

The Use of Creative Writing and Non-academic Vocabulary in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) Classrooms

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Abstract

This paper is an overview of a teacher intervention design conducted with English for Academic Purposes (EAP) learners at a higher education institution in Turkey. It emerged from problems encountered at some stages of in-class implementations of a preoccupation with academic writing at the expense of other types of free writing and overuse of academic vocabulary in inappropriate contexts. The main research question was as follows: How can I familiarize EAP students with creative writing and foster their use of non-academic vocabulary? The data were collected from 54 advanced learners in two EAP classrooms over the course of an eight-week period through a variety of hands-on tools prepared to enable them to undertake creative writing practice and use non-academic vocabulary. On the basis of the findings derived from the pre-test and post-test administrations as well as the qualitative analyses done on the participants' writing submissions, using creative writing tasks was beneficial for the participants, who reported gains in confidence and positive attitudes towards creative writing and non-academic vocabulary.

Keywords: creative writing, free writing, non-academic vocabulary, productive vocabulary, skills development, EAP

Introduction

As a powerful and inspiring source of language, literature has significant value in language teaching settings for a variety of reasons. It is used to develop both linguistic and cultural knowledge and also to increase learner motivation to interact with the target language. Considered an “ally of language” (Brumfit and Carter, 1986), literature provides language teachers with an immense variety of genres (poems, plays, short stories, and novels) to be used in the classroom. Many books,

reports, and papers put forward the value of creative language by stating that integration of literary works into curricula or in-class implementations could facilitate language acquisition and motivate learners to use the target language to a greater extent (Bussinger, 2013; Carter & Long, 1991; Franz, 2005; Hanauer, 2010; Hirvela, 2005; Holmes & Moulton, 2001; Iida, 2013; Kim, 2004; Maley, 2012; Ostrow & Chang, 2012; Paran, 2008; Ross, 2007; Smith, 2013; Vandrick, 2003; Wang, 2009; Ying, 2008). Considering the above, four main reasons for using literature in language teaching are provided by Collie and Slater (1990): Literature includes valuable authentic materials and reflects real-life contexts; facilitates language enrichment and learners' developing receptive and expressive language skills; enables learners' cultural enrichment and familiarity with the context of the target language; and fosters personal involvement and enthusiasm with the target language. In consideration of such functions, literature could be incorporated into language teaching in many ways, one of which is, no doubt, as a tool to improve students' writing skills. Providing literary texts as examples or models in advance of writing sessions and using creative writing prompts during writing instruction is thought to be an effective start to strengthen the link between literature and students' writing skills.

Improving writing skills

Being one of the essential components of EAP curricula, teaching writing is generally treated both as a means of consolidating the linguistic competence of learners as well as an ends to develop a specific language skill, which is defined as communication via written texts (Nystrand, 1986). Seeing writing as an effective tool of textual transmission of information to the readers, the preliminary pedagogical purposes of writing are considered to be communication, fluency and learning (Raimes, 1983).

Although there appear to be a variety of approaches and methods regarding how to teach writing, product and process approaches dominate many of the implementations in language classrooms (Badger & White, 2000). As a mainstream approach, product-based orientation tends to attach more importance to the output or end product of the writing processes, which are, according to Brown (1994), supposed to “(a) meet certain standards of prescribed English rhetorical style, (b) reflect accurate grammar, and (c) be organized in conformity with what the audience would consider to be conventional” (p. 391). Process-based orientation, on the other hand, tends to prioritize the content or the message to a greater extent than the rules of the language. Silva and

Matsuda (2001) describe this approach as “helping students discover their own voice; allowing students to choose their own topic; providing teacher and peer feedback; encouraging revision and using student writing as the primary text of the course” (p. 67).

Regardless of the approach (whether product or process) adopted in language classrooms, writing is primarily an *expressive* use of language (Britton et al., 1975), which not only covers formal frames but also informal everyday communication. Although written language could become increasingly formalized and aim to inform, argue, or persuade rather than simply to ‘share’, its expressiveness does not disappear (Applebee, 2000). Building on this proposition, teaching writing in EAP classrooms is apt to become highly formal and structured by virtue of curricula or assessment. Nevertheless, creative aspects of writing ought to be taught, as well, because they are, in a sense, an imaginative representation of emotions, events, characters and experiences (Maley, 2012).

