AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF ARMENIA

College of Humanities and Social Sciences

Creative Writing course for EFL learners

A design project submitted in

partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Foreign Language

By

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We hereby approve that this design project

By

Hripsime Balyan

Entitled

Creative Writing Course for EFL Learners

Be accepted in partial fulfillment for the requirements of the degree

Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Foreign Language

Committee on the MA Design Project

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Date

DEDICATION

To my family and my lovely dog, Sophie, for their love and support.

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ABSTRACT

This project is designed to promote creative writing and critical reading skills among adult EFL learners with the help of a Creative Writing course held in ICLT (International Center of Languages and Testing), Yerevan. The second main aim of the course is to introduce and give the students the opportunity to employ technology for their creative writing process. Seven EFL learners of intermediate and above levels, selected by an interview, took part in the course. The students practiced various creative writing activities throughout the course as well as read and analyzed a number of well-known short stories. At the end of the course each student wrote one short story of his own. Two stories were chosen as winners based on Internet voting and the teacher's evaluation. On the last day of the course the students filled in a course evaluation form which revealed their generally positive attitude towards the course and their recommendations for its further improvement.

CHAPTER ONE: SCOPE AND BACKGROUND

(Introduction)

Communicative language teaching with its main focus on authentic, communicative interaction in the second language (L2), has also made an attempt to shift from the strictly controlled and drill-based language use to a more creative engagement with the language, giving the learners more freedom to experiment and play with L2. The main purpose of this course is to add a language play in language learning and to give students an opportunity to read other creative writers and try writing short stories in the L2 themselves. The underlying assumption of this course is that everybody can be creative and everybody has a story to share as a good story is not about the actual event itself but the unique view the writer has and the techniques he uses.

The main aims of the course are the following:

1) Develop students' creative writing skills in L2

2) Develop students' critical reading skills in L2

3) Help students get familiar with the technology supporting the creative writing process

4) Promote collaboration among the students.

The literature review discusses the concepts of creativity and creative writing, gives reasons for integrating creative writing in language learning and lists the benefits of reading and writing short stories in L2. The final part of the literature

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review is devoted to the advantages of using technology for enhancing the creative writing experience.

Chapter three ("Proposed plan and deliverables") presents the results of the needs analyses, the matrix of goals and objectives for the course, the assessment plan , the learning plan, as well as the lesson plans for each week.

Chapter four (Reflections and Recommendations) wraps up the design project experience by summarizing the students' answers in the course evaluation form and giving recommendations to the future teachers of the course.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Defining creative writing and reestablishing its role in language curriculum

Before plunging into the main discussion about the integration of creative writing in language teaching, it is first necessary to lay the foundations and try to understand what is really meant by saying creative writing. Marshal (1974), defines creativity as "the ability to create one's own symbols of experience: creative writing is then the use of written language to conceptualise, explore and record experience in such a way as to create a unique symbolisation of it" (p.11). While the experience may not be very significant by itself, a creative writer has the ability to interpret her personal experience in a unique way. The key to creativity thus lies not so much in the event itself but in the unique way that the creative writer presents her story.

Creative writing, as Marshal mentions in the second part of her definition, is also a means of a deeper analysis of oneself or the experience one has had. Creative writers often use writing as a therapy to overcome personal challenges and give answers to the questions they have.

The reasons for integrating creative writing into language learning are many. Creativity, as Felsh (cited in Kaufman, 2009) puts it, is "a way of looking at the world… the realization that there's no particular virtue in doing things the way they always have been done" (Felsh, n.d.). Creative people are those who challenge the established ways of looking at life, thus bringing innovation and

rejecting the old ways that no longer function. Considering the pace with which the world changes nowadays, this reevaluating and reinventing feature of a creative mind becomes even more valuable.

Thus, by encouraging creativity in language learning and in education in general, EFL teachers will potentially prepare more open-minded individuals, capable of being change-makers and innovators.

Considering all that was mentioned above, it is hardly surprising that creativity has recently been listed as one of the five essential 21st century skills, along with Competency, Collaboration, Communication and Critical reading (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2009).

2.2.1 The benefits of reading short stories in L2

Short stories are one of the most popular genres of creative writing. They must have less than 20.000 words and are usually read in one sitting. The main components of short stories are the title, the plot, the conflict, the action, the suspense and the solution (Baíz de Gelpí, 2007).

The two main reasons for integrating story-reading in this course is to enhance the students' vocabulary and to provide them with good models for their own writing.

Reading for the Improvement of language

There are many linguistic benefits to reading stories in foreign language.

First, literature is an authentic representation of a language. This leads to a number of benefits. Literature can be used to teach grammar and vocabulary in

context, promoting learners' awareness of the influence of linguistic and non-linguistic context on the meaning of words and structures (as opposed to de-contextualized, abstract grammar teaching). Taking into account that very few rules of English grammar can be applied and used without a reference to the context (Hinkel and Fotos, 2002), this quality of literature becomes especially valuable.Thus, literature raises learners' awareness about the importance of form for realizing communicative goals and establishing their own voice (McKay, 2001).

Also, due to its authenticity, literature can develop sociolinguistic and pragmatic knowledge about the target language (McKay, 2001). Learners can develop an understanding of what is appropriate or inappropriate in a given situation or context in the target language and culture.

Finally, literature can serve as an ideal resource for integrating the four linguistic skills: reading, speaking, listening and writing (Mckay, 2001; Hismanoglu, 2005).

In order to understand the meaning of a literary text and to support their interpretations, learners need to read attentively and critically, a skill which will benefit their reading of all texts. Also, once students start to develop an interest in literature in English, they are likely to become more interested in reading in general, outside the classroom.

Literature, when read aloud, can also contribute to the development of listening skills. Stories can be presented in the classroom through audiobooks or live story-telling. Each method has its advantages. Audiobooks, read by

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professionals, expose learners to various accents and voice qualities. Live story-telling, on the other hand, is more lively and engaging as the listeners can actively influence the story-telling experience (Morgan and Rinvolucri, 1983, cited in McKay, 2001).

Literature-based drama activities, as well as role-plays, improvisations, debates, oral discussions have a great potential of improving learners' speaking skills (Mckay, 2001). Learners learn to express their ideas and support them by referring to the reading passage when necessary.

However, it must be always kept in mind that language changes over time and the language of literature may consequently become less authentic in relation to the present state of the language. We do not want our students, as Collie and Slater (1987) note:

to think that Elizabeth Barrett Browning's "How do I love thee?" is the kind of utterance normally whispered into a lover's ear nowadays! The objection to literature on the grounds of lexical appropriacy thus has some validity, but it need not be an overriding one if teachers make a judicious choice of the text to be read, considering it as a counterpoise and supplement to other materials. (p. 7)

This is why teachers should make careful choices of the texts read in the classroom. Literary texts, especially for low proficiency levels, should not deviate much from the present state of the language.

