Creative Writing in the Swedish EFL Classroom

The views of teachers in Years 7-9 and Upper Secondary School

Fanny Aidantausta

English, bachelor's level
2023

Luleå university of technology
Department of Arts, Communication and Education

LULEÅ
UNIVERSITY
OF TECHNOLOGY
L

Abstract

The study highlights English teachers' attitudes towards the teaching of creative writing in the English subject in Swedish compulsory school years 7-9 and upper secondary school. The data in this study was collected through a quantitative web survey answered by 13 respondents and qualitative, semi-structured interviews with four teachers selected from the survey respondents. The findings show that the teachers' attitudes to creative writing as a part of English teaching are influenced partly by how important they think writing in English is but also by external factors, such as the school's steering documents and the social environment.

Key words: Compulsory school, creativity, foreign language teaching, upper secondary school, writing skill

Table of contents

1 Introduction

Teaching how to write academic essays, reports and analysis is standard in the English language classrooms at Swedish compulsory school years 7-9 and upper secondary school. Not as self-evident however, is teaching to write creatively or to use creative methods in order to develop language proficiency, even though it is stated in the curriculum that it is the school's responsibility to stimulate students' creativity (Skolverket, 2011a, 2011b).

In the syllabi for the English subject from year 7 and up to upper secondary school it is vaguely worded that students should be given the opportunity to produce text of different kinds (Skolverket, 2011c, 2020). These syllabi could be compared with the English syllabus for primary school (F-6), where it is clearly stated that the core content in the English subject should include production and interaction in form of songs, limericks and dramatization (Skolverket, 2011a). By English teachers in compulsory school years 7-9 and upper secondary school, the vague words in their syllabi could be interpreted differently and even if it is not mandatory to teach creative writing to young adults, some teacher still use creative writing methods in their education. Why is that and how do they employ it? What are the benefits of using creative writing compared to other writing methods?

Writing in a foreign language requires understanding and knowledge of both subject matter and the language in which the text should be written, including knowledge about syntax, grammar, and vocabulary. Many educational tools and working materials exist when it comes to teaching writing, such as glossaries and conventions for academic writing and how to write, for example, reports and literature analyses. Hanauer (2014) points out that writing in a second language does not always need be standardized according to the norm, it can be something outside the box and unique to each student's linguistic knowledge. But creative writing as an educational tool is not as thoroughly examined and therefore not used to the same extent as, for example, academic writing. Despite this, several studies within the area show evidence that creative writing can contribute to language development (Murugiah, 2013; Smith, 2013; Tarnopolsky, 2005; Tin, 2011; Tok & Kandemir, 2015).

Creative writing normally refers to the process and production of text which has an aesthetic purpose, for example, fiction or poetry. Compared to expository writing, creative writing draws more heavily on intuition, imagination and personal memories and experiences (Maley, 2009). Through this study my hope is to gain an insight into how creative writing is taught in EFL classrooms at Swedish compulsory schools and upper secondary schools, and it is my hope that this study can inspire other teachers to make more use of creative writing when teaching writing skills.

2 Aim

The aim of the study is to gain insight into how creative writing in English foreign language classrooms in Sweden is used according to teachers' descriptions and the English teachers' approach to creative teaching methods.

More specifically, the research questions are:

1. What are the teachers' attitudes towards creative writing in the English subject at Swedish compulsory school years 7-9 and upper secondary schools?
2. How, according to teachers, is creative writing used in the English subject in Swedish compulsory school years 7-9 and upper secondary schools?
3. What external factors do teachers identify as influencing their teaching of creative writing?

3   Background

In this background, various theories and definitions based on previous research and other literature will be presented, continuing with writing in general, the Swedish school steering documents as well as different approaches to teaching creativity and creative writing.

3.1   Teaching EFL writing

The first recognised written language found so far is from about 5,500 years ago. Since then, many writing systems have evolved around the world, and even though writing has a long history, it has remained a minority occupation. This is because although all human beings grow up speaking their first language, writing still must be taught (Harmer, 2004). In the context of education, it is worth remembering that most exams, whether they are testing foreign language abilities or other skills, often rely on the students' writing proficiency in order to measure their knowledge (Harmer, 2004).

One of the European Union´s goals, which Sweden stands behind, is that all citizens of the Union should learn at least two foreign languages from early age. To find out to which extent the goal is achieved, an international language study was carried out in 2011 (Skolverket, 2012). The study covered 14 countries and around 53,000 students in the ages of 13 to 16. Each participating country were to test the two largest foreign languages. In Sweden, 3,600 ninth graders in the subjects English and Spanish participated. The students were tested in their reading, listening, and writing abilities. The result showed that the Swedish students performed very well in English compared to the 13 countries that participated, especially in reading and listening abilities. However, the Swedish students did not show as good results in writing skills. The largest percentage of participating students were at level B1 in the GERS scale when it comes to English writing skill, while in reading and listening comprehension the largest percentage of the Swedish students were at level B2 (Skolverket, 2012). According to Skolverket (2012) a likely explanation for the lower results in writing than in the other two tested abilities is that it is more demanding to be good at writing in English compared to reading and listening and thus more difficult to teach writing.

Writing can be taught in the classroom for a variety of purposes and how to teach writing depends on both the teacher and the teaching situation. In some cases, it is taught to the same extent as the other skills. In other situations, it is only used in what Harmer (2004, p. 31) calls a "writing-for-learning role", which means that students write predominantly to increase their learning of the grammar and vocabulary of the language. For example, the teacher asks the students to write sentences using recently learnt grammar or using a selected number of chosen words when writing a paragraph. Additionally, Harmer (2004, p. 34) points out that "writing for learning" depends on the students' ability to write already. Teaching "writing for writing" on the other hand, is entirely different. This kind of teaching aims at helping the students become better writers and learn how to write in various genres using different registers (Harmer, 2004).

In a similar way, Lightbown and Spada (2015) also differ between two kinds of writing instruction methods. The first kind is structure-based instruction where linguistics items are presented and practised in isolation and the written language that students encounter is selected primarily to provide practice with specific grammatical features (Lightbown & Spada, 2015). The other method is communicative and content-based instruction where focus is rather on meaning than accuracy. The classroom activities are formed to prepare students to continue learning outside the classroom by giving them experience in language uses such as write and understand stories or write authentic science reports. In other words, language experiences that they likely will encounter outside of classroom (Lightbown & Spada, 2015).

In agreement with the communicative and content-based instruction method, Harmer (2004, p. 39) argues that the most effective writing for learning is likely to take place when students are writing real messages for real audience or when they are preforming tasks which they are likely to have to do in their out-of-class life. He therefore distinguishes between real purpose and invented purpose tasks. Real purpose tasks are the ones that students will probably need to perform at some stage, for example having to write formal letters or reports of a process or situation. Invented purpose tasks are those which engage but are unlikely to be directly relevant to students' future needs (Harmer, 2004, p. 38). Nevertheless, Harmer goes on to say that if students find an activity amusing and engaging, even if it is an invented purpose task, it will help build a positive attitude towards writing (Harmer, 2004, p. 38). According to Harmer (2004, p. 41) creative writing tasks are nearer the "invented purpose" end of the cline, but he also argues that these kinds of tasks can be motivating since they provide opportunities for the students to display their work. This use of writing is one of few occasions when students write for a wider audience such as other students, family members or even readers of a specific magazine or website, not just their teacher.