Creative writing

Using literary works in second and foreign language teaching settings is not encountered as frequently as it is in first language teaching (Iida, 2011). One possible reason is that teachers tend to focus more on the accurate production of the target language through drills rather than fluency (Zyngier, 1994) and learners attach more importance to learning how to write academically and accurately rather than creatively (Iida, 2013; Paran, 2006). However, creative language exists in various aspects of everyday communication as well as a part of written works. Therefore, the need to acquire creative language besides academic language becomes a requirement for current language learners, as well. This need is observed more by language teachers who tend to consider all aspects of the language they teach and encourage language earners to undertake different types of free writing.

Even though there are numerous studies done on the benefits of using literature for language teaching, very few empirical studies have focused specifically on the use of creative writing in language classrooms (Hanauer, 2010; Iida, 2013). One of them was a study by Hanauer (2010) who investigated the relationship between writing poetry and second language learning and claimed that L2 poetry was beneficial to learners’ individual perspectives, emotional states, and self-reflections. Another was by Iida (2011) who studied the impact of *haiku* writing on learners’ ability to write prose in a second language setting and found a positive effect. Bussinger (2013) also reported gains

in confidence among learners after a four-week period of creative writing process in which learners produced stories. In a similar vein, Smith (2013) asserted that “vocabulary use in fiction writing appears to be more varied and of higher quality than academic writing produced by the same students” (p. 15).

As a summary of all those points, Maley (2012) provided the following list of justifications for the inclusion of creative writing tasks in language classrooms: (a) enabling language development at all levels including grammar, vocabulary, phonology, and discourse; (b) fostering ‘playfulness’ that motivates learners to take risks with the language and explore it without fear of criticism; (c) assisting right brain functions; and putting emphasis on emotions, sensations and intuitions; (d) enabling an increase in motivation, self-confidence and self-esteem; (e) feeding into more creative reading; and (f) helping to improve expository writing, as well.

In view of all the points discussed so far, I, as a language teacher, attempted with this intervention to fill in the gap left by the absence of creative writing activities within our EAP curricula.

Considering the current preoccupation with academic writing at the expense of other types of writing, I intended to assist EAP learners to play with the target language independently without academic constraints.

Method

This study mainly adopted a pretest-posttest research design and focused on contextual concerns and practical elements of language teaching as it existed not to prove a theory, but to improve practice. The research context comprised 54 advanced learners from two different EAP classrooms at a public university in Turkey. The rationale behind this study emerged from a need encountered at some stages of an in-class writing implementation which is the absence of non-academic or creative writing tasks in the curricula of EAP programs and learners’ challenges in using non-academic vocabulary in appropriate contexts. As such, the study aimed to answer the following research question: *How can I familiarize EAP students with creative writing and foster their use of non-academic vocabulary?*

Both qualitative and quantitative techniques were used to investigate the research question and the data were collected over the course of an eight-week period through a variety of hands-on tools. Two types of tasks were implemented within the scope of this intervention: *vocabulary revision files*, including a wide range of words representing mostly non-academic items in order to

promote their more productive usage (see Appendix 2 for the sample items), and *creative writing tasks* to provide the participants with the opportunity to play with the target language by using the non-academic items covered in vocabulary revision files (see Appendix 3). Perceptions of the participants on creative writing and productive vocabulary usage were gathered through pre-test and post-test procedures (see Appendix 1 and 4 for the questions in the pretest and the posttest).

The intervention took eight weeks and was completed in two ways with two different groups, which led the discussion of the findings of the study. The first step started with a pretest designed to assess entry attitudes and perceptions of the participants on the intended intervention. In line with the gaps identified in the pretest, five vocabulary revision files and five creative writing tasks were developed by the researcher (see Appendices). Prior to the implementation, all the participants were provided with a short introductory session about what creative writing is, what its elements are, how a creative writing piece could be produced, and what kind of tasks are to be included in the scope of this intervention. They were also given some models of creative writing pieces taken from literary texts. At this point of the study, participants were divided into two groups: Group A and B. In advance of creative writing sessions, Group A was provided with vocabulary revision files through fifteen-minute contextual revision sessions. Those files included 10 to 15 non-academic vocabulary items. Group B, on the other hand, were given the same creative writing tasks without a vocabulary revision session. Both groups were given about one week to complete each creative writing task and submit their work. The creative writing tasks involved:

- (1) *secret confession* – a personal letter addressed to a close friend, girl/boy friend, teacher, family member, the police, or readers of certain magazines/papers;
- (2) *short story competition* – writing the most creative beginning/ending for a given extract;
- (3) *random words epigraph* – writing a poem with randomly chosen entries;
- (4) *historical fiction* – a diary of an historic figure; and
- (5) *jumble story* – a mix and match story using randomly-chosen characters, setting, time, and situation (see Appendix 4 for more detail)

At the end of the intervention period, having completed vocabulary revision sessions and creative writing tasks, the participants were administered a posttest in order to provide feedback about the implementations and the possible changes in their perceptions on creative writing and non-academic vocabulary.

Results

The general findings revealed that both of the participant groups developed positive attitudes towards creative writing and obtained initial skills for creative writing by being engaged in the tasks. Group A felt better about their level of productive use of non-academic vocabulary and were able to use many of the non-academic vocabulary items covered in the revision sessions appropriately.

Findings in relation to pretest

The pretest indicated that the participants were not sufficiently knowledgeable about what creative writing is, except for five participants, who defined creative writing as an imaginary genre depending on feelings or dreams and as writing that appeared in novels, poems, or stories. More than half ($f=30$) of the participants stated that they did not have any idea about creative writing. On the other hand, most of them ($f=41$) expressed their desires to learn and benefit from creative writing and thought that creative writing would help them develop their writing skills and productive vocabulary usage. There were also some negative attitudes revealed by some participants. Five participants thought they lacked the talent for creative writing; four participants felt they might not like it; two participants described it as an inborn talent; and two participants found creative writing a hard task to undertake with their level of English.

When asked whether they had ever written creatively before, more than half of the participants ($f=35$) answered “No.” The rest claimed that they had done creative writing. However, it was seen, in the follow-up question, that only five of them had real experience with creative writing such as writing poems, lyrics, letters, or diaries in their English courses at high school. Some participants ($f=13$) stated that they had done creative writing in their Turkish language classes.

As for the last part investigating the students’ perceptions on their productive use of academic or non-academic vocabulary, a great majority of the participants ($f=48$) indicated that they were able to use academic vocabulary in their written works while only one-third of them ($f=18$) reported that they were able use academic vocabulary without difficulty in spoken language. On the other hand, only a few participants ($f=8$) reflected that they would be able to use non-academic vocabulary they learned in written or spoken English while one third of them ($f=17$) would feel unable to use non-academic vocabulary effectively. The rest ($f=29$) thought that they could either

use non-academic vocabulary to some extent or would have difficulty in remembering the words acquired previously.

All those points reported by the participants in pretests could mean that EAP learners are so tightly engaged with academic writing and academic vocabulary that they cannot go outside the bounds of formalized language.

Findings derived from the participants' writing samples

A total of 151 writing samples, in different lengths, were analyzed to examine the changes in the participants' styles of non-academic writing and use of non-academic vocabulary. To start with the submission rates demonstrated in Table 1, Group B ($f=68$), who were not offered any vocabulary revision sessions, tended to submit a little fewer number of tasks compared to Group A ($f=83$). The major divergence between the submission rates of Group A and B was related to the task titled *Jumble Story*. When the samples of both groups were compared, vocabulary revision sessions in the case of Group A played a significant role in raising the frequency of their productive use of non-academic vocabulary. This finding could imply that receiving extra input of non-academic vocabulary even as revision might result in better use of target vocabulary in the case of Group A.

Table 1 *Submission Rates of Tasks by Groups*

Creative Writing Tasks*	Group A	Group B
	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>
Task 1. Secret Confession	21	17
Task 2. Short Story Competition	14	14
Task 3. Random Words Epigraph	17	17
Task 4. Historical Fiction	10	9
Task 5. Jumble Story	21	11
Total	83	68

*Submission rates do not diverge much except for the *Jumble Story*, which could imply that both groups freely enjoyed doing creative writing.