Reading for improving writing

Good writers are almost always good readers. By reading others' works, creative writers develop skills to enhance their own writing. As the novelist Cynthia Ozick says. "I read in order to write… to find out what I need to know: to

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illuminate the riddle" (Ozick, cited in Morley, 2007, p.29).

2.2.2. Writing short stories in L2

Writing short stories is a no less exciting and rewarding experience than reading them. Below are some of the main benefits.

Many researchers and creative writers agree that writing a short story means a very thorough engagement with language (Bortoluzzi, 2003), leading to the richness of vocabulary and the enhancement of the style. The creative process demands a very intimate play with the language. The inherent part of the creative process involves finding the right linguistic form for transmitting the cognitive message of the story and this implies a lot of work with the language. In addition to enjoying the writing process, creative writers get a first-hand experience dealing with the language at a very deep level, and by "resolving and solving riddles of their syntax and voice" (Morley, 2007, p.3), writers improve their language considerably. Creative writing is also a source of motivation as it enables the writer to re-experience and reevaluate the world surrounding him. As John Updike says, "Fiction is no less than the subtlest instrument for self-examination and self-display that mankind has invented yet" (p. 156, cited in Morley,2007). Many language course designers, who have included creative writing elements in their courses, also report a greater motivation level among the learners and an improvement in the overall classroom dynamics (Bortoluzzi, 2003; Dai,2012).

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2.3. Technology and CW

  Technology has been reported to assist the Creative Wring process both technically and content-wise. The following section will highlight the tools that technology provides to help writers to generate and organize ideas, edit their work and give feedback to other writers.

  Bortoluzzi (2003) considers the following positive sides of writing with the help of computers. First, computers make the writing and editing process much more effective and practical. The numerous text editing functions in Microsoft Word, as well as the possibility of having a revision history in Google Drive are in sharp contrast with the paper and pen writing that offers little flexibility for editing and saving. Moreover, the tidy, legible texts produced by computers boost students' confidence on the one hand and also facilitate peer and teacher feedback. Also, due to the automatic spell checker in Microsoft Word, writers easily get rid of mechanical and spelling mistakes.

   Finally, learning management systems like moodle.com or edmodo.com organize and facilitate learning and cooperation between writers by providing more efficient ways of sharing their work and by equipping them with various applications for enriching the vocabulary, generating and organizing ideas, doing research and many more.

<div align="center">……….</div>

 Taking into account the benefits of reading and writing short stories for L2 learners mentioned in the literature review and the fact that very few or no course in Armenia engages students in a creative writing process in L2, I decided to

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design a course that will fill in the gap mentioned above. I hope that this course will motivate students to read more in L2 and will give them the knowledge and the tools to feel more confident while writing creatively in English.

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CHAPTER THREE: PROPOSED PLAN AND DELIVERABLES

In this chapter I will provide a brief overview of the design project, including a summary of the needs analysis, the goals and the objectives of the course, the assessment plan and the learning plan.

Course Description, Materials and Structure

This course is intended for adult English learners of intermediate and above levels and is aimed at developing their critical reading and creative writing skills. The second main goal of the course is to introduce and give the students the opportunity to employ technology in their creative writing process.

The course is designed to boost students' creativity as well as to improve their language skills by engaging them in a deeper analysis of language than in case of a general language learning course. The core of the course centers on the short story as a literary genre. Students are expected to discuss and interpret one short story each week with a focus on both language and content. Accordingly, students are introduced to one component or feature of a short story each week along with a writing technique that is practiced both in the classroom and at home. At the end of the course each student has to submit one short story of his own writing. The stories are published in an online blog and shared online. The stories are evaluated by the teacher and by the internet public. Based on the assessment of the teacher and the internet voting, two stories are eventually announced as winners.

Throughout the entire course students are actively involved in their own virtual classroom in Edmodo.com. Edmodo.com is a virtual learning management

platform, which enables the teacher to create assignments and provide lesson materials for the students online. For the purposes of this course students will use Edmodo and some of its applications to post their writings, to read short stories, to leave comments on each others' work and stay updated about the upcoming assignments and other course events. Below are the two main applications of Edmodo that will be used during the course:

1) Actively Learn Free: This application enables the teacher to insert stories into the course page and adapt them by adding notes, comments and questions. The notes and comments may be in the form of word definitions or other useful story-related information. The program does not allow students to proceed reading the story unless they answer the questions inserted by the teacher. The main aim of using the application is to enable the students to read and analyse the stories before coming to the lesson. Actively Learn Free can be added to the course free of charge through Edmodo's application store.

2) Backpack: Backpack is a private store of documents, which is connected to Google Drive. It is like a virtual portfolia where students can keep all their writings and share those which are needed for the course objectives. Backpack is an inherent feature of Edmodo, it is not installed through the application store.

The course is designed to be delivered once a week for two hours. The classroom should have a computer with loudspeakers, Internet connection and a projector. The materials, including handouts, worksheets and realia, will be

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provided by the instructor for each lesson.

Needs Analyses and the selection of participants

For the purposes of this design project a needs analyses was conducted both in the Extensive English Classes (EEC) at the American University of Armenia and in ICLT (International Center for Languages and Testing), Yerevan. The instrument for the needs analyses in both cases was a survey. The aim was to find the most appropriate population for the implementation of the design project.

Twenty-three pre-intermediate students from EEC (10-15 years old) took part in the survey. Most of the students expressed a wish to read short stories in English classes (47. 1%) as well as to listen to short stories (20.6 %). Relatively few of them wanted to try writing stories in English (20.6 %). Students also showed a marked preference towards working individually (48%) and a wish to have technology in their lessons (87.5 %).

Twenty five students (22-39 years old) from ICLT answered the survey questions. The overwhelming majority of them either wanted to take a creative writing course very much (58.3 %) or expressed a wish to try such a course (41.6 %). Most of them wanted to both read (58.33 %) and write short stories in English (58.33%). The rest answered "maybe" (41.67 % and 37.5%). 50 % of the participants was "very interested" in taking the course, while 45,83% was "somewhat interested". Students showed equal preference towards individual and group work and had a positive attitude towards integrating technology in the classroom.

Thus, adults of a higher level from ICLT showed more interest in a creative

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writing course and, overall, seem to be a more suitable population for the creative writing course in question due to their willingness to both read and write stories, as well as to work both individually and in pairs.

