Second language creative writing strategies: In what ways do they foster writing improvement in a Year 9 class?

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Second language creative writing strategies:
in what ways do they foster writing improvement
in a Year 9 class?

Contents

Abstract **7**

Introduction **8 – 9**

Educational background **9**

Questions for review **9**

Definitions **9 – 10**

Literature Review

How does the literature explain the gap between oral and written abilities? **9 – 11**

What is CW? **12 – 19**

On the historicity of CW 12

Defining features 13

Sameness and otherness 14

On sorting out a messy theoretical discourse 15 – 16

Further theories of CW-the process approach and L1 writing theory 17

On L1 theory and L2 connectivity 18

Critiques 19

Summary 19

How is the 'creative' accounted for in the writing? **19 – 20**

How does CW fit in with Waldorf pedagogy? **20 – 22**

Reasons for CW use in the Waldorf context 21

On the future of CW in the Waldorf classroom 22

Which teaching strategies can be put in place to facilitate a CW classroom? **22 – 25**

Time 23

Space 23

Audience 23

Social setting and feedback 23

L1 use 24

Material use 24

Reading 24

Gender 25

Summary 25

Aims of the study **25**

Research questions and rationale **26**

Methodology

Research Design **26 – 30**

Participants 27

Collaboration 27

The intervention period 27

Task setting 28

Task design 29

Ethical considerations 29 – 30

Anonymity 30

Data collection **30 – 32**

Structure **30 – 32**

Measurement of writing process 31

Measurement of writing improvement 31
Reporting student writing 32
Limitations 32
Findings and discussion 33 – 50
RQ 1: How does CW help improve student writing in practice? 33 – 35
Student interviews 34
Teacher observation notes 35
RQ 2: Which age group(s) is CW best suited for? 36
Teacher interview analysis 36
RQ3: How do other teachers use CW at school X? 37 – 40
Teacher interview analysis 38
Collaboration analysis 40
RQ 4: What effect did this intervention have on student writing examined for this project? 41 – 46
Student pre- and post-assessment data 41
Text length data during intervention 43
Content analysis 45
Student group interviews 46
RQ5: Did the attitude of students towards their writing change as a result of the intervention? 47 – 50
Pre-intervention survey data 47
Post-intervention survey data 47
Year 9 student interview data 48
Year 11 student interview data 49
Student surveys 50
Student observation data 50
Implications 51
Conclusion 52
References 53

Appendices

Appendix 1 Teacher 1 interview transcript 60
Appendix 2 Teacher 2 interview transcript 62
Appendix 3 Teacher 3 interview transcript 63
Appendix 4 Teacher 4 interview transcript 65
Appendix 5 Teacher 5 interview transcript 68
Appendix 6 Student observation data 70
Appendix 7 Research plan 72
Appendix 8 Post-intervention student feedback Year 9 73
Appendix 9 Post intervention student interviews Year 11 75
Appendix 10 Content analysis data 76
Appendix 11 Text length data 78
Appendix 12 Student group interview data 79
Appendix 13 Assessment task overview 80
Appendix 14 Year 9 assessment tasks 81
Appendix 15 Teacher interview analysis 82
Appendix 16 Full reading list combined with CW tasks 84

No one can write our stories for us
or steal them from us.
Irina Praitis

Abstract

Second language creative writing strategies: in what ways do they foster writing improvement in a Year 9 class?

The following paper is a contribution to the existing small body of research on the theory and practice of creative writing (CW) in the English as second language (ESL) secondary school classroom. The research aimed at improving the writing skills of Year 9 students through the use of CW in a large, private Waldorf comprehensive school in the Eastern part of Germany. It was carried out under the theoretical underpinning of practitioner research. The study included 31 students from the chosen grade. Prior to the intervention, student writing samples on file were analysed according to word length and use of language. A pre-intervention writing assessment was used as a quantitative measure to monitor change in student writing. During the intervention, students were observed and interviewed to find out if and how student writing changed on the participant's individual level. A post-intervention writing assessment was then used to measure change in student writing. A post-intervention group interview as well as post-intervention survey were also conducted.

The study found that improvement took place with word length, but not on the level of spelling or syntax-related issues. The percent improvement between girls and boys showed a significant difference in text length. The findings from the student interviews obtained showed that students' self-perception changed towards their writing. Students felt reassured and more positive towards writing than before the intervention. It was further observed that CW tasks served students' writing motivation, helped bring out self-expression skills and reduce language anxiety. Students with learning disabilities profited from CW as much as high ability students, which demonstrates that the use of the method is particularly fit for inclusive ESL settings.

It was also found that task design as well as first language (L1) use play a major role in the ESL CW process.

Introduction

On a recent school trip to England, I came across a startling observation. I had students keep a travel diary in English during their stay to express their thoughts and feelings. I also gave them several writing tasks on cultural differences. When I assessed their entries, I discovered an uneven gap between their oral (communicative and listening) and written skills. What I had in common with my students was that the teaching of writing also seemed to be my least developed skill as a teacher, since it had only played a minor role in my teacher training. It was at this point that I thought about teaching writing differently. The knowledge that had informed my teaching of writing so far was largely based on my own learning of a foreign language and mostly based on composition. However, what I wanted the most for my students was to find joy in writing and a 'can-do-approach'.

Despite my own dissatisfaction with student writing after the class trip, I saw students being proud of their travel journals and especially the illustration thereof, and I wanted to build upon that pride. Feeling pride about 'produced work' seemed inherent to the writing process: writing could be shared, looked at, illustrated, talked about and read aloud, whereas speaking often put the young teenage learners on the spot and asked for knowledge in combination with spontaneity in front of an audience. In contrast, writing involves mental effort and *reflection,* which seems a suitable quality to develop as a counterbalance to the emotional upheaval of puberty. I reasoned that if the writing they produced made them feel good about themselves by their own standards, how could it satisfy mine by not judging student work as 'bad writing', but by accepting and helping them improve? I was also asking myself if the concept of 'voice' and 'self-expression' applied to the L2 classroom, as much as it did to student writing in L1. The challenge, therefore, was to find a method to teach writing that would meet those educational needs and be within the pedagogical confines of the Waldorf school.

Why creative writing? Once I set the goal to improve student writing, it became clear to me that I had to find a 'novel way' to do it. The problems were manifold: the entries in the student diaries were too short and lacked linguistic variety, even among very talented students; the quality of writing in terms of grammar and vocabulary also needed improvement. What struck me most, however, was the ambivalence - ranging from pride and insecurity, to bad attitudes towards writing and fear to turn in the journal. The teaching method needed, therefore, had to account for the lack in student motivation, help reduce language anxiety, and improve writing skills, all within the set context of Waldorf pedagogy. The latter favours to customize knowledge as much as possible, as exemplified by a non-textbook approach, heavy focus on language arts, and total freedom towards the curriculum.

The choice fell on CW as a method to customize student writing as much as possible, and to dedicate space to the creative ideal put forth by Waldorf education. The following investigation, therefore, is an attempt to aid bridging the gap between oral and written L2 student skills. The rationale for the research topic is based

on three different strands: first, my own observations; second, the wider context in which ESL writing skills are discussed; and third, the educational context of the school in which student skills as well as the teaching methodology are to be read. The purpose of this paper is to compare, contrast, and analyse CW theory, and juxtapose it with classroom practice, with a goal to make CW an additional, modern secondary school ESL method that enhances student writing.

Educational background

As a first step, it is important to clarify the educational context of this investigation. The research was conducted in a German Waldorf school within the framework of Waldorf pedagogy. In the English-speaking world, it is known as *Steiner* education, whereas in the founding country of Germany, the term *Waldorf* is commonly applied. The concept of schooling is based on Rudolf Steiner's (1861-1925) ideas in philology, physiology and educational psychology, and promotes a classroom practice based on artistic expression (Kiersch, 2014). More of the theoretical underpinnings of Steiner's philosophy in relation to research literature on CW will be cited in the literature review.

Questions for review

The questions induced by my own experiences and asked of the literature review are:

- **RQ1: How does the literature explain the gap between students' oral and written abilities?**
- **RQ2: What is CW?**
- **RQ3: How is the 'creative' accounted for in the writing?**
- **RQ4: How does CW fit in with Waldorf pedagogy?**
- **RQ5: Which CW teaching strategies are there?**

Definitions

At the onset of this paper, a short clarification will be given for the reader concerning terms that will be used frequently throughout the research:

L1 is an abbreviation used in research literature referring to the learner's 'native language'. However, in the context of the rise of bilingualism and multilingualism, Matsuda (2013) notes that the term may be problematic, since there often is no such thing as 'first language' anymore and, therefore, cannot be seen as the status quo. However, since the term L1 is still used widely in foreign language education (Doerr, 2009), it is also adopted in this paper, referring to the learner's mother tongue 'as the first language a human being learns to speak' (p. 2).

L2 is an abbreviation used for the context of 'second language' writing, which, according to Matsuda (2013), has two distinct functions: firstly, it is used as a term referring to writing in *any* language other than the writer's mother tongue; and secondly, it can also mean that the writing is done in contexts where the target language is the dominant language outside the classroom, which would then set it in contrast to 'foreign language writing' (p. 450). However, even though the literature makes this distinction, 'second language' and 'foreign language' are usually used synonymously and treated the same by most research literature (Matsuda, 2013). This research follows this view, even though the student's dominant language outside the classroom is German and not English. The choice was made for pragmatic reasons in order to avoid confusion. L2 shall further refer to the student's 'second language', other than their mother tongue.

The term **ESL** refers to English-as-a-second-language and belongs to the concept of 'second' language education. First, it was a term used only in US schools (Doerr, 2009), but has now been adapted to teaching English to non-native speakers in a bilingual/multilingual setting worldwide (p. 6). This research was written in the context of ESL.

MFL is the abbreviation used for Modern Foreign Languages. It refers to the teaching of *'living'* foreign languages, in contrast to languages that are considered classical or dead languages, like Latin or Ancient Greek (Fleischmann, 2002). The term MFL is sometimes used in this paper to demonstrate that findings do not relate only to the teaching of English (ESL), but may be part of the much larger discourse in the teaching of foreign languages in general (MFL).

Literature review

1. How does the literature explain the gap between oral and written abilities?

The rationale for selecting CW traces back to the travel journal exercise, where the gap between students' written and oral competences was initially discovered. The problem is also described in the research literature by Brisk (2011). She explains that oral language is not a pre-condition for learning to write. The development of oral language does not necessarily lead to the development of written language, though language acquisition does not take place entirely separate. Furthermore, according to Kress (1994), there is now an increasing amount of evidence which shows that speech and writing do each have a distinct grammatical and syntactic organization.

Kress (1994) further explains that studies in linguistics have found that the sentence structure forming the basic unit of written expression is not necessarily typical of spoken language. Moreover, the sentence may occur in speech as a borrowing from the syntax of writing, but speech typically is organized on the basis of clausal complexes, which are not sentences per se (p. 9). Further, writing and speaking are viewed to

occur in distinct social settings - each with their own demands and significant effects on the syntactic and textual structures of speech and writing. For that reason, writing theory has often been explained through the lens of social constructivist thinking (Kress, 1994). In sum, according to the literature, oral skills do not prompt writing skills. On the other hand, it was found that writing skills are strongly influenced by reading skills (Alghonaim, 2018). Research has found that students' L2 writing is closely linked to their L1 literacy level with both writing systems being 'learned subjects' (Brisk, 2011). As a consequence, how far the student has acquired L1 literacy, will determine his L2 literacy outcomes due to 'direct transfer' (Brisk, 2011, citing Lanauze & Snow, 1989).

Kobayashi and Rinnert (2013) confirm this finding by stating that 'writing knowledge overlaps substantially across languages when writers gain more L1 and L2 writing knowledge' (p. 442). That is, L2 learners do not learn a completely new system of writing in the foreign language, but rely on what is already there, which can be called 'transfer of learning' (James, 2007). Further research has demonstrated that, as knowledge increases through instruction, experience, and exposure across languages, L1 and L2 literacy will eventually merge to one single overlapping system (Kobayashi & Rinnert, 2012). Therefore, the students' writing in the travel journals, may not so much have been a problem of a lack of L2 literacy, but may also be representative of students' struggling in L1. Cook (2002, 2003) explained this development to be part of 'multicompetence theory'. However, the fallacy of the language transfer theory is that sometimes skills do not transfer between L1 and L2. Kobayashi and Rinnert (2013) observed that Japanese student writers, for example, did not include certain features of writing in neither L2 nor L1, despite having learned them, due to lack of confidence as writers, which also brings up motivational issues as an important feature when studying L2 student writing (p. 443).

Again, Kress (1994) underlines this point by stating that 'any theoretical discussion of student writing should always start with the learners first language' (p. 9). He also supports the view that learning to write involves a similar process as learning a second language, including the initial 'interference' from L1 when writing in L2. For that reason, CW pedagogy can be read within the context of L1 as well as L2 writing. Consequently, how 'successful' skills are acquired in L2, depends on L1 literacy acquisition and the degree of L2 exposure (Kobayashi & Rinnert, 2013).

For writing, this means that exposure to written texts is important, especially through reading (Alghonaim, 2018), along with an adequate writing instruction. The pedagogical implications of these findings reveal the necessity for an L2 writing instruction. As such, a methodology for writing should be based on the following: It should draw on students' L1 literacy skills, an exposure to L2 readings, as well as strengthening students' self-confidence as writers. With this framework in mind and along with the school's particularity, the choice fell on CW.

2. What is CW?

In 1939, Allen Tate, Dean of the English Department at Princeton University, said that CW represents 'a risk for the student' and can only be viewed as 'an academic anomaly'. He added that this 'should give scholars no reason to abolish it, but can only be justified as a discipline, if we are willing to understand *what it is*' (Tate, 1964, p. 181). Much has changed since then, but the quote demonstrates that CW has been a controversial topic from its introduction, when it started to replace *rhetoric* courses in universities (Garrett, 1993). In their extensive research on CW, Bishop and Starkey (2006) formulate the question at hand: What makes CW so different from other forms of writings across the curriculum?

Applying CW to the ESL context widens its application further. As Matsuda (2013) writes: 'Second language writing is a transdisciplinary field' (p. 450). According to Hesse (2010), there are many divergent views of CW. This is due to the fact that there is still much argument in scholarly circles over whether CW is or should be a stand-alone discipline called CW studies (CWS), or a part of composition studies (Bailey & Bizarro, 2017, p. 80). A short historical discourse might help in understanding what CW stands for and what its aims are.

On the historicity of CW

From a historical point of view, the ability of writing in particular has been subject to critical reflection for many centuries. Brayfield (2009) claims that CW is not a new subject *in general,* though it may be viewed as 'novel and new' *within L2 studies* (Disney, 2012; Zhao, 2014). Given the recent upsurge of CW programs worldwide, including England, Brayfield's (2009) perspective surprises. She claims that CW is not new, but, rather, an extinct subject that formerly existed under a different rubric of 'free writing' in schools, which had formerly been part of almost all subjects and was removed from the literary canon due to changes in educational policies. Bradley (2009) further explains that ever since the age of mass education, there has been great suspicion on the part of the British government and other European countries of the development of artistic expression and 'mass self-expression' (p. 176) in schools, in favour of formalising writing and 'setting assessment benchmarks' (p. 177). She even traces the origins of CW back to 'the Aristotelian system of analysing and defining creative practice as the foundation of narratological theory' (p. 177). Even this short portrayal of the origins of CW makes a strong point: with economic development of nations and a shift from mostly illiterate to literate societies, the idea of play in education in the form of poetry, rhetoric and storytelling, eventually viewed as too elite, disappeared. It was no longer seen as intellectual 'enough' in the age of science. According to Bradley (2009), the practice of CW that we see happening in educational contexts today is, therefore, not a new occurrence but re-invitation of an old concept. The latter idea is significant for two reasons. Firstly, it links theory to practice and gives a theoretical underpinning to why 'playful thinking' is so important when setting up a CW classroom. Secondly, it links the idea of play in CW theory to Waldorf pedagogy as a commonly shared theme.

Reflecting more on the history of CW, Waite (2015) explains that CW was established only 'recently' as a US university writing program in 1970, where it was first met with hostility. Though it finds full acceptance today as a 'real subject to study at university', it is often attached to English degree programs or adult retreats, and, therefore, has a growing body of research literature mostly from university settings (Bishop & Starkey, 2006; Stephens, 2018), but only few studies from secondary schools and even fewer within MFL contexts. Hanauer (2010) and Disney (2012) even describe an absence of analysis in ESL creative writing due to it still being 'a new space for linguistic hybridity with other subjects and theoretical discourses that yet need to evolve' (p. 5). Thus, the topic proposed in this paper represents an under-researched area.

Defining features

Due to the complexity of defining CW, it serves the reader best to look at diverse scholarly opinions in the field that describe CW, before finalisation of a working definition for this paper.

Disney (2012) sees it as 'an improved insightfulness' into the language and the Self and 'an aptitude for linguistic variety through the transfer of creative knowledge into writing' (p. 6). He also describes CW as process-oriented, which also sets it apart from ESL 'composition'. Similar to Disney (2012), Nasir et al. (2013) underline the insightfulness and what the writer personally gains from engaging with CW (p. 27). The same line of argument based on the inner experience of the writer is also followed by Zhao (2014), who sees CW as a 'self-empowering tool, hence aiding the development of self-esteem through imaginative, creative, personal, or aesthetic self-articulations' (p. 454). Duff and Maley (2007) and Maley (2009) also relate 'the writer identity' as the most powerful pedagogical value to be gained from CW. The experienced CW teacher-researcher Maley & Bolitho (2015) describes the most distinct feature of CW as 'being aesthetic or affective rather than having a purely pragmatic intention or purpose' (p. 77), which clearly sets it apart from most writing in schools.

The second dimension of CW cited in the literature is the social dimension (Stockwell, 2016; Zhao, 2014) of writing, which then links CW to studies in social science such as Bourdieu (1991). The assumption is that the writer has an awareness of who he is writing to and for whom (teacher, classroom), thus 'proving his capacity to express himself within a particular social site' (Zhao citing Bourdieu, 1991). Zhao (2014) also sees the social dimension in writing as a 'counterdiscourse' (p. 454) to 'what else' is going on in the classroom, underneath the actual task performance of students. Likewise, Wenger (2016) adds the notion of CW as a 'community of practice' (p. 261). She mentions the fact that when students share their work with others, they also reconstruct their identity as members of that particular group because the writing space echoes their own ideas, which they normally would not share. This stimulates dialogue and installs trust in the format of most CW classes (p. 270).

Bereiter and Scardamalia (1983) note that CW is a new, more open, and more liberal approach to writing that shifts away from a focus on form to a focus on the process and the experience of writing itself. The writing

relies on associations and memories of the writer, based on his own experiences. Especially the use of 'raw text' in CW allows total creative licensure, where formal rules of grammar and punctuation may be disregarded temporarily (Hinrichs, 2011). Associations are individual and happen as a sort of associative chain reaction. They are then tied to a text production of high communicative value to the writer. For that reason, CW often relies on visual clues, such as pictures, to aid the writing process.

Further, content and form are not bound to a status quo and not assessed. The writing can be corrected by peers or the teacher before being brought to an audience. Hinrichs (2011) further describes that while writing, the attention shifts to the writing process itself with the writing atmosphere as a stimulating factor, instead of creating pressure on students to succeed. That way, even weak learners can have a feeling of success. The work is often read aloud after being revised, which makes it a sharing of experiences and an affirmation of the Self, rather than an assessment of intellectual capability.

One form of CW, which can be viewed as its even more personalized sub-form, is called 'personal writing' and deals with biographical, emotional, and cultural problems. In this genre, the writing often takes on the form of a diary and is used in therapeutic contexts. As one author notes: 'CW is like very profound self-analysis. It's like meditation' (Piirto, 2002, p. 187). However, typical forms of CW can also be short stories, poems, or text formats in which personal experiences or fictional narratives are shared. This explains why CW becomes a medium for the personal development of the writer since practically everything relies on personal insights. Hence, CW is viewed as 'a personal activity, involving feeling' (Maley, 2014).

Similarly, Disney (2012) views CW as a playing with ideas and an exploration of linguistic limits, rather than a focus on mistake-making. As such, it is different from composition because it is not limited to language proficiency or linguistic competencies (Disney, 2012), which brings about an important point. In order to determine what CW is, it is also helpful to look at what it is not. How, then, is CW different from composition? In order to answer this question, it is necessary to compare and contrast the two theorems by setting epistemological boundaries. By so doing, one touches upon the most controversial aspect of CW discussed in the scholarly community: depending on the theoretical underpinning used, CW is either made part of CWS (creative writing studies) or CS (composition studies), which will give rise to the next point of discussion.

