



CREATIVE WRITING AS A STIMULATING STRATEGY FOR CRITICAL THINKING

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ABSTRACT

In the field of education, topics related to brain functioning and thought-generating processes have attracted great interest in recent years, mainly due to the concern of teachers and researchers in the area, in order to know how to create and implement new pedagogical strategies that contribute to the development of necessary skills in 21st-century education, among which creativity and critical thinking stand out. For the development of this research study, a qualitative design was used, employing the hermeneutic method, which resorts to documentary and descriptive analysis that uses theoretical data from previous studies, for interpretation and reflection. Once the data has been interpreted and discussed, it becomes evident and aware that creative writing can be used as a tool to stimulate critical thinking. Teachers should strengthen the management of the teaching process so that learning is meaningful and students have the necessary tools to promote and strengthen their creativity, enhancing their reflective thinking, which will be very useful for them to face their daily and professional life efficiently in a globalized world, filled with much information to discern, digital transformation, challenges to overcome, and major constant changes to assume.

KEYWORDS

Critical thinking, Creative writing, Creativity, Reasoning.



Introduction

The fundamental purpose of education is to develop the capabilities that the person possesses (Sanz and Serrano, 2017), for this, it implements through curricular programs, a set of pedagogicalactivities that contribute to the development of language, creativity, thinking, reflection, autonomy, entrepreneurship, among other human faculties. Human capacities integrate the principles of life, knowledge, socialization and affection. All these aspects are achieved through processes and are oriented from the family, basic education and society, in order to have students capable of performing in the various contexts in which they develop. The educational act is concretized in the teaching-learning process, and in these processes the integral formation of the person is based, and higher order capabilities are favored, such as critical thinking, and it must be ensured in a class that everyone learns to observe, interpret, analyze, and issue a reasoned opinion with their own positions. This educational purpose should be assumed at all educational levels, and especially during the first levels of education (Chrobak, 2018).

To achieve this, teachers, based on scientific research, must constantly seek answers to the diversity of problems that arise, and mastery of pedagogy, based on a horizontal relationship with the student. The teacher leads the development of reflective capacity and analysis of reality, so that it assumes own thinking (Drovnikov et al., 2016).

Education must assume the development of critical thinking as a responsibility, since it will allow society to think before acting, action being based on knowledge. In turn, critical people respect the ideas and decisions of others, within the framework of ethics and values. According to statements made by Ennis (2011), learning takes place in the classroom through the pedagogical performance of the teacher, since students learn by interacting with their peers, mobilizing creativity, reasoning, invention, imagination, judgment, communication and critical reflection.

In this process of analysis, evaluation and reflection, the fundamental aspects of critical capacity are energized, such as imagination, which is fundamental for the development of criticality (Elder and Paul, 2005). It has been seen that teachers generally focus on covering the contents of the programs, leaving aside the teaching of learning to learn, which has been one of the reasons why teaching has failed, since it has not provided students with all the necessary tools to achieve a real commitment to their own learning (Elder and Paul, 2005).

Writing goes far beyond knowing and applying the various orthographic, grammatical and syntactic rules; the real challenge lies in developing different and original ways of thinking through writing, which allow the individual to be more reflective and creative (Corrales, 2001). Looking at creative writing as a form of creation implies focusing attention on the student's capacity for invention, which should be encouraged by the teacher in the classroom, so that the student can use the various resources and techniques that help him/her to order his/her ideas and thoughts and express them assertively in written form.

From all this, some questions arise, such as: how can creative writing be fostered in students so that it can serve as a stimulator of critical thinking; is it prepared to teach how to learn this in the classroom; under this approach, this research article is developed, which in turn mentions strategies to work on creative writing in the classroom and to stimulate critical thinking, which are indispensable skills that students must have in today's world of information.

The main objective of this study is to become aware of the importance of creative writing in current education, as a strategy to stimulate critical thinking in students, encouraging teachers, mainly elementary school teachers, to implement techniques that encourage creative writing and develop critical thinking.

METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The present study is framed in a qualitative approach, developing a hermeneutic method, resorting to descriptive documentary research, starting from the collection of previous theoretical data (Hernández & Mendoza, 2018). A theoretical reflection is made on creative writing and the importance of fostering creativity in the classroom to stimulate critical thinking, reflecting on the importance of creative writing and critical

thinking in the education of the 21st century and the global world, in which there is saturation of information, and the student has the challenge of knowing how to discern which is truthful, which can be improved, and which is false and should be discarded.

CRITICAL THINKING

Critical thinking is based on criteria that are subjected to criticism and review; it will not accept conclusions without a prior evaluation of the assumptions, with previous analysis of the situation, and assessing all the alternatives, resources and difficulties that may arise (Bermejo, 2001, p. 45). All this implies a relationship between knowledge, attitudes and skills put into action in relation to agiven context.

Likewise, critical thinking seeks all the information on a given situation to create hypotheses and reach conclusions. In this sense, Boisvert (2004) mentions that critical thinking has the characteristics of a research process, because it involves the formation of skills such as detecting a problem, knowing its dimensions and after research and analysis, proposing new assertive solutions, noting how critical and creative thinking is involved, without being limited only to the process of evaluation and testing of hypotheses.

According to Bermejo (2001), this thinking is closely related to reflective and creative processes where skills such as creating, imagining, inventing, discovering, as well as evaluating and proposing one's own ideas are intermingled.

Piette (1998) mentions that critical thinking is made up of a group of basic skills that can be grouped into three categories: 1) Skills linked to the ability to clarify information (asking questions, conceiving or judging definitions, distinguishing the various components of an argumentation, a situation, a problem, or a task). 2) Skills linked to the ability to make judgments about the reliability of information (judging the credibility of information and/or the source of information, identifying implicit assumptions, judging the logical validity of an argument). And 3) Skills related to the ability to evaluate information (make generalizations, formulate hypotheses, draw inferences, and personally reformulate an argument, a problem, a situation or a given task, draw appropriateconclusions).

WRITING

Writing uses the written code as a communicative expression and is composed of a strategy that includes knowledge, attitudes and skills that are linked to critical thinking. Writing is not the simpletranscription of oral language, but rather the elaboration of a text within the framework of a situation for which the writer must make a series of decisions. Writing is therefore a complex process, for which it is necessary to draw up a plan to guide decisions, capture in the text the ideas that are generated, evaluate what has been written, make the necessary corrections, until finally considering that the text meets all the requirements (Galaburri, 2005).

When writing, one must consider skills and processes that are fundamental to convey reasons, ideas or opinions that the writer wants to express, so that the knowledge transcends and acquires a greater scope. When writing, the writer's personal interpretation must be taken into account, as well as that of the reader, who will create his or her own argument from what is written, which closely links writing with reading.

The act of writing consists of three key phases: planning, writing ideas, and revision. However, it has been seen that at school each of these phases is not worked equally, giving greater importance to the fact of writing while respecting grammatical rules, and leaving aside both planning, which is of great importance to face the blank paper, and the final revision, which is important for the development of self-criticism.

Duclaux (1993) divides the art of writing into four important phases: invention or the art of telling ideas; disposition or the art of putting them in order by elaborating a plan; elocution or the art of choosing words; and finally presentation. If writing is conceived as a means of creation, the phases of invention and disposition should be studied in depth, which are developed thanks to creativity, a fundamental element that should be encouraged at school.

CREATIVITY

Creativity is the ability to imagine and invent, it is an attitude of accepting novelties and changes, ofplaying with ideas and possibilities, of continuously improving ideas to offer better solutions, making constant modifications to the development of creations. It is an innate human ability, but it requires development through constant applicability. Any factor that generates a more creative person will also make him or her better parent, teacher, citizen, or whatever else he or she sets out to be (Maslow, 1994 p. 37).

In the business world, creativity is a driving competence, since it is a field in which it is necessaryto generate possibilities, to explore ideas, to seek various assertive solutions to problems, ratherthan a single answer. It is not only a matter of describing reality, but also of being able to modify it; of defining problems, but also of offering solutions. Creativity is a capacity for abstraction, analysis and synthesis that allows us to adapt more easily to changes and to innovate in the identification and solution of problems (Corbatán and Martínez, 2003).