Before the implementation of the course an interview was conducted among the applicants to select the participants that were most suitable for the course. Questions related to story writing and reading as well as a brief creative writing exercise was implemented to choose seven participants for the course.

Course Goals and Objectives

The main aim of this course is to prepare the students to the challanges of being a creative writer. The following grid was designed with an attempt to meet the needs of an EFL creative writer (short-story writer in particular) in the modern age. The three main targets of the course, as shown in the grid, are centered around content (the elements of short stories, writing techniques,etc), language (enhancement of vocabulary) and skills (technology skills and collaboratove skills).

COURSE GOALS	COURSE OBJECTIVES
	By the end of this course students will be able to:
GOAL 1: Improve students' linguistic knowledge to prepare them to write creatively in English **(Language).** Teach concepts related to writing a short story and engage students in a creative writing project **(Content).** Develop appropriate strategies	**OBJECTIVES:** Use appropriate language for writing a short story **(Language)** Identify the main components of a short story **(Knowledge)** Name and apply appropriate writing techniques for generating ideas for a short story **(Knowledge and Skill)** Recall that language is not only a tool for communication but also a source of pleasure and a means of self-expression **(Knowledge)**

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and skills needed to write creatively in L2 **(Strategies).**	Recall that literary language may sometimes deviate from the everyday language **(Skill)** Conclude that foreign language learners also can write creatively in L2 (**Knowledge**) Conclude that people all over the world share similar traits **(Attitude)** Analyze the linguistic peculiarities of short stories **(Knowledge)** Recognize and recall the key vocabulary of the selected short stories read in class **(Knowledge)** Infer meaning from context by context clues and world knowledge **(Skill)** Show an understanding that Creative Writing requires a process approach **(Skill)** Draft, edit and revise their writing **(Skill)** Proofread their writing for mechanical errors **(Skill)** Work both individually and in groups **(Skill)**
GOAL 2: Introduce to the students the proper way of giving feedback on each others' work.	**OBJECTIVES:** Recall that the language of feedback should be hedged and non-offensive **(Language)** Recall that feedback can be oral and written, offline and online, content and linguistc **(Knowledge)** Recall that other people's viewpoints need to be respected **(Attitude)** Give adequate and non-offensive feedback on each others' stories, using constructive and hedged language **(Language)** Give both online and offline feedback **(Skill)** Incorporate their knowledge about the features of short story to provide meaningful feedback to peers **(Skill)** Collaborate and cooperate with peers to discuss each others' writings **(Skill)** Analyze and interpret peer-feedback and teacher-feedback to revise their writing **(Skill)**
GOAL 3: Introduce appropriate technology for enhancing the creative writing process	**OBJECTIVES:** Use dictionaries and other online tools and websites appropriately for enhancing the writing process **(Skill)** Use Google Drive to write, edit and proofread their stories **(Skill)** Use Google Drive to leave feedback on each others' stories **(Skill)** Use Edmodo.com and its applications to organize their learning. **(Skill)**

Assessment Plan

Like any other type of creative work, short stories are hard to assess in terms of numbers. Therefore, the writings of the students will be evaluated through teacher and peer feedback throughout the course and with the help of online voting and comments at the end of the course. The following grid presents the assessment plan for the course.

ASSIGNMENT	DESCRIPTION	OBJECTIVES ADDRESSED By the end of this course students will be able to:	GRADE
Class participation and homework assignments	Students are expected to take an active part in the reading and the discussion of short stories both in class and at home. Ss are also expected to do their homework reading/writing tasks in a timely manner.	● Analyze short stories according to the linguistic devices used ● Infer meaning from context by context clues and world knowledge ● Analyze short stories according to the characteristic features of the genre ● Employ various writing techniques to write creatively in English	Not graded (teacher and peer feedback via comments)

Class participation and homework assignments	Students are expected to take an active part in the reading and the discussion of short stories both in class and at home. Ss are also expected to do their homework reading/writing tasks in a timely manner.	• Analyze short stories according to the linguistic devices used • Infer meaning from context by context clues and world knowledge • Analyze short stories according to the characteristic features of the genre • Employ various writing techniques to write creatively in English	Not graded (teacher and peer feedback via comments)
Writing a short story	Students construct their stories step by step throughout the course. They regularly get online and offline feedback both from their peers and the teacher throughout the entire process of writing the short stories. Based on the peer and teacher-feedback Ss will finalize their short stories and will publish them online. The stories will be graded by the teacher via a rubric (see Appendix B and students will also get feedback from the internet users. The teacher will take into	• Draft, edit and revise stories using Google Drive • Work both individually and in groups • Use a variety of creative writing techniques to generate ideas • Give adequate and non-offensive feedback on each others' stories • Participate actively in the discussion of each others' work • Use Edmodo.com	The stories will be assessed by a grade given by the teacher (see Appendix B for the rubric) and by internet voting and comments. The authors of the two winning stories will be rewarded by a one-month free course in ICLT or some other encouragement.

	account both her own grade and the feedback from other readers to choose the two winning stories.	and its applications to organize their learning.	
Reflections	At the end of the course students will fill in a course evaluation form to reflect on their experience with the course.	Reflect and evaluate their own learning	Not graded

Taking into account the results of the survey and the findings of the literature review, the following grid for the learning plan was designed. Each week introduces the students to one component of a short story and enables them to practice one writing technique. Each week's story was chosen according to its potential to illustrate the target feature or the writing technique of the week.

Learning Plan
SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

Week 1	Targeted Goals and/or Objectives
Tasks ● Ss get to know each other and the teacher. ● Ss are introduced to the course via a presentation. T models using Edmodo.com and its main applications (Actively Learn, Backpack, Google Drive). ● Ss read and discuss the short story "The lady or the tiger" by Frank Stockton. ● Ss play a follow-up vocabulary game	**Target writing technique:** Free writing **Target story:** "The Lady or the Tiger?" **Target feature of short story:** The title and the plot ***Objectives addressed*** ***(At the end of the lesson students will be able to):*** ● List the main components of the course ● Employ one technique of generating ideas for creative

