
Fiction apprentices: about reading and writing stories at school

Gildene Lima de Souza Fernandes

Alessandra Cardozo de Freitas

Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte (Brasil)

Abstract

The article presents an excerpt from a qualitative research about the development of fictional narratives by children, carried out with in a 5th grade of elementary school at a public school in Rio Grande do Norte, Brazil. It aims to reflect on the effects of reading literature and interlocution between peers on the process of creating stories. The research was based on studies on literature (Candido, 2012), fiction reading (Amarilha, 2013 e 1997; Jauss, 1994; Eco, 1994), pedagogical mediation and textual production (Vigotski, 2007; Graves e Graves, 1995; Calkins, 1989). The research design included reading sessions of the work *Fazendo Ana Paz* (Making Ana Paz), by Lygia Bojunga, and meetings for writing, discussing and rewriting fiction stories. Data analysis revealed that reading literature, under the scaffolding methodology, favored the freedom of creating stories by apprentices, who used literary references to write narratives that presented new choices regarding the type of narrator, use of time, outcome, among other aspects. The choice of the literary work (Bojunga, 2007), which is metafictional in nature, had a major impact on the new meanings attributed by the apprentices to the writing activity. It was also noticing the effect of interaction among peers and the research teacher in the writing and textual review processes, through the children's attempts to create their fictional narratives, triggered by writing conferences.

Keywords: Fictional stories. Children. Reading mediation. Literature reading.

Aprendizes de ficção: sobre o ler e o escrever histórias na escola

Resumo

O artigo apresenta um recorte de pesquisa qualitativa sobre a elaboração de narrativas de ficção por crianças, realizada numa turma do 5º ano do ensino fundamental, de uma escola pública do Rio Grande do Norte, Brasil. Tem por objetivo refletir sobre os efeitos da leitura de literatura e da interlocução entre os pares no processo de construção de histórias. A investigação fundamentou-se nos estudos sobre literatura (Candido, 2012), leitura de ficção (Amarilha, 2013 e 1997; Jauss, 1994; Eco, 1994), mediação pedagógica e produção textual (Vigotski, 2007; Graves e Graves, 1995; Calkins, 1989). O desenho da pesquisa

compreendeu sessões de leitura da obra *Fazendo Ana Paz*, de Lygia Bojunga, e encontros para escrita, discussão e reescrita de histórias de ficção.

A análise dos dados revelou que a leitura de literatura, sob a metodologia da andaimagem, favoreceu a liberdade de criação de histórias pelos aprendizes, que recorreram às referências literárias para escrever narrativas que apresentaram novas escolhas quanto ao tipo de narrador, uso do tempo, desfecho, dentre outros aspectos. A escolha da obra literária (Bojunga, 2007), de caráter metaficcional, repercutiu, de sobremaneira, nos novos sentidos atribuídos pelos aprendizes à atividade da escrita. Também foi constatado o efeito da interação entre os pares e a professora-pesquisadora nos processos de escrita e revisão textual, mediante as investidas das crianças na constituição de suas narrativas de ficção, desencadeadas pelas conferências de escrita.

Palavras-chave: Histórias de ficção. Criança. Mediação de leitura. Leitura de literatura.

Aprendices de ficción: sobre la lectura y la escritura de cuentos en la escuela

Resumen

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El artículo presenta un extracto de una investigación cualitativa, realizada sobre el desarrollo de narrativas de ficción por niños del 5º grado de la enseñanza fundamental de una escuela pública de Rio Grande do Norte, Brasil. El objetivo es reflexionar sobre los efectos de la lectura literaria y la interlocución entre pares en el proceso de construcción de historias. La investigación se basó en estudios sobre literatura (Candido, 2012), lectura de ficción (Amarilha, 2013; Jauss, 1994; Eco, 1994), mediación pedagógica y producción textual (Vigotski, 2007; Graves e Graves, 1995; Calkins, 1989). El diseño de investigación comprendió sesiones de lectura/escucha de la obra *Fazendo Ana Paz* (Haciendo Ana Paz), de Lygia Bojunga, y encuentros para escribir, discutir y reescribir cuentos de ficción. El análisis de los datos reveló que la lectura de literatura, bajo la metodología andamiaje, favoreció la libertad de creación de historias por aprendices, quienes utilizaron referencias literarias para escribir narrativas que presentaban nuevas opciones en cuanto al tipo de narrador, uso del tiempo, desenlace, entre otros aspectos. La elección de la obra literaria (Bojunga, 2007), de carácter metaficcional, tuvo un gran impacto en los nuevos significados atribuidos por los aprendices a la actividad de escribir. También se observó el efecto de la interacción entre pares y la profesora-investigadora en los procesos de escritura y revisión textual, a través de los intentos de los niños en la constitución de sus narrativas ficcionales, desencadenadas por conferencias de escritura.

