of observation and reevaluation of the model proposed, as it is merely a theoretical conceptualization based on the current psychological and pedagogical research. However, the model addresses the main objectives of the proposal, and the activities designed in following the model have the potential to respond to the current curricular and cognitive needs of students. These tasks give the students opportunity to work on their linguistic skills in an inductive way, alongside their creative and cultural development. The intercurricular focus on literature makes possible the development of different competences directed at making the student a confident, independent, creative learner, and motivates them to be in touch with different cultures as well as their own, being an active participant on their own learning process.

This pedagogical proposal explores an interesting intersection of fields that could greatly benefit the student in their EFL teaching. There is room for improvement, as mentioned in the discussion, as this proposal remains an ideal framework through which to develop individual classroom practices. The shape of these practices will depend on the different realities of each EFL classroom. However, and despite a lack of research on the precise topic covered by this proposal, the implementation of this model could be used to observe the ways

creativity, literature, and linguistic knowledge can be interconnected in the EFL classroom.

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10. ANNEX

Figure 1. Examples of the Perusall website. Example of the main page, in which the assignments are located, and example of a reading assignment.

The screenshot shows the Perusall website interface. At the top, there are navigation links: "Get started", "Library" (highlighted in blue), "Assignments", and "Students". To the right is a search bar labeled "Type to search library" and a green "Add content" button. Below the navigation is a "Add content" section with a list of items: "The Selfish Giant", "Reading- Student Survey (sample)", and "The North Pole Workshops- Writing submissions". The "The Selfish Giant" item is selected, showing a preview of the story's cover image and the title. Below the image are icons for "Open", "Edit", "Clear digital rights", "Assign", "Groups", and "Delete". A link "View original web page" is also present. Underneath, it states "1 assignment for this library item:" followed by a list item: "The Selfish Giant- Reading Comprehension".

This screenshot displays a reading assignment interface. On the left, the text of "The Selfish Giant" is shown with a yellow background. The text includes: "winter morning he looked out of his window as he was dressing. He did not hate the Winter... for he knew that it was merely the Spring asleep, and that the flowers were resting. Suddenly he rubbed his eyes in wonder, and looked and looked. It certainly was a marvellous sight. In the farthest corner of the garden was a tree quite covered with lovely white blossoms. Its branches were all golden, and silver fruit hung down from them, and underneath it stood the little boy he had loved. Downstairs ran the Giant in great joy, and out into the garden. He hastened across the grass, and came near to the child. And when he came quite close his face grew red with anger, and he said, 'Who hath dared to wound thee?' For on the palms of the child's hands were the prints of two nails, and the prints of two nails were on the little feet. 'Who hath dared to wound thee?' cried the Giant; 'tell me, that I may take my big sword and slay him.'" "Nay!" answered the child; "but these are the wounds of Love." "Who art thou?" said the Giant, and a strange awe fell on him, and he knelt before the little child. And the child smiled on the Giant, and said to him, "You let me play once in your garden, to-day you shall come with me to my garden, which is Paradise." And when the children ran in that afternoon, they found the Giant lying dead under the tree, all covered with white blossoms.

At the bottom, it notes: "The Selfish Giant was featured as *The Short Story of the Day* on Tue, Oct 16, 2018".

On the right, a "All conversations" window is open, showing a search bar and a list of discussion questions:

- Can you find any synonyms for "gruff"?
- Put yourself in the giant's shoes. How do you think he felt? Was ...
- The author has used personification to describe natural element...
- This is a linnet. Do you know any other name of bird?
- Why is it that the Spring had not come to the Giant's castle?
- Who do you think the boy was? What does he represent?
- After having read the story, what do you think is the moral?

Figure 2. Prompt sheet for task 2 made in Canva.

One day, a strange man knocks on your door, asking you for some salt. He says he is your neighbour, but you have never seen him.

You have to tell the story...

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| IN VERSE | AS A ROMANCE STORY |
| AS A HORROR STORY | AS IF IT WAS A NEWS REPORT |
| WITH A BAD ENDING | FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE NEIGHBOUR |

Figure 3. Assessment rubric made in Rubric-Maker.

| | Exceeds Expectations | Meets Expectations | Needs Improvement | Below Expectations |
|---|---|--|---|--|
| Content Creativity Unique delivery 4 points | The writing demonstrated student's own interpretation and expression of material. They used many images and descriptions and created a unique scenario. | The student devised a creative way to complete the project. | The writing was correct but showed little student interpretation. Project based primarily on sample work. Student added one or more original ideas. | Project was designed only as prescribed or was based entirely on sample work. |
| Writing Organization Clear, logical sequence 4 points | All ideas were presented in a logical order. Introduction was clear, body included many details, and conclusion summarized main idea. Writing flowed smoothly throughout. | Ideas were presented in a logical order. Introduction was clear, body included many details, and conclusion summarized main idea. | Some ideas were presented in logical order. Introduction, body, and conclusion were included. | Writing was fragmented. Ideas were not presented in logical order. Introduction, body, and conclusion were not clear. |
| Writing Overview Ideas, voice, conventions, fluency, organization, and word choice 4 points | Used rich and topic-specific vocabulary and made no spelling, grammar, capitalization, or punctuation errors. Used personal style and feeling. | Used correct vocabulary. Made less than 5 spelling, grammar, capitalization, or punctuation errors. | The vocabulary was basic. Made 5 to 10 spelling, grammar, capitalization, or punctuation errors. | Vocabulary was lacking. Made more than 10 spelling, grammar, capitalization, or punctuation errors. |
| Organization Overview Ready for classwork 4 points | Every assignment complete, accurate, and on time. Used time well. Work was turned in early or on time. Student kept an organized account of the task development. | Finished assignments on time. Most work was done on time. Monitored progress frequently. Completed all required tasks on schedule. | Most assignments finished on time. Some work was not done on time and was lost at some point in the task. | Rarely finished assignments on time. Did not use time well. Little or no work was done on time and was lost through most of the task. |
| Behavior Overview Friendly, helpful, positive 4 points | Followed all directions and completed project as assigned. Took part in all activities. Was helpful to others and made constructive suggestions about their work. | Made a few minor deviations from tasks assigned but successfully completed project. Had a positive attitude about assigned work. Shared ideas and took part in all activities. | Followed most directions, but did not complete all tasks. Took part in most activities. Was unwilling to try new things or share ideas. | Did not follow directions, resulting in an incomplete end product. Had a negative attitude about the project, team, and work assigned. |