Teachers have several crucial tasks to perform in order to help their students to become better writers. Harmer (2004, pp. 41-41) defines five tasks that he believes are important for the teacher. The first is "demonstrating". Teachers need to be able to draw features such as writing conventions and genre constraints in specific types of writing, to students' attention. Second comes "motivating and provoking", which means that the teacher helps the students by provoking them into having ideas, enthusing them with the value of the task, and persuading them what fun it can be. This task is important especially when students find themselves lost for words. The third task is "supporting". Teachers need to be extremely supportive when students are in writing class, always available and prepared to help students overcome difficulties. The fourth is "responding". When responding, the teacher reacts to the content and construction of a piece, supportively and make suggestions for its improvement. This is not a stage for grading or judging, rather telling the student how well it is going so far. Finally, the last task is "evaluating", where the teacher indicates where the students wrote well and where they made mistakes, and often award grades. Evaluating is not just to grade students but also a learning opportunity.

3.2 The steering documents

The steering document for compulsory school years 7-9 and upper secondary school are essential for this study since the curriculum and the syllabi decide to a high extent the content in the classroom. The comparison of the steering documents below demonstrates both the similar and different conditions under which teachers work towards in their teaching of creative writing.

3.2.1 The Curriculum

Some of the aspects stressed in the curriculum for both compulsory school and upper secondary school are individuality, self-expression and personal development. In order to achieve these, the school's mission is, among other things, to stimulate and encourage students' creativity, curiosity, and self-esteem as well as willingness to try and put ideas into action (Skolverket, 2011a, 2011b). Compared to the curriculum for upper secondary school, the curriculum for compulsory school emphasises creative, exploratory work and play as essential parts of active learning. Within compulsory school, students should be encouraged to try and develop different forms of expressions, and experience emotions and moods. Drama, rhythm, dance, music making and creation in image, text and form should be elements in the school's activities (Skolverket, 2011a). In the curriculum for upper secondary school, it not explicitly stated that similar elements should be included in the learning process or that the students should be encouraged to try out different forms of expressions and experiences such as image, music, drama, and dance. Instead, it is stated that it is the teachers' responsibility to let the students try different methods and ways of working in general (Skolverket, 2011b).

3.2.2 The English Syllabi for 7-9 and Upper Secondary School

In the English subject in both compulsory school years 7-9 and upper secondary school, the syllabi state that students should be given the opportunity to develop the ability to use different strategies to facilitate communication when language skills are insufficient. The aim with the teaching of English is to give students the opportunity to integrate in writing and develop the ability to put the content of spoken language and texts in relation to their own experiences, living conditions and interests (Skolverket, 2011c, 2020). In neither the syllabus for compulsory school years 7-9 nor upper secondary school English, 5, 6 or 7 is it explicitly stated that the courses must include interaction and production of creative texts. In the English syllabus for years 7-9 it is stated that the subject must include oral and written narratives (Skolverket, 2011c), and in the syllabi for English 5, 6 and 7, the courses must include oral and written production of different kinds (Skolverket, 2020).

In other words, it is not written in neither of the syllabi that creative writing must be included in the English education. But it is at the same time stated that the English courses must include oral and written production of different kinds. This, in combination with the curriculum for years 7-9 and upper secondary school, where creativity and self-expression are emphasized,

allow teachers to introduce creative writing in the English classrooms for both years 7-9 and upper secondary school.

3.3   Creativity

There are numerous definitions of creativity. In the later part of the twentieth century creativity was seen as neither unique nor distinctive to literature, and that creativity in life and in literature were not unlike in either kind or degree (Hall, 2015, p. 32). More recently, Pope (2002) defines creativity as the capacity to make something innovative and essential and for an appropriate purpose. Additionally, he interprets creativity as something that should be recognised as common as well as special, ordinary as well as extraordinary, and collaborative as well as individual. Creativity can be referred as big 'C' creativity, which is often associated with admirable and creative people and their extraordinary achievements. However, creativity can also refer to creative processes and acts in our everyday life, not spectacular processes and acts but still remarkable instances of creative thoughts, expressions, and behaviours, which can be referred as little 'c' creativity (Kurtz, 2015). Besides that, Otto (1998) distinguishes between creative thinking and creativity. He defines creative thinking as a cognitive process whose intended outcome is a number of alternative responses to a given task that are perceived in some way as novel and unusual. Creativity, he argues, is then the extent to which individuals can successfully engage in such a process (Otto, 1998).

Since creativity is so widely defined it is believed to be about letting the imagination loose in a lawless land of self-expression (Maley, 2015). Maley (2015) states that creativity is nothing like that, it is born out of discipline and thrives in a context of constraints. It is difficult to define creativity as either this or that, since creativity is widely interpreted by different researchers, but a common factor is that creativity is highly individual and refers to innovative and remarkable processes in our everyday life (Kurtz, 2015; Pope, 2002).

3.4   Creativity and language learning

Creativity is necessary for survival, or at least according to Maley (2015). From a more linguistic point of view, creativity is a large part of learning and using a language, from the ability to formulate new utterances to the way a child tells a story; from the skill of a stand-up comedian to the genius of Shakespeare. In a learning context, creativity can stimulate, engage, motivate, and satisfy in a deep sense. Additional, creativity can improve students' self-esteem, confidence, and self-awareness (Maley, 2015).

Tin (2011) uses the term "language creativity" and defines it as the playful use of language to construct new meanings, transforming one's current linguistic and conceptual world, and involving creative thinking. Tin (2011) further argues that a creative use of language may potentially develop learners' language and challenge them to use a wider vocabulary. In the same vein, Kurtz (2015) argues that we engage in multiple instances of little 'c' creativity when we learn a foreign language, because learners of a foreign language constantly guess, improvise,

and create new utterances in the target language. Humans are storytelling-beings, in other words, language users need to be able to tell stories. Evidence shows that the one area of human linguistic expertise that goes on improving across our lifespan, is our narrative competence (Hall, 2015, p. 38).

3.5   Writing as a creative language tool

Learning to express oneself creatively is a very individual process rooted in one's inner imagination and emotional life. Despite that, several researchers claim that the use of creative writing in foreign language teaching can have a wide-ranging implication in learning a foreign language (Murugiah, 2013; Smith, 2013; Tarnopolsky, 2005; Tin, 2011; Tok & Kandemir, 2015). Creative writing can not only shape the acquisition of language (Lutzker, 2015), but also help increase students' motivation and engagement in classroom activities (Avramenko et al., 2018). Tok and Kandemir (2015) even go as far as stating that creative writing aids language development at all levels including grammar, vocabulary, phonology, and discourse. They mean that creative writing requires learners to manipulate the target language in interesting and demanding ways to express uniquely personal meanings. Additionally, Tornberg (2017) points out that one of the advantages with creative writing such as writing poetry is that the students have the opportunity to discover that with the help of the form, they can express meaning that words cannot express itself. She also believes that poetry writing is a playful way for the student to learn that they can express emotions and meanings with very simple means (Tornberg, 2017).

In an attempt to explore the effectiveness of teaching creative writing in ESL/EFL contexts, Murugiah's (2013) study, which comprised 36 non-native English-speaking students from Sarawak, Malaysia, showed signs of improvement in the students' writing skills. However, it took time for the students to learn and cope with this new way of writing and thinking. In Tin's (2011) study, which comprises data of written products by 23 non-native English-speaking Indonesian students and transcripts of students´ discussion while writing in pairs, he observed a kind of transmission bottleneck when the students were to perform a poetry writing task with explicit formal constraints. The task put a selection pressure on the learners, requiring them to develop compositional strategies and syntactic structures; combining known familiar utterances in unfamiliar ways, in order to construct new meanings (Tin, 2011). For many students and teachers, creative writing is a new and unexplored way of writing. Murugiah (2013) therefore argues that it is of high importance to choose the right kind of creative writing task suited for the learners of the target language.