Palabras clave: Cuentos de ficción. Niños. Mediación de lectura. Lectura de literatura.

Introduction

The boy learned to use words.
He saw that he could do mischiefs with words.
And he began to make pictures.
(Manoel de Barros, 1999).

In *O menino que carregava água na peneira* (the boy who carried water in a sieve) (Barros, 1999), the poem that serves as the setting for the verses that open this article, Manoel de Barros refers to an achievement that is often long awaited by boys and girls: learning to use words. The choice of this literary text is intended to highlight the theme addressed here: the use of words by children to express their ability to create fiction.

In this article, we present an excerpt from the master's thesis *Apprentices of Fiction: the construction of stories by elementary school children* (Fernandes, 2019), carried out in the Graduate Program in Education at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte (UFRN). Our aim is to reflect on the effects of reading literature and the interlocution between peers on the process of constructing stories. The empirical work that gave rise to the data was qualitative in nature, with the practice of intervention developed in 2017, in a 5th grade class of Elementary School, in a public school in the city of Natal/Rio Grande do Norte. Eighteen children took part in the intervention, aged between 10 and 11, students of the classrooms in which the researcher, who performed the mediation, acts as a teacher.

The research was guided by the following questions: a) Can the literary repertoire and the mediation of reading literature support the construction of stories created by children? b) What is the effect of mediation strategies on the construction and improvement of texts written by children?

In the hope of answering these questions, the research design was configured: a) planning the reading and discussion sessions of the book *Fazendo Ana Paz* (Making Ana Paz), by Lygia Bojunga (2007); b) setting up a bank of fiction stories, produced by the individuals before the reading sessions; c) presenting the work to be read, including a biography of the writer and a discussion about what fiction texts are; d) development of the reading sessions and discussion of the book *Fazendo Ana Paz* (Making Ana Paz); e)

production of a second fictional story by the individuals, based on the previous definition and characterization of a character; f) socialization of the stories produced among the children; and g) conferences to exchange ideas, rewrite/improve the stories produced by the authors.

We believe that dedication to the production of written text at school is a pedagogical, scientific and social necessity. This need is corroborated by the National Common Core Curriculum (BNCC, in Portuguese abbreviation), which emphasizes the development of authorship as knowledge that comes from reflecting on one's own experience of producing texts. The BNCC (Brazil, 2018) organizes the language practices in the curriculum into fields of action and establishes, in the artistic-literary field, that children in 5th grade of Elementary School should be able to produce narratives in which they use realistic and fantasy scenarios and characters, highlighting the need to observe the conventions of language and elements of narrative structure (plot, characters, time, space and narrator). We can see the emphasis on formal aspects – in this case, mastery of narrative structure – and we recognize the importance of the school investing in this area. However, we want to draw attention to the formative potential of literature in the process of children creating fictional stories.

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One aspect that motivates research into reading and writing formation with children who are already literate is that much has been discussed about the initial process of acquiring these skills, but we believe that there is still little research into how to encourage the development of reading and writing skills with children who already have a certain command of the language. In a survey we carried out with our research individuals prior to the intervention, they revealed that they did not like making up their own stories because they did not think they were creative enough. In view of this, we realized the need to discuss pedagogical strategies for developing/boosting the creative potential of children in the fifth year of Elementary School.