and a writing activity. ● T introduces the structure of short stories based on the story read. Ss are given a corresponding handout. ● Students are introduced to Free writing and free write on the topic "The story I would like to share...". ● T introduces the website "www.oneword.com" as a platform for practicing free writing. ● **Homework: T** assigns Ss to edit their free writings at home and write a short description of the story that they would like to share most. Ss are to post their writings in Edmodo.com.	writing (free writing) ● Infer meaning from context by context clues and world knowledge ● Name the main themes and recognize the key vocabulary of the target story ● Explain how to use Google Drive for writing and editing short stories and the course LMS for posting their writings
Week 2	**Targeted Goals and/or Objectives**
Tasks ● Teacher and peer feedback on the homework assignment ● Teacher introduces some tips on how to come up with ideas for short stories ● Students read and discuss extracts from the short story "A cup of tea" by Katherine Mansfield and revise the plot structure of short stories. ● Ss are introduced to the peculiarities of character description in short stories based on the story read. Ss are given a corresponding handout. ● Ss do a character writing exercise based on a movie scene. ● Ss draft the files for their own characters ● **Homework:** Ss are assigned to outline the plot of their stories in their Backpack (Google documents) and draft the main characters' descriptions. ● (Optional homework):Ss are assigned to observe and describe	**Target story:** " A cup of tea", Katherine Mansfield. **Target writing technique:** Using the five senses to observe the world **Target feature of short story:** Character descriptions, Revision of plot structure ***Objectives addressed*** ***(At the end of the lesson students will be able to):*** ● Participate actively in the discussion of each others' work ● Name the main themes and recognize the key vocabulary of the target story ● Work both individually and in groups ● Give adequate and non-offensive feedback on each others' ideas ● Analyze short stories according to the characteristic features of the genre and the linguistic devises used ● Identify and discuss the main points contributing to creating successful character descriptions ● Apply descriptive writing to write

a complete stranger (e.g. someone they briefly meet in public transport). SS are encouraged to use all their senses to make assumptions about the person based on his/her appearance. Students are to share their writings in Edmodo.com.	creatively based on a given prompt
Week 3	**Targeted Goals and/or Objectives**
Tasks ● Teacher and peer feedback on the homework assignment ● Students read and discuss extracts from the short story "The Tell-tale heart'" by Edgar Poe ● Ss are introduced to the main types of point of view (POV) and the techniques of writing an effective opening paragraph ● Ss do an exercise for practicing writing from POV ● Ss play an interactive story-game to assess the role of point of view in stories ● Extra exercises: 1) Ss write 2-3 paragraphs from the point of view of an something inanimate, e.g. a classroom object. 2) Ss write from the point of view of a person from a photo/painting. ● Ss are introduced to online language tools (http://www.onelook.com/, http://corpus.byu.edu/coca/) ● Ss are given handouts about writing from different POVs ● **Homework:** Ss are assigned to draft the first paragraphs of their stories.	**Target writing technique:** Writing a catchy hook **Target story:** "The Tell-tale heart", Edgar Poe **Target feature of short story:** Point of View ***Objectives addressed*** ***(At the end of the lesson students will be able to):*** ● Use peer-feedback and teacher-feedback to revise their writings ● Name the main themes and recognize the key vocabulary of the target story ● Discuss and identify the importance of point of view in stories ● List the main types of POV and their peculiarities ● Apply their understanding of POV in classroom writing exercises ● Use different techniques to find English words on the Internet
Week 4	**Targeted Goals and/or Objectives**
Tasks ● Teacher and peer feedback on the	**Target writing technique:** Doing research for a story, writing stream of

homework assignment ● Ss make posters of their story outlines, including the title, the themes, the introduction, the rising action, the conflict, the climax and the resolution ● Students read and discuss extracts from the short story "The law of life", Jack London ● Ss are introduced to the literary technique of stream of consciousness ● Ss do a stream of consciousness exercise; Ss write a stream of consciousness from the POV of one of their story's characters on an event that happens in the story. ● Ss are introduced to the techniques of writing a good description. Each student goes to one of ICLT's rooms and writes a description of it. ● Ss are introduced to the importance of doing a research for their stories. T shows how to use the application Instagrok in Edmodo.com. ● Homework: Ss are assigned to research on some aspects of their stories using Instagrok. Ss are to post their groks in Edmodo.com.	consciousness, writing a description **Target story:** "The law of life", Jack London **Target feature of short story:** Details, Showing vs Telling ***Objectives addressed*** ***(At the end of the lesson students will be able to):*** ● Use peer-feedback and teacher-feedback to revise their writings ● Name the main themes and recognize the key vocabulary of the target story ● Identify the role of details and research in the writing process ● List some techniques for writing an effective description and apply those techniques in a classroom writing exercise ● Use Instagrok to do research
Week 5	**Targeted Goals and/or Objectives**
Tasks 1. Ss do a warm-up writing activity (writing a poem based on juxtaposition) 2. Ss are introduced to the website **http://www.writerhymes.com/** ● Teacher and peer feedback on the homework assignment ● Students read and discuss extracts from the short story "The Journey to	**Target writing technique:** Writing a twist end **Target stories:** "The Journey to Hanford" by William Saroyan and "The Romance of the Busy Broker" by O Henry **Target feature of short story:** Dialogs ***Objectives addressed*** ***(At the end of the lesson students will be able to):***

Hanford" by William Saroyan and "The Romance of the Busy Broker" by O Henry. ● Ss are introduced to the technique of writing twisted endings ● Ss use paintings to write the outline of a short story with a twist end ● **Homework**: Ss are assigned to post the first drafts of their stories in Edmodo.com.	● Use peer-feedback and teacher-feedback to revise their writing ● Name the main themes and recognize the key vocabulary of the target story ● List the techniques of writing a good dialog and apply them in their own writing ● State what the technique of a twist end is and apply it in a classroom writing exercise ● Use http://www.writerhymes.com/ to write a poem
Week 6 (Writing Workshop)	**Targeted Goals and/or Objectives**
Tasks ● Ss do a warm-up writing activity (Squiggles of the future) ● Ss use Google Drive to have a writing workshop at class and receive detailed feedback from each other and the teacher on their first draft ● **Homework:** Ss are assigned to make revisions on their first draft at home and post a final draft in Edmodo.com. ● T posts the final stories in the course blog and the voting starts.	**Target skill:** Participating in a writing workshop, giving and receiving constructive feedback ***Objectives addressed*** ***(At the end of the lesson students will be able to):*** ● Use teacher and peer-feedback to revise their writing ● Use Google Drive to write, edit and proofread stories
Week 7	**Targeted Goals and/or Objectives**
Tasks ● Students read and discuss extracts from the short story "The Pair of of Silk Stockings" by Kate Chopin and "The Chaser" by John Collier ● Ss are introduced to the techniques of writing a dialog and the "Show, Don't Tell" technique ● Ss do a dialog-writing exercise ● Ss practice the "Show, Don't Tell"	**Target writing technique:** Writing a dialog **Target stories:**"The Pair of of Silk Stockings" by Kate Chopin and "The Chaser" by John Colliert **Target feature of short story:** "Show, Don't Tell" technique ***Objectives addressed*** ***(At the end of the lesson students will***

technique ● T announces the winning stories and gives them prizes for encouragement ● Ss fill-in the course evaluation sheet	*be able to):* ● Name the main themes and recognize the key vocabulary of the target story ● List the techniques of writing a good dialog and apply them in their own writing ● Apply the "Show,Don't Tell" writing technique ● Evaluate their own learning

Deliverables

This project culminates in a complete course with lesson plans, including

materials and handouts for each lesson, located in Appendix A. The appendices

section also includes a sample of a student writing taken from the course blog

and a link to the course blog itself.