Despite the fact that the process of creative writing might be experienced as time consuming and can create possible bottlenecks, learning a language creatively by writing literary texts can help improve second language learners' language development. Creative writing incorporates a range of critical orientations and potential towards zones of experimentation and exploration of languages (Disney, 2014). The challenge with creative writing is to encourage students to shift from attending to compositional rules, and instead move toward creative zones where language is a material with structures, surface texture, and tensions, fit for exploration and

experimentation (Disney, 2014). Creative writing tasks will not be easy for EFL learners because of the limitations many students come up against when writing in a foreign language. Nor will all students respond well to the invitation to be ambitious and to take risks. But for some, the supplying of genuinely creative tasks may open up avenues they have not previously travelled neither in their mother-togue language nor the target language (Harmer, 2004, p. 41). For teachers to understand what it actually means to have to be creative on demand, Tornberg (2017) suggest that teachers themselves try out the tasks that the students do to challenge themselves and show their students that learning is lifelong and that, as the students, the teacher is also a learner.

4 Method and implementation

In the following section *choice of method, sample* and *implementation* are presented, followed by *process and analysis.* Finally, the research *ethical consideration* is presented.

4.1 Choice of method

This study is a mixed method research with a parallel mixed design. A parallel mixed design involves a simultaneous gathering of quantitative and qualitative data where both are equally important. The analyses are then compared with each other or integrated into a whole (Bryman, 2018, p. 762). This type of design can also be explained in terms of triangulation, which means that the results from one investigation, with a certain method associated with one research strategy, is double-checked against the results from another method, which belongs to the second research strategy (Bryman, 2018, p. 767). A mixed method research enables a more comprehensive and complete understanding of the collected data than single method approaches and answers the research questions more meaningfully by combining quantitative and qualitative data (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 33).

Quantitative research involves a collection of numerical data and an objective view on the social reality. This kind of research can be described as focused on some specific factors including measuring, causality, generalisation, and replication (Bryman, 2018, pp. 198, 223). A questionnaire was designed in order to gather quantitative data about English teachers' experience of teaching creative writing in compulsory school years 7-9 and upper secondary school. Questionnaires can be compared to structured interviews, but unlike structured interviews, questionnaires tend to have fewer open questions, a design that is easy to understand, and be shorter (Bryman, 2018, p. 286). The conducted questionnaire is designed through Google Forms. The benefit with a web questionnaire is that the respondents' answers can be organised automatically which eliminates the monotonous work of coding a large number of surveys (p. 297).

In parallel with the questionnaire, qualitative semi-structured interviews with a selected number of teachers were conducted. A qualitative research strategy is inductive, interpretive and constructionist (Bryman, 2018, p. 454). Interviews are probably the most common method in

qualitative research. For this study a semi-structured interview was designed, which means that the interview had relatively specific topics, but the participant also had great freedom to design the answers in their own way. Compared to a structured interview, the questions in a semi-structured interview do not need to come in the same order as in the prepared interview guide, which works as a list with different topics and suggested questions that the interview should cover. Additionally, if the interviewer links to something the interviewee said, questions that are not included in the guide can also be asked (Bryman, 2018, p. 563-565). For the questionnaire and the interview guide, see the Appendices.

4.2   Sample

The method of sampling is a non-probability sample, which means that a particular section of the wider population has been selected purposely (Cohen et al., 2018). There are several types of non-probability sample, in this case purposive sampling is undertaken to include representativeness and to access those who have in-depth knowledge of the subject I question (Cohen et al., 2018). The study was based on questionnaires and interviews with English teachers. The questionnaire was answered by 13 teachers. The requirement to participate in the questionnaire was that the teachers teach English in either compulsory school years 7-9 or in upper secondary school, English 5, 6 or 7, and use or have experience of using creative writing in the English subject. The questionnaire was shared in multiple groups at Facebook aimed towards English teachers.

Through the questionnaire, teachers were able to leave contact information if they were interested in participating in a more in-depth interview about creative writing. Four teachers were interviewed, two of them are teachers at compulsory school years 7-9 and the other two are teachers at upper secondary school, English 5, 6 or 7. They work at different schools in different parts of Sweden. All the teachers have more than eight years of working experience and teach at least one more subject in addition to English. The selection of teachers was based on those who were asked and agreed to be interviewed.

4.3   Implementation

The web questionnaire was answered online, individually by the participants. In the introduction of the questionnaire the participants were informed about the aim with the study and consented to participation.

After designing an interview guide based on the aim of the study, interviews with the teachers who had agreed to participate were booked. At this stage the teachers were informed about the estimated length of the interview and where it would take place. Due to covid-19 and long distances, the interviews took place on the online video conference service Zoom. The interviews were in Swedish and lasted between 15 and 34 minutes. The length of the interviews had an average of 24.25 minutes and a standard deviation of 7.12 minutes. During the interview,

follow-up questions were adapted to suit the respondents' answers. The video meeting was recorded in Zoom to be transcribed.

4.4   Process and analysis

The collected audio material from the interviews was 92 minutes in total. The empirical data was processed by transcribing the interviews verbatim. However, recorded material that was not of relevance, such as small talk or humming, has been marked and/or deleted from the transcriptions. The completed transcription resulted in 20 computer-written pages with the font Times New Roman, font size 12 and spacing 1.15.

The questionnaire was designed through Google Forms, a computer packages that automatically processed and reviewed the data. The transcption from the interviews and the reviewed data from the questionnaire has been analysed in order to search for patterns in the respondents' answers. By reading through the respondents' answers, similarities and differences were detected and coded. Coding is a process where one tries to find out what the data is about and then gradually develop categories and concepts (Thornberg & Forslund Frykedal, 2015). For this analysis selective coding was used, which means that the researcher selects and uses the codes that appear to be the most important or that are the most frequent (Thornberg & Forslund Frykedal, 2015). The process of finding important, relevant and frequent codes then proceeded to group the codes that belong together into themes in relation to the study's research questions. Based on this analysis, categories were created in relation to the research questions. The categories are *Attitudes to creative writing in the English subject, Ways to use creative writing in the English subject* and *External factors affecting the use of creative writing*

4.5   Ethical considerations

The study is conducted according to the Swedish Research Council's (Vetenskapsrådet, 2002) four main requirements regarding principles of research ethics: the information requirement, the consent requirement, the confidentiality requirement, and the utilization requirement. The information requirement was fulfilled by informing the teachers about the aim of the study and how the survey was to be conducted. To fulfil the consent requirement, the teachers were informed about their rights to decline their participation whenever they wanted. Those who participated in the study gave their consent by filling in an approval in the questionnaire and orally before the interview. All participants in the study are protected by anonymity. No names for persons, schools or other that can be traced to the interviewees or participants in the questionnaire are stated in the study. Thereby the requirement of confidentiality is met. All collected data will only be used for this study, recorded material from the interviews will be shredded after the study is approved for publication (cf. Vetenskapsrådet, 2002).