We agree with Calil (2004) when he criticizes the school's demand that students have beautiful handwriting, be creative, not make mistakes, produce in a short space of time and return to the text only to make a "fair copy". This context does not prioritize the freedom of authorship; it does not consider the "social place" of the individual who writes, which influences the conditions of production, nor does it consider that the discourse produced articulates other both school and non-school voices.

Smolka (2008) also criticizes the contradiction that permeates the writing practices experienced at school, an institution that expects children to occupy positions as readers and writers, while, at the same time, mostly promote work centered on isolated words, meaningless sentences – work that denies reading and writing as dialogical, discursive and meaningful practices.

This reflection on textual production practices at school confirms the importance of the research that supports the analysis undertaken in this article, which is made up of the following structure: initially, it presents the theoretical references that support the research; then, it details the development of the intervention; next, it makes assessments about the writing produced by the children and, at the end, it presents considerations built on the study developed.

Basic ideas about reading literature, producing texts and mediation

This study assumes that reading literary texts can encourage children to create fictional stories. This thinking is anchored in the formative dimension of literature, an artistic expression defined by Candido (2012) as:

[...] a universal manifestation of all men at all times [...], it is present in each one of us, illiterate or erudite, as anecdote, story, comic strip, police news, popular song, music, carnival samba (Candido, 2012, p. 23).

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In the definition, the word is the raw material, the producer of meaning in orality and writing, constitutive and provocative of the reader's action. We draw on the vision of Jauss (1994) to discuss the liberating effect caused by the reader's interaction with the literary text. Jauss explains it this way:

The experience of reading manages to free him [the reader] from the oppressions and dilemmas of his life praxis, insofar as it forces him into a new perception of things. Literature's horizon of expectations is distinguished from that of historical praxis by the fact that it not only preserves lived experiences, but also anticipates unrealized possibilities, expands the limited space of social behavior towards new desires, pretensions and objectives, thus opening up new paths for future experience (Jauss, 1994, p. 5).

If the literary text broadens the reader's horizons, paving the way for future experience, it is likely to contribute to leading him/her to new story-writing experiences, expanding his/her reading repertoire and, in turn, their imagination and creativity. Considering that, to write, you need to have something to say (Geraldi, 1997), we assume that children need to have a repertoire of fictional texts to write fictional stories.

When it comes to fictional narratives, Amarilha (1997) states that literature is an experience that catalyzes interest and pleasure. In this experience, the child can experience the process of aesthetic identification so that he/she can project himself/herself into the plot and experience the fictional game, which, in the author's words, takes place in this way:

This game of entering fiction instructs the child in the intellectual adjustment procedures for dealing comparatively with real facts and imagined facts. This ability to move between two worlds – which play provides – introduces the child to the knowledge of the limits of things that have happened and things that have been invented. It helps him/her to develop discernment between the real and the fictitious (Amarilha, 1997, p. 54).

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Would not school be the ideal social institution to enable children to exercise this transition between fact and imagination? And would not the school also be the privileged place for the exercise of fiction authorship? Let us imagine the possibilities for developing children's creative potential through their encounter with the literary text and, why not say it, their encounter with the possibility of authorship.

In the theoretical foundation around writing practices at school, we identify with the ideas of Calkins (1989). The researcher argues that it is essential for the school to review how it has organized the times and spaces for writing practice, so that allows students to be readers of what they write, to share their written productions with colleagues (drafts) and to be able to revisit and change them as often as they wish. The group meetings in which the children establish writing partnerships are called "writing conferences" by the author. We understand that this configuration for writing activities considers the child as a potential writer, who needs support in the exercise of creating fiction.

When peers or the teacher offer support for a child to advance in their ability to carry out a certain action, such as writing a fictional narrative, for example, they are intervening in what Vygotsky (2007) calls the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The ZPD consists of the distance between what the child can accomplish independently (actual development) and what can be done with the help of others (potential development). This theory emphasizes the role of interaction with others so that the individual can achieve things that would not be possible if he/she was alone.