CHAPTER FOUR: REFLECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper has given the outline of a course that was implemented by me and would also, as I hope, be implemented by other EFL tutors. Both the process of designing the course and its implementation was a great challenge and a great learning opportunity for me.

Reflections

> **Raichle Farrelly 2014-5-5 12:12 AM**
> **Comment [3]:** Before jumping straight to the student feedback, can you say something about the actual implementation and design process - beynd it being a great learning opportunity. Discuss where and how you implemented it and the overall flow of the course. What challenges did you face? What was enjoyable? How did you motivate students? How did you know when something worked, etc.? Go a little deeper in your reflections.

Course Evaluation

The course evaluation form administered to the students at the end of the course provided some insight on the weaknesses and the strengths of the course. Below is an overview.

1) Edmodo.com and it applications (ActivelyLearn, InstaGrok, Google Drive, "Academic Word List Crossword Puzzles", "Learn that Word", "No Red Ink", "Backpack").

> **Raichle Farrelly 2014-5-5 12:12 AM**
> **Comment [4]:** These are mostly new concepts/applications to teachers. I think you should include a brief introduction to each one in Chapter 3 where you describe the course design. You only reference them in lesson plans and the grids, but there is no resource for teachers.

The students expressed quite a positive opinion on the usefulness of Edmodo and its applications. They especially valued the interactivity of the Actively Learn

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and Google Drive. Some students also mentioned the role of the online tools in facilitating and enhancing learning as the course met once a week. The only caveat, mentioned by one of the students, was related to giving access of all the documents in Google Drive to Backpack.

2) The choice of the short stories and the efficiency of creative writing activities

The students were highly satisfied with the selection of the stories as well as the classroom activities. One of the students mentioned that some modern stories could also be included to bring more variety of style into the course. Some of the students expressed their appreciation of the correspondence between the stories of each week and the target writing techniques.

3) Suggestions for improvement

Some of the students expressed a wish to have more regular classes instead of meeting once a week. Others wished to have more reading for homework and more time for writing their own stories. Some of the students didn't want to change anything in the course.

4) Other comments
Students mainly thanked ICLT and the teacher for the course, particularly for the interesting discussions, activities and the chance to get to know other creative

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writers. Some of the students expressed their willingness to recommend the course to EFL learners, who wish to improve their intellect and English skills. Some students confessed that some of the stories discussed during the course made them fall in love with English.

While the great amount of time and hard work I put into this project contributed greatly in the final outcome, I don't think it would have been successful without my keen interest in the subject. I took a great pleasure in discussing literature as well as helping the students to create their own piece of written work.

Overall, this has been an invaluable learning experience for me and I fully intend to teach the course to other groups in the future as well, with the aim of discovering new talented writers as well as further enhancing and polishing the course.

Recommendations

To the teachers, who would like to implement this course, I would advise to do so only in case they are truly interested in the subject.

LESSON PLANS

Appendix A

Week 1

1. **Level of students** – Intermediate and above
2. **Age and Number** – seven adult EFL students
3. **Duration** – 2 hours
4. **Materials used & Aids:** Projector, netbook, speakers, board, markers, handouts.
5. **Class Objectives:**

By the end of the lesson students should be able to:

1. List the main components of the course
2. Employ one technique of generating ideas for creative writing (free

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writing)

3. Infer meaning from context by context clues and world knowledge
4. Distinguish the structure of short stories
5. Name the main themes and recognize the key vocabulary of the target story
6. Explain how to use Google Drive for writing and editing short stories and the course LMS for posting their writings

Time	Procedure	Objectives met:
40 m.	· **Getting to know each other:** ● T briefly introduces herself, including the following information Name Favourite book/story Favourite quote/saying The reason for teaching the course ● Students interview each other in pairs with the following questions: A) Name B) Favourite book/story C) Favourite quote D) The reason of taking the course ● Ss introduce each other using the information from the interviews · **General introduction to Creative Writing and the course** ● T presents the general overview and the aims of the course through a presentation (see the link in the Appendices).	Objective 1

	● T models using Google Drive (for writing, sharing and commenting) and Edmodo.com for reading and discussing the stories at home as well as posting the assignments	
80 m.	· **Reading the target story** ● T boards the word "love" and elicits words associated with it, including jealousy. T asks students if love is possible without jealousy. ● T briefly introduces the author of the story and the story itself ● Ss read and discuss the short story "The lady or the tiger" by Frank Stockton ● Ss solve a vocabulary crossword with the target words of the story (see the link in the Appendices) ● Ss write an ending to the story using the target words **Introducing the target component** ● T elicits the main elements of the plot of short stories based on the story read. ● Ss are given the corresponding handout (see Appendices) · **Introducing and practicing the target feature** ● Students are introduced to Freewriting and free write on the topic "The story I would like to share..." ● T introduces the website	Objectives 2 , 3 ,4 , 5 and 6

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Comment [7]: I won't change this everywhere, but from this point on - indicate these by labeling them accordingly… for example: Handout 1, Appendix 1, etc. Then include them in order directly after each lesson, with titles (Handout, Appendix, etc.). Make it very organized and easy to locate the different components. Do so for all materials in lessons.

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Time	Procedure	
	"www.oneword.com/entry-form/" as a platform for practicing free writing.	
5 m	**Homework assignment** ● T assigns Ss to edit their free writings at home and write a short description of the story that they would like to share at the end of the course. Students are to post their writings online in Edmodo.com. .	Objective 5

Week 2

Class Objectives

By the end of the lesson students should be able to:

1. Participate actively in the discussion of each others' work
2. Name the main themes and recognize the key vocabulary of the target story
3. Work both individually and in groups
4. Give adequate and non-offensive feedback on each others' ideas
5. Analyze short stories according to the characteristic features of the genre and the linguistic devises used
6. Identify and discuss the main points contributing to creating successful character descriptions
7. Apply descriptive writing to write creatively based on a given prompt

Time	Procedure	Objectives met:

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20 m.	**Teacher and peer feedback on the homework assignment**	Objectives 1,3 and 4
	● Ss share their story ideas in groups of three. T monitors and facilitates the discussion. ● T boards a number of ways for generating story ideas.	
50 m.	· **Reading the target story and Introducing the target component** ● T briefly introduces the author of the story and the story itself ● Ss read and discuss extracts from the short story ''A cup of tea''' by Katherine Mansfield ● Ss solve a vocabulary crossword with the target words of the story (quaint, dazzled, stagger, beam, flattery, shiver, stammer, burst into tears, I can't bear it, delicious, adore, well-off, gaze, to be fond of smb, charming). ● Ss are introduced to the peculiarities of character description in short stories based on the story read. T boards the main points and gives some examples of successful character description. ● Ss are given a corresponding handout (see the link in the Appendices). .	Objectives 2 ,5 and 6

50	**Practicing the target feature** ● Ss do a character writing exercise based on a movie scene (see the link to the scene appendices) ● Ss watch the scene and brainstorm adjectives and phrases to describe the main characters' appearance ● Ss watch the same scene for the second time to describe the characters' personality ● T boards the adjectives and phrases	Objective 7
5 m	**Homework assignment** ● Ss are assigned to outline the plot of their stories in their online Google documents and draft the main characters' descriptions. ● (Optional homework):Ss are assigned to observe and describe a complete stranger (e.g. someone they briefly meet in public transport). SS are encouraged to use all their senses to make assumptions about the person based on his/her appearance. Students are to share their writings in Edmodo.com.	Objective 5

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Comment [9]: Can you elaborate on this for the future instructors. What is the character writing exercise like? Are there steps? What do they consider/include? Are there resources you used to help them?

Raichle Farrelly 2014-5-9 4:00 PM
Comment [10]: Is this your board brainstorm? You might mention the way you did it - with pictures of characters on the board, class brainstorm, discussion of adjectives, etc. Discussing 'show not tell'.

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Week 3

Class Objectives:

By the end of the lesson students should be able to:

1. Use peer-feedback and teacher-feedback to revise their writings
2. Name the main themes and recognize the key vocabulary of the target story
3. Discuss and identify the importance of point of view (POV) in stories
4. List the main types of POV and their peculiarities
5. Apply their understanding of POV in a classroom writing exercises
6. Use different techniques to find English words on the Internet

Time	Procedure	Objectives met:
20 m.	**Teacher and peer feedback on the homework assignment** ● Ss report the progress of their stories in pairs ● T gives advice and feedback on the stories	Objective 1

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50 m.	· **Reading the target story and Introducing the target component** ● T briefly introduces the author of the story and the story itself ● Ss read and discuss extracts from the short story "The Tell Tale Heart"' by Edgar Poe ● Ss are introduced to the peculiarities and types of point of view and hooks in short stories based on the story read. T boards the main points and gives some examples of successful hooks. ·	Objectives 2-4
50 m	**Practicing the target feature** ● Ss do a point of view exercise based on the story read (see appendices) **Online language tools** ● T models using online language tools for finding words and expressions (http://www.onelook.com/, Corpus dictionary of American English: http://corpus.byu.edu/coca/) ● Ss are given handouts about writing from different POVs	Objective 5-7
5 m	**Homework assignment** ● Ss are assigned to draft the first paragraphs of their	Objective 5

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	story (the hook)	

Week 4

Class Objectives:

By the end of the lesson students should be able to:

1. Use peer-feedback and teacher-feedback to revise their writings
2. Name the main themes and recognize the key vocabulary of the target story
3. Identify the role of details and research in the writing process
4. List some techniques for writing an effective description and apply those techniques in a classroom writing exercise
5. Use Instagrok to do research

Time	Procedure	Objectives met:
20 m.	**Teacher and peer feedback on the homework assignment** ● Ss create their story posters, including the following information My story a) Plot (intro, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution) b) Characters (personality, appearance, motivations, conflicts and relationships) ● Ss receive peer and teacher feedback on their story posters	Objective 1

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Comment [13]: What are story posters? When do they do them? In class, before class? What size are they? Do they share in groups or pairs or with the whole class?

50 m.	· **Reading the target story and Introducing the target component** ● T briefly introduces the author of the story and the story itself ● Ss read and discuss extracts from the short story "The Law of Life"' by Jack London ● Ss are introduced to the peculiarities of writing using stream of consciousness techniques and the importance of details in writing descriptions. .	Objectives 2-3
50 m	**Practicing the target feature** ● Ss do a describing exercise (see appendices) ● Ss are introduced to the importance of doing research for their stories ● T models using the application Instagrok in Edmodo.com for	Objective 4-5
5 m	**Homework assignment** ● Ss are assigned to research on some aspects of their stories using Instagrok. Ss are to post their groks in Edmodo.com	

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Comment [14]: Which include …?

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Raichle Farrelly 2014-5-5 9:26 AM
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Raichle Farrelly 2014-5-9 4:00 PM
Comment [15]: And what is Instagrok? Do you provide information on this for the teachers? Where?

Week 5

Class Objectives:

By the end of the lesson students should be able to:

1. Use peer-feedback and teacher-feedback to revise their writing
2. Name the main themes and recognize the key vocabulary of the target story
3. State what the technique of a twist end is and apply it in a classroom writing exercise
4. Use http://www.writerhymes.com/ to write a poem

Time	Procedure	Objectives met:
20 m.	**Warm-up writing activity** ● Ss write a poem based on writing a poem based on juxtaposition ● Ss are introduced to the website **http://www.writerhymes.com/**	Objectives 1 and 4

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Comment [16]: Did you write something extra here or is this being clever somehow? When did they get introduced to Juxtaposition. Should the T do that before they write?

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Time	Procedure	Objectives met:
50 m.	· **Reading the target story, Introducing and practicing the target component** ● T briefly introduces the author of the story and the story itself ● Ss read and discuss extracts from the short stories 'The Journey to Hanford" by William Saroyan and "The Romance of the Busy Broker" by O Henry. ● Ss are introduced to the technique of writing twist endings ● Ss use paintings to write the outline of a short story with a twist end (see appendices) .	Objectives 2-3
5 m	**Homework assignment** ● Ss are assigned to post the first drafts of their stories in Edmodo.com.	

