

Creative Writing Colaboratory GuideLines for teachers

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1. Introduction

In this document we present some of the possible activities that can be done when using Creative Writing.

This document is completed by another one reporting about the activities that some teachers and trainees have conducted in some schools at Coimbra and Porto from January to June of 2004. These activities can open new trends for the creative and collaborative use of deep significant writing activities.

By the use of this co-laboratory, it is possible to make several activities, depending on the work and interest shown by students and teachers. As examples, we present some suggestions that involve several kinds of skills in the Language domain. They are skills of:

- § recognizing – comprehension of the oral (attribute the meaning to phonic ensembles) and reading (extract the meaning of grapheme ensembles);
- § production – oral expression (production of phonic ensembles with sense) and writing expression (production of grapheme ensembles with sense);
- § elaboration – explicit knowledge.

After having the decomposition process (character – sound) as an automatic routine, the use of the “Creative writing” microworld, in an assistive and oriented way, can provide the possibility of assembling numerous activities.



Silent reading	Doing the silent reading of a text previous written thinking about its purpose: information, entertainment or preparation for loud reading.
Clear and loud reading	We can use an audio record for reading the text (previously prepared in silence), for making a subsequently evaluation of the reading, taking into account parameters as: punctuation, expressivity, rhythm, intonation, accentuation... This evaluation can be made in groups, in pairs or individually.
Identification of the main ideas of a text	Underline and highlight the parts of the text that have the most important elements, such as actions, characters, places or the most significant moments of a story.
Contents anticipation	Anticipate the contents, the actions' developments or the ending of a story (starting with the title or with the first lines of a text with or without the pictures, photos, images, drawings, cartoons...). After this, we can confirm if what has been anticipated is effectively related to the picture, photo, first lines of the text...
Use of a computer keyboard	Write small texts illustrated with images, objects, sound effects, audio record, managing the existing space in the page, organizing the presentation to the class mates or other kind of audience.
Writing exercises with memorized texts	Write words (orthographically well-written) of the elementary vocabulary (using the main punctuation signs, uppercase letters and demonstrating a new paragraph), based upon proverbs, guessing, small poems...
Write short stories	Compose and illustrate small stories of the daily school life to narrate to relatives and friends, using the writing as substitute of the oral.
Narratives of personal experiences	Make the photographic record of the most representative moments of the activities related to a study journey and make the necessary comments.
Rewrite of listened or read stories	Retell listened or read stories, making the necessary alterations, combinations or introducing strange elements, with the aim of training the speech routines characteristics of the narrative texts. (Cf.: Rodari: 1993) For example, the Red Riding Hood goes to her grandmother's house by motorcycle; The Three Little Pigs meet Goldilocks and the Three Bears.
Association of text to images and of images to small texts	Compose news or small pieces of journalism based upon real or non-real facts, associating them to the existing images.
Collective writing	Write texts within small or large groups, learning how to progress from an initial draft until the final, consensual, correct and continuously improve text.
Elaboration of games with questions and answers	Elaborate games with questions and answers about different themes (scholar or not), with or without multiple choice, respecting the elementary rules of concordance (subject – verb; noun – adjective – determinant) and using complex sentences to express sequences and relations.

So, the “Creative writing” co-laboratory has as its major aim to involve and to exercise mental processes that allow: to receive, to organize, to elaborate, to retain, to recover and to play

with the information, through symbols handling, in domains of literacy, citizenship, maths, music and arts.

The suggestions proposed above have followed the indications mentioned in.

2. General Writing Templates

Here we can find some templates with a design and little or no information or text.

These templates can be used like a suggestion of how to put on paper some activity. If any child or teacher wants to write about an activity but in another way, they have the freedom to change what they want. Some examples follow.

2.1 *Incomplete Recipe Book*

This template contains some recipes with their ingredients and the way of cooking (only text). After each recipe, the child must explain each step of the recipe with its own words and make the correspondent draw. We previewed two pages for the explanation of each recipe.

The recipes included are: stuffed croissants, strawberry dessert, chocolate mousse and fake chicks.

Template

Each page has, on the left size of the screen, the ingredients needed. Above, it has the image or a drawing of the final product or of some of the ingredients. On the right size, it has the description of the recipe.