The concept of ZPD guided our methodological decisions because of its relationship with the scaffolded reading approach (Graves; Graves, 1995), chosen as the reading methodology in the sessions of this research. The “scaffolds” are supports for the reader to build a broader understanding of the text, so that he/she can “[...] reach a goal that might be beyond their unassisted efforts” (Graves; Graves, 1995, p. 20). According to the scaffolded reading approach (Graves; Graves, 1995), the teacher should plan activities that help students achieve maximum understanding of the text. To this end, the reading activity should consist of the following phases: a) pre-reading – raising expectations and/or exploring prior knowledge; b) reading – orally, silently, shared; and c) post-reading – discussing the book, producing various records, etc.

Based on the foundations presented here, we will now discuss and analyze how the research intervention was developed.

Reading sessions and writing conferences

The intervention was planned considering the need to promote contact with the literary text – moments we call reading sessions – and the need to promote the exercise of producing fictional stories – moments we call writing conferences – based on the theoretical framework presented.

For the reading sessions, we chose the book *Fazendo Ana Paz* (Making Ana Paz), by the writer Lygia Bojunga (2007), which was read in its entirety and discussed with the individuals before the writing sessions. The choice of this work was justified for several reasons: the author is a reference when it comes to literature for children and young adults; the research individuals had already shown an appreciation for the writer Lygia Bojunga on other occasions during their school career in which they had had contact with some

of her works; and, above all, by our expectation that, by living the fictional game proposed by *Fazendo Ana* (Making Ana Paz), the individuals could be inspired and/or motivated to experience a promising relationship with authorial creation.

In the chosen book, the character is constituted through the “appearances” of a girl, a young woman and an old woman to the fictionalized writer, who is the narrator of the story. The characters, at first, seem to have nothing to do with each other, until, at a certain point in the plot, the intertwining between them is understood by the narrator/writer: “That is it! The three are the same! In the dark depths of my mind, I should have realized what I am only now realizing” (Bojunga, 2007, p. 40).

The text, which we consider to be a good literary reference for our “fiction apprentices,” highlights feelings that can be common to those who write, such as anxiety, joy, frustration, identification, doubt, tiredness and fulfillment. It puts the discussion about the writing process on the agenda, helping to demystify some beliefs about literary production and its authors. This is because the story highlights aspects related to the writer’s experience, suggesting to the reader that narratives are not born ready-made in the head of the person who writes them – that it is possible for the writer to have doubts, to like or dislike what they are producing, to start again or even to give up on finishing their texts.

The excerpt below, taken from the book itself, clearly translates the “impasses” of the creative process, when the narrator is asked to define how the father of the character Ana Paz would be like:

And then it started again:
Today I will do the father;
Monday without fail I will make the father;
By Wednesday this father will be ready;
Maybe I will leave the father for next week?
Who knows, maybe I will get the father out of this story?
I stopped writing.
I spent some time without any contact with Ana Paz
(Bojunga, 2007, p. 59).

For the children, who were sensitive to the dilemmas experienced by Ana Paz's narrator-creator, to live their own writing experience, we proposed a sequence of situations in which they would read, discuss, plan, write, share ideas and rewrite, using the lessons of Calkins (1989) as a basis.

The intervention with the children consisted of fifteen meetings. The first eleven meetings were attended by eighteen children and the last four only by six. The need to create closer conditions for monitoring and mediating the final phase – aimed at improving the stories – motivated our decision to reduce the number of participants.

In the first meeting of the intervention, we instructed the individuals to create a fictional story to build up a bank of texts prior to reading *Fazendo Ana Paz* [Making Ana Peace] (Bojunga, 2007). This collection served as a parameter for comparison with the stories produced after reading and discussing the aforementioned literary work.

From the second meeting onwards, we began to approach the literary work selected for the intervention, dedicating ourselves to studying the biography of the writer Lygia Bojunga. Talking to the children, it was possible to see how familiar they were with the writer. As well as mentioning works, they already knew, read in previous years, the children mentioned characteristics of Lygia Bojunga's writing style, specifically how some of her short stories end, as Alice (2017) said: "At the end, she leaves it up to the person to think".

From the third to the eighth session, we read the book *Fazendo Ana Paz* [Making Ana Peace] (Bojunga, 2007), completing the pre-reading, reading and post-reading stages. The teacher-researcher did the oral reading, which was followed by the children who had the written text and were arranged in a circle. While looking at the cover of the book, the children were encouraged to think about what they expected from a work written by Lygia Bojunga. The most diverse predictions were shared, visibly influenced by previous readings and discussions about the author's life and work.

