The Integration of the Word Processor into a Process Writing Lesson

Nikolaos Papadopoulos

Directorate of Primary Education, Drama, Greece

Abstract

The present paper delves into the creation of a computer-based lesson via the effective exploitation of the word processor. After the author presents the teaching situation, he discusses the rationale for the use of the word processor in a process writing lesson based on the relevant literature. Moreover, the relevant teaching materials are described and placed in appendices and the teaching procedure is justified in relation to the pedagogical framework.
Keywords: TEFL, teaching methodology, word processor, process writing, writing skill
DOI: 10.7176/JEP/10-22-14
Publication date: August 31st 2019

1. The teaching context

The selected group of students is the sixth graders of a State Primary School in the prefecture of Drama, Greece. They are of Greek origin, monolingual and twelve in number. According to the Common European Framework (CoE, 2001), their average language level is the A2 level (see Appendix I-A). All of them possess Gardner's (1993) interpersonal and kinesthetic forms of intelligence and they are highly motivated towards EFL learning and ICT. English classes include three forty-five minute sessions a week. The learners use "English 6th Grade" pupil's book and workbook (Efremidou, Zoe-Reppa & Fruzaki, 2011) and the teacher uses their digital form, as the classroom is adequately equipped. Additionally, after being scheduled with the ICT teacher, the classes can be held in the computer lab, where twelve computers, speakers, Internet connection, a whiteboard and three printers are available.

2. Literature review

As the present lesson (see Appendix I) promotes digital writing, its pedagogical framework revolves around Vygotsky's (1978) Constructivism and Sociocultural theory, Connectivism and Situated Learning (Herrington & Oliver, 2000). Constructivism claims that learning is accomplished through the learners' construction of knowledge and the development of their higher order thinking skills. Bloom's (1965) critical and reflective thinking are top priority notions, which lead learners from the comprehension and application of their knowledge to the analysis, synthesis and evaluation of their experience. Duke et al. (2013), supporters of Connectivism, argue that effective learning happens when peer groups driven by common interests and goals are directed towards production and multicultural learning within networks. Situated Learning (Herrington & Oliver, 2000) along with Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural theory place the learning process within its social and physical context. Hence, the lesson designer views learners as active participants in collaborative and authentic interactions during which the critical reflection of their experience and opinions is sought through the TL use. Based on Vygotsky (1978), the language is the means of learning and cognitive development.

The computer-based lesson (see Appendix I) puts into practice all the above learning theories through the use of the word processor. Piper (1987), cited by Slaouti (2005: 87-88), describes various reasons for using the word processor. Firstly, in line with the particular learners' interpersonal and kinesthetic forms of intelligence (Gardner, 1993) it assists learners develop their writing skill in a motivating and purposeful way. Secondly, word processors, available in all machines, facilitate group work, increase the collaboration time among learners and provide especially those who are not proud of their handwriting with the opportunity to produce attractive and professional texts. Not only are the final texts errors free and more easily and quickly produced in relation to the paper texts but also learners are not disgraced by their teacher's red marks and crossings out. Furthermore, the word processor features, such as, moving, deleting, spacing, spell checking, copying, cutting, pasting, increase the learners'

concentration and time on the draft improvement. Moreover, the word processor use promotes the perceptions that the text is addressed to an immediate audience and that it evolves within the process writing framework, as elaborated by Flower & Hayes (1981a) and White & Arndt (1991). On the basis of Pennington's (1996) "default value of word processing" the learners of the present lesson are exposed to the stages of "writing easier", "writing more" and "writing differently"(ibid.: 131). Consequently, they are positively oriented towards writing, produce longer and more developed pieces of writing and are urged to appreciate the qualitative difference between their first and final drafts.

As mentioned above, the word processor features facilitate the approach of process writing, which focuses on the intermediate stages the writer's mind goes through in order to end up with the construction of meaning. According to Flower & Hayes (1981a) and White and Arndt's (1991) description, the writer is involved into a series of recursive cognitive processes, such as, goals setting, ideas generation, planning, structuring, drafting, evaluating and reviewing. Consequently, as Hyland (2009) clarifies, reading, rereading, planning, editing, revising, questioning and self-assessment are various strategies the writer experiences before s/he publishes the final text. As a result, process writing meets the demands of the above mentioned learning theories since the knowledge creation and transformation, the realisation of text as a communicative act and the writer's self-expression are of vital importance.