Sameness and otherness

Scanning through the list of research articles on CW, it is evident that CW receives attention from a host of disciplines beyond education. Their interest of study lies on the various methodological techniques used in CW. The related fields are: creativity studies (Sawyer, 2012), composition, and neuroscience (Manery, 2015). CW not only has a wide application, but, according to Disney (2012): 'promises a new frontier as a linguistic hybrid that

possibly opens up discourses with several humanities-based disciplines' (p. 6). However, there are only a few common assumptions and a wide range of differences.

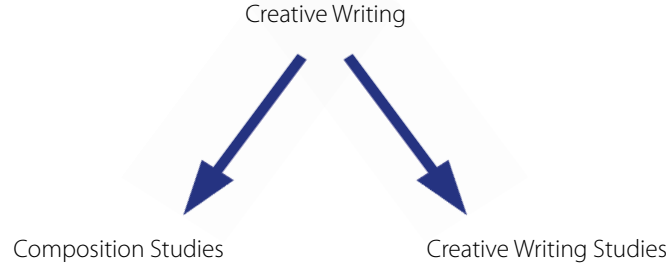
One feature that all fields have in common and share an interest in, is the assumption, that an ability such as writing, can be developed through the creative and imaginative force in human beings. Though each discipline may focus on different factors on how abilities are developed, they all challenge the view that ability is linked to birth right or talent, and cannot be taught and learned as a craft (Brayfield, 2009). There are many scholars, including acclaimed writers, who argue instead for the *teachability* of writing, in particular through the means of CW (Brayfield, 2009; Manery, 2015; Murugiah, 2013; Viana & Zyngier, 2019; Waite, 2015).

Contrary to this view, there are scholars in CWS and CS who oppose the idea that writing can be taught, claiming instead that 'writing is the one art that requires no education but a mere harvesting of talent' (Ebden, 2008; Iowa Writers Workshop, 2018).

Another feature that CW has in common with composition is that both exist within a writing community that views writing as a 'collaborative, multimodal means of social action' (Belcher, 2013), relating writing to a collaborate activity instead of an individual act, which will be discussed later within the theoretical framework of creativity. However, sameness and otherness toward composition do not fully capture the theoretical divide that exists. According to Santos (1992), the real problem, when speaking of an L2 CW theory, goes back to L2 writing not having an ideological perspective, unlike L1 writing. Instead, CW is part of different fields, and consequently, different theories. He concluded that L2 writing always borrowed theories from L1 and in turn, the discourse is messy and the voices are many (Santos, 1992).

On sorting out a messy theoretical discourse

Likewise, Bailey and Bizzaro (2017) state that, a major issue with CW is its lack of belonging to a clearly defined academic field of research. Research methods used to study CW are generated within the paradigm of composition, rather than CWS. There are several reasons for this: for one, there is a clear lack of research in CWS, as well as a lack of clearly defined epistemological differences of CWS that set it apart from those of composition (p. 79). As a visual help towards understanding the theories that informed CW, the researcher proposes the following overview:



For that reason, Bishop (2003) does not take on a positive view of the field. In her extensive CW research, she documented composition's 'intrusion on the same territory simultaneously inhabited by creative writing' (Bailey & Bizzaro, 2017, citing Bishop, 2003, p. 78). As a consequence of being in the same field of L1 English Studies, research in CW has generally adapted methods of empirical research mostly popular in composition. There are different reasons for this. Toulmin (1972) explains that CWS has 'no real shared commitment to a sufficiently agreed set of ideals for studying itself as creative writing' (p. 359), which seems a severe hindrance in establishing CWS as a 'proper' discipline. Hesse (2010) concludes even more drastically, that CW is not interested in systemic research, empirical studies or the production of scholarly articles, but rather trusts accounts of its own agents, like authors teaching CW (p. 32).

Instead, what scholars of CW (many of them writers themselves) want, is to report findings in a creative form in order to break away from the confines of composition. This approach would make it possible to study CW *through* CW (Bailey & Bizzaro, 2017, p. 83). The CWS research calls this form of analysing data 'aesthetic inquiry' or 'other knowledge'- research, meaning the knowledge that is valued within the field (San Pedro, 2015, p. 82). As an example thereof, Bailey and Bizzaro (2017) used poems and creative narratives and turned them into a novel along with demographic surveys, in order to study writers' voice and student personas. 57 undergraduate students took place in the research from different rural locations, urban settings, gender, age, and religious affiliations. The researchers then analysed what they called 'common threads' (similar topics) within the writing for comparative analysis with the real-life surveys. The study found that there was a direct correlation between the narrative created by the student for the novel (persona) and the real-life struggles of students, as stated in the surveys. The findings demonstrated that the Self that students create on paper does not create stories at random as mere offsprings of the student's imagination, but instead, represent students' real-life problems in a different form and imagined setting, thereby 'giving voice to their world through writing' (p. 85).

Similarly, a study by Powell and Journet (2000) showed that, through writing, students come to understand themselves differently, when they apply their feelings to a story 'in relation to the absence and presence of the concept of truth' (p. 85). That way, according to Ivanic (1998), any act of writing becomes autobiographical in nature because people bring their own identity to a story. Likewise, many CW scholars have used aesthetic expression as part of their research methods (Bailey & Bizarro, 2017, p. 88), as will also be the case for this paper (see later sections).

In conclusion, CWS may be difficult to distinguish from other discourses, such as composition. For one, this is due to a lack of a clearly defined methodology of studying its own discipline. Secondly, there is the problem that CW does not have its own theory but shares its theoretical underpinnings with sub-related fields.

Further theories of CW- the process approach and L1 writing theory

In the sense that Kress (1994) notes that 'teaching practices can only be as good as the theory underlying them' (p. 7), it is of relevance to look at further theories that influenced CWS. In order to help disentangle the complexity of the literature, it is helpful to reduce CW's theoretical underpinning to three major strands: composition theory, the process approach, and L1 writing theory.

Observations by Kress (1994) show the dilemma of the interrelationship between theory and practice. He remarks that 'changes in theory are always bound to affect practice' (p. 7). This underlines Kroll's (1990) analysis that the teaching of writing has undergone a major theoretical shift within the past 30 years. In order to understand this shift in L2 writing theory, it is important to look at the development of L1 writing theory over time. As outlined by De Oliveira et al. (2013, p. 12), there have been four prominent writing approaches so far:

- **Controlled Composition**
- **Current-Traditional Approach**
- **Process-Approach**
- **English for Academic Purposes**

The central concern of the *current- traditional approach* was the construction of paragraphs, which helped the writer with structure, whereas in *controlled composition* the main idea was to control linguistic features, given to students in the form of scaffolding. Both aimed at producing text as a written product with as little grammar, spelling, and punctuation mistakes as possible. Content was less important. The *process-approach* challenged the former ones with a final shift away from text as a written product to *students as writers* (Bishop & Starkey, 2006, p. 38). The main goal of the process- approach was helping learners improve their skills at all stages of the process with the idea that it was not enough to look only at what was produced but to understand *how* it was produced (Nation, 2009).

As a result, the role of the teacher during the writing process as well as the approach to teaching changed considerably. In aiding *the process* of writing, teachers today provide much more structural advise and scaffolding techniques to students than 10 years ago (Eikenbusch, 2016). As De Oliveira et al. (2013) point out:

Formerly, the writer was seen only as a manipulator of previously learned language structure. This meant that the roles were clear with the teacher being the proof-reader and the student being the deliverer of linguistic features put in a written form. The focus, therefore, was not on the quality of ideas or expression but on grammatical structures and vocabulary. These roles of proof-reader and deliverer heavily influenced the power relationship between teacher and student (p. 13).

Recent research in L1 writing has mostly been dedicated to the composing process. The growing body of research on L2 writing shows that L2 writing theory follows the L1 theory pattern, and is subsequently used in the teaching thereof. CWS were heavily influenced by the epistemological claims of the process approach, because what it shares with the process approach is a study focus on *how* students write.

However, CW differs from all the major approaches mentioned earlier in that it offers *a post-progressive* view of writing that lets students free play with language with the aim to enrich their learning (Ruzbeh, 2015). By so doing, CW creates zones of fear-free writing in school without a focus on assessment. Students then have a chance to discover writing as a form of self-expression, making CW a form of communication that goes far beyond scholastic use. On the basis of *what* is studied, CWS shares its focus with the process approach, but CW takes it further in that it changes the *aim* of writing. In that, CW can be viewed as an extension to the process approach.

English for Academic Purposes was excluded from this review, because of the different context and age groups studied, who do not directly apply to this research.

On L1 theory and L2 connectivity

It is of further relevance to look briefly at the development and teaching of writing in L1, in order to fully understand how L2 writing theory came about. This helps to place CW within the existing ESL teaching of writing paradigm. For one, it was found that a successful writing acquisition in L1 is closely linked to L2 acquisition (Hinrichs, 2011) due to a transfer of knowledge (Brisk, 2011, citing Carlisle & Beeman, 2000). But also, CW cannot be looked at in a single context but must be understood as a complex process that touches on a variety of dimensions in the language learning process.

Grewal and Williams (2018) support this view by claiming that children likely draw upon skills in their L1 to contribute to their writing in L2. Their studies are based on the common underlying proficiency theory, which confirms that knowledge developed in one language can help another language that is being learned. Few studies have looked at children's writing skills in an additional language context, but studies of other skills, particularly reading (Furnes & Samuelsson, 2011; Moll et al., 2014), support the idea of a common underlying proficiency. Therefore, writing shares a strong theoretical link with the development of L1 reading skills. In turn, research by Goodman and Goodman (1979) shows a strong connection between reading and writing, though there exists a long-standing debate over the topic. Byrne (2002) summarises the debate as follows: Spoken and written language are two versions of one system. Therefore, learning to use one invokes the same principles as learning to use the other.

In sum, L1 writing studies represent CW's third theoretical underpinning, demonstrating its grounding in research and scholarly discourse.

Critiques

Next to the majority of scholars who agree on L2 writing acquisition following the same pattern as L1, there are those opposing the idea. Kroll (1990) criticises that much research on L1 was simply replicated and used in practice for L2, which does not always capture the writing problems associated with L2 writing (p. 2). She further explains that writing in L1 is not the same as writing in L1 due to its unique context. Brisk (2011) supports this view by observing that L2 students struggle with different problems than L1 students. Organizational structures can be a problem to both L1 and L2 writers, but L2 students often lack vocabulary and grammatical knowledge as fluent writing qualities (p. 47).

Additionally, students struggle with what they want to say and how to express their thoughts in L2. Hinrichs (2011) explains that the character and quality of L2 writing are different due to the speed by which information is processed. Similar to Kroll (1990), he notes that a lack of vocabulary or stylistic questions can block the writing on different levels, so that L2 writing strategies have to be used, which will receive an in-depth look in a later chapter.

Summary

CW represents a *development* in MFL, rather than a new approach to writing. It does not aim to replace existing methods of writing. As Howatt and Smith (2014) state: 'It is tempting to assume that teaching methods replace one another and old ones are thrown into the dustbin of history' (p. 92). Instead of replacing composition, CW can be seen as an *additional way* of teaching writing with a focus on the learner, instead of the linguistic structure. Instead of teaching *how* to write, CW focusses on the content, feelings, thoughts, and imagination (Maley & Bolitho, 2015). The theoretical underpinning of CW comes from different strands of research, thus making it a complex construct. They are:

- **theories on L1 writing**
- **composition studies**
- **theories on L2 writing**
- **studies of creativity**

The latter will be looked at in more detail in the next section.

3. How is the 'creative' accounted for in the writing?

The term 'creative writing' implies the use of creativity in combination with writing. The term 'creative writing' first came into use after World War II (Garrett, 1993). Though, some scholars struggled with its name. Tate

(1964) unsuccessfully proposed to change it to 'imaginative writing'. Bishop and Starkey (2006) also critique that scholars of CW use the term so naturally, while spending less time discussing CW's root concern - creativity itself (p. 70).

There are different theories explaining creativity. According to Sawyer (2012), creativity is culturally rooted in our experience as social beings. He refers to this view as the 'action theory of creativity' and describes it as something emerging from the subconscious in a burst of inspiration (Sawyer, 2012, p. 320). In practice, this view can become problematic since it makes the writer wait for individual inspiration. CW teachers have observed that this belief often keeps novices from starting (Sawyer, 2012, p. 321). This theory was then followed by the 'idealist theory of creativity' (Sawyer, 2012), which describes creativity as a *collaborative* dialogue, instead of an individual endeavor (Sawyer, 2012, p. 225).

Likewise, creativity may work collectively and collaboratively in any given setting. This gives reason to underline the importance of the *collective* effort of writing in the classroom and to establish writing formats that allow writing and sharing in a group, since it not only fosters individual learning but also social learning. For that reason, the concept has also been applied to larger social settings. On a meta level, it is even viewed as a much needed resource to solve the world's problems in the future (Hargreaves, 2011, p. 29). Banaji et al. (2010) also describe its economic imperative and view it as a resource within successful societies (p. 39). Similarly, Dali (2017) highlights creativity as 'a marketplace demand and a survival strategy for a fast-changing world' (p. 5). This explains why creativity is a favoured term within educational policy-making: It is to symbolize and demonstrate a different approach to teaching, centred on value debates like child-centeredness and collaboration versus rigid individualism and competition. Creativity then turns into an educational goods that is part of a much larger debate., such as the OECD report (2001) mentioning the concept of creativity as 'a trend that currently shapes education because it portrays pathways into a desirable future (p. 1). Judging from this discourse, CW emerges as a pedagogical approach that symbolises values that lay far beyond classroom use. It is especially Waldorf schools today that try to put creative values into practice (Lutzker, 2013); a fact that shall be developed in more detail in the next section.

4. How does CW fit in with Waldorf pedagogy?

The question of teaching writing means engaging with the discourses that circulate in the discipline and that define the discipline (Adsit, 2017). Thus, for this research, there are two distinct discourses to follow: the mainstream literature discourse and the Waldorf discourse, the latter taking its main pedagogical incentives from *anthroposophy*, a spiritual philosophy based on Rudolf Steiner's views on formal education. As a disadvantage of this, problems with the teaching of MFL in Waldorf schools are often viewed and treated only *within* the confines of the

pedagogy. The current trend in MFL to focus more attention on writing (Valdes et al., 1992) has largely passed Waldorf publications. The focus remains on vocabulary building, reading, listening and speaking (Dahl, 2014; Kiersch & Skillen, 2014). As a consequence, there is not a large pool of literature on L2 writing within the Waldorf context.

One reason for this is, that Steiner (1919) largely based his pedagogical incentives for MFL on speaking (Ward, 2013), which would be interpreted today as the 'communicative approach'. Historically, mainstream academic opinion also neglected 'writing' as an MFL topic for a long time. With globalisation, however, educational needs have changed and much time has since been devoted to the study of writing (Valdes et al., 1992). In 2019, Waldorf pedagogy does not remain aloof either to the 'worry' of writing (Waldorf Publications in North America), but solutions offered seem unusual and hardly describe the particular problems associated with writing in the Waldorf context. The worry of writing is somehow left to the margin, which also reflects my own experience as teacher in a Waldorf school. Searching for answers more deeply, by looking at the pedagogical incentives for MFL teaching in Waldorf schools, there seem to be many reasons why CW should be used to foster writing improvement especially in Waldorf schools.

Reasons for CW use in the Waldorf context

1. At its core, language learning at Waldorf schools has always followed an artistic approach (Kiersch & Skillen, 2014). Traditionally, Waldorf schools do not use textbooks, which leaves room for more individualised tasks, chosen by the teacher (O'Shiel & O'Flynn, 1998). CW tasks represent highly individualised writing tasks since they are based on personal imagination, thoughts and feelings, which cannot be reproduced. This fits in with Steiner's (1919) aim that all content in the language learning process should be representative of 'inner themes' of the students' age (Dahl, 2014, quoting Steiner, 2003, p. 31).
2. As the literature has shown, CW should best be guided by readings. Those serve a holistic and scaffolded way to teach due to the imagery in books that help the writer (Adsit, 2017). This finding mirrors one of the main incentives of Waldorf pedagogy: As a rule, reading should always precede writing on the way to establishing literacy in L1 and L2 (Kiersch & Skillen, 2014, p. 81).
3. Waldorf pedagogy views the MFL teacher in classes 9-12 as a companion in a 'community of readers' and not as the master interpreter (Dahl, 2014). This very much fits the general concept of CW, in which the CW classroom is set up in a way to make the teacher a writer in a 'community of writers', and as a helper, not an authority from above (Belcher, 2013; De Oliveira et al, 2013).
4. In the Waldorf curriculum, a lot of space is given for independent text production (Sievers, 2017). According to Dahl (2014), Steiner (1919) always wanted the students' own thoughts as a starting point for teaching (p. 37), which is highly representative of CW tasks.

On the future of CW in the Waldorf classroom

Moreover, the Steiner concept of MFL teaching is still under construction. As Kiersch and Skillen (2014) write: 'Scarcely any subject in Waldorf schools has been a more fertile field of dramatic controversies and reversals of opinions' (p. 13). Consequently, this paper asks to renew writing, as an underdeveloped area in Waldorf education.

My objection to the interpretation of Steiner's views are their one-sidedness. Steiner hardly talked about *how* to use language. Instead, he stated that 'through the "use of language" we will be able to grasp the creative element' (Steiner, 1910). Language teaching at Waldorf schools follows this 'use of language' mostly through the heavy focus on the communicative approach (Dahl, 2014, p. 59). But what about the autonomous 'writer' in the Waldorf school of the 21st century? Educational standards have changed tremendously since 1919 with a now heavy focus on written exams. Today Waldorf schools offer all school-leaving certificates. The need for written competencies is higher than ever before. The focus of teaching, however, remains the same, which makes it extremely hard for Waldorf students when they reach exam preparation courses to accustom themselves to written standards. This is not to suggest that Waldorf pedagogy should leave its path but to *extend* its traditions beyond the scope of 'speaking', because if it is to remain true to its aim of taking on an 'artistic approach to learning' (Steiner, 1910), then teaching, as well as learning undergo processes that allow change. Despite being a rather complex approach, CW offers a compromise. It combines what students need 'more of': more writing practice, more creativity, and more individualized learning tasks, which do not conflict with Waldorf pedagogy.

5. Which teaching strategies can be put in place to facilitate a CW classroom?

It becomes clear from the various kinds of literature reviewed, that only very few scholars describe actual linguistic effects in terms of a written improvement when using CW. One such study by Nasir et al. (2013) shows that CW in combination with strategy training can help improve vocabulary and grammar skills. To teach writing is often viewed as a difficult task by teachers since it takes time and training to teach 'pragmatic knowledge' such as text structures and grammar before the actual writing process. Apart from that, an average classroom consists of different students with varying needs. Therefore, the question remains- how can a writing classroom be structured in such a way to be of use for most, if not for all students alike? On this basis, a CW classroom will need a structural approach to teaching based on the following strategies to foster student writing:

Time

CW is different from preparing other forms of writing in terms of calculating a lot of time for students and preparing materials to initiate and aid the writing (Eikenbusch, 2016). There is an expected investment to make on the teacher's part to dedicate 'enough' lesson time to CW. In that, the method does not differ from composition. However, what is different in the CW process, is, how class time is used by the student, not the teacher, next to where the student wants to write (Eikenbusch, 2016).

Space

In order to give students freedom and the feeling of empowerment, the literature describes that it serves best to let students choose where they want to write (Eikenbusch, 2016). Quiet spaces are favourable, where students can withdraw in order to concentrate. Creating 'an atmosphere' and an actual writing 'space' was mentioned a necessity by several authors (Disney, 2012; Praitis, 2006; Stockwell, 2016). Since CW is viewed as an individual process, time and space are viewed as essential qualities in creating one's own writing 'atmosphere' (Hinrichs, 2011).