The pages with the various steps of the recipe must have the structure contained in the following scheme: 1 part for the caption, another for the ingredients, 4 equal parts for the steps of the recipe. The 4 equal parts should have a place for the draw and a text box where the step correspondent to the draw will be described.

Scheme:

caption	
ingredients	
draw	draw
text	text
draw	draw
text	text

2.1.1 What type of activities we can do with this template?

The teacher can do with the class some recipes at school and after this, all together, can create a recipe book for the class. Or even reproduce and distribute or sell for all community.

For this the teacher can ask the children to look for ancient recipes made by they parents or for recipes made on they birthplace! Some children came from different countries or cities, so, this is a way for children to better know the traditions of different places that have relationships with children.

This is a way to create a good purpose to let children to study the place where they live or where they were born.

Using the asynchronous collaboration tools, children of different countries can write an international recipe's book.

By doing these activities the children can develop some competences:

- writing skills
- creating a sequence of an event
- creating a representation of something they write about
- looking for information needed in different sources

- analyzing different information from different sources
- understanding the different cultural heritages

2.2 *Diary*

This template has a first page that functions like a front-page where the child can write his name. The second page and all the others have a place to insert the date and other to describe what happened in that particular day.

This diary can be individual, for all the class, or shared among different schools or countries.

The teacher can ask the children to write what they experience on the vacations instead of the text made on the class about this theme. This activity can also be done at home.

The children can also register together the activities and experiences they do on every day instead of a summary. This is a way of let the children express themselves about their emotions, their knowledge, their achievements, their thoughts, their bad and good experiences and all things that make their futures memories.

Today is difficult to listen each others about his day by day experience. Some of us lose the capacity to talk or describe our emotions and our thoughts. So is important to create ways of promote these actions, relationships and reflexive thinking.

By doing these activities the children can develop some competences:

- writing skills
- expression skills
- reflexive thinking skills
- analyzing thoughts or emotions
- analyzing the day events
- describing the day events
- reconstructing the day events
- dealing with emotions
- collaborative skills

2.3 Newspaper

For this template we can find different ways of putting news on paper to be read by others. Here the newspaper has a title, an introduction paragraph that answer to the essentials questions: who, what, where, how, when, why and how many. The text have also a descriptive part and a conclusion. Images or photos can be included.

This can be used to regularly include new information on a newspaper on a class wall or on the newspaper of the school.

For this activity the children can develop some competences:

- writing skills
- writing different types of text
- writing news
- expression skills
- thinking skills
- analyzing the day events
- describing the day events
- reconstructing the day events

2.4 Class book

This template has a front page where they can put a photo of the class and write the year. On all other pages they can put a photo or a drawing of each one and a description about him or her.

It is interesting if in the end of a year, the class reflects about the moments they experienced. Each child can see their own growing up reviewing different class books.

For this activity the children can develop some competences:

- writing skills
- expression skills
- thinking skills
- analyzing thoughts or emotions

- describing the idea of someone

2.5 *Outside school trip*

Many schools have trips to be made along the year, why not make a document that describes these visits?

In this template the children can insert a map of the journey and photos and, of course, texts describing what they have experienced.

This is something that many teachers already do with the children after a trip. This is only another suggestion of a different way to put the information on paper!

For this activity the children can develop some competences:

- writing skills
- expression skills
- thinking skills
- analyzing new knowledge acquired from the trip experience
- analyzing the day events
- describing the day events
- reconstructing the day events
- creating a sequence of images that illustrated an event
- Collaborative skills

3. Writing Drafts

By drafts we understand some templates that give the possibility of creating new stories based on stories we have heard on childhood. For instance, all of us heard the story of Cinderella. What if Cinderella story had different characters? What if “Once upon a time there was a cat named Cinderella that liked to sleep by the fire place”? And what if this story ends with a male cat looking for the owner of a crystal collar in the neighbourhood? This is a story based on other we all know but with different elements to invite children to write a new story.

On this section we want to provoke children to write creatively. They found new ideas that could be developed to a new story.

Why use these templates on school activities?

These templates pretend to develop creative writing competences. Teachers can use them to provoke motivation on children to write. All templates have scenarios and animated objects that give color and life to the story. We think these features promote creativity and enhance motivation to writing.

Other linguistic competences that can be developed with these activities are:

- text comprehension
- text analyzing
- content analyzing
- brainstorming capacity
- thinking about “what if” by changing the usual narrative of a known story.