Throughout the reading sessions, a climate of curiosity was established in the class. The meetings always began with an oral retelling of the passage read in the previous session. After discussing the passage read, the meeting ended with a survey of predictions about the continuity of the narrative.

One of the questions we asked in the post-reading session was whether the children thought the writer was aware that she was ending the story

suddenly, as if the text was not finished yet. In response to this provocation, the children expressed the most diverse ideas: Melissa thought that the author wrote this ending intentionally, as this is a characteristic of her way of writing – leaving gaps for the reader to fill in; Bianca said that the narrator put the text in the drawer because she did not feel like writing anymore; Joaquim said that when the writer starts the text, everything is already “designed”; Raíssa argued that the author can start a story with one intention, but end up giving it other developments and outcomes, which, at first, were not foreseen.

After the reading and discussion of the literary work, we moved on to the writing conferences (9th session), which began with the proposal that the children carry out a kind of planning of a new fictional story, recording their initial ideas about the constitution of the characters and a life for them, based on a proposed script.

At the next meeting (10th session), the children revisited their notes on the new character and began to create their stories, in an individual exercise with no time limit. The children were also told that they could change or even produce something completely different from what had been planned for the character in the previous meeting.

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The configuration for the writing activity was in line with the experience of the fictional writer that the children had just experienced through the literary text. The mediation implemented for the writing process allowed the children to experience something completely different from the prevailing practices in schools, in which production is usually completed in a short and determined time.

At the eleventh session, when the stories were shared among the group, a large part of the productions had not yet been completed because some of the children still used other time and spaces for writing – both at school and at home. As a result of the writing experience enthusiasm, we found that some of the texts were much longer than those that made up the initial bank of texts.

Also, at the socialization meeting (11th session), we left the children free to read their story to the class. We highlight the case of Joaquim, who, as well as reading his story, which was still under construction, shared how he was feeling about this writing experience. He usually wrote only a few lines, but revealed that, despite having written twenty pages, he was still in

the process of putting together the plot of his character, a young mammoth. Joaquim said that he was feeling attached to the mammoth and that, for this reason, he was finding it difficult to make it lose its life – which was his initial idea. Joaquim's revelation tells us that creative activity was not dissociated from emotion, as he was probably experiencing a process of identification with his character (Jauss, 1994).

Other children, in response to our provocation about how they felt about taking on the role of writer, indicated doubts, a desire to make changes to the course of the story, a desire to write in ways not yet experienced, to give up, and even dissatisfaction with the result. As an example, we share the following statement.

Raíssa: First of all, I was thinking of other things to do, and, when I wrote this text, I tried to change, because I always had the narrator and not the character himself speaking. And I also wanted to write about a boy, because I do not think I have ever written a character other than a girl. I found it very interesting to be a writer, but also a bit complicated. Yes, I think I felt the emotions that Lygia felt for Ana Paz. Sometimes I thought about giving up like one of my friends, she lost her story and started again. I was in the middle of mine thinking about giving up, that it was not good, but I still think it could be better than my story, yeah... but it is still good (Raíssa, 2017).

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We believe that this testimony recovers the literary text read, as it reveals that the child experienced different sensations with the writing of the text, including the feeling of incompleteness that Lygia Bojunga so often propagated. The importance of the reading repertoire for the creation of fictional stories is evident in the positive interference of the literary work on the children.

For the last three meetings of the intervention (12th to 15th), aimed at collaborative work to improve the texts, we selected six children, who were divided into two groups. In composing these groups, we considered the heterogeneous profiles of the children in terms of their relationship with reading and writing. Our aim was making participants benefit from the ideas and/or help of those who probably thought differently, due to their different experiences and conceptions of creating fictional texts. According to this criterion, group 1 was made up of Raíssa, Melissa and Diego – the latter of whom admittedly did not like reading. Group 2 was made up of Camille, Bianca and Felipe – the latter was the one who did not usually finish writing his texts.