Week 6

Class Objectives:

By the end of the lesson students should be able to:

1. Participate in a writing workshop, give and receive constructive feedback

Time	Procedure	Objectives met:
20 m.	**Activities**	Objective 1

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Time	Procedure	
	● Ss do a warm-up writing activity called squiggles of the future ● Ss use Google Drive to have a writing workshop at class and receive detailed feedback from each other and the teacher on their first draft	
5 m	**Homework assignment** ● Ss are assigned to make revisions on their first draft at home and post a final draft in Edmodo.com. ● T posts the final stories in the course blog and the online voting starts	

Week 7

Class Objectives:

By the end of the lesson students should be able to:

1. Name the main themes and recognize the key vocabulary of the target story
2. List the techniques of writing a good dialog and apply them in their own writing
3. Apply the "Show,Don't Tell" writing technique
4. Evaluate their own learning

Time	Procedure	Objectives met:
100 m.	**Reading the target story, Introducing and practicing the target component**	Objectives 1 and 3

	• Ss read and discuss extracts from the short stories "The Chaser" by John Collier and "The Pair of Silk stockings" by Kate Chopin • Ss are introduced to the techniques of writing a dialog and the "Show, Don't Tell" technique (see the handout in the appendices) • Ss do a dialog-writing exercise (see the appendices) • Ss practice the "Show, Don't Tell" technique (see the appendices)	
20 m	**Wrap-up and Evaluation** • T announces the winning stories and gives the prizes • Ss fill in the course evaluation form	Objective 4

Appendix B

Table 1:
Rubric for the Teacher assessment of students' short stories

Category	15	13	12	11
Characterization	The main characters are named and clearly described using variety of direct and indirect techniques. Most readers could describe the characters accurately.	The main characters are named and described using some direct and indirect techniques. Most readers would have some idea of what the characters are like.	The main characters are named using few direct and indirect characterization techniques. The reader knows very little about the characters.	It is hard to tell who the main characters are and there is little or no use of direct or indirect characterization techniques.
Setting	Many vivid, descriptive words are used to tell when and where the story took place.	Some vivid, descriptive words are used to tell the audience when and where the story took place.	The reader can figure out when and where the story took place, but the author didn't supply much detail.	The reader has trouble figuring out when and where the story took place.
Organization of Plot	The story is very well organized. One idea or scene follows another in a logical sequence with clear transitions.	The story is pretty well organized. One idea or scene may seem out of place. Clear transitions are used.	The story is a little hard to follow. The transitions are sometimes not clear.	Ideas and scenes seem to be randomly arranged.

Creativity	The story contains many creative details and/or descriptions that contribute to the reader's enjoyment. The author has really used his/her imagination.	The story contains a few creative details and/or descriptions that contribute to the reader's enjoyment. The author has used his/her imagination.	The story contains a few creative details and/or descriptions, but they distract from the story. The author has tried to use his/her imagination.	There is little evidence of creativity in the story. The author does not seem to have used much imagination.
Sentence Structure (Fluency)	All sentences are well-constructed with varied and interesting structure patterns.	Most sentences are well-constructed with varied and interesting structure patterns.	Most sentences are well-constructed but have similar and uninteresting structure patterns.	Sentences lack structure and appear incomplete or rambling.
	10	**8**	4	2
Grammar and Spelling (Conventions)	Writer makes no errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader form the content.	Writer makes 1-2 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader form the content.	Writer makes 3-4 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader form the content.	Writer makes more than 4 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader form the content.
Additional comments:				

(adapted from Rebecca Moore: http://www.d.umn.edu/~moor0145/storyrubric.htm)

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APPENDICES

Week 1

- Course-introductory presentation: http://prezi.com/uawcvpjfixib/welcome-

  to-the-creative-writing-course/

- Crossword for "The Lady or the Tiger?"

http://worksheets.theteacherscorner.net/puzzle/cw-mq0nt3c/

- Handout related to the plot structure of short stories

Short Stories and Plot Structure
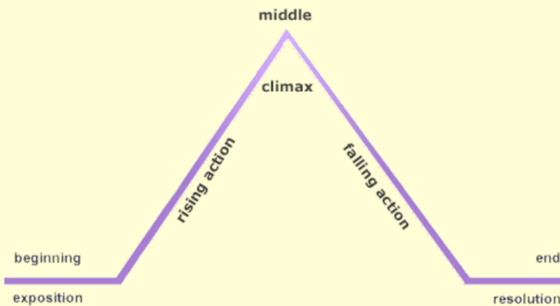
ES2A: Mrs. Schaffer

source: http://www.docstoc.com/docs/52729286/Short-Stories-and-Plot-Structure

Week 2

- Handout on character description

http://missolive.hubpages.com/hub/Writing-Tutorials-Describing-a-Character

- Movie scene for character-writing exercise

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ebc9lzhxTBg

Week 3

Writing From a Point of View (Student A)

Write the story of the "Tell-Tale Heart" from the third person omniscient point of view. Begin the story with the following sentence.

It had been a long time that the atmosphere in the house was changed. Everybody felt it, Jack, the old master and the new servant.

Writing From a cPoint of View (Student B)

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Write the story of the "Tell-Tale Heart" from the point of view of one of the servants working in the house. Use third person limited point of view. Begin the story with the following sentence.

It had been a long time that Jack noticed that something fishy was going in the house. He felt the air of foul play all over the place.

- Point of view handout

http://creative-writing-course.thecraftywriter.com/writing-from-a-point-of-view-pov/

Week 4

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- **Describing a place**

Enter any of ICLT rooms, describe it in detail using the four senses and using unusual/fresh similes. Mind every detail, make assumptions about the teacher who works in that room and the types of lessons she/he gives.

Week 5

Twist ends

What secret story lies behind these paintings? Uncover the mystery by writing a story with a twist end based on one of the paintings below.

We

Week 6

- Course blog: http://creativewritingiclt.blogspot.com/

Week 7

- "Show, don't tell!" exercise

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Rewrite the following paragraph in such a way as to <u>show</u> the feelings of the character instead of describing them (as it is in the writing).

<u>The first day on the Skating Rink after the injury</u>

She was excited; however her excitement was mixed with some kind of fear. She was not sure of her legs but she desperately tried to persuade everybody around her that she was confident. While making the first successful glide on the ice, she felt both happiness and some kind of unexplainable sadness. Suddenly she felt like crying and, on finishing the first circle on the ice, her heart was full of a queer feeling of loss.

● Dialog-writing exercise

Choose any two objects in the classroom (e.g. the classroom eraser and the whiteboard) and write a dialog between them showing their a) relationship, b) character.

A sample student story

Captain Chobanyan, Gwyneth Peltrow and the power of beauty

She had gained a reputation for beauty,
and (which is often another thing) was beautiful.

Charles Dickens, Little Dorrit

"Hey, Muradyan, come with me", said the Colonel, taking us to the place of the assignment, "it's your turn".
I followed him, thinking about what was going to happen next.
"I will introduce you to Captain Chobanyan. You will be sharing the office with him for the rest of your service".

Then he looked at me and winked.