In these times of great and constant change, it is crucial to reinvent oneself and have the courage to modify the environment according to one's vision, for which it is necessary to be ready to take risks facing all the problems and obstacles that arise, and this is possible with the ability of creativity, which allows to create new ideas and establish new relationships between ideas and conceptsalready established.

CREATIVE WRITING

According to (Duclaux, 1993) creative writing refers to the art of finding many ideas to write them down and, if possible, that these are original. In this sense, it is important to encourage creativity at school, because it will awaken and develop inventiveness and imagination in students, as well as show them a certain sensitivity to face the blank page and express themselves in writing. It should be noted that the term creative writing is still new in the educational context, and manyteachers do not have sufficient resources to put it into practice in the classroom. Creative writing encourages a critical look at reality in order to approach it in a literary way, prior to an organization of thought. This type of writing brings students closer to a more concrete way of configuring theirreflective look, critical and creative thinking, and emotions (Corrales, 2001).

It is necessary to foster creativity in students so that they can develop their capacity for invention and willingness to write. Creativity is a concept that is currently much talked about in the classroom, but few teachers dare to put it into practice, since this attempt to include the creative element in teaching methods has often been conditioned by various factors, such as curricula, the current situation in the classroom, where the ratios are too high and often have to face a significant degree of conflict (Hernando and Sanz, 2015) in addition to the distribution and number of subjects in the agenda that do not allow much flexibility to the teacher (Colomer, 1991).

However, the factor that has probably most influenced these limitations is an excessive academicism that has placed too many obstacles in the way of creativity in favor of strictly quantifiable results from the mathematical point of view.

In this sense, many authors have warned about the phenomenon of "humanistic imitation of the scientific" (García, 2001, p.328) in the field of the humanities, which has led to the emulation of themethods of the applied exact sciences. An error that, as some authors point out, would seem to date back to nineteenth-century positivism (García, 2001), and that would lead to the formation of "technicians in the subject" (p. 343) instead of good creators, readers or writers, when literature should be closely linked to the vital, to a way of thinking and feeling, to a heartbeat that goes far beyond the memorization of data or the application of certain technical procedures.

We could say, in this sense, that students should often be taught to feel, to imagine and to have a critical perspective when delving into a literary work, instead of carrying out what some authors have come to call "aseptic laboratory analysis" (p. 344). This is one of the reasons that would explain the success of creative writing workshops, which, in short, assume a role that should be assumed by the classroom, counteracting an academicism that is too much installed in the conception of the humanities as mathematical formulas.

As Jover and Esteban state, a literature class that promotes personal research, imagination and creativity is an unforgettable experience for the student - far from the contents that he/she willforget the next day because

he/she considers them uninspiring - that can "approach the problem of literary creation from the inside, from the technical difficulties involved in the gestation of a literarywork. In this sense, there are many activities that can be carried out in the classroom, depending on the ages and means" (1996, p.101).

For Miguel Ángel Garrido, it is necessary to transmit to the students the enthusiasm for literary communication, since the fact of enjoying the text and not only valuing it superficially to fulfill an obligation, besides enriching their artistic sensibility, will develop their capacity for critical discernment, and this will increase their "linguistic and conceptual tools" (1994, pp. 26- 27). Thus, the contagion of enthusiasm for literature should promote the materialization of the "pleasure of the text" (Barthes, 1989, pp. 94-95).

As Quintana del Castillo states, "fostering imagination, sensitivity, a taste for literary text, creativity and everything that differentiates us from machines and animals, continues and will continue to be our mission as teachers" (2007, academic and cultural context section, p. 10). In short, it is a matter of conceiving teaching as a construction of meaning.

(Colomer, 2001) which has to do with the fullness of being and not with its constraint, so that students can come to think for themselves and not only store and manage data.