5   Results

In this section, the results are presented based on the categories that could be distinguish in the analysis of the questionnaires and the interviews. In the analysis three categories of the English teachers' approach to and experience of creative writing could be distinguished. These are *attitudes to creative writing in the English subject*, *ways to use creative writing in English class* and *the influence of external factors*.

The interviewed teachers are referred to as Teacher 1-4. Teacher 1 and 3 teach the English subject in compulsory school, years 7-9 and Teacher 2 and 4 teach English in upper secondary school. The quotes from the interviewed teachers have been translated from Swedish to English by the author of this study.

5.1   Attitudes to creative writing in the English subject

In the analysis differences and similarities in the teachers' attitude towards creative writing in the English subject could be distinguished. The respondents of the questionnaire agree that writing in general is of importance when teaching English. The interviewed teachers are however of different opinions regarding to which extent writing in the English subject is important. Two of the teachers explained that they thought that writing in English is important. One of those two described writing as an important way for the student to measure their English proficiency and that writing is an important process that needs explicit teaching. The other teacher pointed out that the writing skill is central in the English education and that it is probably the one skill that students need to practice the most. The two other teachers did not consider writing as important. When they are asked the question, if they think writing is an important skill to teach in the English subject, teacher 3 answered: "Well, important and important, I don't know." (Teacher 3). She explained that she does not experience writing as explicit teaching. Her students write independently, she just introduces them to the activity and sometimes put in some grammar. The other teacher explained that teaching writing is important in a way and can help the students to structure their thoughts but that it does not contribute to development within the English language.

When it comes to creative writing as a teaching method, nine out of 13 teachers believe that creative writing contributes to language development, whereas two out of 13 teachers is of the opposite opinion and additionally two teachers have a neutral opinion on the topic. All four interviewed teachers experienced benefits of using creative writing in English class. Teacher 1 meant that creative writing motivates the students to write and teacher 2 was of the same opinion. Teacher 2 experienced that her students appreciate writing in English when they have the opportunity to be creative and when the activity is freer. Additionally, she explained that creative writing includes writing skills such as how to describe and express oneself linguistically and how to make stories more alive, which contributes to language development:

> … they often think that it is a bit more fun with things that are a bit more
> freer and creative, and where they can be a little bit playful, and that also

means that they automatically, or at best, develop linguistically, and that is why I try to put such parts in it: … how to describe, how to express oneself linguistically, how to create more vivid stories. So it is not just that, when writing a story for children, that they use everyday language and it does not become so much of a challenge, but that they are pushed to develop. Then it will be fun and developing at the same time. (teacher 2)

Teacher 4 also agreed that there are benefits to teach creative writing in the English subject. She meant that when the students are given the opportunity to write more freely and creatively, they activate their vocabulary. As a teacher she can then more easily detect those students that have a larger, more active vocabulary compared to those who might need more vocabulary practice.

Despite the benefits of teaching creative writing, the interviewed teachers expressed several difficulties and challenges with the method. The one challenge that all interviewed teachers brought up is their students' lack of imagination when writing. Based on the interviews, this challenge is not perceived as the teachers' biggest challenge with creative writing, since some of them already have come up with solutions to help their students get started when they lack imagination. Teacher 2 explained, for example, that she can introduce a beginning, some sentences, or pictures to start from to help the students that lack imagination of their own.

Another challenge some of the teachers' said they experience was the question of whether the students learn something during the time spent writing creatively, which also is a major reason for why some of the teachers say they do not use creative writing to the same extent that they want to. Both teachers 2 and 3 think it is difficult to grade and give feedback on texts such as stories, lyrics, and poems. They both question how to assess their students in creative writing and make sure that they have learnt something. The teachers agreed that creative writing is fun and challenging in a positive aspect, but they also question whether it is educational enough or if it is just a fun activity to teach for a change.

During the interviews with the four teachers, what came across is that the teachers think differently about how time-consuming creative writing is. All of them said that writing in general takes more time than other activities in English. How much time the teachers spend on teaching creative writing differs among both the questionnaire respondents and the interviewed teachers. Both Teacher 1 and 2 emphasised that time is enough for those activities that they plan and teaches for the moment, but that they experience that time is not enough for everything that they would like to do. The other two interviewed teachers thought that there was not enough time and that they teach writing far too rarely than they want to. Other musts take precedence, such as the national exams which includes reading comprehension, listening comprehension and oral exams.

It is more that I think that I am being controlled, that I do not do it so often because you have to make room for these listening comprehension exams and now, we will have an oral national exam, in the ninth grade, it is now at the

end of November, then you have to practise until then and practise how it works so that they are not nervous. And then you have to add some grammar and reading comprehension. So you can say that, you are welcome to write that I think that the writing part may be a bit too small (teacher 3).

The divided notion of how much time and space each teacher has could also be noted among the survey respondents. Seven out of 13 teachers in the questionnaire agree that there is not enough time and space to teach creative writing in the English subject, whereas six of 13 teachers experience that time is enough. How much time and space the teachers have is crucial to their own attitude towards teaching creative writing in the English subject.

5.2   Ways to use creative writing in English class

When asking the teachers to define what creative writing is for them, the answers included multiple different definitions, from wide definitions, such as "writing that uses students imagination" and "using a vivid and colourful language where the content derives from one's imagination/interpretation of something", to more defined writing activities such as "non-academic writing" or "writing fiction such as short stories, fairy tales or movie scripts, or poems/lyrics, for example.". Many of the teachers, both those interviewed and the respondents from the questionnaire, explained creative writing as a kind of writing that includes using one's imagination or when the students write more freely without boundaries:

> To write something that is made-up or that is close to reality but still 'fiction', so to say. Which has a bit more literary quality. Use your imagination, play with the language. It can be a fairy tale, it can be a short story, it can be a novel. … [W]here there sort of is more creativity, imagination and playfulness included, I would say. (teacher 2)

The wide definition of creative writing is also reflected in the teachers' different suggestions for creative writing activities that they say they use or have experience of using in English class. Teacher 1, for example, uses storytelling dices. The students have to come up with a story based on what the dice show. The teacher explained that each dice has a different theme, for example, the student throws one dice which shows a specific character, it can be a wizard or a ghost, and then the story should include that character. Additionally, this teacher meant that the storytelling dices can help those students that have difficulties coming up with stories of their own. Among the teachers who answered the survey and those teachers who were interviewed, storytelling appears to be a popular activity to teach when it comes to creative writing, 11 out of 13 teachers in the survey use or have experiences of using storytelling in their English education.

Storytelling is just one among many other activities suggested by the interviewed teachers. Both teacher 2 and 3 mentioned that they work with Shakespeare in different ways. Teacher 2 explained that her students get to read a select play by Shakespeare, then watch a filmed version

13

of one of the plays and afterwards the students themselves write and dramatize their own idea for a Shakespeare version based on one or two key events from the play they have read. Teacher 2 pointed out that this activity is appreciated among her students and include more than just a creative way of working, it also includes literature and ways to understand ideas and topics in these kinds of literature. At the school where teacher 3 works, a theatre group visits them annually and write and perform sketches of Shakespeare's plays together with the students. According to the teacher, this theatre group makes the sketches with a lot of humour and in a high tempo, which is highly valued among the students. Besides the activities mentioned above, the teachers gave example of many other creative writing activities, such as writing diaries, poems, urban legends, and song lyrics. One of the teachers mentioned in the interview that she likes to work with themes such as thriller and horror. In English class they can, for example, watch and listen to scary stories and then the students get to write their own scary story with help of for example a writing prompt.