3. The lesson presentation
3.1. The lesson stages

The lesson plan (see Appendix I) and the task sheet (see Appendix II) have been designed to supplement the course book (Efremidou, Zoe-Reppa & Fruzaki, 2011: 30-31). Taking into account the popularity of the mystery stories and the recent practice of the receptive skills, the teacher suggests the original lesson which exposes the learners to the productive skills by means of the word processor based on the same topic. Before the computer-based lesson starts in the computer lab, the Task sheet "The fifty cent piece".doc (see Appendix II) is copied onto the computers desktops and the class is separated into four groups of three.

Being compatible with the learning theories analysed earlier, the aims of the particular lesson (see Appendix I-B) are the learners' exposure to the digital process writing and the improvement of their writing and word processing skills. The lesson also aims at the enhancement of their positive motivation towards the digital writing and the development of their higher order thinking skills, such as analysis, synthesis and evaluation (Bloom, 1965) in an authentic environment, which flourishes through the learners' collaborative interaction.

In the pre-writing stage (see Appendices I & II: Tasks 1-2) the learners' long term memory (Atkinson & Shiffrin, 1968) is activated in order for them to remember the previous lesson content through the available video in the digital course book. The practice of the word processor functional features, such as cutting, pasting and spelling check boosts Pennington's (1996) easier writing and will be useful to them later in the while-writing stage. In this case the instruction of the word processing skills, which Hyland (1993) contemplated, is integrated into the process writing lesson.

During the while-writing stage (see Appendices I & II: Tasks 3-7) the learners are guided to write their own end of the story step by step incorporating their imagination and self-expression through the authentic use of the TL and group collaboration. These steps assist them to increase their concentration and the digital writing time and develop their higher order thinking skills while discussing, negotiating and critically reflecting on the content and the accuracy of their first draft (ibid: Task 5). As a result, the tasks aid them to experience Flower & Hayes (1981a) and White & Arndt's (1991) recursive stages of process writing, presented earlier. In this way, they are acquainted with the immediate audience their drafts are destined to and they can realise the qualitative difference between their first and last draft.

Finally, in the post-writing phase (see Appendices I & II: Tasks 8-9) the presentation of their end in class awards them with a sense of mental achievement and self-confidence. The homework outcomes are the process writing beyond classroom and the exercise of their higher order thinking skills via the self-reflection on their experience. Finally, the teacher can exploit the students' feedback so that s/he designs future lessons.

3.2. The teaching procedure

According to Brandl (2002), the suggested lesson yields to the Teacher-Facilitated approach because although the learners follow the instructor's choice of topic and tasks design, they are free to create their own story end and they are asked to contribute to materials and techniques shaping for future use (see Appendix II: Task 9). Additionally, within Vygotsky's (1978) framework the group separation and the seating arrangement in the computer lab are the teacher's main concerns because they safeguard the social and physical context of learning (see Appendix I-B).

While designing and teaching the suggested lesson, the teacher considers the psychological, sociocultural and cognitive parameters of L2 lifelong learning, discussed by Papaefthymiou-Lytra (2014). As regards the psychological parameters, the teacher introduces the learners into the new experience of the word processor use and its benefits, analysed earlier in Section 2. Consequently, the learners' attitudes including motivation, surveyed by Warschauer (1996), anxiety and self-esteem are significantly considered and meet one of the lesson aims (see Appendix I-B). Furthermore, the sociocultural parameters are detected within the Situated Learning framework. The teacher enables the learners to take advantage of their immediate physical and social context and thus, become more responsible organisers of their work through collaboration, ideas sharing and peers observation. In this way, the socio-constructivist notion of peer scaffolding within their Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978) facilitates experimental learning.

As far as the cognitive parameters are concerned, during the while-writing stage the learners discuss, negotiate and do remedial work so as to build discourse and mould their personalised story end exercising self-instruction, problem solving and imagination in a creative and pleasant way. Thus, during the process writing stages the learners are actively involved into initiatives taking, decision making based on knowledge construction, critical thinking and self-expression. Simultaneously, they utilise self-assessment, learning and communicating strategies, which lead them to conquer metacognition, metalanguage and lifelong strategies, elaborated by Psaltou-Joycey (2015).

All the above support Papaefthymiou-Lytra's arguments (2014) about the teacher's new roles within the learner-centred EFL instruction. Therefore, the teacher assumes the roles of the manager, who is responsible for the group work and classroom management, the caring and supportive facilitator, the coordinator, who reduces the learners' inhibitions of the word processor use and the alternative assessment assessor. Last but not least, s/he is a lifelong learner while acting as the learners' collaborator and co-investigator in learning discovery.