CREATIVE WRITING AND INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES

The emergence of new information and communication technologies (ICTs) has brought about major social changes, including new ways of thinking, understanding the world, communicating and relating to others. This digital technological revolution has given rise to what is known as "the information society", in which the supports in which information can be found have multiplied, and reading and writing are still present, although new ways of reading and writing have been introduced, which is causing a linguistic revolution since, for example, those who write messages frequently use abbreviations and write without vowels to reduce the text.

Today's children then show greater difficulty in maintaining their concentration on long texts because they have become accustomed to reading in a choppy manner in search of information. Hence, it is necessary to update the literacy mode, being the school as an institution that must carry out this mission, renewing it and adapting to this new society (Lanksear and Knobell, 2010). Currently it is not feasible to move ICT away from the classroom and continue teaching only with traditional methods, because the new generations, according to the current time, request anothertype of training.

In the new educational model, writing is linked to ICT but the use of paper and pen is largely replaced by the computer, so according to García (2014), writing is currently facing new challenges, being necessary to renew methodologies that include new technologies as another means to enhance communication and for the transmission of information.

It is now easier to access diverse sources of information thanks to the Internet, which opens the door to multiple resources to encourage and develop literature and creativity in the classroom. The roleof the teacher in today's school will be to master the use of ICT in order to get the most out of the students' reading and writing skills and for the teacher to experience with them different ways of working on creative writing.

Jaime Mita (2004) suggests that one of the teacher's missions is to establish connections betweenthe literary text and everyday life, which often becomes a problem for students. For this mission, there must be professional teachers with a solid literary culture and a solid training that allows them to know the problems that arise in today's world.

Joaquín M. Aguirre Moreno (2001) argues, in this regard, that, by extension, literature can maintain a close relationship with ICTs. That is to say, he opts for a good use of these technologies that, instead of destroying comprehension, writing and reading skills, encourage them and bring them closer to adolescents.

It is a matter of making good use of these tools to facilitate creative processes, and not the other way around. Sartori argues in Homo videns: The Teledirected Society (1997) that human beings are the only ones who possess the capacity for abstraction and that reading allows them to abstract, infer, encode and decode, construct and imagine other possibilities. Television, on the other hand, shows an abstracted and decoded language, which does not test or exercise this capacity of the human being. With the invention of new

codes, the practice of reading increases but not the capacity to read, that is, young people read, but they have lost the capacity for abstraction.

The young person practices reading electronic documents, television commercials, comics, twits, facebook messages, whatsapp, etc., but not books that help him to abstract, infer, and reflect on problems or circumstances of his environment. He is consuming literature, but he is progressively changing his means of reading and expressing himself.

In these times of pandemic, where all educational levels had to resort to the different ICT to maintain the educational process under the online modality, the following was closely watched The use of technology, led to reflection and thinking, can achieve the combination of both, in favor of the integral formation of the student and the development of his critical thinking.

FUNDAMENTAL ASPECTS FOR THE TEACHING OF CREATIVE WRITING

Writing occupies a very important place in school; its teaching is a matter of debate, due, among other reasons, to the pressure to achieve the objectives of the curriculum, which has distanced teachers from the most important thing, which is to foster in students the love of writing.

This process of teaching writing should not conform to a standardized teaching method for an entire class, since it should be personalized for each student, giving him/her the possibility of writing his/her ideas, concerns, feelings and memories (McCormick, 1992). In this sense, the teacher's mission will be to help the student to make writing a free personal process, away from pressures, since many teachers continue to consider writing as a final product to be evaluated without focusing on the processes that lead to the elaboration of the text, and should be more dedicated to writing activities in the classroom, which should be focused on the composition of texts.

A creative writing proposal in the classroom is supported by the following characteristics (Álvarez, 2009):

- It favors a playful, aesthetic and experimental relationship with language.
- It unlocks the imagination by proposing creative skills.
- Activates activities that are characteristic of divergent thinking.
- Encourages the imagination to capture images, generate relationships between them and create new ones.
- It is based on aesthetic practices of reading and writing.
- It discards all technical use of language, favoring autonomous production.
- It invites to observe reality from a poetic point of view.
- It is usually placed in the realm of fiction writing.
- It attaches great value to reading.
- They activate the creative process.
- It involves group work as a team.
- Generates writing processes that involve the revision and rewriting of texts.