Audience

Next to issues of where to write, the literature cites that students can only experience the effect of their own writing sufficiently if they have someone to write to, such as a teacher or peer (Eikenbusch, 2016). This is viewed as important in order to truly understand the range of their writing and to gain social-cognitive competencies during writing. Psychologists Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987), who have studied the dynamics of writing, found that the biggest problem students have is to put 'a language production system geared to conversation over to a language production system capable of functioning by itself' (p. 21). As a human development phenomenon, humans always acquire speech before learning to write. Both lead to a discourse as a form of social interaction. One can conclude that writing, then, serves the Self in explaining itself and is literally geared towards a 'receiver'. Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) therefore put the focus of their research on 'attending to the relationship' between sender and receiver. As their findings demonstrate, the relationship of the writer to the reader is not just an additional part of the writing task but, 'in a very important sense reconstitutes the whole task' (p. 25), thereby turning writing into an act of meaning making.

Social setting and feedback

CW has received a growing interest also for the reason that it is viewed as a social endeavour (Zhao, 2014), thus likely being used in collaborative learning contexts. Aspects of 'voice and identity' in writing

(Brisk, 2011) enable the writer to enter into a socio-cultural relationship with an audience such as peers or teachers. For this reason, the literature cites the workshop format as the most common form of teaching CW. This allows students to play an active role and to let them have as much written feedback from peers as possible (Viana & Zyngier, 2019). Sawyer (2012) underlines this point by stating that 'CW is often the result of collaboration' (p. 319). However, the classroom and its time limitation do not accommodate the writer's workshop very well, which is why peer feedback has become an important feature in teaching CW in school and university settings.

Allowing L1

Differences in writing have been observed within L1 and L2 learners (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987). For that reason, Viana and Zyngier (2019) suggest that in mixed ability classes, students consciously draw on previous L1 knowledge, when playing with language in L2. It was also found that a stimulating and successful writing acquisition in L1 is closely linked to student motivation and enjoyment of writing (Hinrichs, 2011). Therefore, to find out about former writing instruction in L1 might make writing in L2 easier. This will serve as a vital aspect in setting up the CW intervention, making collaboration a necessary means (Appendices 1-5, 16).

Material use

Hinrichs (2011) further suggests to give students objects to inspire writing such as photographs or any kind of 'iconicity' that gives them visual, auditory, or cognitive clues (p. 4). Here, the notion of creativity becomes a vital aspect. It is deemed helpful to give students lists of words to use, a start-up vocabulary or any kind of helpful material, even visual or audio (Geok Lin Lim, 2015).

Reading

The literature describes a direct link between the teaching of reading skills and writing outcomes (Alghonaim, 2018; Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1984). Bereiter and Scardamalia 's (1987) research is based on a large body of recent studies confirming that background knowledge plays a crucial role in the mental processing of texts. This means that students should be instructed on the basis of bringing their own knowledge to a text. It also means that the more students do so, especially through reading classical literature and solving higher-order thinking tasks, the better their writing will be. In yet another study (1984), they found that writing improvement occurs especially through mimicry, when children are exposed to models in reading (p.183). This claim is supported by Alghonaim (2018), stating that writing should be integrated with reading and vice versa, based on research that views literacy as a whole constituent and not separate entities.

Gender

The research on writing reports slight differences have been observed in boy and girl writing (Brisk, 2011). Ofsted (2009) reports underline this finding by stating that 'gender issues' were greatest in the domain of writing (Waite, 2015). In her research, Waite particularly makes mentioning of creating exercises for 'reluctant boy writers' (p. 41). However, the literature makes few references on gender preferences for CW. Generally, scholars have observed that girls write lengthier texts than boys and that boys have trouble expressing personal recounts (Brisk, 2011). More preferences described in the literature are the use of comics as a writing prompt by boys and more journaling and personal letter writing in girls (Mc Phail, 2009, citing Brisk, 2011).

Summary

Researchers trying to understand writing in L1 and L2 recognize the importance of the teaching of skills (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987). As Eckstein and Ferris (2018) quoting Raimes (1983) underline: 'Writers in L2 need more of everything- more time to read, think, formulate, revise, and edit' (p. 139). In sum, L2 writers generally need more help from the teacher, making the teaching of skills a necessary means toward L2 writing acquisition.

Aims of the study

Up to this point, it is not clear from CW literature, whether student writing improves using CW in an ESL context, and if so, to what extent. The aim of the research therefore is twofold: to help students find a way (back) to the excitement of writing, and at the same time fostering writing improvement. The research offers a description of which part of the students' writing improved during the teaching of CW, as well as which strategy used in the teaching deemed most helpful. In terms of a lack of research in ESL as well as within the Waldorf context, the study will investigate CW in a secondary school with a focus on Year 9. Students will receive a CW intervention in combination with a pre- and post- assessment test in order to measure change. Student interviews will give insights into the writing process. Teacher interviews will be conducted to shed light on the practical reality of CW for future improvement. It is hoped that through this research, the teacher gains new grounds on the teaching of L2 writing, leading to a more informed perspective and a changed practice thereof. The research will consist of a mixed methods approach. For one, the teacher will attempt to 'detect evidence of *learning in progress* through errors and immaturities in student's written works' (Cowie, 2018), which will result in quantitative data. Secondly, talking to students and teachers and collecting opinions and observations will serve as a method to collect qualitative data. The following questions came out of the literature review and will serve as the basis for the small-scale practitioner research to follow:

1: How does CW help improve ESL student writing in practice?

2: What are teachers' experiences and opinions about the use of CW?

3: Given the lack of research on ESL creative writing, which age group (s) is CW best suited for in practice?

4: What effect did this intervention have on Year 9 student writing examined for this project?

5: What are students' opinions towards CW?

Rationale

In Waldorf pedagogy, Year 9 is interpreted as the height of puberty (*Stockmeyer & Everett-Zade, 2015*). In view of it being a difficult age and in need of a new concept to accommodate the needs of learners much better, School X is undergoing structural changes at the moment. Previously, the school was organised in elementary (Years 1-7), middle (Years 7-9), and upper school (Years 10-12). However, the school is now undergoing a transitional stage, changing the concept back to the original idea as proposed by Steiner (1919) with only 2 parts: class teacher time (Years 1-8) and upper school time (Years 9-12). For this reason, the focus of research is on Year 9. Year 8 and Year 11 also took part in the study and received a CW intervention. This was done in all three year groups to see which strategies work (best) and whether Year 9 takes on a special role. In staff meetings, colleagues frequently discuss whether Year 9 needs a special pedagogy, and if so, what methods help support students at this age.

Another reason why this age group was chosen came out of the literature. As Seloni (2018) observed, students often feel frustrated to write in L2 in their adolescent years because they cannot voice themselves in the foreign language, yet they have so much to say at this age, which they cannot express due to a lack of vocabulary. So, it is especially important 'to talk to L2 writers about their processes, while composing texts and helping them identify their strengths' (p. 2382). As she further pointed out, little is generally known about L2 writing at the adolescent level. Practitioners who work with adolescent writers criticise that the increased emphasis on L2 writing research is on university students. This paper is written in hopes to reconcile some of these concerns, including my own teaching of writing as an ESL teacher.

Methodology

Research Design

In an attempt to find answers to the research questions above, the study uses the theoretical underpinning of action research (AR), a movement in educational research (Campbell, 2013). The research follows the tradi-

tional AR concept as first introduced by Lewin (1948), viewing it 'as a collaborative effort, resulting in critical reflection and, in turn, hoping to change the immediate environment' (Rainey, 2000). However, the small-scale character of the research with a limited time frame would classify it as practitioner research, as a distinct form of AR, with respect to its methodology. This form does not follow the typical AR action-reflection model based on Altrichter (2008). Also, the study is not instigated by an outside researcher. Instead, it represents the teacher's attempt of doing research by putting himself in the place of the researcher, to undertake a reflective and systematic study of his own practice by informing it with theory (Campbell, 2013).

Participants

For the main part of the study, 31 participants (15 males, 16 females) took part in Year 9. They were recruited through the ESL teacher, who is also the practitioner researcher of this project. The study took place in a large private comprehensive school, comprising 847 students, in the Eastern part of Germany. All participants were native speakers of German with English as their second language. In order to validate the findings and to compare them with other year groups, Year 8 (N=33) and Year 11 (N=32) ESL students also participated in the study. They also received a CW intervention with a follow-up group interview. This was done in order to find out, if Year 9 takes on a special role in the CW process.

Collaboration

According to research, L2 writing instruction is mostly based on L1 writing models of instruction (Silva, 1990). For that reason, it made sense to collaborate with L1 as well as L2 teachers. For the interviews, teachers were recruited by e-mail and chosen on the basis of their voluntary participation. In total, five teachers agreed to be interviewed: 2 from the MFL and 3 from the German (L1), art, and history department.

The intervention period

All three year groups participating in the study received a CW intervention over a period of 5 weeks. The length of the intervention was based on different articles with a similar focus. Wood (2016) suggested a 4-week intervention, Nasir et al. (2013) 8 weeks, whereas Elabdali (2016) and Praitis (2006) aimed for 3 weeks. The decision for a 5- week intervention on my part was made for two reasons: For one, most research articles were based on university settings with little research available on CW in secondary schools. Assuming that students for this study had a lower level of English and that they would possibly need more time, a 5-week period seemed a compromise to the readings (Appendix 7). Also, the research literature forewarned that ESL students generally needed longer for any literary L2 task (Eckstein & Ferris, 2018). I also wanted student works

to be computer typed for better comparison. Knowing that students receive little IT training at School X, it was expected that they would take longer to turn in assignments.

Task setting

What was similar to all assignments was the task being based on former in-class readings (Appendix 16 for full reading list). This was based on the teaching of reading as a strategy for improving writing described by the literature (Byrne, 2002). The task was given as an in and out of class assignment based on the time and place criteria described in the literature (Eikenbusch, 2016). Sawyer's (2012) description of different forms of creativity and the problems associated with it, like writer's block and wait time for inspiration, also influenced this choice. Voices in CW literature, especially published writers (Goldberg 1986; Lamott, 1995), also stated that CW means hard work with first drafts providing only the raw material for a story. For that reason, I wanted students to have enough time to re-work material. In practice, the effects this had on student writing and the identification with their own work were enormous (Appendix 9).

I also sent students into the CW task with a group brain storming. This was viewed very positively (Appendix 11). Based on Nation (2009), who described that group or partner brainstorming was important for the ESL writer, the aim also was to collect ideas about the writing topic, whereby 'no idea was to be rejected or criticised because it might lead to other ideas' (p. 117).

Despite claims of the literature that the workshop format would be the best method to serve the social aspect of CW, I decided against it. The decision was informed by Bishop (1990), who argues for the shift away from the traditional CW workshop format. She claims that a non-work shop format would be better for the youngest university learners, which, I would assume to be true also for secondary school learners.

In order for students to develop their own stories, a change of place and time was described by the literature (Eikenbusch, 2016). Year 11 students were also encouraged to choose a different place for writing during class time, like the library or hallway. Maturity and self-regulatory skills were taken as a means for responsible individual out-of-class writing behaviour. In Year 8 and 9, I changed the writing space *together* with the students. Writing took place in class, in the garden, in the library, and the computer lab. The shared writing space helped to observe students better and to answer questions on vocabulary and plot.

Each lesson, short CW warm-up tasks were given to students *before* their time on individual work. Those tasks mostly consisted of acronyms on the black board that helped students retrieve lexical vocabulary connected with the readings or were picture prompts, as suggested by colleagues (Appendix 1-5) and the literature (Hinrichs, 2011).

Task design

According to Nicholes (2016), the literature describes two different CW task formats: autobiographical writing and narrative writing. I decided against autobiographical writing from an early point on, since I felt it to be too personal for a school setting in comparison to university writers' workshops, where CW is used for students who willingly engage in writing and who consciously choose it as academic field. Instead, I chose narrative storytelling. With adolescent students in Year 9, I assumed that chances were high that they were not willing to share much personal content with a teacher, which also might have resulted in fewer students taking part in the study. Narrative writing, it was hoped, would not scare students away.

Finally, the writing task consisted of one longer piece of writing, that had to be turned in at the end of the intervention. It was communicated to the students that the stories had to be handed in, but did not have to be shared with the whole class. I used a consent sheet to collect student signatures for those students who wished to be published in the spiral-bound story book created during the intervention. Students were also encouraged to share their stories with peers at any point in time.

For the pre-intervention assessment, Year 9 students received a task based on the 'guided creative writing' section in the German GCSE-style exam with a time limit of 50 minutes in class (Realschulabschluss Sachsen, 2016). For the post-intervention assessment, students received a similar writing task (Appendix 14). Both tasks were guided CW tasks with scaffolding, whereas the writing task *during* intervention was without scaffolding and encouraged complete free writing (Appendix 16). The idea for the pre- and post-assessment task was taken from David (2016). Although he also cited arguments against impromptu, timed writing exams (ITW) for the lack of planning time and background knowledge, it was still chosen as an assessment method for this research for pragmatic reasons: a) the limited time period for data collection, b) to make sure that no one copies from other sources.

It was also explained to students from the very beginning that I would not 'assess' their stories through marking, but instead, hoped to look at students' writing process for the purpose of research.

Ethical considerations

The role of ethics was seen as a vital aspect of the research from an early stage on. Before the start of the project, ethical approval was sought through the University of Oxford's Central Research and Ethics Committee (Curec). After approval, with adherence to the Ethical Guidelines for Education Research (BERA, 2018), consent was sought in written form from the school's principals. Since it is a democratically-run school, there was a total of six principals to consult. All other members of staff were also informed in the weekly all-school conference for reasons of transparency. Since the recommendation from the MSc (Learning and Teaching)

seminars was that school consent suffices in cases of research similar to mine, parental consent was not sought, in agreement with the school's principals. However, students were fully informed about the research and its aims and asked to sign a consent form, prior to the investigation. This decision was made on the basis of the student's age since they were nearly adults, but also on the basis of the readings, warning of ethical dilemmas in covert research (Robson, 2011).

Since the study involved different year groups, a colleague from the department assisted with the forms due to the large number. Students were informed about anonymity and confidentiality of analysis data and given the possibility to opt out of the research at any given time. It was made clear to them that the topic of the project was part of the regular Scheme of Work, and that they could not opt out of the lessons, but opt out of the monitoring process (assessment, interview, survey) if they wished to. There were no objections. Likewise, the five teachers interviewed also signed a consent form.

Anonymity

For the project, the school under investigation received a name change to Waldorf School X to secure its anonymity. All participant names recorded for the research were kept confidential, and are thus referred to by Teacher 1, 2, 3 or Student 1, 2, 3 etc. with numerical classification. All surveys were used anonymously, so that there was no way of linking information to individual students. Data collected was stored on the school's property only and kept strictly confidential on a password-protected computer in the staff room. Data was used only by the researcher and will be deleted at the end of the project.

Data Collection

Structure

A range of research methodologies with different epistemological and ontological positions can and should be utilized in research. The over-reliance on one sort of research method runs the danger of not fully understanding the nature of the phenomenon (Hanauer, 2010, p. 139). The process of gathering data therefore included several phases (Appendix 7) based on a mixed-methods approach. Data was analysed from five sources for this study:

- **student text samples before and during intervention**
- **student assessment before and after intervention**
- **student and teacher interviews**
- **surveys**
- **observations**

Assessment was carried out in the pre-intervention period based on old student records from Year 8, in order to compare it with post-intervention writing. Along with the quantitative data collected, students were interviewed in the post-intervention phase to find out, if and how student perception of their writing had changed (Appendix 9, 12).

The teaching of writing support strategies was carried out prior to the intervention, as well as during the intervention. However, students were given an extensive *reading* training *before* intervention. The necessity for the reading training as support strategy had come out of the literature and was intended to help students generate ideas about their writing (Alghonaim, 2018).

Measurement of writing process

The teacher kept an observation journal and wrote down impressions during the intervention period (Appendix 6). Students were also asked to participate in a pre-intervention survey. This was for the teacher-researcher to scan if students would rate their own writing as problematic and to compare it with the post-intervention data. It also helped to see how important students rated their writing in ESL, compared to other abilities such as reading, speaking and listening, which might be telling of student motivation to write in general. Students were then asked to describe their own writing process during the intervention in the form of an open-question survey, along with a group interview. For the interviews, the researcher asked for volunteers *after* class. Since this cost students extra time, there were only few participants.

Measurement of writing improvement

Because I was not sure *what part* of the student writing would improve, I decided for an extensive error coding. This gave me an error index and also showed me *what* aspects of students' work were improving (Appendix 12). Error coding was based on research by Eckstein and Ferris (2018, p. 147), who outlined the following error categories:

verb tense
punctuation
spelling
use of plural
word order
vocabulary
missing word

I further added word count, total mistakes and error score as categories (Appendix 11). The idea for the

word count measure was based on Grewal and Williams (2018). It was used to account for gender differences described in the literature (see earlier sections), which I also added as a coding category. The use of the proportion of spelling errors as an outcome measure for change was also from Grewal and Williams (2018). However, not much emphasis was placed on this category, which mainly served as an informative device for the teacher.

Since the question of improvement was asked on the linguistic level, I set aside content assessment. Despite a certain genre agreement, the student usually has free choice of what to write in CW. For that reason, ideas and creative content were not assessed. Instead, the *choice of topic* was recorded as an extra category (Appendix 10). This was done to find out how the student *personally* connected with his/her writing as a means of self-expression.

Reporting student writing

Student data during the CW intervention was either collected in the form of lose pages or collected in the form of 'aesthetic data' based on research by Bailey and Bizzaro (2017) and Hanauer (2010). The latter suggest to present student writing in a creative and aesthetic way. For that reason, the teacher asked students to create a cover page to their story. The teacher then produced spiral-bound books as a form of data collection, which were handed out to each student participant for reasons of transparency and, also, as part of the shared writing format described by Bishop and Starkey (2006). After the intervention, Year 8 and 11 had each produced one volume of short stories, whereas Year 9 did not want their stories to be shared in a book with others. Instead, they used lose copies of their writing and shared it only with chosen individuals in class.

Limitations

The findings of this study have to be seen in light of some limitations. Even though the study took place under an AR paradigm with means for *collaborative* action, collaboration only took place with a few individuals. Teachers in the MLF department did not share my concern for writing improvement. Bailey and Bizzaro (2017) state that collaboration is most difficult in schools with a strong institutional identity (p. 78). Since the study took place in a Waldorf school, I did not fully take the influence of teachers' ideological claims towards Waldorf pedagogy into account. This limitation could only be apprehended by repeating the study in a different school.

Even though the study provided evidence of students' success as creative writers, the intervention period was very short and would make more research on the topic necessary, in order to conclude that CW helps improve student writing skills *overall*. In this research, students' group error scores changed significantly as a result of the intervention, but on the basis of it being a small-scale practitioner research, findings are not generalizable.

Findings and discussion

RQ 1: How does CW help improve ESL student writing in practice?

In order to answer the first research question, I used student group interviews, student surveys, and my own observations.

Student interviews

It was found that ESL learners, who try to write in L2 generally, struggle with what they want to say (Brisk, 2011). This is also reflected in the student interviews. A number of students in Year 9 and 11 (Appendix 8, 12) could not find a beginning for lack of ideas and content.

> ***S11:*** *All my texts are always very short in CW. I am lacking ideas.*
>
> ***S14:*** *It helps me to have an inspiration to start with; otherwise, I don't have ideas. It's like with cooking- you just need some ingredients to start with and then you can be a little more creative with the rest.*
>
> ***S26:*** *I never really know what to write.*

One reason for this problem could also be found in the educational system itself. Mostly, it is the teacher, who gives organised information to the student. Leaving students with the freedom to fill their own writing space in CW, then turns the usual student expectation upside down. This caused for irritation and stress in some Year 9 students. Elabdali (2016) underlines this point by stating that ESL students face difficulties writing in a genre that does not have a strict pre-established outline. In addition, at that moment, the teacher role changes to being a 'helper' on the writing journey, instead of an instructor.

However, the opposite seemed to be true for Year 8 students. They generally seemed more positive on the freedom of content, time, and space, which inspired and motivated them to write. Year 11 students yet reported on a different problem. For them it seemed very hard to write within a certain genre, such as a short story. Thinking 'too much' about structure, plot and setting, despite free choice thereof, led some students to experience writer's block (Appendix 12). Overall, the beginning seemed the most difficult phase in all three year groups. Once it was mastered, students showed more positive reactions towards CW. As one Year 9 student noted:

> ***S20:*** *In CW you can just start writing without thinking too much... because usually you want to write words that you hear in your head but you don't know how to write them so you think about writing them a lot and then you can't really write.*

Though, negative student reactions also arose during the intervention. Those moments were helpful tools for me to see where CW was not viewed as helpful by students. The following descriptions from my notes will help shed light on the problem.