How to use these templates on school activities?

We can begin with the original story, by reading to the children or a child reading to the class. After this we can discuss about the story that they have heard, divide the class in groups with the children on the computer to work on a new story that is similar, but with different characters or scenarios.

We think that is better to work in groups because on this context they can collaborate between them, or work in different computers in the same story. This could enrich all de work than by the children.

Teachers can do other things, like propose new stories that don't have a model on the software to children work. Teachers can also create a contest between the children of the class about the most creative story written from an old story. Children can vote on the most creative story, justifying why they consider it the most creative one. Letting the children analyze the texts and emit a founded judgment about them is very important to develop critical thinking. It is important to the child to create a judgment about something and express this judgment in such a manner that all understand his point of view.

These are some examples of activities that can be done with these templates on Creative Writing. We will now present the different templates:

3.1 Templates with a beginning

All these templates have a beginning of a story to be continued. First they have to read what is written on the template to continue the story. They have to read carefully what is written because the text is different from the story they know.

3.1.1 Jack and the Beanstalk

On this template we can find some scenarios and objects about this story. The different element introduced on the story is an apple tree with golden apples instead of the chicken with golden eggs.

3.1.2 The three little pigs

On this template we can find some scenarios and characters about this story. The different element introduced on the story is the place where the action occurs. Instead of living in the country-side, the three little pigs live in a city.

3.1.3 The turtle and the rabbit

We have also some scenarios and objects for this story. The different element introduced on this story is that the turtle has a car to make the race and the rabbit has a huntsman trying to catch him. Who will reach the finish line in first place!

3.2 Templates with a middle

All these three templates have a middle text about the story and children can make the start and the finishing. First they have to read what is written on the template to complete the story. They have to be careful with what has been written because the text is different from the story they know.

3.2.1 The real story of the little Red Riding Hood

We can find here some new scenarios and characters for this story. The different elements introduced on the story are that the wolf is a good wolf and the little Red Riding carries a pair of scissors to cut the wolf's tale. Children have to think about why the wolf is good and why the Red Riding wants to make bad things to the animals. Wonder a big final to the story!

3.2.2 Snow White story

Once again we got some new scenarios and objects for this story. On this new version of the story, instead of Dwarfs, the Snow White found a home of Giants. Where are these Giants from and how can they help or injure the Snow White?

3.2.3 The toad that was a football player

Some new scenarios and objects have been introduced on this story. The story is very different from the one well known. The toad was not a prince, but a well known football player that made some misdoings and has to find someone that like him as a football player. Think about the misdoings made by the well known football player and how he can find someone that like him at the point of forgive it.

3.3 *Templates with an end*

All this three templates have the end of a story that children can start and continue until this end. First they have to read what is written on the template to complete the story. They have to be careful with what have been written because the text is different from the story they have heard before.

3.3.1 Sleeping Beauty

On this template we can find some scenarios and objects from the original story of the Sleeping Beauty. But this story is very different from the original. We find a prince that doesn't like the character he represents and a Sleeping Beauty that don't want to wakeup. Think about the origins of the strange behaviors of the prince and of the princess.

3.3.2 Cinderella

Once again we have here some new scenarios and objects from the story of Cinderella. But this story is very different from the original. We find a she-cat named Cinderella that likes to sleep by

the fire place and a male cat that want to find the owner of a crystal collar. Think about the origins of the all the actions that occur from the beginning.

3.3.3 The fox and the grapes

On this template we can find some scenarios and objects from this story. But this story has a different end from the original. The fox was helped by ants to catch the grapes. How the ants become friends of the fox? Why the ants did help the fox?

4. Stories

Some fair tales and modern stories made by final graduates of ESEPF on the subject of Childhood Literature will be included.

They can be read, printed, but several other types of activities can be performed.