Worth pointing out was that only a few teachers said that they use the material from English course books when they teach creative writing. Many of the ideas to creative writing activities are found online, or made up from the teachers' own experience, which is not true for other writing activities such as grammar practise, discussion essays, argumentative texts and glossaries. The material to these kinds of activities is often found in English course books or in old national exams. Although this is the case when it comes to general writing in the EFL classroom, the teachers in the questionnaire and interviews do not seem to have any problems coming up with their own creative writing activities, but as mentioned previously, time is money and most of the teachers do not have as much time as they want to in order to plan for new creative activities.

5.3   The influence of external factors

If the teachers themselves could decide, they would like to teach creative writing more than they do. One of the interviewed teachers explained that she only now and then teaches creative writing, and the other teachers try to squeeze it in as often as possible, but they explained that there are many other factors that affect the possibilities to teach creative writing to the extent they want to. One major external factor is the Swedish school's steering documents. Among the questionnaire respondents, four out of 13 teachers think that the English syllabi for compulsory school years 7-9 and upper secondary school support the use of creative writing in the EFL classroom, while another four think that there is no support in the syllabi. The rest of the respondents are of a neutral opinion. Opinions about the steering documents also differ between the four interviewed teachers. Two of them are of the opinion that there is distinct support in the English syllabus for teaching creative writing; both of these teachers are teaching English in compulsory school years 7-9. Teacher 1 meant that according to the steering documents, all language subjects in school aim to develop the individual and she interprets creative writing as a tool to help the students with that: "All language subjects aim to develop the individual. You develop very much personally by expressing yourself creatively." During the interview with teacher 3, when asked if she think that the English syllabus encourages the

teaching of creative writing in English class, she runs to pick up the physical syllabus from the bookshelf and then said:

> It is not so often I look in here. Now I just saw it in the bookshelf. … [In] the English subject, I know that one should use writing as a large part. But I do not go and check what to do [in the syllabus], instead I talk to colleagues. (teacher 3)

The teacher argues that writing in English is a central part of the core content in the English subject, but she is uncertain of whether creative writing is included or not. The other interviewed teachers, who are English teachers at upper secondary schools, both pointed out that it is not explicitly stated in the English syllabus that creative writing should be taught. Teacher 4 implied that in English 5 it is included to produce different texts such as narratives, but in English 6 there are no such things mentioned. Instead, she thinks that the space to read creative texts such as fiction and fairy tales is more central in the English 6 syllabus. Teacher 2 is of the same opinion. According to her, creative writing is not something that the syllabus in English promotes, at least not in upper secondary school.

Other external elements, such as the environment of the school is also of importance in order to stimulate creative writing. The school's environment does not only include the physical environment, but also the social environment. Three of the four interviewed teachers agreed that the physical environment at school is not the most stimulating place to write creatively in, but they also explained that not much can be done about the physical environment. However, the social environment can be affected, which includes things such as the composition of students and collaboration with colleagues:

> And then you are controlled a lot by the group as well, so you feel if it would be of value here. So, the group attitude plays a big role, I can imagine that such an approach in a group where you have an aspiration, then it is like you are really there to learn … [T]hen it would probably feel more valuable. (teacher 4)

According to the interviewed teachers, which students there is in the classroom affects both what the teachers are teaching but also the learning outcome. Teacher 4 teaches English 5 and 6 at upper secondary school to students in vocational preparation programs including the industry and construction program. She explained that her students do not always have the aspiration to reach the highest grades and hence do not always appreciate creative writing activities which requires more of them. Teacher 2 on the other hand, also teaches English at upper secondary school, but her students study the aesthetic program, so she does not experience the same problem. Her students enjoy and appreciate activities where they are allowed to use their imagination and work more freely. Even so, teacher 4 explained that she can understand that it must be harder to teach creative writing when teachers have students who

struggle with their imagination. She also emphasises that if the students are not supportive, teachers rarely get that much good out of it.

Being able to brainstorm ideas with colleagues and other teachers is also considered important for coming up with new, educational activities that include creativity in the English subject. Two of the teachers in the interviews explained that they have one or two colleagues that they brainstorm ideas with or plan lessons together with, and that they work cross-disciplinary, in this case, the English and the Swedish subjects. None of the interviewed teachers expressed that being able to share ideas and activities is essential for whether they choose to teach creative writing or not, but that the support and ideas from colleagues are of great help for developing and coming up with new, creative writing activities.

6 Discussion

In this section the results are discussed as well as the methods that have been used to obtain the results. The section is divided into two subheadings: *Method discussion* and *Result discussion.* The method discussion deals with the choice of method and how it has contributed to answer the study's research questions. In the result discussion, the results are linked to previous research from the background section.

6.1 Method discussion

6.1.1 Sample

The sample of this study consisted of compulsory school 7-9 teachers and upper secondary school teachers teaching the English subject. To obtain an acceptable reliability in this study, the web questionnaire was published in multiple Facebook groups for English teachers in Sweden. The goal was to gather data from at least 3-4 interviews and 15 questionnaires. Bryman (2018, p. 468) points out that the sample size should be large enough to generate "thick descriptions" and rich data. After 13 collected questionnaires and four interviews with a total of 20 pages of transcribed texts, the material was perceived as sufficiently to be able to continue with the study. However, the sample size is too small to be able to generalize the results from a larger population.

6.1.2 Choice of method

To gain insight into the teachers' attitude to creative writing as a part of the teaching process, a mixed method research was conducted. Triangulation means that more than one method or data resource is used in the research, often to compare and double check the results to see if the result is consistent (Bryman, 2018, p. 468). To ensure credibility of the results, triangulation is recommended (p. 468). This study is based on two different data collection methods in order to complement each other and provide rich data. The collection of data has taken place through

quantitative research in the form of questionnaires and qualitative research in form of semi-structured interviews, which is a form of triangulation. The benefits of using triangulation in this study has been to find respondents to the interviews and to get a broader view of English teachers' experience of creative writing. A possible problem that can arise when analysing data, especially when having data from a large number of respondents or from different data collection methods, is data overload, which may mean that the researcher is not able to handle the large amount of data at the same time (Thornberg & Fejes, 2015). To avoid this risk, data from both the questionnaires and the interviews was analysed in parallel during the time the data was collected.

With the help of follow-up questions and open-ended questions, the respondents' approach to and experience of using creative writing in the English subject have been captured. There is a risk that some nuances in spoken language and in body language have been overshadowed when compiling the answers. This may affect the reliability of the results, which concerns the question whether the results from one research are the same if the research is conducted again or if a measurement is stable or not (Bryman, 2018, p. 72). However, Bryman (2018, p. 468) points out that reliability becomes most relevant in quantitative research and that the equivalent in qualitative research is dependability which means to adopt a critical approach and clearly outline all phases of the research process. Throughout the process of collecting data from interviews and questionnaires, the material for this study has been analysed and processed to be able to present consistent and comprehensible results. Recording the interviews was a crucial condition for maintaining good validity of the study and the form of individual interviews was chosen to highlight the individual perception of teaching creative writing. The interviews took place online via a video conference platform, this solution made it possible to conduct interviews with teachers in other regions. There are some restrictions when it comes to online interviews via video conference platform, especially the potential of technological problems and the risk of quality impairment in transmission and reception (Bryman, 2018, p. 593). To reduce the risk of technical problems occurring, the respondents were contacted in advance about which video conference platform would be used during the interview and if they did not have access to that platform, they were given an opportunity to make suggestions for another platform that would work better for them.