Teacher observation notes

The notes highlight a problem that was also observed by San Pedro (2015), who applied the concept of 'hierarchies of power' to CW. He remarked that the concept equally applies 'to the plight of individuals in classrooms' (p. 137). This was demonstrated by a conflict that arose during the CW task between me and a Year 11 student. The student had turned in the story to me for voluntary feedback. I had then written a commentary under the student's work stating that the story lacked clarity and that I could not follow the plot all the way to the end. On giving the student her work back, my feedback led her to have an emotional breakdown. She felt very disappointed that I did not understand her story, which she interpreted as me not understanding *her*. She exclaimed:

> *I will not re-write my story for you. I know what I mean by it. My friend read it and she understood what I wanted to say. I can't change it now. I will just write another story for you!*

Her wording 'for you' shows that the student had experienced her CW task as writing for herself. She still felt very connected with her story, which seemed to represent a part of herself. For that reason, my feedback had a strong effect on her. In *Whose Goals, Whose Aspirations,* Fishman (2001) tells a similar story about one of his students in a writing class. In his account, he further analyses four categories of goals within learning. He cites students' personal growth as the prime goal and uses it to explain that the teacher sometimes is not aware that his goal of the teaching does not match the student's goal, which ultimately leads to a mismatch in student and teacher perception of the student's work (p. 19). In my case, this meant that I wanted the student to write a coherent story in order for her writing to improve. For her, writing improvement was not her (first) goal. Instead, she wanted to communicate an experience. My rather formal feedback had led her to think that my teacher opinion was worth more than hers: the story had become a matter of a hidden power relationship in the classroom as described by San Pedro (2015). Similar to another author (Richardson, 2009), I had hoped that 'the student would hear points about her work that would force her to critically examine and clarify her own text' (p. 27); but instead, she felt offended.

The situation further attests to the contested issue whether CW should be studied as a separate form of writing, apart from composition, with a different focus of looking at students' work (Bailey & Bizarro, 2017; Bish-

op and Starkey, 2006; Hesse, 2010; Toulmin, 1972). In CW, students can only experience the effect of their writing sufficiently, if, they have someone to write to, such as a teacher or peer, with whom they can share their thoughts in an authentic way without assessment or error penalizing, and space to indulge in a self-structured writing process (Eikenbusch, 2016). In composition, work is viewed on the basis of factual knowledge like paragraph structure, planning and revising. Basically, I had intruded into the student's CW by using the same teacher feedback vocabulary that I had previously used for composition tasks, bringing words like plot, and issues of structure to the CW task, which the student rejected.

The situation also showed that peer feedback does not always work in ways intended. Often, the teacher is the first to criticise a student's work, whereas peers often give only positive feedback. A similar situation also occurred with another student, who had also turned in her work for feedback.

In the writing task, she had used derogatory language to talk about the sexual experience of her protagonist. I gave her positive feedback on the content of the story, but asked, if, for the sharing of the story with peers and the printing in the class volume (which I was aware some parents would read), she could perhaps 'alter' her language. As a reaction, she got angry and walked out of class, replying: 'I thought it was my story, not yours. My friends think it's fine'. Again, this shows that the topic of feedback and ownership represent tangible issue in the CW process, especially in secondary school.

Reflecting some more on the situation, Yu and Lee (2016) describe that peers may be reluctant to criticise others in order to avoid tension in the group and to keep harmony (p. 477). However, school culture as a social factor may also be an indication of how trained and well-prepared students are in giving constructive peer feedback. It might be important in setting up a secondary classroom to train students on giving peer feedback *before* using CW.

Whereas the literature describes mostly positive effects on the use of peer feedback for CW, the issue of feedback *by the instructor* is often left out completely. Also, most CW teaching relates to university settings with more mature students in work shop style classes, which does not fully capture the secondary school context. This makes more research of the topic necessary.

In relation to question one, it may be concluded that CW does not help students improve their writing, if it follows formal aspects of teaching and does not make itself distinct from 'normal lessons', which may lead to students rejecting CW altogether. As the examples have further shown, the CW teacher also needs full awareness of his role change in the classroom and a sensitised view of writing. As Bishop and Starkey (2006) underline: 'Writing helps set the house of the psyche in order by helping individuals cope with affective challenges in their lives' (p. 180). This also ties back to the literature explaining why CW is often used in therapeutic contexts (Bishop & Starkey, 2006).

As Murray further pointed out: 'Isn't it true that an author can write only about himself?' (1990, p. 19). What is helpful then for students is the teacher's recognition of the two-folded nature of CW tasks: on the one hand, to practice writing in a school setting and helping students improve their written skills, but on the other hand, to be aware of the underlying nature of writing, as a tool to meaning making and understanding life. The helpfulness of CW to the student will, to a high degree, depend upon this awareness of the teacher to create an adequate writing atmosphere, in which meaningful communication and sensitive peer and student feedback can take place.

Therefore, it is not so much a question of what the teacher *does* during CW. He may even take a step back from formal teaching by letting go of explanations and simply letting students write. However, much of the succes of CW will depend upon the teacher's mind set as the examples have shown. The teacher's task is to set the tone and atmosphere, in which the writing can take place, eventually handing over the power to students (Bishop & Starkey, 2006, p. 179).

RQ 2: Which age group (s) is CW best suited for in practice?

For this question, I interviewed five colleagues. As stated earlier, my special interest lay on Year 9, since it represents a transitional year in the current school structure and has been subject to controversial staff discussions before (see rationale section). The following table shows teachers' answers toward CW use in Year 9:

Teachers and subjects taught	Year groups for CW use	Reasons for non-use
Class teacher (classes 1-7)	Year 5	
Class teacher (classes 1-7), ESL	Year 5	
German (L1), history, social studies	Mainly in Year 10, but also in Years 11 and 12	No use in Year 9, too difficult to teach, very few lessons
German (L1)	Starting in Year 8 Differentiated use: guided CW in Years 8-10 Free writing in Years 11-12	Year 9 and 10 very difficult to teach, students cannot distance themselves very well from their own writing, react sensitively to feedback
Art, German (L1)	Years 8-12	Year 9 difficult, height of puberty

Table 1. Showing year groups in which CW is used

As shown, CW is used in a variety of different subjects (Appendices 1-5). Subjects in the upper school include German (L1), German as a foreign language, art, history, social science and drama, whereas in the elementary school CW is used for L1 and L2 teaching. Elementary school teachers do not find it a suitable method for Years 1-4 due to the lack of literacy in L1. One of the interviewed teachers said she was afraid students would memorize wrong spellings, if no correction takes place in CW (Appendix 1). Two upper school teachers were in

agreement that CW should be taught from Year 8 onwards, whereas another teacher said the earliest starting point should be Year 10.

There generally does not seem to be an agreement among teachers about which age group best suits the teaching of CW. One elementary teacher explained: 'Students actually need to understand the structure of an English sentence before they are able to write' (Appendix 2). She thus referred to student literary skills. The observation is closely linked to the literature, stating that L2 acquisition follows the same pattern as in L1 (Brisk, 2011; Kroll, 1990).

However, Teacher 1 differs from that theory by stating that she can teach writing better *bilingually*, because children use grammar naturally in L1 without thinking about it. Therefore, they are not interested in the rules of L1 writing, but pay more attention if compared with L2 (Appendix 1). As she further explained, contrasting languages always makes them better writers in both languages.

This is an interesting point to raise since it turns the concept of writing upside down, as described in the literature. The common assumption about ESL writing as described by Viana and Zyngier (2019) is that students draw on previous knowledge in L1, when playing with language in L2. What Teacher 1 describes, actually is a critique thereof, and sparks the same discussion as raised in the literature by Kroll (1990): Is L1 writing acquisition (really) replicated in L2 or does it possibly follow its own pattern?

As the example from practice shows, children who have been taught grammar structures in L2, and who are then given a CW task, sometimes show to be better writers in L2 because of their awareness of the language that they do not naturally have in L1. In other words, CW can be a tool to practice L2 writing in the lower years, even if students do not yet possess the same cognitive awareness of language use in L1. L2 writing then fosters a better understanding of L1. Following this claim, CW can also hold a place in the early ESL years. This also underlines Kroll's (1990) claim that L2 writing is not necessarily the same act as L1 writing.

Another argument that speaks for early CW use is its playful nature. This reflects the playfulness of children at that age. It thus makes it possible to practice writing for reasons other than correctness or assessment at a vulnerable age. There is nearly no literature available on the use of CW in the ESL elementary classroom (Grewal & Williams, 2018). If CW should hold a place in the ESL classroom, as this paper argues, then its usage may not be limited to certain years, but be made available to *all* year groups.

RQ 3: How do other teachers use CW at school X?

For this research question, I used teacher interviews. The data was then categorised and analysed in relation to the question (Appendix 15). Also, I used teacher observation notes from a departmental meeting to show collaboration on the topic.

Teacher Interview Analysis

As Table 1 (Appendix 15) shows, the usage of CW differs for different age groups. What all teachers have in common is CW usage in combination with reading. This connects to the reading-writing link described in the literature (Byrne, 2002; Goodman & Goodman, 1979). In the lower school, teachers use CW to deepen students' knowledge, whereas in the upper school it is commonly used as introduction of a new topic.

Another common point is to use CW for the practice of writing in general (Appendices 1-5, 15). As one Year 5 teacher put it: 'Students really start writing like crazy at that age'. CW gives them an outlet by letting students express their own thoughts. Despite the fact that CW only has a limited use in the early years, upper school interviews describe a plethora of usages: warm-up for a topic, writing poetry and lyrical texts, writing theatrical scenes, exam practice, on class trips, for travel journals.

According to teacher interviews, the writing *space* is also used differently by different age groups. The early year ESL teacher described a classroom-*only* use, whereas the middle and upper school teachers described an inside *and* outside of classroom use. This reflects the research literature, highlighting 'space' as one of the most important CW components (Eikenbusch, 2016; Hinrichs, 2011; Stockwell, 2016). Since self-regulation skills are an essential pre-condition for students to write on their own and only increase with maturity, it goes without further explanation why CW is bound to an in-class only use in the early years.

Teacher 1 further stated that CW is based on ability, which represents a view that is seen as problematic by CW researchers (Bailey & Bizzaro, 2017). Teacher 3 reflected another common problem within the CWS discourse by asking: 'Is essay writing part of creative writing? I am not 100% sure where CW begins, and when it is purely composition'. Teacher 4 underlined this point by asking 'Where does CW start and where does it end?' He further explained that 'it depends on how wide or narrow you define it'. Whereas Teacher 1 gave the impression of feeling unsure about a CW definition, Teacher 2 made it a personal choice how to define it. Both teachers reflect the rift in the research literature as to whether CW should be part of composition or should represent its own field of research within literary studies, as described in more detail in the literature review (Bailey & Bizzaro, 2017). Teacher 4 also warned against the use of CW without a clear distinction (Appendix 4):

> *I think it is really important to make a division for students, to tell them… there is a space of creative 'free' writing and here is a space, where you can also use* ***creative means,*** *but where you need to be logical in your structure and content. The latter can be assessed. Creative 'free' writing cannot be assessed because it takes place through an emotional trigger. It is something we feel, something inside of us, something subjective, not something objective… and therefore cannot be assessed.*

In relation to the title of this paper and the question asked as to how CW can improve Year 9 writing, colleagues' use of CW in this age group seems to be limited to the upper school starting in Year 10 or the lower school as *language play*.

In sum, Teachers 2-4 agree that CW should be based on the maturity level of students. The older students are, the more they are able to distance themselves from their writing when describing inner thoughts and feelings (Teacher 4, Appendix 4). One common assumption that the upper school teachers (Teacher 3,4,5) shared, however, is the assumption that CW is geared towards personal thoughts and feelings that relate the students' *own* experience. Therefore, writing is viewed as an intimate process that takes a lot of trust on the students' part to share their work (Teacher 4, Appendix 4).

Further, all but one teacher described CW as an individual task. Teacher 1 and 4 also agreed that CW reassures students about their writing. Likewise, three teachers mentioned that CW helps with writing anxieties. These answers may surprise coming from a Waldorf school, where no formal curriculum, no marking and no text books exist. The assumption would be that marking puts pressure and stress on students, who show anxieties as a consequence thereof. However, lots of students show language and writing anxieties *in the absence of* marking. One explanation for this phenomenon was given by a colleague. As a former Montessori teacher, she helped assist with the group interviews. After class, I had asked her opinion of the topic. She replied:

> *After 15 years of teaching, I have no illusions about anxieties. I see it as a reality in language teaching. It is based on the school system as a whole, punishing mistakes (Appendix 8).*

This brings about an important point to raise: CW seems to be used by teachers as a break away from writing for assessment (Appendices 3-5). This highlights the concern that most writing in schools is either formally assessed or used to highlight mistakes (Clegg, 1964; Cowie, 2018). Waldorf schools seem to be no exception here (Teacher 4, Appendix 4). This also reflects Silva's (1990) observation, that the *controlled composition approach* with a focus on 'correct' writing is often openly condemned by ESL teachers, but is still commonly used in practice (p. 13). Teacher 4 underlines this thought by stating that another reason why students don't like to write is because they mistrust the concept of school. 'In CW, students can hardly comprehend that they are not assessed in any sort of way', she states (Appendix 4). However, there are also strong disagreements among teachers. Teacher 3 opposes the view that CW should not be controlled. He states that teachers need to *at least* control text length. He explains that his conviction is based on his observation that the joy of writing has gone down over the past few years (Appendix 3). He further explains:

> *CW is not just writing for fun. They need to produce a certain length. It's not nice to force*

students that way, but that's just what I do…and it has a great effect. Now, they write longer texts, which also transfers to composition tasks. That's because they know the expectations (Appendix 3).

The role of teacher training (Teacher 5) and the gender gap (Teacher 4) were also of high concern to colleagues, which were also frequently discussed in the literature (Bishop & Starkey, 2006; Brisk, 2011, p. 51). Teachers also named particular student groups for whom CW seems most useful: dyslexic students (Teacher 4), highly talented or highly sensitive students (Teacher 5), strong students (Teacher 2), introverts (Teacher 4, 5) and boys (Teacher 4). The answers relate back to the literature, where CW was described as an inclusive method for various learner needs (Bishop & Starkey, 2006). In sum, further discussions with more teachers at School X seem necessary to make CW a wider accepted method and to agree on forms of its usage to highlight where it can help and hinder writing development. The next section provides an attempt for collaborative action.

Collaboration analysis

According to Thomson (2011), collaboration means adding to the repertoire of practice and changing taken-for-granted ways of daily work to build professional learning communities (p. 348). However, he also recognizes that micro politics may make collaboration difficult, especially due to a lack of criticality in a group (p. 347). This is also what I experienced in MFL staff meetings, where I felt that my concern for writing improvement was not shared. The Russian teachers, who have equal share in the department, ruled out CW upon first hearing. The perception was that students needed to know too much subject knowledge (grammar, composition) and needed scaffolding at all writing stages. They also claimed that writing in Russian could not be compared to writing in English, since ESL teaching is heavily supported by external cultural factors, such as the radio, television, and internet.

Out of 10 teachers present, only two ESL teachers claimed to use CW. One ESL teacher explained that her students' self-regulation skills were not highly developed, whereas another concluded that her class needed to first learn more grammar structures for writing. All in all, the use of CW was viewed neither as convincing, nor as useful for most teachers. This fits in with research on collaboration by Howatt and Smith (2014), who describe how 'the success of new methods may have less to do with their supposed intrinsic merits than with the degree to which they correspond with teachers' abilities or otherwise to use them' (p. 92). However, Thomson (2011) also offers the idea that 'change needs to make sense to people and thus must build not only on what people know but also what they *want* to know how to do' (p. 348).

Despite the unwillingness to try CW, the topic still sparked interesting discussions in team meetings on the

general value of teaching writing. To a high degree, MFL teachers' opinions reflected critical voices found in CW literature. One teacher inserted that writing was based on innate ability - an idea discussed in depth by Brayfield (2009) - whereas another teacher stated that 'language teachers, cannot improve what has gone wrong in the teaching of L1'. Likewise, most collaboration on CW research took place with L1 teachers, who showed great interest in the topic. This finding is in support of the research, claiming that L2 writing generally follows the same pattern as L1 with a *shared* interest in theory and practice (Hinrichs, 2011).

The question remains why Russian teachers at School X, whom the literature would also consider L2 writing teachers, viewed themselves as exempt from these findings and in disagreement with theory by stating that teaching writing in Russian is very different from L1 and from ESL.

RQ 4: What effect did this intervention have on student writing examined for this project?

I wanted to gain quantitative data for an easier comparison between pre- and post- intervention. For research question 4, I, therefore, collected data from the pre- and post-assessment tests. I tried to find improvement patterns in students' written work through error coding. Students' written works *during* the intervention were also analysed to see how writing had turned out for different age groups and for different genders.

Student pre- and post- intervention assessment data

The first set of writing samples analysed for this project came from student travel journals and represented a free writing activity in Year 8 (now Year 9, data on file). The pictures show the approximate text length and quality of writing. There was a lot of code-switching from L2 to L1, as can be seen in the following examples:

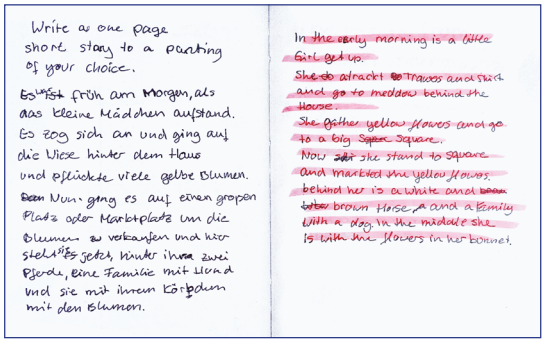


Table 2. *Student writing sample on file showing L1 to L2 conversion, Year 8, Example 1*

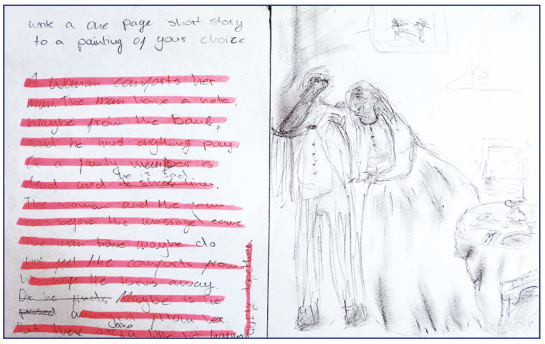


Table 3. *Student writing sample on file showing typical text length, Year 8, Example 2*

The second set of writing samples was collected during a guided CW activity. Students received scaffolding in the form of a list of words that were available for use during the activity (Appendix 14). Letter writing had

been a part of the composition teaching for 3 weeks prior to the assessment. It was hoped that the structures learned during the composition unit would help the guided CW activity. The decision to use a *guided* (scaffolded) CW task for this assessment was informed by my colleagues who were interviewed for this paper and reported that it was better to use this format in Year 9 or students would easily feel lost (Appendix 4). This concern was also mentioned in the literature (Elabdali, 2016). The results were as shown:

Pre-intervention error types

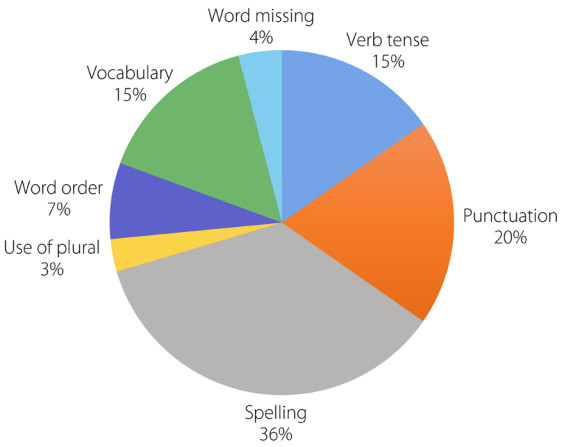


Table 4. Portrays a pie chart of student writing ***prior*** to the intervention.

