

# The “Foundations” of Creative Writing: Creative Narratives of Young Children Inspired by Literature

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**Abstract:** Within the framework of original educational programs which took place during seventeen academic years, young students produce narrative texts, inspired by various literary works, regarding creative imitation, modifying or overturning the literary model. Throughout a great number of games and activities, young students, perform individual or team narrations, based on the teaching principles of fading scaffolding. The educator initially addresses the young children by asking general questions and later additional clarifying ones, in connection to the previous answers he is given as far as characters, locations and time action are concerned and so on. The answers of the infants are recorded by the educator via traditional or contemporary methods as a whole text. Then, we move on from the asking and answering procedure to the narration of the young students as long as the questions of the tutor decrease to a degree that children’s references become complete and more explicit. Young children repeat to each other spontaneously as a recreational activity the process of interactive asking/answering while focusing on literary works of their choice. Therefore, we conclude from the results namely the productive children speech that the young children throughout their own increasing participation in the programs come up automatically with the relative questions and with self- guidance, they narrate entire, original texts.

**Key words:** creative thinking, literature, academic programs

## 1. Introduction

Our constant and systematic goal setting throughout these seventeen consequent academic years, is the materialization of academic programs inspired by various literary works of art. We refer to our academic approaches leading to the many hundreds of children narratives as the foundations of creative writing and then we attempt to verify our position as it may seem strange to refer to creative writing with regards to young students who usually lack the skill of basic writing at this age.

The cultivation of creative thinking certainly comprises the most fundamental target nowadays and simultaneously the most critical bet of upbringing from an early age. In addition, the need of kids to take part in recreational and educational programs is surely undisputable. Since the dominant element of children’s nature is the vital necessity to play (Huizinga, 1989), therefore through the playful atmosphere of academic programs, we accomplish the creative participation of all class students in the fore-mentioned programs.

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The focusing of these programs on literary texts (Poslaniek, 1992), maximizes and improves their results. The literary model constitutes the strongest motivation of children’s imagination to say the least. It inspires, takes off, releases powers and skills (Ilia, 2004, p. 167)

## 2. Educational Objectives

- The development of critical thinking is the essential target.
- The linguistic development is mentioned indicatively and specifically the cultivation of narrative aptitude through the literary citing.
- The familiarization with the concept of literature is evident in the children’s creative narrations.
- The comprehension of the connection between oral and written speech; the unique trait of written speech to replace the oral one.
- The goal of promoting interaction and better communication amongst all young children resulting in the establishing of stronger friendship ties.
- As the varied presentation of student’s daily achievements is ensured within the carrying out of academic programs, the connection and reaching out of the school community towards society overall is also pursued. This contributes to the communication and understanding of different generations and instills in all of us hope and optimism.

## 3. Principles of Teaching Approaches

### 3.1 The Creative Role of Readers

With the view to emphasize the effectiveness of the combination of academic programs with literature so that students produce original speech, let us reflect on how the very same literary readership is a process through which the creativity that characterizes our being is expressed (Κωτόπουλος, 2012) and while we respond to our reader role how we are becoming more of co-creators with the author himself (Iser, 1990, pp. 44–45). As a result of our intensive thinking activity, we perform while reading, unveiling mistaken concepts arousing aspirations for the plot development, forming beliefs towards various literary characters being directly involved in the narrative. We “identify” with the heroes (Booth, 1987) to such a degree that we personally experience situations and emotions entailed in the text. As our literary approach is based on individual experiences, it enhances our self-awareness. By exploiting literature in education, we view consequently an aesthetic enjoyment, we not only become emotionally charged because of reading creativity, but we also realize how valuable a correlation between educational programs is especially combined with literature teaching.

Within the framework of educational programs, we utilize the inexhaustible nature of literature, meaning the fact that every individual reading is different, one of a kind, original, unparalleled and is worth expressing just because it embodies the unique nature of each reader. In Reader-response criticism, the text interpretation is interrelated with the special traits of each reader (Tziovas, 1987).