Collecting data with the help of web questionnaires has been of great benefit to this study. The choice to use a web questionnaire was made to reach out to English teachers at compulsory school years 7-9 and upper secondary school across Sweden and not just be limited to a specific area. However, with a web questionnaire there is a risk that one and the same respondent fill in the questionnaire repeatedly (Bryman, 2018, p. 304). In an attempt to counteract this, information about how to submit one's answers is included in the questionnaire. To design the questionnaire with mostly closed questions was a productive process since the answers were easier to analyse. Bryman (2018, p. 316) explains that when doing the coding afterwards there are often problems regarding to what extent the respondents' answers can be compared with each other. It is difficult in a reliable way to attribute codes to people's answers to questions that have not been coded in advance. However, according to Bryman (2018, p. 317) these problems can be avoided with closed questions. Since most of the questions in the questionnaire

were closed questions, the problem with comparing and coding the respondents' answers did not occur.

6.2 Result discussion

6.2.1 Attitudes to creative writing in the English subject

In the result it appears that the teachers' attitudes to creative writing as a part of English teaching are influenced partly by how important they think writing in English is, but also by external factors, such as the school's steering documents and the social environment. All the respondents in the questionnaire and the interviews are of the opinion that writing is important, but to different degrees. The arguments that emerge about why writing is an important ability to develop in school is, among other things, that writing is the one skill that students often struggle with the most and therefore it is also the skill that needs most practice and explicit teaching. In agreement with this argument, Harmer (2004) means that writing in the context of education is essential, and to measure knowledge, whether it is foreign language abilities or other skills, the teachers must rely on their students' writing proficiency. Even if writing is considered important among the teachers in this study, they express an attitude that it is not more important than any of the other three skill, that is, speaking, reading, and listening. A reason for this could be that writing is not experienced as explicit teaching, as one the interviewed teachers expressed it.

In Swedish compulsory school and upper secondary school, writing is a central part of the syllabus in the teaching of English. However, writing can be used for a variety of purposes and differ depending on the teaching situation. One of the main reasons for teaching creative writing that the interviewed teachers bring up is that they experience that their students appreciate it, think that it is fun and as a result the students become more motivated to write. As Maley (2015) puts it, creativity is a large part of learning and using a foreign language. He argues that creativity can stimulate, engage, and satisfy learners of a foreign language in a deeper sense. In agreement with Maley (2015), Avramenko et al. (2018) point out that creative writing activities can increase learners' motivation and engagement in classroom activities, and that such activities can make the learning process more interactive, inventive, and stimulating.

However, in the interviews with the teachers, there was uncertainty about whether creative writing contributes to language development or not. This was mainly because many of them consider creative writing as a kind of writing without restriction or structure, which is usually factors teachers react to when responding and evaluating written texts. When students write for example, an argumentative text, the teacher can indicate if the students have understood the type of genre and if the students have developed since the last time they wrote similar texts. Similar processes do not always work for responding and evaluating creative written texts and the teacher might not experience fast results. Murugiah (2013) implies that creative writing can take time for the students to learn. In his study he saw results first after several lessons. The results indicated that the use of creative writing helped the students to use a wide range of

vocabulary and interesting phrases in their continuous writing. In the same vein, Tok and Kandemir (2015) argue that creative writing requires learners to manipulate the target language in interesting and demanding ways to express uniquely personal meanings, which they believe aids language development. One of the teachers in this study explains that for her, creative writing is more than just using one's imagination and writing freely. According to this teacher, creative writing includes writing skills such as how to describe and express oneself linguistically and how to make stories more alive, which she believes contributes to language development. Additionally, the teachers in this study also express that they use creative writing as a tool to practice vocabulary, grammar and syntax and in preparation for major writing assignments such as national exams. Instead of teaching the students to write sentences using recently learnt grammar or using a select number of chosen words when writing a paragraph, the teachers teach writing for the students to become better writers. Harmer (2004) means that teaching students how to write in various genres using different registers help students become better writers, because writing creatively includes the practise of vocabulary, grammar and syntax.

6.2.2   Ways to use creative writing in English class

One of the challenges with creative writing is to encourage students to shift from attending to compositional rules, and instead move toward creative zones where language is seen as a material with structures, surface texture, and tensions, fit for exploration and experimentation (Disney, 2014). That is a challenge the teachers in this study also experience, that writing creatively demands a certain amount of imagination and innovation. For this reason, some of them have come up with solutions to help their students get started when they lack imagination. For example, they use storytelling dices that give the students a theme or a character to write a story about, which is one of many suggestions of creative writing activities that the teachers say they use or have experience of using in English class. Other activities, such as dramatization of plays, writing diaries, poems, urban legends, and song lyrics, are also suggested by the teachers. To assume that creative writing is easy is not entirely true. Harmer (2015) explains that creative writing tasks will not be easy for EFL learners because of the limitations many students come up against when writing in a foreign language. Nor will all students respond well to the invitation to be ambitious and to take risks. But for some, the supplying of genuinely creative tasks may open up avenues they have not previously travelled neither in their native language nor in the target language.

Which students the teachers have in their classrooms affects their approach to teaching creative writing in the English subject. If the students are not interested or show commitment to creative writing activities, neither the teaching nor the learning outcome will be good, as one of the interviewed teachers expressed it. But it is also a matter of adapting the task to the students. As in Murugiah's (2013) study, his students did not cope with the new way of writing and thinking right away, they made errors such as misspelled words, the wrong usage of expressions and grammatically wrong phrases and as mentioned above, it took time for the students to learn. For this reason, Murugiah (2013) highlights the importance of having patience as an EFL

teacher and to choose the right kind of creative writing task suited for the learners of the target language.

6.2.3 The influence of external factors

Skolverket (2011a, 2011b) emphasises that it is both the compulsory school and the upper secondary school's mission to stimulate and encourage students' creativity and curiosity as well as willingness to try and put ideas into action. On the other hand, it is not highlighted in the English syllabi for neither compulsory school years 7-9 nor upper secondary school that the students' creativity or curiosity should be encourage. Among the teachers in this study, there is a divided notion regarding the syllabus in English. One view is that there is support in the English syllabus for teaching creative writing and the other is the opposite view, that is, that the English syllabus does not promote the teaching of creative writing. There may be several different reasons for this. One reason could be that the teachers in this study interpret the syllabus differently. Skolverket (2021) has a description of how the syllabus is to be used in school, it says there that aim of the subject and the core content should give the teacher information about the essential teaching content in the subject and that it is the teacher who decides how and what content should be included in the teaching.

Another reason is which level of English the teachers in the study are teaching. The two teachers of years 7-9 believe that the English syllabus encourages the teaching of creative writing, while the two upper secondary school teachers argue that there is no such support. However, it is not possible to see such a clear division among the teachers who participated in the questionnaire: four out of 13 teachers think that the English syllabi for compulsory school years 7-9 and upper secondary school support the use of creative writing in the EFL classroom. These respondents include both teachers of years 7-9 and upper secondary school. Another four teachers think that there is no support in the syllabi, these too include both groups of teachers. The rest of the respondents are of a neutral opinion. Neither the syllabus for compulsory school years 7-9, nor the syllabus for upper secondary school English 5, 6 or 7, explicitly states that the course must include interaction and/or production of creative texts. In both syllabi, however, it is stated that the courses must include oral and written production of different kinds (Skolverket, 2011c, 2020). In other words, it is up to each teacher to interpret this statement their own way and decide the type of written production that would be educational, developing and motivating for their students.