According to Morote (2014), a good teacher should apply didactic strategies that foster creativity in the classroom, which will help the integral development of his or her students. For the development of creative writing in the classroom, the teacher must:

- To leave aside the textbook in order not to condition its methodology and to be able to explore other ways of teaching.
- Encourage oral communication in the classroom, promoting dialogue through debates, forums, assemblies, among others, creating moments of free expression in the students.
- Motivate students to acquire interest and curiosity to know what surrounds them, thus forming critical people who have concerns, goals and dreams towards which to move.
- Promote the creative capacity of students through literary or artistic activities that allow them to express themselves.
- Encourage and value teamwork.
- Stimulate the sense of playfulness.

- Generate a climate of respect, tolerance, trust and equality.
- Encourage the pleasure for literature and the aesthetic sense.
- Develop imagination and inventiveness.

In this way we are also working on a space for collaboration and practical application. The school curriculum is more focused on syntactic structures than on offering a complete vision of the writing process. Students receive theoretical information on the different discursive genres, but are not taught how to produce them. In this sense, the use of the collaborative in the writing workshop offers the possibility to cover this need in an optimal way (Sevilla and Batres 2020, 179).

STRATEGIES FOR WORKING ON CREATIVE WRITING IN THE CLASSROOM

As mentioned above, it is clear that it is very important to develop creative writing at all educationallevels, but very especially in the primary education classroom, and for this, some of the strategies that have been proposed and can be applied are:

- The fantastic binomial: is a technique proposed by Gianni Rodari in his book "Grammar of fantasy" (1983), which consists of starting to write a story from two words that are generally opposites, so that the imagination is able to relate them and look for a fantastic situation in which both words can coexist. The student may come across words such as "table" and "flower" that have little to do with each other, but both function as triggers for an invented story.
- Brainstorming: also known as brainstorming, is a technique that seeks to inspire and develop creativity through the association of words or expressions to a main theme. The idea is to write down words that recall the main theme proposed by the teacher and that are all related or can be associated with each other. An example of this technique is shown in the book entitled: The brainstorming technique and creativity in education (Mendoza, 2005).
- Writing from a drawing or image: it is a technique that consists of starting to write from an illustration that serves as a stimulant of the imagination. It has many variants, and can be created from a dialogue between the characters in the image, to a story establishing a coherent order in the sequence of images. It is a technique easy to adapt to the age of the student. Cassany (2005) exemplifies it in the book "La expresión escrita en el aula de E/LE", and also describes another technique very similar to this but instead of writing from an illustration, writing is done from situations, and for this the teacher must expose an imaginary situation in order that the student can raise and develop in writing his point of view in a given context.
- Sentence starters: this method consists of presenting the student with a series of incomplete sentences, so that from them, the student can develop an idea. The idea is to help the student by giving him the beginning and then letting him write freely, putting his brain to work, connecting ideas. Some unfinished sentences that can be used are: "The important thing is..."; "I agree with..." or "I have to avoid that...", and the students will start writing freely from them. This technique appears in the book "The Writing Kitchen" (Cassany, 1995).
- The word shaker: is a technique that consists of thinking of different words associated with objects, feelings, colors, animate beings, and flavors. All these words are organized in five columns and numbered so that each student or group of students gets a different word from each column. These words will serve as a trigger for the students' imagination and they will write a story in whichthey appear (Rodari, 1999).
- Story salad: is a method that stimulates students to create stories from traditional children's stories, because for its development different characters, objects or landscapes from different stories are mixed to create with all these elements, a new and personalized story (Rodari, 1999).

This type of exercises are usually divided, following Santos (2014), into blocks organized sequentially with a pedagogical criterion, thus we have unblocking exercises (such as automatic writing or word jars, which help children lose their fear of paper), initiation exercises (such as "whatif" or "transformed characters"), through which children progress towards greater creativity and skill from the playful component), and creation (Santos, 2014), the latter block in which we can already initiate students in the practice of literary genres ("Let's write a diary", "Fantastic binomial", "Let's write couplets").