A wink was the last thing I could expect from a Colonel, so I smiled. We walked to the third floor and stopped in front of the door.
"Go ahead", said the Colonel.
I knocked at the door and opened it. At least I TRIED to open it.The door was locked but there were sounds of a TV, set to the loudest possible volume. The assignment officer smiled. I knocked again. The assignment officer smiled wider. And again. The assignment officer began to laugh. And again. Nothing happens; the TV was yelling. The assignment officer leaned on the wall, trying not to lose balance with the hardest possible laugh attack, and I was trying to figure out what to do.

"Mr. Colonel", I said, trying to hide any possible inch of sarcasm, "it seems that Captain Chobanyan is not there".
"He IS there", mumbled the assignment officer, wiping off the tears, "you are just knocking on the door in the wrong manner", and then he began to kick the door. After a minute of action the door opened, and a small and round captain, in his late forties, with a mustache and salt-and-pepper hair appeared in the doorway.
"Can't you just knock as a normal person? Why are you breaking the door?", he said, obviously failing to play a macho.
"I've brought you some fresh meat" said the assignment officer, pushing me forward, "he's Ruben".

The room looked like a hospice for items. Everything located there was old, heavily used and dying. The sofa, produced in the sixties, was under the big, long window. The screaming black-and-white TV was put on something that used to be a table in its youth. The computers used to be modern 5 years before, and even Captain Chobanyan himself, under the influence of the room, seemed to have instantly added two decades to his real age.

"This is the best room in the whole ministry", he said with a smile of pride, showing me his two golden teeth, "everyone is prohibited from entering here. You will be the second one who is authorized".

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I was looking around and trying to find myself in this room when Captain Chobanyan looked at his watch, made his failed macho face, quickly moved to the window, and then returned with some homemade food.
"I hate when someone wakes me up, and this Colonel wouldn't have survived if it wasn't the lunchtime".
"Oh", I said, "enjoy your meal", and sat to the right side of the TV. Captain Chobanyan made an inviting gesture and said "I can't eat alone, join me, bro".
I thanked him, put some cheese on bread, bit a piece and looked at him.
"I'm your boss, bro" sputtered Captain Chobanyan, "If we are alone - then call me by name but publicly say Mister Major", he caught my wondering glance and quickly added "Captain. I was degraded in rank recently...there are some officers all over here... don't care, while you are not touching the shit, it does not stink". I stopped chewing and looked at him with even more wonder.
"You don't like profanity during meals?" tongue-twisted my self-appointed boss. Trying to catch a wave, I looked at him, thought a little, and replied in the same tongue-twisted manner;
"I don't give a shit".
"I like quick learners", he said, "take another sandwich".

My service was an easy one. I had to stay on duty once a week; all the other days I was allowed to go home for a sleep. I was managing army servers, doing some programming and listening to the TV, while Captain Chobanyan was sleeping. Normally he entered the best room in the whole ministry in the morning, turned the TV on and fell asleep to the sounds of the broadcast. At 12.55 sharp he woke up, had a lunch and continued to enjoy his sleep till the end of the day. The door to the room was always locked, and my job benefited from it. I was completing the tasks, reporting to the head of the military IT and enjoying the screaming TV along with the lunch talks with Captain Chobanyan.
I soon learnt that only one thing could keep Captain Chobanyan awake: pretty women on his old monochrome TV. If there was a program with pretty women, Captain Chobanyan would made coffee and would begin to talk to the TV, explaining how he would enjoy those women. His brain had no knowledge of tender wording and I think he had the unique peculiarity of even thinking in a profane language. When it happened for the first time, I was trying to figure out if I should participate in this talk or not. After a minute though I understood that it was a part of his pseudo-machoism and decided to let him verbally enjoy the TV women alone. Those bursts of verbal sexuality happened with him not so often, perhaps once or twice a week but lasted for 20-30 minutes, depending on the length of the program and the sex-appeal of the woman. Anyway, the end was always the same; he became tired and fell asleep.

After one or two months I already knew that he was fond of noisy women with curves, preferably of Slavonic origin. At least this type of women created the longest Niagara of obscenity directed to the TV.

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Time and my service were slowly going forward together. Captain Chobanyan proved to be a person of strong habits and showed nothing new. He was always the same: sleeping, eating, talking to the TV and playing a macho. When we were on a day-long duty together I would bring some beer and we would drink it slowly, talking or watching movies in the evenings when he was not sleeping according to his habit.

It was another night on duty and we were watching "Shakespeare in love" on that crappy black-and-white TV. It was a slow and lazy evening; all the job was done, the ministry was quiet as a grave, the beer was cold, the homemade sandwiches were almost eaten and the movie was the perfect fit to our mood. I was watching the TV and thinking that I have only one thing left to feel totally happy: a girlfriend. Someone cute, smart and sweet. Skinny and tender. Someone who needs support and can support me back. I looked at a screen and found Gwyneth Paltrow. She totally fitted all my expectations, and I began to think about any girl I already knew that could be considered a real-life substitute for the famous celebrity.

Captain Chobanyan was enjoying the nirvana. The beer and the food had made his evening and he was enjoying the moment. The last sip of the beer was blinking on his mustache, his eyes were lazily targeted at the TV set, and his silence provided a little hope that he would not verbally abuse the TV women this time.

The movie was near its end when I figured out that my search for the girlfriend candidate had failed. There was no girl who could even stand close to the woman of my dreams, acting on the crappy black-and-white screen. I opened another bottle of beer, swallowed half of it in a single sip, looked at Captain Chobanyan, and asked, "Isn't she cute?", pointing at Gwyneth Paltrow.

I asked that question and immediately understood what a grave mistake I had made. Captain Chobanyan could not say any good word about her. First of all, she was not his type, second, even if she was, he could explain his positive attitude to her only in obscene language. I became sober in a second, bit my lip and looked at Captain Chobanyan's mustache, chewing out the answer.

"She is. I want to put her on a big bed, tear off her clothes, forcibly cuddle her..."

He was saying it calmly, but I felt those words like bullets hitting my heart.

"Forcibly cuddle her", repeated he, looking in my eyes, chewed the edge of his mustache a little bit and continued, "and to cry like a baby".

The he again looked at me and winked.

Course-evaluation form

Creative Writing Course, ICLT
Course Evaluation

Dear participant, thank you for completing the Creative Writing course at ICLT. We highly appreciate your feedback and would like to see your answers for the course-evaluating questions below. The survey is anonymous.

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1) The course made use of a virtual classroom in Edmodo.com. How useful was the website for you? How useful were the applications (ActivelyLearn, InstaGrok, Google Drive)?

2) The course aimed at introducing the main elements of short stories through story-discussions and creative writing activities. Were the short stories well-chosen? Were the activities useful?

3) How do you think the course could be improved? What would you like to add to the course?

4) Other comments:

Thank you for completing this form!