6.3 Conclusion and Implications

This study aimed to gain an insight into English teachers' expressed attitudes towards creative writing and how they claim to use creative writing in their EFL classroom. The participants were 13 English teachers at compulsory school, years 7-9 and upper secondary school. To achieve answers to the study's research questions, a mixed method was used consisting of a web questionnaire and in-depth interviews. Through the study, a greater understanding has been achieved of how the respondents view the importance of teaching writing in general and more

specifically, creative writing, in the EFL classroom. What creative writing involves differs widely among the respondents. It includes everything from free writing without boundaries to writing letters and poems, from storytelling to dramatization of plays. The study's respondents emphasise that they experience creative writing as language-developing, fun and motivating for their students. Apart from this, the interviewed teachers considered creative writing challenging for those students who experience a lack of imagination and described an uncertainty about whether creative writing is included and supported in the English syllabi.

The English syllabi for compulsory school years 7-9 and upper secondary school are essential since they decide to a high extent the content in the classroom. As for that, one conclusion drawn from what is mentioned above is that the teachers' own attitudes to creativity and writing, and how they interpret the English syllabus, influence which type of writing activities they teach in their EFL classroom. Another implication of this study is that what kind of creative writing activity the teachers use in their teaching depends on which students they have in front of them and what they might appreciate. A third implication of this study is that there is not only one way one can use creative writing in the EFL classroom in compulsory school years 7-9 and upper secondary school. Which benefits and challenges creative writing may entail depends on various factors, such as the teachers' own interest, the composition of students and the choice of activity.

6.4   Proposal for further research

Doing research for this study, the experience is that studies on creative writing in English as a foreign language in a Swedish context are missing. Since this is a small-scale study, it would be interesting for future research to conduct a similar study, but with a larger sample to be able to generalize the results from a larger population. This study is focusing on the teachers' point of view; a proposal for further research could be to carry out a similar study but based on the students' experiences and attitudes towards creative writing. Additionally, a case study how creative writing is done in the classroom would be of interest for future research.

7   References

Avramenko, A. P., Davydova, M. A., & Burikova, S. A. (2018). Developing creative writing skills in a high school ESL classroom. *TLC Journal*, *2*(4), 55–69. https://doi.org/10.29366/2018tlc.2.4.4

Bryman, A. (2018). *Samhällsvetenskapliga metoder* [Social science methods] (3rd ed.). Liber.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2018). *Research Methods in Education* (8th ed.). London: Routledge.

Disney, D. (2014). Introduction: Beyond Babel? Exploring second language creative writing. In. D. Disney (Ed.), *Exploring second language creative writing: Beyond Babel* (pp.1-10). John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Hall, G. (2015). *Literature in language education* (2nd ed.). Palgrave Macmillan.

Hanauer, D. I. (2014). Appreciating the beauty of second language poetry writing. In D. Disney (Ed.), *Exploring second language creative writing: Beyond Babel* (pp. 11-22). John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Harmer, J. (2004). *How to teach writing.* Pearson Education Ltd.

Kurtz, J. (2015) Fostering and building upon oral creativity in the EFL classroom. In A. Maley & N. Peachey (Ed.), *Creativity in the English language classroom* (pp. 73-83). British Council.

Lightbown, P.M. & Spada, N. (2015). *How languages are learned*. (4. ed.). Oxford University Press.

Lutzker, P. (2015). Practising creative writing in high school foreign language classes. In A. Maley & N. Peachey (Ed.), *Creativity in the English language classroom* (pp. 134-141). British Council.

Maley, A. (2009). *Creative writing for language learners (and teachers)*. Retrieved from: https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/creative-writing-language-Learners-teachers

Maley, A (2015). Creativity – the what, the why and the how. In A. Maley & N. Peachey (Ed.), *Creativity in the English language classroom* (pp. 6-13). British Council.

Murugiah, M. R. (2013). Improving the 5th formers' continuous writing skills through the creative writing module. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, *4*(2), 7–12. https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.alls.v.4n.2p.7

Otto, I. (1998). The Relationship between Individual Differences in Learner Creativity and Language Learning Success. *TESOL Quarterly*, 32(4), 763–773. https://doi.org/10.2307/3588011

Pope, R. (2002). *The English studies book: An introduction to language, literature and culture* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

Skolverket (2011a). *Läroplan för grundskolan, Lgr11* [Curriculum for compulsory school]. Skolverket. Retrieved September 2021 from https://www.skolverket.se/undervisning/grundskolan/laroplan-och-kursplaner-for-grundskolan/laroplan-lgr11-for-grundskolan-samt-for-forskoleklassen-och-fritidshemmet

Skolverket (2011b). Läroplan för gymnasieskolan, *Gy11* [Curriculum for upper secondary school]. Skolverket. Retrieved September 2021 from https://www.skolverket.se/undervisning/gymnasieskolan/laroplan-program-och-amnen-i-gymnasieskolan/laroplan-gy11-for-gymnasieskolan

Skolverket (2011c). Kursplan för engelska [Syllabus for English in compulsory school, year 7-9]. Skolverket. Retrieved September 2021 from https://www.skolverket.se/undervisning/gymnasieskolan/laroplan-program-och-amnen-i-gymnasieskolan/gymnasieprogrammen/amne?url=1530314731%2Fsyllabuscw%2Fjsp%2Fsubject.htm%3FsubjectCode%3DENG%26tos%3Dgy&sv.url=12.5dfee44715d35a5cdfa92a3

Skolverket (2012). Internationella språkstudien 2011 – Elevernas kunskaper i Engelska och spanska [International langauge study 2011 – Students' knowledge of English and Spanish]. Skolverket. Retrieved August 2022 from https://www.skolverket.se/download/18.6bfaca41169863e6a659e7a/1553964471626/pdf2832.pdf

Skolverket (2020). Ämnesplan för engelska [Syllabus for English in upper secondary school]. Skolverket. Retrieved September 2021 from https://www.skolverket.se/undervisning/gymnasieskolan/laroplan-program-och-amnen-i-gymnasieskolan/gymnasieprogrammen/amne?url=1530314731%2Fsyllabuscw%2Fjsp%2Fsubject.htm%3FsubjectCode%3DENG%26tos%3Dgy&sv.url=12.5dfee44715d35a5cdfa92a3

Skolverket (26 Mars 2021). Så använder du läroplanen, examensmålen och ämnesplanerna [This is how you use the curriculum, degree objectives and syllabi] https://www.skolverket.se/undervisning/gymnasieskolan/laroplan-program-och-amnen-i-gymnasieskolan/sa-anvander-du-laroplanen-examensmalen-och-amnesplanerna

Smith, C. (2013). Creative writing as an important tool in second language acquisition and practice. *The Journal of Literature in Language Teaching*. 2(1). 11-17.

Tarnopolsky, O. (2005). Creative EFL writing as a means of intensifying English writing skill acquisition: a Ukrainian experience. *TESL Canada Journal*, *23*(1), 76–88. https://doi.org/10.18806/tesl.v23i1.79

Thornberg, R. & Forslund Frykedal, K. (2015). Grundad teori [Grounded therory]. In A. Fejes & R. Thornberg. (Ed.), *Handbok i kvalitativ analys* [Handbook in qualitative analysis] (2nd ed., pp. 38–61). Liber.