During the analyses of the participants' writing submissions, it was seen that there were striking differences between the two groups. In this sense, the percentage of the use of non-academic vocabulary by the students in Group A ranged from 30 to 82% across various tasks and reached a cumulative of 61%. When the appropriate use was investigated, it was seen that 67% of the non-academic vocabulary used in Task 1; 78% in Task 2; 60% in Task 3; 75% in Task 4; and 90% in Task 5 appeared in an appropriate context. As a cumulative rating, 74% of the vocabulary used in creative writing tasks of Group A was contextualized appropriately (see Table 2).

The same analyses were performed on the submissions of the students in Group B. Accordingly; the proportions were much lower. 6% of the non-academic vocabulary in Task 2; 2% in Task 3; and 3% in Task 5 were used by the students in Group B. A cumulative of 1.8% was used appropriately in the writings (see Table 2). The percentages above suggest that because the students in Group B did not receive any vocabulary revision sessions, they did not attempt to use non-academic vocabulary in their writings. This finding seems to justify the inclusion of vocabulary revision files within the scope of this intervention.

Table 2 *Productive Vocabulary Usage in Tasks by Groups*

Creative Writing Tasks	Group A (%)		Group B (%)	
	Usage*	Adequacy**	Usage*	Adequacy**
Secret Confession	80	67	0	-
Short Story Competition	82	78	6	4
Random Words Epigraph	30	60	2	2
Historical Fiction	81	75	0	-
Jumble Story	31	90	3	3
Cumulative	61	74	2.2	1.8

*These percentages were calculated by adding each attempt in writing tasks to use a non-academic item covered in vocabulary revision files (e.g., If 12 out of 15 revised vocabulary items were used in writing, it gives 80% usage).

**These percentages were calculated by adding each correct usage of non-academic items in writing tasks (e.g., If 12 out of 12 items used were appropriate in context, it gives 100% adequacy).

Finally, the submissions of the participants were examined in a qualitative tradition with the aim of assessing improvement in their non-academic writing style. In both of the groups, a remarkable change in their styles throughout the intervention was observed and their submissions tended to be reflective of more individual emotions and personal perspectives. For instance, Extract 1 is an example of a secret confession letter written by a student from Group B. It was the first creative writing task given to the students at the beginning of the intervention. At this stage, sentence structures that this particular student used were more academic and the presentation was more formal. The letter the student wrote was indicative of a structured organization of essay-type writing. This particular student either did not grasp the scope of the task or was not used to going beyond academic constraints. Another example from the same student is provided in Extract 2, which is a piece of a sample for the last creative writing task assigned to students at the last session of the intervention. The change in style could easily be seen as the student demonstrated freer and more confident expressions in her writing. As the student was in Group B, usage of non-academic vocabulary was not as frequent as that of the students in Group A.

Extract 1. *Sample for Task 1*

“Surely, everybody has a secret in his/her life. This secret might be about family life, school, lessons, friends, people, or love. I think love is a big secret in our life. Nobody knows how someone loves someone else or how much loves. Generally, we, humankind, love ourselves most. But if we are talking about love, everything changes. Sometimes, we love someone else more than ourselves. We think only him or her. Sometimes, we cannot think ourselves. It is a strange emotion but it is so...”

Extract 2. *Sample for Task 5*

“There was a heavy downpour. Little Matthew was sitting under a bridge. He was damn cold. He was waiting for the rain to stop. In his old and torn trousers, Matthew tried to warm up himself. But no way! He was so scared by the lightning that tears were falling down on his cheeks. Suddenly an old and ugly woman appeared by the river...”

For other examples of writing submissions by other participants, see Extracts 3 to 8. During the analyses of other extracts, it was seen that students started to free themselves from the fear of

criticism regarding their ideas, emotions, and imaginations. Knowing that this intervention was an extra-curricular implementation and would not have any impacts on final grades, the students enjoyed discovering their capabilities and limits in relation to their use of English language. The pleasure they received from creative writing could easily be seen in their pieces, most of which may have been a topic for movies, sitcoms, documentaries, and other types of fiction. The creativity they reflected through those pieces far exceeded my expectations as I had only known these students from in-class activities and their writings from assignments and formal exams.