Intervention error types, class 9, creative writing

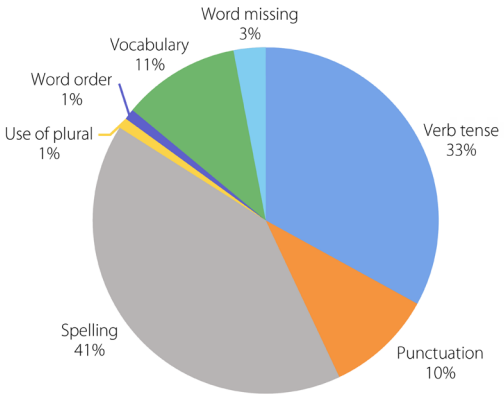


Table 5. Portrays a pie chart of student writing ***during*** the intervention with the CW task.

Post-intervention error types, class 9

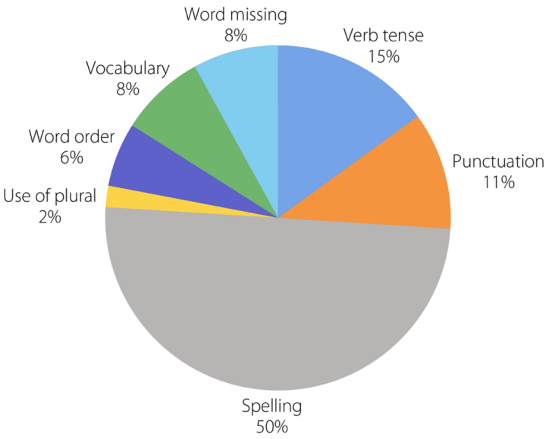


Table 6. Portrays a pie chart of student writing ***after*** the intervention.

In their writing, students did not seem to have a clear knowledge of punctuation, with a large number of mistakes made in this category. The finding shows the connection between L1 and L2 transfer. Teaching punctuation usually is not something that an MFL teacher targets, but rather, relies on from L1 lessons. However, if students have not acquired a clear grammatical structure in L1, then they are not able to use it in L2. This ties directly to the literature on L1 transfer (Hinrichs, 2011).

The total number of words for the pre-intervention was 2272. On average, girls wrote 92 words per task. Boys wrote an average of 61 words, amounting to a difference of 33% between girls and boys. The total number of mistakes was 251 in 2272 words for boys and girls, whereby girls (N=16) made 141 mistakes in 1473 words and boys (N=13) made 110 mistakes in 799 words total. Girls, therefore, made fewer mistakes than boys. The error index with girls was also lower (1.56) in comparison to boys (1.88).

A post-intervention writing assessment was then used to measure change in student writing (Appendix 12). The results showed that punctuation mistakes decreased, which indicates that the transfer of knowledge works vice versa from L2 to L1 through increased practice. The total number of words increased from 2272 in the pre-intervention to 2888 in the post-intervention. Girls wrote 121 words on average. Boys wrote 92 words on average. This amounts to a difference of 24% in girl and boy writing concerning text length.

The total number of mistakes was 260 in 2888 words, whereby girls (N=17) made 166 mistakes in 2059 words, and boys (N=9) made 94 mistakes in 829 words. That means, in relation to the number of words, girls generally made fewer mistakes than boys. Ultimately, the average error index score was lower for girls (1.15) in comparison to boys (1.53). This means that the error score decreased in both gender groups (boys 1.88 to 1.53 and girls from 1.56 to 1.15). In sum, both gender groups improved their writing in comparison to pre-intervention results.

Likewise, there was a significant improvement for boys and girls concerning text length (Appendix 11). Boys increased from 61 to 91 words on average, equalling a 50% improvement. Girls increased from 92 to 121 words on average, equalling a 32% improvement. Furthermore, boys' and girls' error index also improved. Boys increased by 19% (from 1.88 to 1.53), and girls increased by 26% (from 1.56 to 1.15).

Text length data during intervention

Gender differences occurred in the text length category (Appendix 11). The numbers suggest that girls wrote significantly more than boys *during* the intervention. Boys wrote only 28 % of the total number of words in Year 9, while girls wrote 72%. However, with an increase in age and maturity, the gender gap closes. In Year 11, girls and boys showed almost the same text length with a proportional difference of only 0,5%.

It also seems that different outcomes towards text length had to do with the task design. Year 8 was encouraged to use L1 in the writing process. Translation was permitted and helped with by the teacher, in comparison to the upper years, where L2-only was encouraged. When L1 was allowed in Year 8, students also seemed less blocked in their writing. Generally, students seemed to care very little about the number of pages for translation into L2. Five students wrote a second story, and two students wrote a third story in Year 8. Students even wanted to cancel their annual ESL Christmas party in order to finish their writing. They reassured me on several occasions that it did not bother them, because they were excited to have their *own* story in English. Ownership of their learning was observed to be an important incentive for writing during the CW process.

Waldorf pedagogy also makes the claim that Year 8 students are still very attached to imagery (Stockmeyer & Everett-Zade, 2015). The general teaching method in Year 8 in Waldorf Schools is heavily targeted at imagination as a 'golden rule' for that age group (Rawson et al., 2013, p. 38). So, especially for Year 8 students, L1 was a valuable tool for expressing themselves and for putting their imagination into words.

Year 9, on the other hand, had a CW task based on the reading of a novel. Therefore, students mostly stayed within the confines of the novel (setting, plot, characters). They produced the least amount of text, still with a great unwillingness to write. Students also needed longer to turn in their finished work. The level of excitement was missing, because the novel context gave them too little space for their own imagination. Even though students had the freedom to create their own story *based on the novel,* they did not stray very far from the original plot in their CW narratives. This finding will have important implications for future use of CW in my classroom.

Similar to Year 8, Year 11 also had a CW task that was set *after* their reading unit, and not alongside. Their prior reading units also consisted of shorter pieces of text, in comparison to Year 9, where the assignment included an entire novel. Also, Year 11 had previously done text analysis alongside reading, which, on the one hand, gave them a clear idea of the different parts of a short story, but on the other hand, caused many students to have a hard time to write without thinking too much about structure (Appendix 11). This finding sheds light on the *ideal* CW task design, as well as where and how it should be placed in the curriculum. This represents a finding that received no attention in the research literature, but came up as an important fact to consider for CW use in secondary schools.

Concerning task design, CW in ESL classes seems to work best when used *without* a specific context (like a novel or any other story). Students must feel that they are to be completely free to write. This result is reached

if text analysis is not taught beforehand. Best results for CW text length and personal connection further came about when L-use was encouraged and used as translation exercise. One implication could be to always allow L1 for L2 CW tasks.

According to the data available, Year 9 does not seem well-suited for CW at School X. Year 9 only receives two lessons of English a week, and there seems to be too much content knowledge to be handled (Appendices 1-5). This is not to say that CW in Year 9 has no effect, because as was demonstrated earlier, the writing became more fluid and error scores had improved for both boys and girls. However, it became apparent that task and curriculum design are important planning tools to be considered by teachers for CW use in the secondary school. Further effects CW use had on student writing will be described in the next section.

Content analysis

The content analysis data was based on Bailey and Bizzaros' (2017) research on 'common threads' found within narrative writing. Their study identified six descriptors in narrative text by which content could be classified. One descriptor was the category 'themes', which was also used for this research in order to determine how students made the CW task part of their own world. The narratives described common problems and worries at that age and gave insights into students' life experiences (Appendix 10).

Bailey and Bizzaro (2017) described that shared themes are a sign of students finding a means for self-expression, which was also the case for this research (see Table 5 below).

Recurrent themes Year 8:			**Recurrent themes Year 9:**			**Recurrent themes Year 11:**		
friendship	(N=4)	13%	theft	(N=5)	19%	death	(N=6)	19%
nightmares	(N=2)	6%	drugs	(N=4)	15%	love	(N=4)	13%
suicide	(N=2)	6%	bullying	(N=3)	12%	loss	(N=4)	13%
old age	(N=2)	6%	robbery	(N=3)	12%	drugs	(N=3)	10%
revenge	(N=2)	6%	peer pressure	(N=2)	8%	nightmares	(N=3)	10%
			jealousy	(N=2)	8%	family	(N=3)	10%
			loneliness	(N=2)	8%	anxieties	(N=3)	10%
						partying	(N=2)	6%
						guilt	(N=2)	6%
Shared themes with other year groups:			drugs nightmares	(Class 9+11) (Class 8 + 11)				

Table 7. Showing the topics students chose for their CW narratives.

According to the literature, 'affect impacts topic choice in writing' (Brisk, 2011, p. 43). It was then concluded that the stronger the affect, the stronger the effect of the writing on the student. This was shown by a Year 11

girl, who wrote a story about the death of her grandfather. For the onset of her story, she used an L1 proverb from his tombstone. The title of her story also was in L1. When being made aware of the fact that she wrote for an L2 audience, she replied that it was *personally* meaningful to her, and that she would not change it. Similar to the student examples cited earlier, it shows again how emotional the student felt about her (L2) CW task. Even though the literature on L2 writing theory adopts the view that writing in L1 is not much different than writing in L2 (Matsuda, 2013), the example shows that differences in writing exist, especially where one language is thought or felt to be closer to the student's *voice*. The student wanted to include L1 because it rendered her L2 writing activity more meaningful. In turn, the concept of voice seems to be closely linked to L1, and is a concern for L2 writers' ability to transport their message in a way that is closest to their own thinking (Brisk, 2011). This is also highly reflective of Ivanic's (1998) report of the *writerly* self that mirrors the autobiographical self and 'the identity that people bring with them to their writing' (p. 24).

Herein also lies an important implication for the ESL teacher:

- Limiting the scope of the task to L2-only would possibly result in diminishing the student's creativity and meaning making process.
- Allowing L1 as part of the process of writing might be a necessary step when offering CW in an MFL context.

The bilingual switch was further reflected in student interviews.

Student group interviews

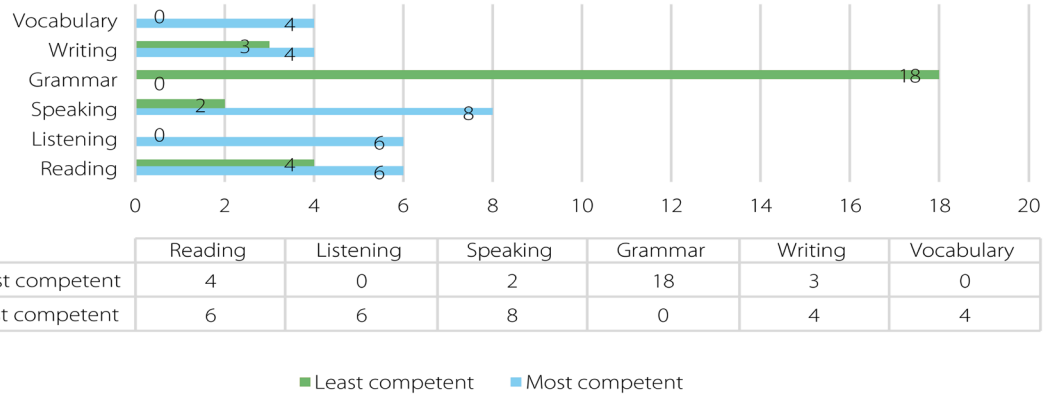
Student responses to their writing showed that most students started their CW task in L1 and then translated what they wanted to say to L2. Only 4 out of 15 students directly wrote in L2. According to Hyland (2007), one of the reasons for this could be that students sometimes cannot think in L2 because their minds constantly produce ideas and thoughts in L1. On the one hand, this means that limiting the scope of a CW task can help the student stay in L2 and produce written content based on his linguistic ability. On the other hand, the freedom of thought opens up a wide mental field with lots of ideas to communicate. The student might then notice the possible lack of vocabulary, which triggers translation as part of the process of writing, instead of direct L2 output (Brisk, 2011, p. 42). For that reason, L2 learners showed significantly higher levels of anxiety while writing in school than L1 writers (Eckstein & Ferris, 2018).

In summary, the content analysis showed that students used CW as a means of self-expression through narrating content that mattered to their lives in all three-year groups. The results showed the effectiveness of the intervention, since it demonstrated that students used CW for self-expression, as intended by research literature.

RQ 5: How did the attitude of students towards their writing change as a result of the intervention?

In the pre-intervention stage, I also wanted to find out how students rated their own writing in comparison to other ESL competencies. The surveys helped me to see whether the student views compared to mine. The survey was also used as a measure of comparison against the pre- and post-assessment test results. That way, I could compare students' self-report surveys on how they 'felt' about their learning against actual written results.

Pre-intervention survey data

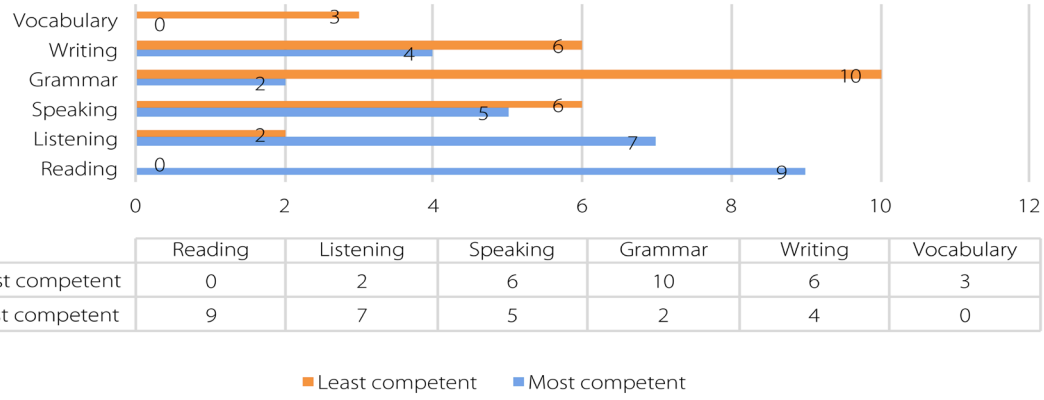


	Reading	Listening	Speaking	Grammar	Writing	Vocabulary
Least competent	4	0	2	18	3	0
Most competent	6	6	8	0	4	4

N=28 Table 8. Showing how students rate their MFL competencies and where they feel the most and the least competent in Year 9 before intervention.

After the extensive reading training, followed by the CW intervention, students were given the same survey. This time student answers showed the followed results:

Post-intervention survey data



	Reading	Listening	Speaking	Grammar	Writing	Vocabulary
Least competent	0	2	6	10	6	3
Most competent	9	7	5	2	4	0

N=27 Table 9. Showing how students rate their MFL competencies and where they feel the most and the least competent in Year 9 after intervention.

The graphs reflect the students' perceived strengths and weaknesses. The top 3 categories where students felt most competent *prior* to the intervention were: speaking, reading, and listening. After the intervention, the number of students feeling most competent with speaking decreased by one third (33,3%). Instead, there was a significant increase in feeling most competent in reading, followed by listening and speaking.

This shows that the training-in-reading strategy had the most impact on writing. Students felt they had now received enough input (reading) to produce output (writing), which directly connects to literature on strategy training (Trebits, 2016). Moreover, the two most favoured categories by students in the surveys represent more passive forms of learning. This underlines that written fluency is a long process, or in other words, it takes time before receptive knowledge changes to productive knowledge (Webb, 2009). This also shows that there is no such thing as a quick fix solution to the long-term process of writing, which is heavily dependent on other competencies that need to be mastered first. Student opinions also reflect that learning to write is a process, which underlines why studies of CW and composition both estimate the *process* in writing to be of essential focus, instead of the writing output (De Oliveira, Silva & Ortmeier-Hooper, 2013).

The survey further showed that grammar was viewed as problematic and worrisome by most students before *and* after the intervention. However, the feeling that students do not know grammar is not reflected in the actual written results (pre- and post-assessment). In an earlier section, it was shown that grammar mistakes only made up 25% of total writing mistakes in pre-assessment, in comparison to 23% in post-assessment.

Though students made relatively few mistakes in grammar, at the same time, they showed a great insecurity with grammar. This finding is highly representative of the Waldorf approach to MFL teaching, where the focus is on the communicative approach with only very few grammar lessons. Notably, students were only now being made aware of different MFL competencies through the survey, and consequently perceived *a lack* in grammar teaching, because it was the one category that corresponded the least with their MFL experience so far.

This also shows that student opinions change based on the focus of teaching, which is supported by research. According to the *four quadrants model* (Greber, Ziviani & Rodger, 2007), students move from *unconscious incompetence* to *conscious competence*. This theory has shown that the more children learn, the more they are in a place to identify their own learning needs. Likewise, student opinions also reflect the teacher's observation that writing is viewed as a difficult subject and receives less attention than other domains in MFL learning. It supports the rationale for this paper - that students need more teaching of skills in order to stimulate change towards their feelings on writing.

Year 9 student interview data

Year 9 students (N= 29) gave clear answers towards their writing improvement through CW. However,

student answers were very ambiguous towards writing improvement in relation to their assessment results (Appendix 8). 12 out of 29 students indicated that their writing had improved through CW. 11 out of 29 answers showed a discrepancy between written results and students' feelings.

Students' perception of their writing followed two trajectories: some students had the feeling that their writing had improved after the intervention and viewed their abilities *above* their written assessment results. In this case, CW fostered student self-esteem in writing (Appendix 8). On the other hand, some students felt that their assessment results were *below* their actual abilities, as shown in the comments below:

> *S1: According to your records I improved. I just don't really have the* ***feeling.***
>
> *S15: According to the records, my writing has improved. I can totally see that, but I can't* ***feel*** *it.*

Only 2 out of 29 students indicated a complete match between assessment results and their *feeling* toward writing. When asked what part of their writing had improved, student answers ranged from *the feeling* for the language (S14, S27), to *more vocabulary* (S15, S25), *better grammar* (S24), and *text length* (S23) (Appendix 8). Most students commented positively on *the flow of writing* (Appendices 8, 9). Six students answered that their *liking* of the method had helped them improve, which directly relates to literature showing how affect influences writing improvement (Gonca,2016).

Year 11 student interview data

In contrast, most Year 11 students reported improvement in their writingdue to the intervention. 7 out of 8 students interviewed in Year 11 (N=8) said their writing had improved. Only one student said he did not know for sure (Appendix 9). However, student answers about improvement were very similar to Year 9. Answers ranged from a *better feeling* (S1) to *longer texts* (S3), to *feeling more secure* in writing (S4). Asking students how their writing had improved through the intervention, 5 out of 8 students used words hinting at the domain of *ownership*. The wording 'my own' was used most frequently when asked how their writing had improved (Appendix 9).

Moreover, 5 out of 8 students reported that reading had helped their writing improvement. One student stated: 'That way I had an idea of how to write' (Appendix 9, S1). More strategies for writing improvement cited in student interviews were:

- **grammar lessons**
- **exercises on word order**
- **extended practice**
- **exam practice**
- **watching English television**

Next to talking to students personally after the intervention, I also asked them to fill out an anonymous survey at the end of the intervention.

Student surveys

In Year 9, survey answers showed that most students (62%) would prefer CW over the teaching of composition (38%).

What do you prefer?

CW	Composition
N=18	N= 11
62 %	38 %

Table 10. Showing students' preference in L2/ESL writing in Year 9.

The findings show that the majority of students responded overly positive to CW. Eckstein and Ferris' (2018) explication of composition can serve as an interpretation for this finding. They write that 'composition requires a high degree of form-focused instruction, preferably a high linguistic competence such as knowledge of vocabulary and metalinguistic explanations of mistakes' (p. 139). For that reason, L2 writers are afraid of error penalization and have significantly higher levels of language anxiety. Composition tasks may, therefore, frustrate students, while CW tasks tackle the problem of anxiety by taking the pressure for correct writing away from the students.

Student observation data

The lesson observations further underlined this finding, especially where they relate to students with learning disabilities. A Year 9 boy, who had shown highly problematic behaviour with all members of staff, became very engaged during CW (Appendix 6). Similarly, it was observed that students who would be classified as *weak* learners showed high levels of engagement with the CW task and even stayed after class to finish their work. This demonstrates that the use of CW is particularly fit for inclusive ESL settings and ties back to the literature, describing CW as a method *fit for all* (Manery, 2015; Praitis, 2006; Viana & Zyngier, 2019). In sum, the findings from student interviews and surveys showed that students' self-perception towards their writing changed as a result of the intervention, as they felt reassured and more positive towards their writing. It was further observed that CW tasks fostered writing motivation, helped bring out self-expression skills, and reduced language anxiety (Appendix 6).

Implications

After data collection with the results shown, I would now modify the teaching of CW for future use. For one, there needs to be a modification in the task design. Since Year 9 had to read a whole novel, it was impossible to execute the intervention *after* the reading. In Years 8 and 11, the readings were finished *before* intervention. This would allow for an atmosphere where students could focus solely on writing, without the distraction of reading assignments yet to be completed. In the future, I would use CW only after the teaching of reading. In practice, it did not seem effective to use CW as a break away from *normal teaching*. Instead, CW needs its own place in the curriculum.