4. Conclusion

As future citizens of the global society the learners will experience the demands of the modern professional or personal life, which include the ICT skills, the interpersonal skills and the higher order thinking skills. The suggested lesson has hopefully successfully attempted to arm the learners with these necessary skills of the contemporary era via the word processor use, which facilitates the innovative approach of the process writing.

References

Atkinson, R.C. & Shiffrin, R.M. (1968). "Chapter: Human memory: A proposed system and its control processes". In Spence, K.W. & Spence, J.T. *The psychology of learning and motivation.* 2. New York: Academic Press. pp. 89–195.

Bloom, B.S. (1965). *The Taxonomy of Educational Objectives.* Longman Higher Education.

Brandl, K. (2002). "Integrating internet-based reading materials into the foreign language curriculum: from teacher-to student-centered approaches". *LLT* 6/3, pp. 87-107 http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.127.1586&rep=rep1&type=pdf. Accessed: 9/12/2018.

Council of Europe (2001). *Common European framework of References for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. https://rm.coe.int/1680459f97 Accessed: 08/11/2017.

Duke, B., Harper, G. & Johnston, M. (2013). "Connectivism as a digital age learning theory". *The International HETL Review.* Special Issue 2013 (pp. 4-13). https://www.hetl.org/wpcontent/uploads/2013/09/HETLReview2013SpecialIssueArticle1.pdf. Accessed: 4/12/2018.

Efremidou, E., Zoe-Reppa, E. & Fruzaki, F. (2011). "Do you believe in ghosts?" in *English 6th Grade*, ITYE Διόφαντος, Athens. Available from http://ebooks.edu.gr/modules/ebook/show.php/DSDIM-F101/441/2924,11597/.

Flower, L. & Hayes, J. (1981a). "A cognitive process theory of writing". *College Composition and Communication*, 32: 365-387.

Gardner, H. (1993). *Multiple Intelligences: The Theory in Practice*. United States of America: Basic Books.

Herrington, J., & Oliver, R. (2000). "An instructional design framework for authentic learning environments". *Educational Technology, Research and Development*, 48(3), 23-48.

Hyland, K. (1993). "ESL Computer writers: what can we do to help?" *System 21/1:* 21-30.

Hyland, K. (2009). *Teaching and Researching Writing (2nd ed.).* New York: Pearson Education Limited.

Papaefthymiou-Lytra, S. (2014)."L2 Lifelong learning/use and new media pedagogies". In *The evolution of CALL and current research in New Media,* Vol. 5 Issue 1, pp. 16-33, Research Papers in Language Teaching and Learning, Patras: Hellenic Open University. http://rpltl.eap.gr/images/2014/RPLTL_5_full.pdf Accessed: 5/11/2018.

Pennington, M. (1996). "Writing the natural way" *Computer Assisted Language Learning* 9/2-3: 125-142.

Piper, A. (1987). "Helping learners to write: a role for the word processor". *ELTJ* 41/2: 119-125.

Psaltou-Joycey, A. (Ed) (2015). *Foreign Language Learning Strategy Instruction: A Teacher's Guide.* Saita publications, Kavala. http://www.saitabooks.eu/2015/05/ebook.162.html Accessed: 13/1/2018.

Slaouti, D. (2005). 'Computers and Writing: The Role of the Word Processor, Email and the www'. In Slaouti, D. & Bouboureka, P. *Educational Technology in English Language Teaching,* Vol. 2, Patras: Hellenic Open University.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1978). *Mind in Society: the development of higher mental processes.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Warschauer, M. (1996). "Motivational aspects of using computers for writing and communication". In Mark Warschauer (Ed.), *Telecollaboration in foreign language learning: Proceedings of the Hawai'i symposium.* (Technical Report #12) (pp. 29–46). Honolulu, Hawaii: University of Hawaii, Second Language Teaching & Curriculum Center.

White, R. & Arndt, V. (1991). *Process Writing*. London & New York: Longman.

Appendix I
Lesson plan
A . Description of the Class

Learner profile: Twelve 6th graders of a Primary school in Drama, aged eleven years old, monolingual (Greek speaking).

Language Level: A2

Recent Work: As regards vocabulary, words related to fairy tales, heroes and monsters and adjectives describing characteristics, personality and skills have been taught. In terms of grammar, the comparisons of adjectives and adverbs, irregular adjectives and opposites with suffixes have been presented and practiced. The teaching focus has been mainly on the receptive skills, reading and listening.