Extract 3. Sample for Task 1

“Dear Teacher,

I’m sorry to tell you all these things but I am sleepless for many days. Do you remember the day you saw your new car badly scratched with punctured tires? That was me! Everything started when you told me to leave the classroom and not to come back till I did my assignment. The first thing that I saw when you kicked me out of the classroom was your new car. With the ambition to take revenge, I couldn’t control myself and did all the things you...”

Extract 4. Sample for Task 2

“I was alone in the house reading a scary ghost story. As rain was falling silently outside, the only sound was the ticking of my grandfather’s clock. The dying fire cast an orange glow onto the walls. Suddenly I saw a ghost who was wearing sleeveless pink shirt and sunglasses feeding mosquitoes on my woollen blanket. I jumped out of the sofa and a helicopter flew into my room through the window. The pilot threw a rope down and screamed at me to hurry up...”

Extract 5. Sample for Task 3

Last night, there was a lightning

While I was camping

It was too risky

To drink some whisky

I was talking to the mosquitoes

Which were dancing on my little toes

There was something flying in my mind

*“Oh God, these mosquitoes are so kind!”
Once I had a dog to take care of
Yet he died after he jumped off
I know this is a goddamn weird
Then I saw a man with purple beard
Suddenly I heard a strange sound
Hoping that it belonged to a hound
I was going to burst into tears
But I faced up with my silly fears
No time to make an objection
That’s because of natural selection
I drew a picture and painted
Before I saw the hound and fainted
My eyes were wide open and I saw a beam
Oh what? Was it just a dream?
Mum was sitting by my side and saying that
“Next time, don’t forget putting the blanket”*

Extract 6. Sample for Task 4

“I’m Isaac Newton and the thing that scares me most in my life has always been seeing a rotten apple. As you all know, once upon a time, a rotten apple fell down on my head while I was sitting under an apple tree in my garden. Since then I have never sat under an apple tree. I know this is paranoia. And you might think that I am a potential maniac. But a rotten apple is a psychoactive fruit for me. Whenever I see one, I remember my miserable years. Because of the toxins in the apple that fell down on my head, I had to spend six years at a clinic and attend daily treatment programs...”

Extract 7. Sample for Task 5

“Carlos woke up by the side of a polluted stream. His clothes were covered with mud and were torn. Suddenly, he saw his car got stuck in the stream. It was foggy and dark. There was no sound and light. He could hear just voices of owls...”

Extract 8. Sample for Task 5

“Sitting at the porch of an old farmhouse, Linda, a 93-year old woman, was busy with thinking about years that passed quickly throughout her life. It was late at night. Such a lot of thoughts were flying in her mind that sleep was too far from her eyes...”

Findings in relation to posttest

At the end of the implementation stage, a short post-test (see Appendix 4) was administered to the participants to see if there were changes in their perceptions about and attitudes towards creative writing and non-academic vocabulary usage. In the first part, participants were asked to define creative writing in their own words. Their definitions exhibited the change in their perceptions and knowledge about creative writing. Specifically, the participants defined creative writing as: free writing without strict rules and borders ($f=13$); something improving creativity or productivity ($f=10$); using imagination, feelings, and thoughts ($f=8$); something developing vocabulary ($f=6$); and something fostering actual writing ($f=2$). Regarding their exit attitudes towards creative writing, it was seen that 84% found it enjoyable; 37% found it beneficial; 27% thought that it gave them freedom; 17% thought that it refreshed and developed their thinking; and 7% found it necessary. On the other hand, 10% did not enjoy doing creative writing and another 10% found it fairly difficult.

In the second part, the participants were asked to rank the creative writing tasks according to them being difficult, easy, and enjoyable. The results revealed that the task the students perceived to be the easiest was *random words epigraph* (46%), which was followed by *secret confession* and *short story competition* (23% each). *Historical fiction*, on the other hand, received the highest ratings in relation to the most difficult task (50%). When the students were asked which task they enjoyed the most, half of the participants selected *random words epigraph*, which could imply that the students tended to find a task easier if they enjoyed it more or vice versa (see Table 3).