Also, I would make more conscious use of L1 during future use of CW. Before the intervention, I had ambiguous feelings towards the use of L1 in the writing process. However, as findings have demonstrated, CW is very much connected with the students' mother tongue and needs a general openness of the language teacher towards the use of L1 in the classroom. In Waldorf schools this may be difficult, as a monolingual approach is the favoured method, and changes may have to be communicated with colleagues and parents.

Findings further implied that the conscious use of L1 showed itself to be one of the most effective CW teaching strategies for this research. Since the literature has also shown a positive transfer from L1 to L2 and vice versa, there needs to be no worrying about students writing in L2-only. As Brisk (2011) confirms, 'L2 writing development should always be embedded in the context of bilingualism' (p. 53). This finding represents a much undervalued strategy in the research literature on CW in an ESL context.

There are other important implications that can be deducted from the present study. They not only relate to the future use of CW in my own classroom, but also give indication for future research concerning aspects that need closer examination. They are:

- Deepening of the **reading-writing connection** within the existing CW literature, especially in relation to input-output theories of learning.
- Adapting the **task design** by making CW a teaching unit on its own, apart from the teaching of other forms of writing.
- Embedding CW in the **curriculum design,** and allowing a space and time for it in the school year.
- More **teacher awareness** that the time and space aspects will change the style of the classroom completely, leading to a **role change** of the teacher.
- Accounting for **gender differences** by offering a wide choice of writing topics and materials to stimulate writing.
- Making **L1 use** a pedagogic tool in the writing process, as the most overlooked feature in the research literature on CW in MFL/ESL classrooms.

Most importantly, findings indicate, that we (as teachers) constantly underestimate the students' urge to write. All throughout this research, students have taught me that there is a growth pattern to writing, even with the weakest writers. The method of CW is much more about learning as a teacher than it is about teaching. It is about ways to learn to let go and become familiar with creative processes that extent beyond our control in the classroom, if we let it happen and give the space for it.

Conclusion

Before starting this research, I had no ready argument to object to the claim that learning to read and write is based on innate abilities, as often propagated by Waldorf literature (Ward, 2013) and other sources (see Crain & Thornton, 1998, for a more complex defence of this view). At some point of the research, and especially through observing students who struggle with their writing, I had a shifting sense of how important I deemed CW for the ESL classroom. I would say that students with learning disabilities profited the most from the CW intervention, and CW enabled me to help guide those students better through their MFL writing experience.

Following the intervention, I think that CW in ESL is especially important in combination with reading. This makes the question whether CW deserves a place in the ESL classroom an easy one to answer. Yes. CW methodology further shows a great overlap with the Waldorf MFL approach. What it takes then are teachers willing to leave the traditional path. This is not to argue that CW should be a particular feature of the ESL Waldorf classroom 'only', but quite generally deserves a place in MFL teaching. What becomes of CW in the future will depend upon the general openness of any (language) teacher.

Concerning strategies to foster writing improvement, it is of importance to notice that the literature may describe practical *incentives*, but that theory does not necessarily tell us the pitfalls of practice and cannot account for individual teaching settings. It is only through a stand to practitioner research as a way of life-long learning, and as a commitment by the teacher to learn from their students as much as they learn from us, that teaching practices can be improved in the long run. To know whether or not a method is useful, we need to try it and find professional means to evaluate it. By taking *action* and stimulating a research process with and through the students, the gains were twofold - empowering students in their learning, and giving me more ownership of my teaching. I hope I could show through detailed analysis that my findings contribute to a much wider field of knowledge. In view of the literature, CW is part of yet a much larger debate and a much bigger picture. Creativity is not only a trend or prospect that currently shapes education, but it is still the underlying feature of any kind of learning. Where a creative thought is sparked, learning takes place. The possible benefits CW holds in the teaching of foreign languages, and which connections it will make with other forms of learning, are still an open field.

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APPENDIX 1 – Teacher Interview 1 Transcript

Semi-structured interview with an ESL elementary school teacher/ classteacher

Interview conducted in English

R: Do you use creative writing in your lessons? If so, how?

T: I ask myself what tools do students need. Do they need more adjectives or more verbs? And then I give them writing tasks that have this structure come out… So, I do the same as the German teacher. My experience is that it is best if I teach writing bilingually. I can teach students grammar in English better than in German because the children naturally use their mother tongue for writing… they don't think about it.. but in foreign language writing… students actually need to understand the structure of a sentence before they are able to write. I offer students grammar in German and they are not interested in class 5 because they think,Why?' - I offer them grammar in English and they get it. The weak students write about 3 sentences on their own a week. The strong students are able to write their own stories.

R: Do you use creative writing in your 5th grade English class that you are teaching at the moment ? How does that work out?

T: My problem is that I teach in 4-week periods. If I wanted to concentrate on writing only… it's complicated because the kids really are in two different worlds based on their abilites. One group can only write 3 sentences, whereas the strong students can already write a little story… so I feel stuck with them at the moment … teaching grammar in their mother tongue is very difficult… At the moment I am doing grammar with them in English and I am reading a book with them. And I gave them a creative writing task along with the book… then I had them share their work with each other, individual children shared their stories with the children who are below their reading and writing level… it's like they are their own teachers.

It's totally weird what I have observed during this task… children who have trouble writing in German, were actually better in writing short English sentences. Why? It's because they were taught how to write in the foreign language based on structure and in German they are totally lost because they don't understand the grammatical system of their own language. Formal learning of grammar structures in ESL actually helped them write …
And then there are those students who can read and write in English on a low level - but they can- they actually can't read and write in their mother tongue nor in a third language, like Russian. And that's because students learned writing structures in English or rules on how to write by heart-
There are students who read a lot but they don't have good spelling at all… they read tons and they still have a bad spelling habit. And then you have students who are worried about their spelling and those who aren't… and those who aren't worried… they just write anything in any language… so yes, it goes back to anxieties and strategy training. If a student can generally write… then he can do composition or creative writing well because he is not afraid to write and he has the ability to write… basically creative writing is based on ability…

R: What do you use creative writing for in class? Have you encountered any difficulties?

T: For writing A LOT, so students can improve their writing. But my students, even the good ones, always need a list of words, or a list of vocabulary to use at that stage of their writing ability… sometimes I give words to them spontaneously, sometimes they learn a list of words by heart and then write… if kids watch their spelling, however, it hinders them in their writing. It's tricky. The problem is that watching their spelling makes them stop altogether, because they then have a feeling like they can't do it because it's not their mother language. So with ESL writing, there are several problems. They don't know enough vocabulary, then they start worrying about it, then they might help each other, get distracted, maybe answer the question of another pupil but then they can't react as quickly because they are in a creative process… and creative processes take time. Of course writing is a difficult situation for them because they have to find a solution on paper . Some kids just stop at that point because they don't know,a word' and they can't help themselves and then there are others, who just write a different word because they have gained enough knowledge and they are flexible enough. But it's the same in German so at that point, writing in their mother tongue and writing in ESL causes the students to have the same problems at that age. Some kids are hindered because they are so worried about not finding the right word in English… and those are the kind of kids that I give word lists to. But generally all writing I do in class 5 is creative writing… is forming sentences…

R: How do your students react to creative writing in class 5?

T: My kids really like it.

R: The majority like it?

T: I have the feeling they ALL like it. But as I said, some need help through word lists. It makes them feel secure and then they all love it.

APPENDIX 2 – Teacher Interview 2 Transcript – German/English translation

Semi-structured interview with an elementary class teacher, German teacher

R= Researcher

T= Teacher

R: Benutzt du kreatives Schreiben im Unterricht ?
R: Do you use creative writing in your classes?

T: Gelegentlich ja, besonders in der 5. Klasse. Die Schüler schreiben echt wie wild drauf los, aber man muss echt aufpassen, denn in dem Alter prägen sich Fehler stark ein.
T: On occasion, especially in class 5. Students really start writing like crazy at that age when you give them a task like that but you have to be careful. At that age, mistakes in writing really brand on the memory.
T: Es gibt eine Gefahr. Es können sich Fehler in der Rechtschreibung einschleifen, besonders wenn sie es immer wieder schreiben. Das ist sehr zeitintensiv zu korrigieren.
T: There is a risk in that. Students may get used to their own wrong spelling, especially if they write it again and again. It is too time-consuming to correct it all.

R: Wie hilft dir das kreative Schreiben in der Grundschule?
R: How does creative writing help your teaching in the lower school?

T: Die Inhalte werden anders verinnerlicht.
T: The lesson content is memorized differently.
T: Ausserdem ist die Hürde niedriger auf Texte zuzugehen.
T: There is less of a barrier when working with new texts.

R: Hast du beobachtet, dass sich Kinder durch kreatives Schreiben generell im Schreiben verbessert haben?
R: Have you observed that student writing has improved through the use of creative writing?

T: Ich habe einzelne Kinder, die sich stilmäßig ausgedrückt haben und mit Texten gespielt haben… richtig künstlerisch. Ihr Selbstausdruck hat sich verbessert.
T: I have some students who really expressed themselves stilistically and who played around with the texts. Their self-expression really improved.
T: Ich erinnere mich an eine Stunde…ich hatte eine Schülerin und sie hat immer geschrieben,und dann…, und dann…' Das war echt nervig. Ich habe ihren Text dann laut vorgelesen . Es hatte echt einen Lerneffekt für sie und die anderen Schüler, weil sie sich selbst hören konnte.
T: I remember one time… I had one student who always wrote„…and then this, and then this…' That could be really nerve-racking. I read her text out loud and it had a learning effect on her and the other kids, since she could actually hear her own text.

R: Und die Rechtschreibung?
R: And spelling?

T: Ich habe Keine Indizien dafür, dass sich die Rechtschreibung verbessert hat. Im Gegenteil man muss sehr aufpassen mit dem kreativen Schreiben in der Unterstufe. Ich benutze es daher nicht so oft mit den Kleinen, da die Schüler sich Fehler einprägen. Wenn man ein Wort so und so oft selbst geschrieben hat und falsch geschrieben hat, prägt es sich ein und ich korrigiere ja die Texte nicht.
T: I have no indication that their spelling improved. On the opposite, if you use creative writing too much in the lower school, you have to really be careful. That's why I don't use it so much with younger students because they memorize their own wrong spelling. If you write a word in the wrong way many times over, you remember it that way since I don't correct their creative writing texts.

APPENDIX 3 – Teacher Interview Transcript 3 – German/English

Semi-structured interview with German, history and social studies teacher

R: Was sind deine Erfahrungen mit dem Kreativen Schreiben und in welchen Klassen
R: What are your experiences with creative writing and in which class?

T: Der Schwerpunkt im kreativen Schreiben liegt bei mir in der 10. Klasse… lyrische Texte, Poetik… als Einführung. Meine Methode ist, das Kreative Schreiben zu nutzen um in Themen einzuführen, damit die Schüler erst mal los machen, erst mal selbst Erfahrungen machen, weniger vom analytischen herzukommen…

T: I mainly use creative writing in class 10… lyrical texts, poems, as an introduction. My method is that I use CW to introduce a new content, so that students can just‚jump start' and have experiences without analyzing things too much…

T: Szenisches Schreiben in Klasse 12, ein eigenes Theaterstück schreiben. Da benutze ich kreatives Schreiben als Kaltstart, nicht analytisch vorbereitet, nicht erst nachdenken, dann wirds am besten.

T: Writing theatrical scenes in class 12, writing their own play. I use CW as a coldstart into the topic. Students are not prepared analytically, not too much thinking about it… then writing turns out best.

T: Essays schreiben in Klasse 10… aber das ist kein Kreatives Schreiben, oder?

T: Essay writing in class 10… but that is not creative writing, is it?

T: Einen Zeitungsartikel schreiben in Klasse 10? Ehrlich gesagt, ich bin mich nicht 100% sicher, wo kreatives Schreiben anfängt und wo man von Aufsatz schreiben spricht.

T: Writing a newspaper article in class 10? Honestly speaking, I am not 100% sure, where creative writing begins, and when it is purely composition.

T: Ich mache auch geführtes Kreatives Schreiben als Prüfungsvorbereitung. Es kommt ja in der Realschulprüfung vor.

T: I also teach guided creative writing as GCSC exam preparation.

T: Einmal habe ich auch sehr schöne Sachen bekommen, als ich im Sabbatical war und die Schüler selbtständige Texte schreiben sollten.

T: Once, I received really pretty creative writing texts from students, when I was on my sabbatical and mostly had students work on their own.

T: In der 9. Klasse sehe ich kreatives Schreiben grundsätzlich als Problem, da die 9.Klässler viel zu wenig Unterricht haben. Dann lese ich lieber Klassiker.

T: I see Year 9 as a difficult year to do creative writing, since students have only very few German lessons in Year 9. I then prefer to read classics.

T: Ich benutzte Kreatives Schreiben auch im Geschichtsunterricht, zum Beispiel, wenn wir nach Polen fahren, Thema Holocaust. Dann lasse ich die Schüler sich alleine durch die Stadt Krakau bewegen und dabei schreiben sie Geschichten zu Familien, wie das Leben damals war. Ich mache ein paar historische Vorgaben, aber ansonsten darf die Geschichte ganz frei erfunden sein. In Polen habe ich das kreative Schreiben am wirksamsten erlebt, da sie in der Stadt und den Straßen alles anschaulich vor sich hatten. Das ist‚ne tolle Sache, weil man diesen Ortswechsel hat und die Schüler angeregt sind.

T: I use creative writing in my history lessons in Year 9, for example, when teaching the Holocaust and we go on our trip to Poland. I let students walk on their own through the city of Krakov and have them write stories on families that once lived there. I only give them a few historical details to include. The rest of the story can be completely free. I have experienced creative writing to be most effective on our school trips, because walking around in town really makes you‚see' things in a different way that you can then write. It's a great thing. A change of place can be an inspiration to students.

T: Aber meine grundsätzliche Erfahrung mit Kreativem Schreiben ist, wenn du vorher zu viel analysierst und Struktur vorgibst, dann wird es nichts.

T: Principally speaking, if you analyse language and structure too much before writing, creative writing doesn't work.

T: Ich habe beobachtet an den Schülern, dass die Schreiblust in den letzten Jahren nachgelassen hat. Deswegen mache ich jetzt eine Längenvorgabe von 1- 2 Seiten pro Schüler, damit die Schüler merken es geht um Textproduktion.

T: I have observed that the joy of writing has gone down over the past few years. That's why I now tell students an approximate length of 1-2 pages, so that they know it's also about text‚production'.

T: Ich mache Kreatives Schreiben auch nur in Einzelarbeit, nie Gruppen oder Partnerarbeit. Alles andere ist Zeitverschwendung.

T: I only do creative writing as an individual task, never in groups or with a partner. Otherwise it's a waste of time.

T: Meine andere wichtige Erkenntnis ist, keine analytischen Vorgaben zu geben, sondern lieber nur eine kleine Einführung in ein Thema und den Schülern Ideen geben, statt Struktur. Dann gelingt das Schreiben am besten.

T: As to my best knowledge, it is best to give students as little analytical prescriptions before writing as possible. I prefer to only give very brief introductions of a new topic. Giving students ideas, instead of structures makes for successful writing.

T: Die beste Methode des Kreativen Schreibens ist das‚automatische Schreiben'.

T: The best creative writing method is‚automatic writing'.

T: Es hilft aber auch den Schülern Stimmungen vorzugeben oder Farben oder ein Bild. Ich benutze dazu gern Kafka's Tuschezeichnungen. Kreatives Schreiben ist toll in Kombination mit graphischen Elementen.

T: But it also helps to give students a certain atmosphere to write about, certain colors or a certain pictures. I like to use Kafka's black and white drawings. Creative writing is great in combination with graphic elements to include.

T: Es braucht emotionale Trigger.

T: It (CW) needs emotional trigger.

R: Hast du festgestellt, ob sich durch das Kreative Schreiben das Schreiben der Schüler verbessert hat? Wenn ja, wie?
R: Did the writing of students improve because of the teaching of creative writing? If so, how?

T: Also, ich habe eine Wirksamkeit festgestellt beim Aufsätze schreiben. Die Schüler haben wesentlich längere Texte geschrieben, wenn man sie durch Kreatives Schreiben schon vorher angewärmt hatte.

T: I noticed that creative writing was effective during composition tasks. Students generally wrote longer texts after the creative writing units.

T: Die Rechtschreibung… Weiss ich nicht. Ich mache keine Rechtschreibkorrektur, außer bei Texten, die dann für die Aufführung verwendet werden beim Theater. Ich kommentiere nur zum Inhalt von Texten als Feedback an die Schüler. Bei lyrischen Texten wie Gedichten mache ich gar keine Korrekturen.

T: Spelling… I don't know. I don't correct spelling, except for texts that are used for the public, like for theatre plays. I only comment on content of texts as a feedback to the student. With poems, I do no corrections at all.

R: Wie gibst du dann ein Feedback an die Schüler?
R: How do you give feedback to students during creative writing?

T: Die Schüler geben ihren Mitschülern ein Feedback. Das mache ich ganz oft. Ich nutze auch immer wieder die Aufsatzkonferenz beim Aufsatz schreiben, zum Beispiel. Das heisst, ich gebe den Schülern einen Schreibauftrag und die Schüler sprechen dann über die Umsetzung von diesem Auftrag mit ihren Mitschülern. Dann schreiben sie zuhause oder in der Schule. Sie bilden ausserdem Gruppen und korrigieren sich gegenseitig. So mache ich das auch beim kreativen Schreiben.

T: Students do peer feedback. I do that very often. I also use ‚writer's conference' as a method in composition writing. It means that I give the students a writing task and then they talk about how they will do it, how they will structure their writing. Then, I let them write at home or in class. Students form little groups and correct each others' work. That's also what I do with creative writing.

R: Was findest du sonst noch wichtig zu dem Thema?
R: What else do you find important concerning the topic?

T: Was die Länge betrifft…ich analysiere nicht warum Schüler weniger schreiben als früher. Generell gebe ich ihnen jetzt halt vor wieviel sie schreiben müssen. Ich sage ihnen, dass wenig zu schreiben nur wie eine Art Notbremse ist, weil sie sollen ja auch ‚frei' schreiben. Ein Drittel der Klasse schreibt nur sehr wenig. Aber es geht ja auch darum, schreiben zu trainieren. Bestimme Mengen zu produzieren. Wir schreiben nicht nur aus Spass an der Sache. Das ist also meine Lösung… ist zwar auch keine schöne Sache das so zu machen, aber das ist so…und es hat auch ganz ordentlich was bewirkt. Die Schüler schreiben jetzt auch länger, weil sie wissen, dass das die Erwartung ist. Das ist zumindest bei Aufsätzen so. Wenn man es ganz frei lässt, schreiben sie wenig. Zu wenig. Also geben ich es vor und dann schreiben sie beim Kreativen Schreiben mehr und bei Aufsätzen auch. Ausser, wenn ich Gedichte schreibe beim Kreativen Schreiben- dann gebe ich natürlich keine Länge vor, außer bei Haikus (lacht).

T: Concerning text length…I don't analyse why students write less today. I just ‚make' them write by including the approximate length into the task. I tell students that I only accept little text as a sort of ‚emergency', because the goal is free writing. One third of a class of 32 students usually writes very little. But writing is also about training students to write. To produce a certain length. It's not just writing for fun. That's my solution… it's not nice to force students to write in that way but that's just what I do…and it has had a great effect. Now, they do write longer texts , also in composition, if they know the expectation. If you give students too much freedom in free writing, they write too little. So I tell them how much and then they generally write more, no matter if it is a creative writing or composition task. Except with poems… of course I don't tell students how long their poem is supposed to be, except with Haikus (laughs).

APPENDIX 4 – Teacher Interview 4 Transcript - English Translation

Semi-structured interview with a German teacher. Mrs X teaches secondary school Years 8-12, A-Level exam courses as well as teacher training courses

R: How do you use creative writing and in which year groups?

T: It only makes sense to me to slowly introduce creative writing in Year 8… very slowly. I don't teach Year 8 at the moment and mostly work with older students… but my main use for it is with Year 11 and 12… because those students have a much higher linguistic competency. I liked using creative writing in Year 9 before… especially because it helps boys at that age who have difficulties with language… they hardly find into a flow of writing, their intuitive use of language is different.. it's just not a common form of self-expression for boys… so, creative writing can help and be an inspiration to describe what is going on inside of you… and foster language competency.