Thornberg, R & Fejes, A. (2015). Kvalitet och generaliserbarhet i kvalitativa studier [Quality and generalizability in qualitative studies]. In A. Fejes & R. Thornberg. (Ed.), *Handbok i kvalitativ analys* [Handbook in qualitative analysis] (2nd ed., pp. 216–235). Liber.

Tin, T. B. (2011). Language creativity and co-emergence of form and meaning in creative writing tasks. *Applied Linguistics*, *32*(2), 215–235. https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amq050

Tok, Ş., & Kandemir, A. (2015). Effects of creative writing activities on students' achievement in writing, writing dispositions and attitude to English. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 174, 1635–1642. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.01.815

Tornberg, U. (2017). Språkdidkatik [Language didactics]. (5th ed.). Gleerups.

Vetenskapsrådet. (2002). *Forskningsetiska principer inom humanistisk-samhällsvetenskaplig forskning* [Research ethics principles in humanities-social science research]. Vetenskapsrådet.

English teachers experience and attitude towards creative writing in Swedish compulsory school year 7 to 9 and Upper secondary school.

My name is Fanny Aidantausta, I am studying my 3rd year at the master programme in secondary education, teaching in the upper secondary school, at Luleå University of Technology. For my bachelor's thesis I am interested in exploring the field of creative writing in English language classrooms in Swedish compulsory and upper secondary schools. I am especially interested in your experiences and attitudes towards teaching and using creative writing with your students.

Below are a number of multiple-choice questions and statements that you are welcome to answer. Before you do so, please read through the information about consent.

If you want more information about the study, please, feel free to contact me.
Fanny Aidantausta, Luleå University of Technology <u>fanaid-5@student.ltu.se</u>

* Required

1.   Samtycker du a! dina svar kan komma a! användas i en vetenskaplig undersökning? *
Genom att skicka in dina svar samtycker du till att dina svar används i min pågående studie. Alla deltagares svar hanteras med konfidentailitet, vilket innebär att materialet hanteras och förvaras på ett sådant sätt att obehöriga inte kan komma åt dem samt anonymiseras, så att inga identiteter kan spåras eller röjas. Det bearbetade materialet kommer användas i min vetenskapliga uppsats och publiceras i Det Vetenskapliga Arkivet, DiVA. Ditt deltagande är frivilligt och du kan närsomhelst välja att avbryta.

    ⬭ Ja, jag samtycker!

    ⬭ Nej, jag vill inte att mina svar används som forskningsunderlag.

English teachers experience and attitude towards creative writing in Swedish compulsory school year 7 to 9 and Upper secondary school.

2.   Which grade do you teach?

○ Compulsory school years 7 to 9

○ Upper secondary school English 5 to 7 Other:

○ _____

3. How many years of professional experience as a teacher do you have?

         ○ Newly graduated

2 - 5 ○ years

6 - ○ 10 years

11 - ○ 15 years

16 - ○ 20 years

21 ○ years or more

4. How important do you think it is to work with writing in the English foreign language classroom?

○ Very important

○ Fairly important

○ Important

○ Slightly important

○ Not at all important

5. How would you define creative writing?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

6. Do you use or have experience of using any of the following activities to stimulate creative writing?

Check all that apply.

- [ ] Write poems/poetry
- [ ] Storytelling
- [ ] Write letters
- [ ] Drama activities
- [ ] Digital games
- [ ] Listen and/or write song lyrics/music

Other: [ ] _____

7. What kind of working material do you use to teach creative writing?

Check all that apply.

- [ ] English course book
- [ ] Fiction
- [ ] Online material
- [ ] Portfolio with saved material from university education and other teachers

Other: [ ] _____

8. For what purpose do you use creative writing in the EFL classroom?

Check all that apply.

- [ ] Preparatory purpose
- [ ] Vocabulary learning
- [ ] Grammar learning
- [ ] Syntax learning

Other: [ ] _____

9. The English syllabi from year 7 onwards support the use of creative writing in the classroom

27

○ Strongly disagree

○ Disagree

○ Neutral

○ Agree

○ Strongly agree

10. Creative writing contributes to pupils' development within the English language

    ○ Strongly disagree

    ○ Disagree

    ○ Neutral

    ○ Agree

    ○ Strongly agree

11. There is enough time and space to teach creative writing in the EFL classroom.

    ○ Strongly disagree

    ○ Disagree

    ○ Neutral

    ○ Agree

    ○ Strongly agree

12. According to your experience, pupils appreciate creative writing compared to other writing activities.

    ○ Strongly disagree

    ○ Disagree

    ○ Neutral

    ○ Agree

    ○ Strongly Agree

13. May I contact you for an in-depth interview on the subject? *

    Due to current circumstances the interview will take place online via zoom or other platform for video conference within the next upcoming weeks. The interview is estimated to take about 25 to 40 minutes.

    Mark only one oval.

    ( ) Yes   *Skip to question 14*

    ( ) No

    Contact information

14. Write contact information below: name and email address.

    Due to current circumstances the interview will take place online via zoom or other platform for video conference within the next upcoming weeks. The interview is estimated to take about 25 to 40 minutes. I will contact you as soon as possible for further information.

Interview guide

1. **Work experience** [Arbetserfarenhet]
- How many years have you worked as a teacher? [Hur många år har du arbetat som lärare?]
- Which grade do you work with at the moment? [Vilken årskurs/årskurser arbetar du med just nu?]
- What subject do you teach? [Undervisar du i fler ämnen än Engelska, vilket/vilka?]

2. **Writing process and production in English** [Skrivprocess och produktion i Engelska]
- How often do students write in your class? [När och hur ofta skriver dina elever i Engelska?]
- How does the writing process look like? [Hur kan den processen se ut?]
- Do you think it is important to teach writing? Why? [Tycker du att det är viktigt att undervisa skrivning, varför?]

3. **Creative writing** [Kreativt skrivande]
- How would you define creative writing? [Hur skulle du beskriva kreativt skrivande?]
- What inspired you to use creative writing in the English subject? [Vad inspirerade dig att använda kreativt skrivande i Engelska?]
- What kind of activities and materials do you use to stimulate creative writing and for what purpose? [Vilka typer av aktiviteter och material använder du? Hur arbetar du med kreativt skrivande eller kreativa aktiviteter i klassrummet?]
- Can you give example of a creative writing lesson? [Kan du beskriva hur en kreativ skrivlektion kan se ut?]
- What are the benefits of using creative writing? [Vilka fördelar upplever du det finns av att använda denna metod? Ser du att det finns fördelar rent språkutvecklingsmässigt?]
- What are the challenges? [Vad är utmaningarna?]

4. **Steering document and school environment** [Styrdokument och skolmiljö]
- Do you experience support from the steering documents to teach CW in English subject? If yes, in what way? If no, what support would you wish there were? [Upplever du att det finns stöd I styrdokumenten för undervisning i kreativt skrivande? Om ja, på vilket sätt? Om nej, vilket stöd skulle du önska att där fanns?]
- Is the environment at school important to stimulate creative writing? Explain. [Tycker du att miljön så som samspel mellan lärare, klassrums utformning och elevsammansättning på skolan är viktigt för att stimulera kreativt skrivande]
- How much time do you spend on planning, implementing, and evaluating when it comes to creative writing? Is the time enough? [Hur mycket tid lägger du på planering, genomförande och utvärdering när det kommer till kreativt skrivande? Upplever du att denna metod är mer tidskrävande än andra skrivmetoder?]