According to Alter, our imaginary world hides various concepts and the interest which is entailed in any classic or contemporary author is relevant to the fact that his work can inspire varied interpretations (Alter, 1985). Similarly, Riffaterre supports that each interpretation of literary texts should not aim at the banning of ambiguities which characterize literary writing since all words convey different meanings (Riffaterre, 1985). What arises therefore from the above, is that the natural development of literary reading as well as literary teaching within the

framework of inspirational, academic programs, remains the creative renarration of the literary text.

### **3.2 The Creative Thinking of Young Children**

Besides the literary nature of each piece which dictates, it requires the creativity while expressing reader response thus, the same direction follows the quality of infant creative thinking. According to a relevant research which took place among kindergarten and early stages of primary school, we encountered no similar texts at all among children regarding the same book, whereas this convergence was quite common among older students’ texts. The conclusion that infant imagination becomes inexhaustible when is fed by literary passages, as imprinted in a relevant survey (Ilia, 2006), would certainly be a powerful motivation for its systematic use, involving young children in educational activities which incorporate creative narratives.

## **4. Methodological Handing**

### **4.1 The Expression of Reading Experience**

By ensuring the right to readership, students respond freely to the texts which allows the creative renarration of the literary model that may resemble creative mimicking, alternating, or overthrowing (Matsagouras, 2001).

A question arises as to the connection between creative re-narration as mentioned above, with creative writing. Let us focus initially on the ways young children produce narrative texts. Under the influence of the magical element embodied in academic programs and the contribution of their imagination, infants enter the world of literary storytelling and are transformed by impersonating literary heroes.

### **4.2 From Answering to Narrating**

The recreation of literary model derives from the asking and answering procedure to result in a whole narration. In greater detail, the educator initially places general questions to the infants and consequently additional, clarifying ones with reference to the previously given answers concerning active people, places, and time action.

According to each program, young children create academic narratives with reference to the literary model whether individually, in sub-teams or as a whole team (Huck, Hepler & Hickman, 1979), based on the didactic principle of «fading scaffolding» (Matsagouras, 2001). They respond to the teacher’s questions (Pascucci & Rossi, 2002) which constantly decrease to an extent that their own answers become more complete.

### **4.3 Recording and Making Use of Children’s Narratives**

Young children answers are recorded by the educator in traditional or modern ways (mostly in paper or on a computer) as a whole text in any case. In the same way, namely in the form of a whole text, they are read out aloud by the teacher in order that infants have the ability and chance to verify the accuracy of their wording. The co-operation of the infant who are not yet in any position to write with the teacher leads to the production of children’s texts.

The recording of children’s texts, aims at a variety of uses. This utilization of children texts can be in a theatrical mode as well as a printed or digital publication. It comprises one more prerequisite which will further motivate young students to express themselves freely while taking part in the relevant programs (Ilia & Matsagouras, 2006).

#### **4.4 Creative Narrative/Writing as a Recreational Activity**

Infants are used to repeating the asking/answering procedure to each other as a recreational activity. The educational system is transformed into a mimicking game in this case when one infant impersonates the teacher, and the other children act as his/her students and their roles alternate. Watching the children’s free playing, we conclude of course that they have comprehended the questions to a great extent and as the educator keeps asking them, they proceed to complete their narratives. This is an apparent explanation for the gradual decrease in the number of teacher’s questions. The kids’ narrations refer to people, their relationships, emotions as well as time and place of action. Those narratives include all the details that the educator would require in his/her questions.

As a matter of fact, the infant in question also mimics the procedure of recording narratives illustrating the importance and attention paid by infants while expressing their inner thoughts. It is worth noting that this free recreational activity not only takes place focusing on the program’s specific literary work but also on other works of literature chosen by the infants. In this way, young students can express to their classmates their literary preferences about various books, to exchange and share different personal reading experiences.