R: Do you use creative writing in combination with special content units or how do you use it?

T: It depends on how you define creative writing… where does it start and where does it end? Is a literary interpretation part of creative writing- it depends on how wide or narrow you view it. From a wider perspective, it would be CW because it is a creative, inner process to work with language but with a clear structure… creative writing as a form of guided creative writing with clear structures, I really like to use in class 9 and 10, especially to get the students to take on a different role, or perspective on life and to be empathetic with a literary character from a book. The freest form of creative writing, like writing with picture prompts and writing in a really free way without spelling that matters or without a real ‚goal'… I mean just as a form of self-expression, in order to reach deeper levels of conscience… I would use in class 12. I like to use it as a warm-up, when the lesson begins, also as a review of what was said before… so-to-speak as a retrieving of information that is lost in memory due to hobbies, video games, TV, and all other subject content. Creative writing used in that way is completely free. In class 9 that is not very easy because students at that age don't fully comprehend yet that all learning is not for the teacher who asks them to perform a task, but for themselves as a form of self-expression. In Year 9 it is actually too early. In Year 10 creative writing really starts that you can use this method as a teacher. But you can only use it, if you practice it and train students in CW. What is important is that it is always a ‚free' process- if students have no ideas on what to write, then that's okay for me… I then always try that at least 3 students read their works out loud, but without any sort of commenting on my part or other students.

R: Let me go back to what you said before… you are the first to comment on gender differences in writing. I found some of it in the literature- can you comment on this topic a little more?

T: I actually have boys and girls who don't like to write or who refuse to write. There are different reasons for that. For one, writing seems ‚too sudden' for some students and they don't know what to write, so spontaneous writing is difficult… And another reason why students don't like to write is that they mistrust the concept of school or the teacher and cannot comprehend that in creative writing, they are not assessed in any sort of way. It's not about fulfilling teacher's expectations. So, students feel insecure when they are asked to use creative writing … writing generally is something that confronts people with inner conflicts that we are not aware of and that may come out, if we bring our thoughts and feelings on paper…So some students avoid writing for this reason. I have observed this behavior of ‚refusing' to write with boys and girls. However, what I am about to say now is not valid scientifically or a proven fact, it's just my own experience… but I observe more and more boys these days that have a really hard time to use language as a form of expression. There is a whole number of boys who do not write very lengthy texts. Girls on the other hand are not necessarily the better writers because they write more… but girls seem to have more of a natural flow of writing… even to the point where they don't stay on task. I have one girl in my class, for example, and whatever she writes always ends up being a love story. With girls it's like that a lot… they write love stories, animal stories and what they write is always dramatic and reads like a soap opera. They often miss the actual task. Boys have a tendency to stay on target but with fewer words.. Therefore, there are advantages and disadvantages in boy and girl writing. Girls do a lot of ‚bla bla…' in writing but hey, that is exactly what creative writing in the early years is for… to open up their minds to language. For this opening to take place, it is important to take on a non-judgemental role as a teacher. The only thing you can say as a creative writing teacher are comments based on observations, like ‚Oh, you let yourself be inspired to write a love story! Only positive comments allowed. Sometimes you also have students who only write one word… you can then say ‚Oh, this is a really important word for you!' Just because people don't write much, does not mean that they were not thinking hard…

R: You mention an important point that I also read in the research literature… it's giving students time to think…

T: In creative writing, I personally try to create spaces that do not have the intention to reach a certain educational goal … through assessment in order to compare results, like in a classical classroom context… but I try to open up a language space and a space of awareness. I would also make a difference between creative writing and creative interpreting of a text, because creative writing is an open process, that follows the same patterns as creating art. It's very different from essay writing… creative writing is meant to be completely free. It may have some structures of course but it also needs a lot of open spaces to fill with my own imagination, thoughts or experience… it's an art form. And that's why I think it is really important to make that division for students, to tell them… here is a space of creative ‚free' writing and here is a space, where you can also use creative means but where you need to be somewhat logical in your structure and content. The latter can be assessed. Creative writing through a certain writing prompt or emotional trigger cannot be assessed because it is based on something that we feel, on something ‚inside of us', something subjective, not something objective… and therefore cannot be assessed. For example, Year 9 students often make logic mistakes, when you give them creative writing tasks based on a story line, in a novel. It then turns out that an old man who is sick, all of a sudden transforms into someone else… which changes the logic of the text, instead of describing what a character looks like on the inside, how he feels and acts. As I said, creative writing is also based on the maturity level of students.

R: Isn't it difficult for students to understand the concept of guided creative writing and ‚free' creative writing in practice?

T: No. They just need to understand when to use what. I do it with a picture. I tell them with creative writing it's like this: here is a place where you can go outside, smell, taste and hear things….now write what comes to your ‚senses'. Now turn this into a poem. That's creative writing. And then the student can write whatever he/she wants because I cannot ‚assess' their 5 senses… So they understand what ‚free' creative writing is and when to use the more structured form.
For ‚guided creative writing' it is important to make a collection of structural elements with the students, that are important for the writing and that need to be in the text like character, style, choice of language, plot, logic of plot… those are the elements that can be assessed in writing. The most important thing is that the student understands beforehand what he is being assessed for. However, if I let students write completely free, then the purpose is that they reach deeper levels of awareness… I don't know if they do but I hope so… and students then describe their innermost thoughts on paper. Those things are out of any assessment range. For example, if I collect student folders and we have done ‚free creative writing' before, then I tell to only turn in their works if they want me to read them or to comment on them, otherwise it is not necessary to include them in the folder. Likewise, students can stick their personal texts into an envelope that says ‚no reading, please' and then, I don't. If it's a text on childhood, for example.

R: The literature that I consulted on CW talked about class set up…

T: Yeeeeesssss,… I constantly change the set up! I let students leave the classroom. I let them go outside to go on a walk and to ‚free write' about what they see, hear, and smell. I set a time with students when we meet again. If you do that a lot, students use their classtime more wisely.

R: How about partner or group work in creative writing?

T: Generally, I only use creative writing as individual task. I have never used it as a partner or group work. However, I use a lot of peer feedback after writing. I find that very important because as a teacher I am always in the role of the ‚assessor', even if I may deny it or may not be aware of it. Peer groups are important for reading each others' texts. Students may not trust me enough with it in my role as a teacher. I can only show them that I am serious about their work and that they can trust me, if I don't always read their texts but give them time for writing nonetheless.

R: Do you have anything else to say about the topic?

T: If you look at all centralised exams like A-Level or GCSE, you will find that spelling is not so important but content. Content gets you the most points.

If you have dyslexia as a student and you get your paper back full of red ink or let's say green ink, then you simply stop writing… for those students creative writing is extremely important. How do those students in particular learn to write for exams, without stress, if we do not give them the space for it, away from permanent assessment? For that reason, creative writing takes on a very important role in the teaching of writing. I would always value the joy of writing and the joy of self-expression more as a teacher than spelling.

R: Did you experience difficulties in the use of creative writing?

T: Yes, oh yes. Students who refuse to write because they are ashamed of their own writing. Anxiety is a very big issue. I also find it difficult when a student writes completely off the task and you need to be the‚bad teacher' and tell them… even though their perception is very different. The age group of Year 9 and Year 10, I find very difficult for creative writing. Based on my experience, students don't have the ability yet to distance themselves enough from their texts… in order to be able to speak about them. Most girls that age would say‚my peer group or my friends really liked my text, why don't you?' In class 11 and 12, students have more maturity. In class 9 and 10, it's important to give students a certain feeling about their text, so that they feel re-assured in their writing.

APPENDIX 5 – Teacher Interview 5 Transcript - English translation

Semi-structured interview with an art and German as a second language (DAF) teacher

R: How do you use creative writing in your classes and in which grades?

T: In art, in classes 8, 9, 10, for picture descriptions. I usually use it as a warm-up for a new topic.
T: I also use ‚automatic writing' as a method of creative writing. When students are done writing a page or so, I stop them and I have them highlight the most important words from their own texts, then I have them write poems with these words.
T: I really use creative writing to collect the students first impression on something, to trigger their own associations with a topic. In art, it is always a question on how I personally relate to a picture.
T: Also, in class 12 I use it in the teaching of architecture. Students usually feel stressed at this time of the year and then creative writing at the beginning of class helps them to get rid of things they have on their minds. Creative writing means being active. Students have a lot of anxieties and writing is putting them into action… that is a way to confront their own fears. Anxieties make you freeze and when you write, it helps you to move again because you are active on the inside.
T: When we go on art trips to Italy, I also have students keep a travel journal as a form of creative writing. I want them to write down their own thoughts.

R: Do students appreciate this method? What are your experiences?

T: I only got very little feedback from students over the years. I don't know. But I do see them writing. Also, I believe that you can only live your own educational standards by showing students how to do it… so I also keep my own travel journal and I write. I find that very important. I sketch and I write at the same time as I expect students to sketch and write. I believe that writing teaches the students ‚I can organize my world'. On occasion, I also share my work with students on the trip.

R: Have you encountered any difficulties in students' creative writing?

T: (thinks)… students who are highly sensitive or highly talented usually experience creative writing as a great help to extress their thoughts. That is also my experience with my own daughters. Highly sensitive students have lots of imaginary power. Creative writing is an outlet for them to express themselves. Introverted students can finally share their inner richness, when it comes to free writing… because otherwise they don't… they just sit in class and don't express themselves to the public, especially not in a foreign language. I have observed that creative writing works well individually or with a partner.

R: You are also the class teacher of Year 9-why is writing so difficult in that year group?

T: I think many students have a bad self-perception of themselves at that age. They are very critical of themselves at that age. They have many anxieties. It's the height of puberty. They don't have the will power yet to really go after the things they want at that age… and they show a lot of avoidance tendencies!

R: Do you think that avoiding to write has to do with Waldorf pedagogy?

T: Most definitely, yes, because in our school they avoid to turn in work… they just don't… and you can't force them. You can ‚only' give them feedback but you cannot ‚punish' them by giving them bad grades. So, eventually, a school culture establishes itself in which ‚avoidance' becomes part of everyday life for some kids… It's a specific problem in the Waldorf school.

R: Why do students avoid writing? What do you think?

T: I see writing as the‚highest ability', also the most difficult, in schooling. Many students have problems with it. Writing is an imprint of your own maturity level. It shows that you have maturity if you try to find your own place to work at school in order to write… it takes self-regulation skills for students to write. Individual writing is directly linked to the psychological development… as I said the maturity level of students.

R: Do you want to say anything else about the topic? Maybe where you see difficulties with the method?

T: I think that the use of creative writing depends a lot on your teacher training. In German as a second language, it is an often used method and it forms part of your teacher training. It formed a large part of my own training and I enjoyed it. In the Waldorf training, creative writing was not part of the curriculum. That's a pity.

APPENDIX 6 – Student Observation Data

The observation took place during classtime on 26 March, 2019, in class 9

The students were given a creative writing task at the beginning of the lesson. The task was based on the novel ‚Holes' by Louis Sachar. The task was to invent another imaginary character that lives in the same tent with the main character from the book. Students had to invent a family history, physical description, character description and reasons why he/she was at camp. The work could be individual or with a partner.

The classroom was set up in 4 group tables with circa 4 students per table, except for one student who did not want to work with the others and had an extra table close to the teacher's desk (N=16).

After handing out the task, it was observed that the noise level in the classroom increased. When letting students choose to write alone or with a partner, it prompted a lot of conversing in L1.

There was a lot of sharing of ideas but it all took place in L1, lots of giggles.

Group Table 1 (across from the teacher's desk), arguing about what to write

S1: I want to be Joe in the story.
S2: No, I am Joe. That's a cool name.
S3: Waht did you guys say?
S4: I want the kid to be a kid terrorist in a bootcamp…
S1: Oh la la!
(2 min later students find a compromise)
S1: Ok, I'm Joe and I'm here with my 2 friends Joe and and Joe. (now speaking to S3) That way you can be part of our story, too.

In order to silence students a bit and to cut off conversations, classical music was put on in order to calm students down and to aid concentration. This method is based on a previous training in suggestopaedia.

Group Table 2 (teacher listening in to the conversation, taking notes)

S5: I'm clapping out of your group! I'm not doing a bank robbery.
S6: I will write that my parents are dead.
S5: Hold on a second, let me write.

We are 10 minutes into the task and I mostly see students talking, instead of writing.

Call from Group Table 3

S7: Miss, what is expect (erwarten) in English?

Single Table (most surprising observation)

A student, who is very introverted, hardly engages in class and often refuses work, immediately started writing after handing out the task. After 10 minutes of classtime, he already has approximately 10 sentences written (glancing over his sheet). He now raises his hand.

S8: (he now asks) Miss, how do you say uninterested (desinterresiert) in English?
T: It's‚unintestested' or you can use‚indifferent'.

The student now takes a dictionary, keeps on working on his own, thinks, pauses, writes, seemingly concentrated.

Group Table 4

S9: (to another student): What does‚car accident' mean?
S10: (to teacher): Can I say‚caught by the police'? Is is correct English?
S8: calls out loud from his separate table across the room: Miss, how do you say‚they said' (sie sagten) in English?

Meanwhile, S1 helps S2 write his story.
S6: only stares into the air, then takes a dictionary, keeps on staring
S5: writes
S7: writes
S8: writes
S9: writes

The music helps the writing atmosphere. 20 minutes into the task, most students are writing.

S2, who could be described as a weak student, now comes to the teacher's desk and seems to have many questions at the same time, his thinking is faster than he is able to write, though he does not use a dictionary, instead tries to use the teacher as his personal dictionary

S10: (a very strong student, seen writing the whole time): Oh no, the lesson is over now? Really?

3 students stay after class and ask vocabulary for their stories, which normally never happens with‚regular' writing tasks

APPENDIX 7 – Research Plan

Sample	Sample Size	Method of Data Collection	Type of Data Collection	Aim	Frequency	When	Who
Year 9 Year 11 **Total** *(class 8 in Russia)	32 32 **64**	Pre-intervention Student questionnaires	Quantitative (closed questions)	Find out how students rate their abilities	15 min lesson time	January 2019	researcher
Colleagues	5	Interview Semi-structured	Qualitative	Teacher voice-find out how colleague X structures lessons, what his intentions are with creative writing, general experience	1 lesson (45 min) per interview	January-May 2019	researcher
Year 9 Year 11	32 32	Test (GCSE standardized guided creative writing task)	Quantitative	Test writing skills, see where students' writing problems are, have a comparable measure before/after intervention	1 lesson (45 min) plus prep-periods	December 2018 January 2019	researcher
Year 9	32	Secondary data (archived material)	Quantitative	Analyse student travel journals (from June 2018) with particular interest in the free writing phase, spot problems		October 2018	researcher
Pre-Intervention	**Intervetion period**	**Period finished in**	**by class 8 (March/ April 2019)**	**Class 9 (April/May 2019)**	**and Class 11 (January/ February 2019)**	**December 2018 5 weeks each**	**researcher**
Year 8 Year 9 Year 11 **Total**	33 32 32 **97**	Post-intervention Student questionnaires	Qualitative (open-ended questions)	Find out how students experienced the writing process, look for changes in students' perception on writing	15 min of class time	April- May 2019	researcher
Year 11	32	Focus group interview	Qualitative	Exchange on writing process	1 lesson (45 min)	March 2019	researcher + assistant teacher
Year8 Year 9 Year 11 **Total**	33 32 32 **97**	Lesson observation	Qualitative	Taking notes on what happens in class	on-going during intervention lessons	January-May 2019	researcher
Departmental meetings	up to 16 members of staff	Focus group interview	Qualitative	Share findings with MFL (English/Russian) department, ask for ideas and advise	20 minutes	January 2019 March 2019	researcher
Year 8 Year 9 Year 11	33 32 32	Creative writing task analysis	Quantitative Qualitative	Measure text length, error coding in class 9, topic analysis	may differ	at the end of interventions	researcher
Year 9 Year 11	32 32	Test (GCSE standard guided creative writing task)	Quantitative	Standardized test to measure student writing skills/determine if writing has improved in comparison to beginning of year	1 lesson (45 min)	May 2019	researcher
Year 8 Year 9 Total	33 32 65	Final Focus Group Interview	Qualitative	Record student voice/ find out how students evaluate their own learning	15 min in lesson	April/May 2019	researcher

APPENDIX 8 – Post-Intervention Student Feedback
Sheet Part II Class 9 – English Translation
N=29, Open-ended questions

Has your writing improved this school year?

S1: According to your records it did. I just don't really have the feeling.
S2: Yes, most definitely. It is much more fun now than before.
S3: Not sure.
S4: My results are not the best. I am not satisfied.
S5: A little bit. I just did not invest much and I don't care much about writing. Mostly, I write how I feel and then I make a lot of spelling mistakes.
S6: Generally, yes.
S7: According to my results in composition, I have not improved but I feel like I did.
S8: I think my spelling would be considered crazy.
S9 + S17+S18: A little bit.
S10: Your records say that my writing has improved. I find that amazing because I really didn't invest any time into it.
S11: Your assessment records indicate that I didn't improve my writing this year but I think that I did because my vocabulary has improved so I could write much more than in the years before.
S12: My feeling is that my writing has not improved much, but on the composition scores it shows that it did.
S13: I think that my vocabulary knowledge improved- I could see the results in the test and also, my listening skills have improved but with writing I just can't feel it. Even though your records indicate that I did improve.
S14: My writing has improved, but I am still not satisfied with it. I expected more of myself.
S15: According to the records, my writing has improved . I can totally see that, but I can't feel it.
S16: I think so.
S19: I don't think so.
S20: I think my writing has improved. You can't know it because I didn't turn in my homework a lot and I wasn't there for assessments.
S23: I think I have improved a lot more than what it says in the assessment records. That's just how I feel.
S24: I think I have improved a lot this school year, even though the records indicate that I just improved a little bit. I write longer texts now than last year.
S25+S27: Yes. I have.
S26: In comparison to year 8, I really improved but it's still not as good as I like it to be.
S27: My feeling is that my writing improved but the records indicate the opposite.
S29: No. I didn't like the tasks.

What part of it has improved?

S1: My creativity.
S2: My spelling and my vocabulary knowledge.
S3: Don't know.
S4: Don't know.
S5: I make fewer writing mistakes now than in the years before and I write much lengthier texts.
S9: My spelling.
S10: Nothing.
S13: I am bad at spelling but when I write now, like with creative writing, I just write and I am not missing vocabulary anymore in all my sentences. I just write.
S14: My feeling for the language has improved. I can now say what sounds right to my ears.
S15: I can do abbreviations now and more vocabulary than in the years before.
S16: I made more spelling mistakes at the beginning of the school year than now.
S17+ S18: It's much easier for me now to just start writing. I just write without thinking too much about it.
S19: I don't know.
S20+S21: My writing in general.
S22: I don't think my writing has improved because I have so much more knowledge but actually, I started thinking differently about myself and I finally started to organize myself on paper.
S23: Even though your records indicate that I didn't improve much, I feel like I did because my texts are much longer now. And normal assessment texts don't really measure how much longer texts you write now. They just measure text length with spelling mistakes.
S24: My grammar in writing improved and in general… that's because I listen to a lot of English in my spare time.
S25: Since I know more words now in class 9, I can get into a flow of writing (Schreibfluss).

S26: Knowing more words, has helped me to make longer sentences.
S27: What has changed is my feeling for the language (Sprachgefühl). It has helped me to write better along with more vocabulary.
S29: School records say I didn't improve but the other day I wrote a note to my mom in English and I could totally do it. I wasn't able to do that last year.

Has creative writing helped you to improve? How?