Table 3 *Participants' Attitudes towards Creative Writing Tasks (post-test results)*

Tasks	the easiest %	the most difficult %	the most enjoyable %
Secret Confession	23	13	10
Short Story Competition	23	7	17
Random Words Epigraph	46	17	50
Historical Fiction	0	50	10
Jumble Story	7	13	13

In the final part, the students' perceptions in relation to their level of productive use of non-academic vocabulary were investigated through preset percentages. In line with the results, the groups were compared and striking differences were obtained. As shown in Table 4, Group A, who had vocabulary revision sessions, reported that they had a higher level of non-academic vocabulary usage, which ranged from 60 to 100%. To exemplify, 68% of Group A thought that they were able to use the vocabulary acquired in revision files to a facility of 80 to 100%. And the rest (32%) thought that they were able to use the vocabulary acquired in revision files to a facility of 60 to 80%. Receiving no vocabulary revision sessions, Group B, on the other hand, reported that they had a lower level of non-academic vocabulary usage, which ranged from 0 to 80% facility. Nevertheless, their perceptions were higher than their actual usage of non-academic vocabulary in the writings as they were able to use the non-academic vocabulary covered in the files to an extent of 2 to 3% (see Table 4).

Table 4 *Perceptions on non-academic Vocabulary Usage by Groups*

Question	Preset Percentages	Group A	Group B
		<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>
To what extent were you able to use non-academic vocabulary you acquired in advance when doing your creative writing tasks?	0 - 20%	-	5
	20 - 40%	-	4
	40 - 60%	-	8
	60 - 80%	8	8
	80 - 100%	17	-

Conclusion

On the basis of the findings emerging in this research, EAP learners' perceptions about and attitudes towards creative writing could be directed to a positive extent through various tasks implemented in a two-month period, and their productive use of non-academic vocabulary could also be fostered with the help of vocabulary revision files. The implementations performed within the scope of this study seem to be beneficial to L2 learners in an EAP context, and could be used as an attempt to insert creative writing tasks into the curricula of EAP programs, which could make learners more familiar with creative writing styles. The literature reviewed throughout this paper discusses additional benefits of creative writing from a variety of perspectives. Specifically, the inclusion of literary works or creative writing tasks into language classrooms is claimed to contribute not only to learners' creative writing but also to their academic writing abilities (Bussinger, 2013; Hirvela, 2005; Ostrow & Chang, 2012), vocabulary building (Ying, 2008) and communicative competence (Smith, 2013). This improvement could be ensured at all levels, because no matter what levels of proficiency the learners bring to class, "creative writing offers an avenue for all students to improve their English writing skills" (Ross, 2007, p. 14). This study further justified that tertiary level students having more academic concerns and acquiring more formal language due to their curriculum could enjoy and benefit undertaking extra-curricular creative writing activities. Such an enjoyment could also motivate EAP teachers to include more free writing activities and more literary pieces pertaining to the target language they teach. Considering the positive gains on the side of both learners and teachers, using creativity in academic language instruction could facilitate the notion of seeing the language as a whole.

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Appendix 1 *Pre-test Questions*

Part 1: What do you know about creative writing? Can you give an example?

Would you like to do creative writing in this class?

Would it help you develop your writing skills and vocabulary usage?

Part 2: Have you got any creative writing experience before?

If so, what sort of writing was it, how did you feel when writing that piece, and how much did it help your writing skills?

Part 3: What is academic vocabulary? Can you give a few examples? How productively are you able to use non-academic vocabulary in written or spoken English?

What is non-academic vocabulary? Can you give a few examples? How productively are you able to use non-academic vocabulary in written or spoken English?

Appendix 2 Sample Items from Non-academic Vocabulary Revision Files

<i>go bananas</i>	<i>penny-pincher</i>	<i>reserved</i>
<i>old as the hills</i>	<i>battle of words</i>	<i>outgoing</i>
<i>look blue</i>	<i>pickpockets</i>	<i>weird</i>
<i>burst into tears</i>	<i>midpoint</i>	<i>open a can of worms</i>
<i>sleeveless</i>	<i>long johns</i>	<i>tolerate</i>
<i>pinch</i>	<i>mosquitoes</i>	<i>bamboozle</i>
<i>give away secrets</i>	<i>outmoded</i>	<i>fly in one's mind</i>

Appendix 3 Creative Writing Tasks

I. Secret Confession – a letter of your confession

“You must stay drunk on writing so reality cannot destroy.”