Class sessions: The English subject is taught three teaching hours a week. Each teaching hour lasts forty-five minutes. They have been taught the TL since the first grade.

B. Aims of Lesson

1. To enhance digital writing.
2. To improve writing and word processing skills.
3. To create positive motivation and willingness towards the digital process writing.
4. To develop higher order thinking skills.
5. To promote cooperation within authentic interaction.

C. Other Details

A. Teaching aids/ materials to be used:
1. The "Fifty-cent piece". doc on the computers desktop.
2. A photocopy of the Lesson plan (Appendix I).
3. A copy of the students' task sheet (Appendix II).
B. Equipment: one computer per three learners, connection to the Internet, the board, three printers.

D. Procedure
T=Teacher   Ss=Students

Stage	Procedure	Objectives	Interaction	Materials/ resources	Time
Pre-writing	**Task 1** T welcomes the Ss in the computer lab. Ss are separated into four groups of three and sit in front of one computer. T asks them to open the word document "The fifty-cent piece". T advises them to change roles during the tasks of the lesson. The groups watch the video "The fifty-cent piece" and cut, paste and	✱ To link the lesson content with the previous lesson. ✱ To practice cutting and pasting. ✱ To cooperate.	T-Ss Ss-Ss	Computer Internet connection Task 1 in the word document "The fifty-cent piece.	5min.

	put the given sentences into the correct order. The groups give the answers. T gives feedback.		Ss- T T-Ss		
	Task 2 T explains the task. The groups read the five sentences and using the check speller they correct the errors. The groups give the answers. T gives feedback.	✳ To link the lesson content with the previous lesson. ✳ To practice the check speller use. ✳ To concentrate on accuracy errors. ✳ To cooperate.	T-Ss Ss-Ss Ss- T T-Ss	Computer Task 2 in the word document "The fifty-cent piece. The board.	4min.

While-writing	**Task 3** T asks the groups to write their own end of the mysterious story in one paragraph. A dialogue can be included, too. Their end can be funny, strange or frightening. To generate ideas T asks them to note down some ideas in the space provided. Ss do the task.	✳ To raise their motivation and willingness to write. ✳ To generate and exchange ideas. ✳ To use L2 authentically. ✳ To practice digital writing. ✳ To exercise their imagination. ✳ To express themselves. ✳ To collaborate.	T-Ss Ss-Ss	Computer Task 3 in the word document "The fifty-cent piece. The board.	5min.
	Task 4 In a speedwriting task T asks the groups to convert their ideas of Task 3 into sentences. T advises them not to worry about grammar, syntax or spelling errors. Ss do the task.	✳ To focus, structure and write their first draft. ✳ To focus on meaning. ✳ To use L2 in an authentic environment. ✳ To practice digital writing. ✳ To exercise their imagination. ✳ To express themselves. ✳ To collaborate.	T-Ss Ss-Ss	Computer Tasks 3- 4 in the word document "The fifty-cent piece. The board.	5min.

Stage	Procedure	Objectives	Interaction	Materials/ resources	Time
While-writing	**Task 5** T asks the groups to read their paragraph in Task 4 and make corrections. T tells them to check the order of the ideas, any vocabulary, grammar, syntax and spelling mistakes. T also advises them to practice the facilities of cutting, pasting and check speller of the word processor. Ss do the task.	✻ To discuss and negotiate about the content, the structure and the accuracy of their draft. ✻ To develop higher order thinking skills. ✻ To evaluate themselves. ✻ To reflect critically on their first draft. ✻ To trigger authentic interaction in L2. ✻ To increase their concentration and time spent on draft improvement. ✻ To collaborate.	T-Ss Ss-Ss	Computer Tasks 4- 5 in the word document "The fifty-cent piece. The board.	5min.
	Task 6 T asks the groups to stand up and sit on the next group's chairs. T asks the groups to read the other groups' paragraphs in Task 4 and comment on the content and any kind of errors in the space provided. Ss do the task.	✻ To realise their draft is addressed to an immediate audience. ✻ To discuss and negotiate about the content, the structure and the accuracy of the other teams' draft. ✻ To develop higher order thinking skills. ✻ To evaluate and discuss critically. ✻ To use L2 in an authentic way. ✻ To increase their concentration and time spent on draft improvement. ✻ To collaborate.	T-Ss Ss-Ss	Computer Tasks 4- 6 in the word document "The fifty-cent piece. The board.	5min.