S1: I like CW much more than dictations. Basically I hate all written language. I'd prefer oral language learning only.
S2: I liked CW and it helped me to put my own thoughts down on paper.
S3: My problem is that I never have any ideas at school. I can only write at home when it is all quiet.
S7: I liked CW. It was easier for me to write down my own ideas.
S8: It helped me put my 'crazy' ideas on paper but then, when I did and you read it, your feedback was that it really was a bit 'too crazy', maybe politically incorrect.
S9: I liked CW because it really got me into writing and then I could practice writing better than before.
S10: I don't like writing in general.
S11: All my texts are always very short in creative writing. I am lacking ideas.
S12: It helped because it finally made writing fun.
S13: It felt good that we didn't have to be exact writers because when I write very fast, my spelling is bad. When I want to write fast, at least as fast as my thoughts, then I make a lot of grammar mistakes, spelling and punctuation. I think the mistakes come from writing too fast.
S14: It helps me to have an inspiration to start with, otherwise I don't have many ideas. It's like with cooking- you just need some ingredients to start with and then you can be a little more creative with the rest.
S15: Basically, the story was in my head and it was so fast that I had to take notes on the side because I couldn't write so fast.
S16: I didn't have to think so much how to say something as in composition. I couldn't really do anything wrong and that's why I enjoyed creative writing so much.
S17: Creative writing helped me simply because we practiced it more.
S19: Yeah. I think it's better for me because I love creativity. I think I work better and more productive if I can be creative.
S20: Yes, because in creative writing you can just start writing without thinking too much… because usually you want to write words that you hear in your head but you don't know how to write them so you think about writing them a lot and then you can't really write.
S22: Yes, it has helped because of the total freedom in writing.
S23: I have more vocabulary available.
S24: Sure, because I could think of my own stuff to write and that really challenged my vocabulary knowledge… because then I had to look up my own words.
S25: I like it but I always need a little something to start, like a picture or something. I can't just start writing.
S26: Anytime we have to write longer texts, it helps me improve. In creative writing…I never really know what to write. I can't think of anything to write.
S27: Most of the time, I can't think of a good story, but I actually think it is good if we have a chance to put our own ideas on paper. It's just that the word order is always bugging me in English.
S28: I like it when there is some content that the teacher gives you, like a story line and I just fill in the rest with my imagination. I really helps me, otherwise I have to come up with my own story. That's hard.
S29: I like composition more, with clear structure and all.

Closed questions

What do you prefer?	
Creative writing	**Composition**
18	11
62%	38%
Would you have liked to write more this school year?	
Yes	**No**
12	17
41%	59%
Where did you prefer to write?	
At school	**At home**
13	16
45%	5%

APPENDIX 9 – Post-Intervention Student Interviews Class 11

Students chosen on the basis of voluntary participation

N=8

Has your writing improved this school year?

S1: I don't know if my writing has improved. I just know that I wrote a lot and that I have a better feeling about writing than I had at the beginning of the year. If I didn't improve, then I take it on me. You gave us enough opportunities to write.

S2: Yes, definitely in this school year.

S3: Yes, most definitely. I am still far from being a super writer but this school year I have really made a progress, especially through the writing of my story in creative writing.

S4: That's hard to say. My texts are definitely longer than before and I learned a lot through writing my own story during creative writing but I still don't feel good about my grammar use.

S5: Yes, but I still make a lot of grammar mistakes.

S6: Yes, but not much.

S7: Yes.

S8: Yes, I feel more secure in writing than at the beginning of the year.

How?

S1: Through the writing of my own story, exam practice, homework… pretty much anytime I had the feeling to practice something on my own. Grammar lessons also helped my feeling more secure.

S2: Mostly through composition training for GCSE exams. But the writing of my own story and the correcting part of it through you (teacher) was also helpful. Reading, too. That way I had an idea of how to write.

S3: I would say through creative writing, GCSE exam practice, exemplary readings and… grammar worksheets.

S4: I learned a lot through reading exemplary stories and through the writing of my own story in creative writing.

S5: Especially through composition training for the GCSE exams.

S6: No method in particular. Just practice, practice, practice.

S7: Mostly the reading has helped me, but also exam practice.

S8: I remember some exercises that we did on word order that have really helped me. In my freetime, I watched a lot of shows in English, so now I have a feeling when I write if something sounds good or not. Reading has helped me, too.

Did creative writing help you? What do you think about it?

S1: Yes, writing my own story has helped me. I had to think a lot about it. The few times that I turned in my creative writing for teacher correction, has also helped me to see my mistakes.

S2: Yes, it was simply a good way to practice a lot of writing and in the end it was my own story. That was cool.

S3: It was a long and intensive process to write my own story. I always had to go back and rewrite something that I didn't like about it personally. That way I learned from my own mistakes. It was like writing for my own sake, not for the teacher's (laughs).

S4: I think it's a great method. I liked that I could feel really free in my writing. I think I would have liked it even more with a long and intensive grammar training before an intensive writing period.

S5: I had a difficult start, but when I found my story, it was really fun. Creative writing actually was the beginning for me to like writing in ESL. After that I continued writing private texts in English.

S6: Mostly it was a lot of fun because I could be really creative. It was difficult in the beginning to come up with an idea but then it picked up.

S7: Yes, very much. I liked the intensity of the writing since we had so much time for it to write our own texts.

S8: Yes, definitely. I liked that I could write at my own pace. Also, I liked the autonomy over my own writing.

APPENDIX 10 – Content Analysis
Student Topic Choice for Creative Writing Tasks

Class 8 (N=31)	Class 9 (N=26)	Class 11 (N=31)
friendship, taking drugs, violence	family relations, bank robbery	love, sex
dreams, magic	jealousy, bullying, theft	theft
murder	bank robbery, rape	relationships, jealousy, drugs, alcohol
revenge	taking drugs, dealing with drugs	nightmares, being chased by a murderer
bullying, suicide	theft, peer pressure, loneliness	getting old, death
conspiracy theories	bullying, school, graffiti	relationship problems, girlfriend trouble with happy end
deadly accidents, depression	nature, protecting the environment	cultural differences Germany/Japan
false friends	drug addiction	anxiety, being alone, disgust of spiders
loss	misunderstandings	divorce, family problems
death, inheritance, life being unfair	unemployment, gang life	adventure, adrenaline, making mistakes
gang life, respect, fame	loss of control, mood swings	death, loss, memory
humour	patriotism, racism against foreigners	moral strength and courage
family violence, anger, running away from home	alcohol abuse, theft	feeling haunted and tortured, love of family
being old	bank robbery, gang life	love of nature, growing up
ex-boyfriends	theft	eating habits, friendship
nightmares, being followed by someone	divorce, hate of siblings	feeling overwhelmed, writer's block
friendship, cure for deadly diseases	loneliness, jealousy, pregnancy	love, loss
rape, revenge	peer pressure	panic, death, loss, guilt
living in a cyber reality	theft, revenge	adventure, dying young, death, memories
suicide	bullying, murder	cancer, dying, hope
loss, feeling alone, accidental tragedies	partying, wrong friends, love	loss, death, suicide, therapy, acceptance
reuniting with an old friend	violence	school, marks, foreigners, prejudices
about the consequences of cancer	kidnapping	partner for life, love, marriage
panic attacks, proven innocent after being in prison	depression, school, parents	guilt, making mistakes, responsibility for oneself
kidnapping	parental expectations, dealing drugs	partying, drug abuse
growing old	drug addiction, being accepted	anxieties, nightmares
nightmares		love, embarrassment, perfectionism, anxiety
feeling lost		partying, alcohol and drug abuse, sexual attraction
nightmares		nightmares, school shootings, fear, the unknown and dark side in everyone
telling the truth, moral conflict		love for nature

courage						family, aggression		
Recurrent themes Year 8:			**Recurrent themes Year 9:**			**Recurrent themes Year 11:**		
friendship	(N=4)	13%	theft	(N=5)	19%	death	(N=6)	19%
nightmares	(N=2)	6%	drugs	(N=4)	15%	love	(N=4)	13%
suicide	(N=2)	6%	bullying	(N=3)	12%	loss	(N=4)	13%
old age	(N=2)	6%	robbery	(N=3)	12%	drugs	(N=3)	10%
revenge	(N=2)	6%	peer pressure	(N=2)	8%	nightmares	(N=3)	10%
			jealousy	(N=2)	8%	family	(N=3)	10%
			loneliness	(N=2)	8%	anxieties	(N=3)	10%
						partying	(N=2)	6%
						guilt	(N=2)	6%
Shared themes with other year groups:			drugs nightmares		(Class 9+11) (Class 8 + 11)			

Table 11 showing the topics students chose for their creative writing pieces.

APPENDIX 11 – Text Length
Divided by gender

Student number	Class 11 Male/Female	Class 11 Words	Class 9 Male/Female	Class 9 Words	Class 8 Male/Female	Class 8 Words
1	F	470	M	161	M	524
2	F	937	F	232	M	286
3	M	425	F	120	M	184
4	M	354	F	109	M	810
5	M	566	F	102	F	532
6		173	F	598	F	251
7	F	253	M	65	F	741
8	F	576	M	104	F	1311
9	F	562	M	124	F	1045
10	M	367	F	142	M	652
11	F	328	F	112	M	238
12	M	1103	M	169	F	912
13	F	343	M	167	M	413
14	M	407	F	187	F	442
15	F	255	F	427	M	823
16	F	406	M	111	M	481
17	M	409	F	204	M	1425
18	F	781	M	165	M	760
19	F	678	F	261	F	414
20	M	446	F	158	M	702
21	M	345	M	92	F	1074
22	F	576	M	73	F	585
23	M	483	F	189	F	377
24	M	748	F	378	F	595
25	F	381	F	214	M	528
26	F	432	F	73	F	701
27	M	479			F	398
28	F	335			F	1005
29	M	608			F	1068
30	F	255			M	526
31	M	305				
32	F	652				
Totals	**15438**		**4737**		**19803**	
	Total boys: N=15 Total girls: N=17	Words boys: 7218 47% Words girls: 8220 53% Difference between boys and girls in proportion: 0,48%	Total boys: N=11 Total girls: N=15	Words boys: 1304 27,5% Words girls: 3433 72% Difference between boys and girls in proportion: 48,2%	Total boys: N=14 Total girls: N=16	Words boys: 7793 39% Words girls: 12010 61% Difference between boys and girls in proportion: 25,8%

Table 12 showing total word length in all 3 intervention classes divided by gender.

APPENDIX 12 – Post-intervention error scores and gender divide

	Verb tense	Punctuation	Spelling	Use of plural	Word order	Vocabulary	Word missing	Total mistakes	Word count	Error score	Gender
Student 1	3	6	6	0	2	2	2	**21**	**135**	**0,16**	m
Student 2	6	4	7	1	2	3	2	**25**	**72**	**0,35**	f
Student 3	2	2	8	0	0	1	0	**13**	**146**	**0,09**	f
Student 4	0	1	5	0	1	0	0	**7**	**168**	**0,04**	f
Student 5	3	0	2	0	1	1	0	**7**	**144**	**0,05**	f
Student 6	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	**8**	**137**	**0,06**	f
Student 7	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	**2**	**179**	**0,01**	f
Student 8	3	0	7	0	0	3	1	**14**	**65**	**0,22**	m
Student 9	0	0	3	0	0	2	2	**7**	**114**	**0,06**	m
Student 10											absent
Student 11	2	0	2	0	0	0	2	**6**	**69**	**0,09**	f
Student 12	0	0	12	0	2	0	1	**15**	**158**	**0,09**	f
Student 13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**	**59**	**0**	f
Student 14	0	2	11	1	0	1	0	**15**	**70**	**0,21**	m
Student 15	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	**3**	**137**	**0,02**	m
Student 16	4	0	4	0	1	1	0	**10**	**127**	**0,08**	f
Student 17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**	**111**	**0**	f
Student 18	1	1	4	0	0	1	0	**7**	**106**	**0,07**	m
Student 19	5	0	11	0	2	0	0	**18**	**132**	**0,14**	f
Student 20	1	2	4	0	0	3	0	**10**	**76**	**0,13**	m
Student 21	1	2	5	0	1	0	3	**12**	**127**	**0,09**	f
Student 22											absent
Student 23	3	0	9	0	1	1	0	**14**	**164**	**0,09**	f
Student 24											absent
Student 25											absent
Student 26											absent
Student 27	1	2	4	0	0	0	0	**7**	**47**	**0,15**	m
Student 28	1	1	3	2	1	1	1	**10**	**114**	**0,09**	f
Student 29	0	1	4	0	0	0	2	**7**	**85**	**0,08**	f
Student 30	3	0	4	1	1	2	1	**12**	**67**	**0,18**	f
Student 31	0	4	4	0	0	0	2	**10**	**79**	**0,13**	m
SUM	**40**	**28**	**130**	**5**	**15**	**22**	**20**	**260**	**2888**	**2,68**	
%	15	11	50	2	6	8	8				
Total Male	9	17	45	1	2	12	8	**94**	**829**	**1,15**	
Total Female	31	11	85	4	13	10	12	**166**	**2059**	**1,53**	

Table 13 showing post-intervention assessment error types in Year 9. The task was a 45-minute guided creative writing task, very similar to the pre-intervention assessment task.

APPENDIX 13 – Intervention error scores and gender divide

	Verb tense	Punctuation	Spelling	Use of plural	Word order	Vocabulary	Word missing	Total mistakes	Word count	Error score	Gender
Student 1	8	4	13	0	1	3	1	**30**	**161**	**0,19**	m
Student 2											absent
Student 3	3	0	2	0	0	1	0	**6**	**232**	**0,03**	f
Student 4	4	2	6	0	0	3	0	**15**	**120**	**0,13**	f
Student 5	2	0	6	0	0	2	0	**10**	**109**	**0,09**	f
Student 6	1	3	3	1	0	2	0	**10**	**102**	**0,1**	f
Student 7	2	3	4	0	0	3	0	**12**	**598**	**0,02**	f
Student 8	1	1	4	0	0	0	0	**6**	**65**	**0,09**	m
Student 9	5	1	4	0	0	0	1	**11**	**104**	**0,11**	m
Student 10	1	0	0	0	0	3	1	**5**	**124**	**0,04**	m
Student 11	4	0	3	0	0	1	0	**8**	**142**	**0,06**	f
Student 12	3	0	2	0	0	0	0	**5**	**112**	**0,04**	f
Student 13											absent
Student 14	9	3	8	0	0	1	0	**21**	**169**	**0,12**	m
Student 15	0	0	3	0	0	1	0	**4**	**167**	**0,02**	m
Student 16	13	1	11	0	0	3	1	**29**	**187**	**0,16**	f
Student 17	4	1	3	0	0	1	0	**9**	**427**	**0,02**	f
Student 18	3	0	5	0	0	1	0	**9**	**111**	**0,08**	m
Student 19	20	1	9	0	3	3	0	**36**	**204**	**0,18**	f
Student 20	1	1	5	0	0	0	1	**8**	**165**	**0,05**	m
Student 21	10	3	5	1	0	5	0	**24**	**261**	**0,09**	f
Student 22											absent
Student 23	1	0	13	0	0	1	1	**16**	**158**	**0,1**	f
Student 24	4	3	11	2	0	0	0	**20**	**92**	**0,22**	m
Student 25											absent
Student 26	5	1	3	0	0	0	0	**9**	**73**	**0,12**	m
Student 27											absent
Student 28	8	3	8	0	0	3	0	**22**	**189**	**0,12**	f
Student 29	7	4	11	2	0	3	1	**28**	**378**	**0,07**	f
Student 30	7	0	8	0	0	1	1	**17**	**214**	**0,08**	f
Student 31	2	3	5	0	0	0	2	**12**	**73**	**0,16**	m
SUM	**128**	**38**	**155**	**6**	**4**	**41**	**10**	**382**	**4737**	**2,49**	**absent**
%	33	10	41	1	1	11	3				
Total Male (11)	39	17	61	2	1	9	6	**135**	**1304**	**1,2**	
Total Female (15)	89	21	94	4	3	32	4	**247**	**3433**	**1,29**	

Table 14 showing creative writing assessment error types Year 9 **during intervention with creative writing task.**

APPENDIX 14 – Year 9 Assessment Tasks

Pre-Intervention Assessment Task

Write a letter to a friend.

Some words to help you:

- Dear…
- Thank you for your last letter.
- Guess what…
- I want to tell you about…
- Last week I /my family/my brother/a friend of mine…
- I hope we…
- Maybe you can…
- Can you…?
- That's all for now.
- Take care.

Post-Intervention Assessment Task

Option A

Imagine you have been staying with your host family in San Francisco, California for a week and you have seen and done a lot of interesting things. Write an e-mail to you English pen-friend about your experiences . Include

- what your host family / your school / your classes are like
- Any problems you have had so far
- What you have done in your free time

Option B

Write a letter applying for a job at a summer camp in America helping to take care of American kids between the ages of 8 and 14. Say

- why you want the job
- which languages you speak
- your hobbies
- your work experiences

APPENDIX 15 – Teacher Interview Analysis

Subject	What for?	Where?	Individual writing or Pair work?
Elementary school teacher	Working with texts In order to memorize lesson content on a deeper level	Classroom	Individual
Elementary school teacher , ESL	Bilingual lessons, teaching composition, in combination with teaching reading	Classroom	Individual
German, history, social studies, drama	Jump start lessons, writing theatrical scenes, writing lyrical texts, poems, guided creative writing for assessment, GCSE exam preparation, for history excursion to Poland	Inside and outside of the classroom	Individual
German, drama	Beginning of lessons, warm up for a topic, in combination with literature, to work on different characters in a book, for literary interpretations, guided creative writing for assessment purposes	Inside and outside of the classroom	Individual
Art, German	Picture descriptions, writing poems, warm-up for new topic, as a tool to de-stress students, for art excursion to Italy, sharing own work with students	Inside and outside of the classroom	Individual or Pair work

Table 15. Showing what CW is used for, where it is used and how

Subject Teacher (see above)	**Improvement**	**Negative Effects**
1	**Memory** **stilistical improvement,** fosters **bilingualism,** if L1 is also allowed, lots of writing **improves** students' **grammatical structures**	**weak students** feel left behind if they are left to work on their own **writing anxieties** without adequate scaffolding **worries about spelling** hinder student writing
2	**Memory** and practice of **grammatical structures, language awareness** in L1 and L2 through **transfer of knowledge,** foster the joy of writing (very prevalent in elementary school), playing with language improves **self-expression,** writing a lot (even if it may be incorrect) makes students **feel secure** and at ease with writing	mistakes not corrected, fosters **bad spelling habits**
3	Increases **joy of writing** Giving students **ideas, instead of structures** makes students write **longer texts,** CW **helps composition** tasks good for **exam practice** since it **increases text length** Improves **social atmosphere** in class through writer's conferences and peer feedback	CW doesn't work if followed by text analysis **Too much freedom** **very little text**
4	CW **helps boys** who have difficulties with writing Increases flow of writing and intuitive use of language Form of **self-expression** for boys and **introverted students,** who do not talk much in class CW helps to find out **what is going on inside of you** Fosters **insipiration** through **imagination** Helps **retrieve information lost in memory** due to emotional triggers It helps students reach **deeper levels of conscience** CW opens up a language space, fosters **language awareness** Writing **without stress,** particularly helpful **for dyslexic students** Helps **anxieties** **Feeling reassured** in their writing	Needs **lots of practice and training** students in CW Teacher must be completely free of expectations, ‚real' CW cannot be assessed, whereas ‚guided creative writing' can be assessed, **method may confuse students,** method relies on trust, may seem **too personal** to students Students may not have **maturity level** CW is an **open process** like art, **takes lots of time** Boys and girls write differently CW may lead students to write off task Constant changing of class **setting** necessary for CW, **time-consuming** **Teacher role** changes
5	Helps **reduce stress** Puts students in **action** (active **instead of passive learners)** Confronting **anxieties** Producing your own **thoughts** on paper that **you may not have been aware of** Helps students **organize and structure** their **thoughts, ultimately their world outside of school** Particularly fit for **highly talended or highly sensitive students** Helps **imaginary power, share inner richness** CW is an **outlet for introverted students**	Avoidance tendencies, height of puberty, little will power, you cannot force students to write if they do not want to Avoidance problem in Waldorf schools Writing is imprint of maturity level Needs self-regulation Linked to psychologial development of students method depends on teacher training Not part of the curriculum

Table 16. Showing how teachers describe improvement and/or negative effects of CW use in class

APPENDIX 16 – Full Reading list combined with CW tasks

Class	CW Task	Tied to Pre-Reading Task
Class 8	Based on the readings we have covered in class, write a detective story. Be as creative as you wish to be!	Sherlock Holmes
Class 9	Imagine another tent at Camp Greenlake. Another boy or girl has just arrived. Write their story.	Holes by Louis Sachar
Class 11	Based on the readings we have covered in class, write your own short story. Be as creative as you wish to be! Watch out to stay within the confines of the genre (setting, plot, conflict, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution).	Short stories diverse (from the book Working with Short Stories by Ursula Hermes)

Table 17. CW task overview