5. Other books

5.1 *Cooking Book for Kids*

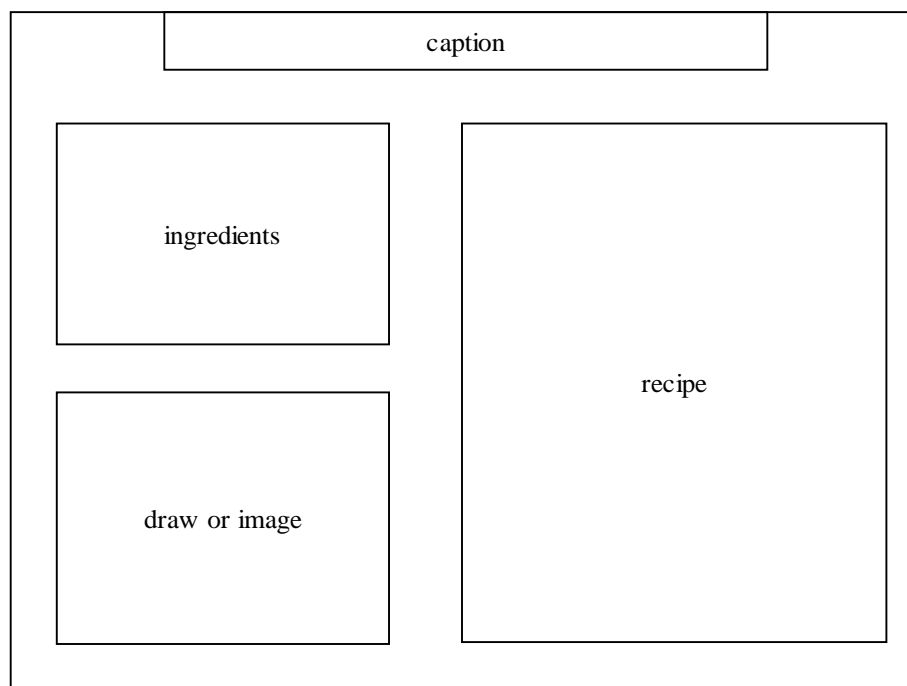
This is a small book including simple recipes. The pages in this template were conceived to be consulted or printed. Although, the child can alter images, text or insert new pages as its own recipes. When inserting a new page, the child can follow the same scheme or alter it as he wants.

The recipes included are: simple apple cake, little buns with sausage, chocolate salame, pancakes, biscuits and tuna rice.

Template

Each page has, on the left size of the screen, the ingredients needed. Above, it has the image or a drawing of the final product or of some of the ingredients. On the right size, it has the description of the recipe.

Scheme:



6. Thinking, writing and drawing with maths

Because of its specificity there is a separate document about how to use Creative Writing co-laboratory in maths activities: "Thinking writing and drawing with maths v003.doc". There is also a PDF file with the same name.

7. Music

Music is first of all a way to communicate and self express. Through music we can communicate to others enjoy of life and our feelings. It's important that children can express themselves and try creatively new approaches as listeners and composers. Music is strongly connected to live.

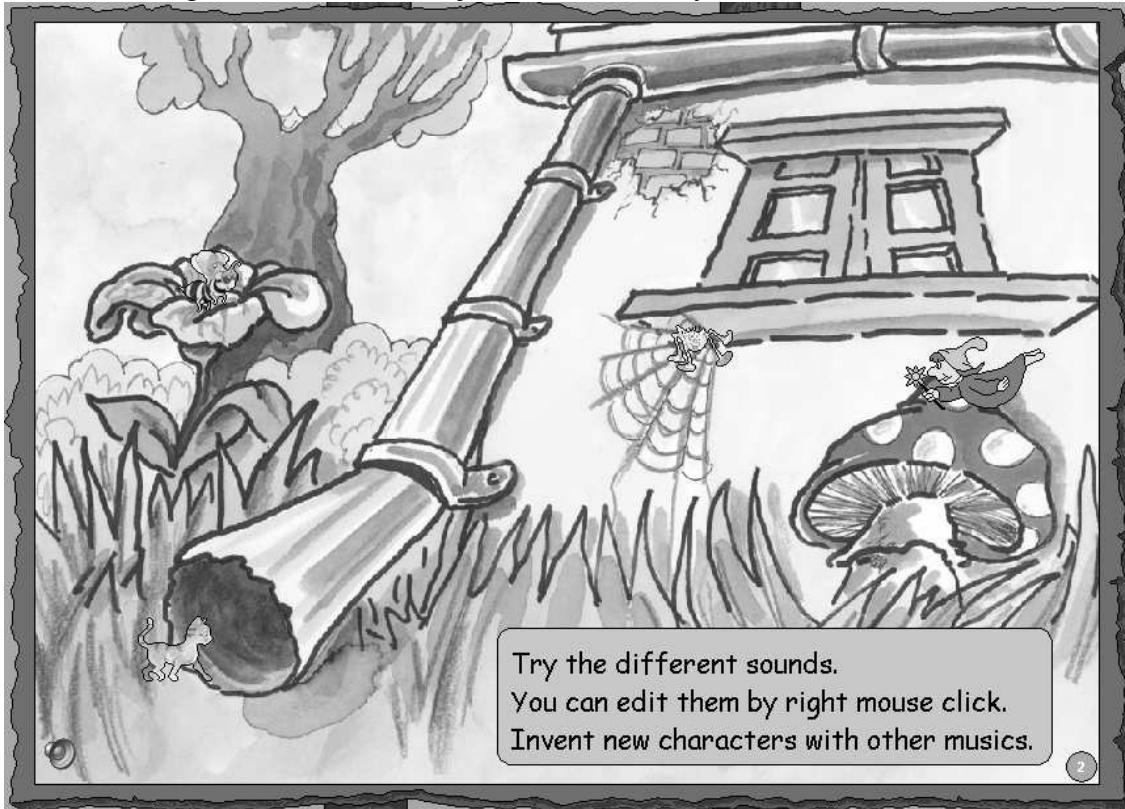
There are several aspects that we should considerer concerning to music activities with children: activity, emotion, art and creativity, integration with oral and writing forms of expression, balance, community.