### **5. Results**

#### **5.1 The Model Text**

Let us refer to an extract taken by a book of Elias Venezis, called “Eoliki Gi”, and his narrative techniques of “retrospective” and “boxing” narrative through which the figure of the mermaid is described to us (Estia publishing, 2009, pp. 119–121). In the text, one of the secondary characters of the story who are talking about ghosts refers to the appearance of the mermaid who is described as possessing a female face and body which however ends with a fish tail. This creature was associated in the main character’s mind with the occurrence of a terrible storm and rough sea he experienced as a young boy during his first sea voyage with his father. On hearing his father’s, the captain of the ship, voice to confirm that “Alexander the Great Lives and Conquers”, the mermaid dived into the sea which immediately became tranquil and the sky clear.

#### **5.2 Children’s Texts**

In total of twenty-three children’s texts, we concluded that the mermaid’s attitude towards people is mainly positive. In many of their narrations she appears to ship just because she seeks human interaction. She is interested in copying human behaviors and adopting elements of the human way of living. In some parts of children’s narratives, the mermaid’s figure is totally absent as young children focus simply on sea voyages and adventures. Three original texts are cited below:

a) The sky became cloudy, and it started raining. Then came the storm and huge waves emerged in the sea. A child was watching from his window and was very scared. He was home alone. His dad was the captain of a small ship and was away travelling. His mum was also away at work. When his dad came home, he told them that at the time of the storm he saw a green fish tail. Judging by its colour, he presumed it belonged to a mermaid. The tail vanished into the sea before he had the chance to see her face and body. The wave prevented her from coming nearer to talk to them. The little child was terrified of the sea ever since and only swam in a pool.

b) The mermaid showed up on the island. She removed her tail, and she is walking fine. She is going to her grandmother who lives on the island. Once upon a time the mermaid was a little girl. She found a real belt in a drawer which she really liked and tried on. Then she pressed the buckle and was transformed into a mermaid, but

she didn't realize it. She called her grandmother to show her the belt but all she said was “nice belt” As soon as the little girl entered the sea to swim, she understood she was a mermaid. She travelled far reached the sea bottom only to see a sunken ship which had crashed in the rocks. When she returned home, her grandma asked her “where have you been? Are you hungry at all?” Once they entered the sea together, they realized that both were mermaids because her grandmother has worn the same belt in the past without the little girl being aware of it.

c) A sunny winter's day two children and their father are travelling on their ship. Suddenly, huge waves emerge like giant mountains. Then the two kids noticed a brown fish tail on the ship's side. The girl asks “can it be a rare fish?”. Then the ship bumps into this tail. Their dad explains to them that it is a mermaid. She has long black hair and small yellow dots on her tail. Her eyes are blue. The mermaid before diving into the sea again, takes a glimpse at the captain and falls in love with him. She wants to become human to stay with him. She finds an unusual coral, strokes it, and makes a magical filter. She drinks it and turns into an ordinary woman. She comes ashore, searches all houses, and finds the captain in the last one. He immediately recognizes her from a small detail, her shoes are covered in yellow dots. She becomes his wife because the kids' mother was snatched some time ago by a gigantic fish while she was swimming.

## 6. Conclusion

Within the teaching framework we have presented so far, the students-readers express freely their identifying with certain narrative persons and re-live the scene of narration, which has mesmerized them, and shape the action plot accordingly to their personal experiences and wishes. In this way, self-awareness and contact are established as well as meaningful interaction among all children.

Students take part in the programs, to enjoy themselves and communicate their thoughts. Children's desire for a wide and meaningful communication through writing, proves to us that they realize writing as the best way to interact with other people.

As it arises from the above-mentioned indicative results, the constructive children's texts, infants through their gradual participation in the programs, think and respond automatically to the relevant questions and with self-guidance they end up narrating entire, original texts. Consequently, by gradually attaining the skill of writing in the future, they can function autonomously while creating narrative texts.

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