Ray Bradbury - American writer

Think about a secret you have to confess that seems difficult to share with other people, but finally you have the courage and want to share it by writing. It can be a real event from your past memories or a completely imaginary situation that you could make up. It doesn't have to be related with your own life, as it could be someone else's confession shared with you some time ago. What is important here is to write it in first person singular as if you had experienced those events or situations. Write a letter in which you reflect on the secret, explore why it needs to be confessed, think about who will be affected if the secret is known, and consider why you are afraid. It is possible that you can write this confess letter in a paper-pencil format or as an e-mail. Still, it will be a real letter addressed to a particular person (a close friend, a girl/boy friend, a teacher, a school principal, a family member, etc.); a group of people (classmates, colleagues, relatives, etc.); or a society (the police, the public, a company, readers of certain magazines/papers, Internet followers, blogospheres, etc.) that might or might not be affected by your confession.

II. Short Story Competition – a short story of imagination

“The role of a writer is not to say what we all can say, but what we are unable to say.”

Anais Nin - French-Cuban author

A magazine is running a short story competition. To enter the competition you have to submit a story either starting or finishing with the words given.

Starting options (choose either of the beginnings and complete the story):

I was alone in the house reading a scary ghost story. As rain was falling silently outside, the only sound was the ticking of my grandfather’s clock. The dying fire cast an orange glow onto the walls. Suddenly.....

Tuesday started like any other day: shower, breakfast, paper, crossword, and then don’t forget the teeth. All was going well, on schedule, according to plan, just like any other Tuesday. Until! Until my.....

Finishing options (choose either of the endings and write a beginning for the story):

.....Now Richard was filled with regret as he looked around the space inside the four walls of the tiny cell. Thinking of the years lay ahead; he heard the heavy prison door shut behind him.

.....Henry, standing at the entrance of the church, was staring at Angela with a flourish of fake joy. He showed his fingers kept crossed. Catching the signal from her ever biggest love, Angela brushed the skirt of her wedding dress, took a deep breath and walked towards where he was going to sit as a bride.

III. Random Words Epigraph – writing your poem

“To me, the greatest pleasure of writing is not what it’s about, but the inner music that words make.”

Truman Capote - American author

Decide on randomly-chosen entries from the vocabulary covered in this class. You can do this just by flipping through the page, closing the eyes, and putting fingers down on the page. After getting all the entries, you need to shape your list of entries into a poem, using at least ten of the

entries. You can, of course, use them all if you want. You can add articles, helping and to be verbs, coordinating conjunctions, and prepositions. It is all up to you to incorporate the themes and images that you are interested in. Be as creative as you can!

IV. Historical Fiction – a diary of a historic figure

Choose a historical figure. You can find background information about famous historic figures from the website: http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/

You can choose one of the following sentence beginnings and compose a diary in first-person, speaking as the historic figure you have chosen. You can explain the figure's wish, dream, regret, or fear. This is going to be a piece of diary that might be a topic for a prospective documentary. You can also create your own beginning sentence.

- *The thing that I regret most about my life is*
- *If I could accomplish one more thing, I would*
- *The accomplishment that I am proudest of is*
- *If I could live anywhere in the world, I'd choose*
- *The saddest moment in life was when*
- *My favorite childhood memory is*
- *The thing that scares me the most is ...*

V. Jumble Story – a mix and match story

There are four sets of cards: (a) character; (b) setting; (c) time; and situation. Choose a card from each set, mix and match them to create your own story.

Appendix 4 Post-test Questions

Part 1: Can you describe, in your own words, what the creative writing is?

How do you feel about creative writing now?

What are your opinions about creative writing?

Part 2: Which creative writing task do you think was the easiest/the most difficult to work on?

Which one did you enjoy best when writing?

Part 3: To what extent were you able to use non-academic vocabulary you acquired in this class when doing your creative writing tasks? a) 0 to 20%; b) 20 to 40%; c) 40 to 60%; d) 60 to 80%; e) 80 to 100%.