While-writing	**Task 7** T asks the groups to stand up and sit back on their chairs. T asks the groups to read their classmates' comments in Task 6 and make any necessary corrections in their paragraph in Task 4. Ss do the task.	✳ To appreciate the qualitative difference between their first and last draft. ✳ To get used to the idea of being exposed to an audience. ✳ To review/edit their draft. ✳ To develop higher order thinking skills. ✳ To develop critical thinking. ✳ To use L2 in an authentic way. ✳ To increase their concentration and time spent on draft improvement. ✳ To collaborate.	T-Ss Ss-Ss	Computer Tasks 4- 6 -7 in the word document "The fifty-cent piece. The board.	5min.
Post-writing	**Task 8** T asks the groups to open a new word document. T asks them to copy and paste their story end and Task 9 on the new document. T asks them to print three copies of their document in order for every member of the group to have one copy. The groups present their story end to the whole class.	✳ To develop the digital skills of copying, pasting and printing. ✳ To practice presentation skills. ✳ To realise their draft is written for an immediate audience. ✳ To boost their self-confidence.	T-Ss Ss-Ss	Computer Printer Tasks 4- 8 -9 in the word document "The fifty-cent piece.	8min.
	Task 9 Homework: T asks Ss to write a paragraph in a word document reflecting on the writing lesson, their cooperation with others and the story end. T asks them to save their document in a USB and give it to her/him.	✳ To extend the time on digital writing beyond the classroom. ✳ To practice process writing. ✳ To develop higher order thinking skills. ✳ To reflect critically on their experience and opinions.	T-Ss	Computer Printed copy of Task 9. USB	3min.

Appendix II

Task sheet

"The fifty-cent piece".doc

Open the word document "The fifty-cent piece". Here are your tasks!

Remember to change roles in each task!!! For example, the student who uses the mouse in Task 1 ***does not use it again*** in Task 2!!!

Task 1

Watch the video "The fifty-cent piece", which summarises the strange story you listened to in our last class. In groups of three cut, paste and put the following sentences into the correct order.

They went back to the cottage.

The travellers left a fifty cent coin on the kitchen table.

The old couple offered them some delicious cakes.

They talked to the restaurant owner.

They entered the burnt cottage and they saw their coin on the kitchen table.

The travellers met a cottage.

They left the cottage early in the morning.

Task 2

In groups of three use the check speller to correct the sentences.

 i.   The cople from new york is returning bak from new england
 ii. It start geting dark and they are seek selter
 iii. The cotage is not as laxurios as a hotel
 iv. The place where stay last nigt was bernt three years ago
 v.   When the travelers entered the house the woman scream

Task 3

In groups of three write your own end and explain this mysterious story in one paragraph. You can imagine a funny, strange or more frightening end! You can write a dialogue in your paragraph, too.

To help yourselves, firstly, write some ideas below:

_____

_____

Task 4

In groups of three make your ideas of Task 3 sentences. Write your paragraph ***quickly*** and do not care about grammar, syntax or spelling errors.

_____

_____

Task 5

In groups of three read your paragraph in Task 4 and make corrections. You can check the order of the ideas, any vocabulary, grammar, syntax and spelling mistakes. Cutting, pasting and check speller can be helpful!

Task 6

All the groups stand up and sit on the next group's chairs.

Read your classmates' paragraphs in Task 4 and below comment on the end of the story.

 ✓ Do you like the end? Would you prefer any change?
 ✓ Are there any grammar errors?
 ✓ What about spelling and punctuation?

_____

_____

Task 7

Stand up and sit back on your chairs.

Read your classmates' comments in Task 6 and make any necessary corrections in your paragraph in Task 4.

Task 8

Open a new word document.

Copy and paste your own end of the strange story and Task 9 on the new document. Print three copies of your document, each copy for every member of the group.

Present your end to the whole class.

Task 9

At home open a word document. In a paragraph write your opinion about:
- ✓ Did you like this writing lesson? Why?
- ✓ Did you like working with other classmates? Why?
- ✓ Did you have any problems working with other classmates? Why?
- ✓ Would you give a different end to the story? If yes, which one?
- ✓ Did you like the other groups' ends of the story?

Before start writing, think about the way and the stages you wrote your own end of the story in Tasks 3-7!!! Save your word document in a USB and bring it to your teacher.

Your opinion will help him design new lessons.