These techniques, born of the avant-garde at the beginning of the century, would continue to develop, and decades later, pioneers of writing workshops, such as Raymond Queneau, co-founder of the OULIPO

1960, workshop (Ouvroir de Littérature Potentielle or "Literature Workshop"), would base themselves on them. Potencial") that would have among its regulars figures of the category of Cortázar, Perec or Italo Calvino (Fernández-Ferrer, 2017, p. 22), and author of the famous style exercises, also surrealist in nature, which have been transferred to the usual repertoire of resources of creative writing workshops (Fuentetaja, 1998).

THE ROLE OF WRITING IN THE RESTRUCTURING OF THOUGHT

The task of composing written texts fosters the emergence of new learning both to the topic of what is written and to the linguistic elements that are used.

Scardamalia and Bereiter (1992), establish the differences between writing in a linear way about what is already known about a topic and writing looking at writing as a process of discovery in which comprehension and conceptual development can be attributed to the effect of the interaction between the content and those aspects that allow altering the syntax to give a particular meaning to what is being communicated.

This vision of writing leads us in turn to see it closely related to the reflective activity of the individual, to the extent that it leads him to return with a critical eye on the ideas he has to objectify them, taking care that they express what is truly desired, reviewing and rethinking the written content to corroborate that it responds to the purposes that are emerging, which leads to the transformation of knowledge.

All this implies going beyond the mastery of composition strategies, it involves rereading strategically in order to identify those aspects that are confusing and/or contradictory, and it implies meditating on what is written in attention to the needs of the audience as well as to the discursive intentions and objectives. Thus, writing seen in this way, has the potential to be able to restructure thought and return it modified (Carlino, 2006). In this sense, it is possible to use writing as astrategy to stimulate reflective thinking in the classroom.

CONCLUSIONS

As has been noted, the process of teaching writing has traditionally focused on linguistic aspects related to the grammatical component and elements related to form and content, which has been assumed by teachers and students as a way to demonstrate academic performance, and other aspects such as the teaching of writing as a sociocultural practice that involves discursive competencies in the use of language have not been considered (Galaburri, 2005).

In a general sense, critical thinking is assumed as reflective thinking, which gives priority to judgments that are continuously reviewed and evaluated, which implies both problem solving and the meta cognitive process of self-evaluation of one's own thinking. When focusing on the development of critical thinking in children, this is assumed in them as creative thinking, which aims at detecting, reflecting, reconstructing and solving the problems that arise in their environment.

Creative thinking in children involves examining situations from different points of view with the intention of seeking a means to transform them. This exercise requires developing in them skills such as argumentation, logical thinking, decision making, and the rejection of meaningless options (Vélez, 2013).

The teaching of writing and the development of critical thinking should be linked to the exercise of linguistic comprehension skills, which promote the development of communicative competence, becoming propitious areas for the development of writing as a sociocultural practice, involving grammatical, discursive, strategic and sociolinguistic aspects. Hence, creative writing can be used as a strategy to stimulate critical and creative thinking.

In this sense, in order to stimulate thinking, it is necessary to implement within the strategies for teaching writing, activities related to the elaboration of critical reviews, the creation of of digital texts, written and oral communication workshops, the production of argumentative essays, and the completion of comprehensive readings.

It is necessary and important to conduct more research on the formation and development of critical thinking in early education, since this is a key stage in the process of developing knowledge, attitudes and skills, which should begin to be forged at an early age. Writing is a complex skill that is learned, developed or perfected at school. From a very early age, children learn to trace letters, write words and put together sentences that, when

joined together, give life to a message. Generally speaking, all students complete the primary education stage knowing how to read and write; however, it has been noted and reported that a good part of them do not master this skill well and present great difficulties to express their ideas in written form and to come up with new solutions to various problems (Debia, et al., 2019).

The challenge for the school as an institution in the globalized world is not access to information, but to form citizens with a high capacity for inventiveness, with their own critical and analytical criteria, who have the necessary resources so that they are not disoriented and can develop assertively in a world of constant change, in which it is imperative to know how to discern between all the information received by the various media, especially ICT, to make the right decisions in the various problem situations that arise in life.

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