Important activities are rhythmic imitation, melodic imitation, improvisation and balanced form.

We have been mainly inspired by musical pedagogue Jos Wuytack.

7.1 *Have fun with*

We can made pages with different sound (melodies or rhythms) hidden on objects: Children can try the different sounds, edit them by right mouse click and invent new characters with other sounds. These sounds go well with these objects? Yes, no, why...



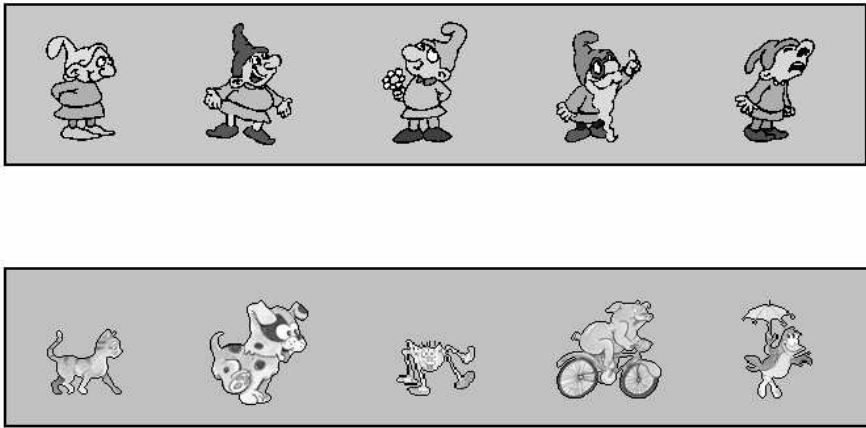
7.2 *Listening, writing and drawing*

Another possibility is to have one or more buttons with clips of music, classic or not. Children can listen while drawing and writing about their emotions.

7.3 *Melodies and rhythms*

Identifying and reproducing rhythms and melodies is another activity simple to accomplish. Different kinds of exercises can be proposed by the teacher. Children can also create their own pages of rhythms and melodies.

Which pictures have the same sound on each row?



You can also try to clap your hands like the ritmes above.

7.4 Music cartoons

Writing a story where the dialogues are rhythms and melodies can be really challenging. It is important to notice the difference between questions and answers and how to transmit emotion by music.

lai lai?

nô,
nô-nô-nô

lai
lai-lai-lai

nô,
nô-nô-nô

ti-ti-ti-ti
lai-lai
lai-lai

tu-tu-tu-tu,
nô-nô

Listen to characters by clicking
and write the story...

1

7.5 Piano and xylophone

This is a more traditional example of enjoying music.

8. Conclusion

This document explains how to use Creative Writing co-laboratory mainly by the use of templates.

A template can be easily created by any teacher as a new activity. The two files resulting should be after moved to the templates directory. And it's all.

The reports of experiments on schools give extra insights on the use of Creative Writing and its reading can highlight new ways of using Creative Writing for fostering creativity, problem solving, music and arts.