We began the writing conferences for the last stage by explaining that the aim was to promote the exchange of ideas/suggestions between the authors and readers, with the aim of making the stories clearer and/or more creative. Each child was invited to present their text and, then, the pairs were free to ask questions and make suggestions.

In the group 1 conference, we saw reactions from children who seemed discouraged from reading their story and a case of a child who expressed a desire not to change the text, even after receiving suggestions from colleagues. On the other hand, we would highlight Raíssa's receptive attitude to the proposal of collaboration between her classmates, who took on board the suggestions she received when rewriting her text.

After listening attentively to Raíssa's reading, the members of group 1 suggested that she could go into more detail about the characterization of the characters, specifying, for example, who were the boys who belong to a group that frightened the main character. They also suggested that she include a female character in the story (possibly by inserting a love affair), so that the author herself would be more satisfied with her own text. This suggestion was related to Raíssa's own statement that she did not like the story because she did not identify with the main character, who was a boy. According to the young author, it was the first time she had tried writing a story narrated by a male figure.

The conference with Group 2 saw a more receptive participation from its members. They felt more comfortable suggesting ideas that could contribute to a more detailed plot, especially Felipe, who presented a succinct story in its first version. It was significant to see how he realized the possibilities of expanding his story as he answered questions about his character's life.

The following meetings were devoted to rewriting the texts, according to the notes taken during the readings and discussions in the groups. Some individuals preferred to establish partnerships to revisit the texts, while others chose to make the changes individually. In this writing process, co-authorship was evident, an experience of recognized relevance in studies on mediation for teaching and learning processes (Fontana, 2005).

We would like to emphasize our efforts to promote writing mediation that respected the uniqueness of the children in their fictional creation process, in terms of the time allocated to writing, the partnerships established and the

choice of themes (Calkins, 1989). We want to highlight the freedom taken on by the children who, like *O menino que carregava água na peneira* (the boy who carried water in a sieve), used the “disguise of fiction” (Amarilha, 1997) to create and to live the roles they wanted and express their thoughts and feelings. We would also highlight the example of Bruna, a girl who identified strongly with the male universe and created a boy character; Lívia, who used the character’s voice to talk about the feelings of loneliness that plagued her and Jason, an introspective boy, who wrote about a nameless character who wore a mask to hide his true identity.

Regarding the process experienced by Jason, who often did not finish his stories, we highlight the revelation he makes when we praise his fictional story: “And I have not finished yet: I’m going to write part 2” (Jason, 2017). We consider this to be the greatest achievement of our intervention: helping a child to believe in his creative potential.

Appreciation of the children’s productions

To guide the analysis of the children’s productions, we compared the narratives produced at different times during the intervention: before the literary work was read and after – initial version and final version. We chose to check for signs of influence from the literary text read and from peer mediation in the rewriting of the narratives, verifying the choices in relation to their constituent elements, namely: a) the role assumed by the narrator; b) the choice of historical or fantastic characters and their characterizations; c) the choice of chronological or non-chronological time; d) the characterization of environments and transitions between different spaces where the narrative takes place; and e) the presentation of the plot in its different stages – exposition, complication, climax and outcome.

We noticed that the productions made after the reading sessions differed from the pattern that prevailed compared to the initial ones of the text bank, in terms of narrator-observer, chronological time, absence or weak characters, story in a single scenario, total resolution of the conflict (if there was one) and outcome with a happy ending. Some of the peculiarities observed in the final versions of the texts are: the presence of narrators, characters and observers; the creation of fantastic characters, interacting with human characters, with

greater characterization of the latter; the use of non-chronological time (flash-back); “real” and imaginary spaces and plots with unusual outcomes or even without defined outcomes, allowing them to be completed by the reader.

Let us look at the beginning of Camille’s narrative as an example:

The pursuit of evil

Chapter I: Where am I?

I woke up in a strange place, I could not remember why I was there, when suddenly someone came in.

– At last, you are awake – said the nurse with an arrogant tone – you have been asleep for three long days.

– Where am I? – I asked, a little disoriented.

– You are at the Oswaldo sanatorium, you came to us a few days ago – she explained – you were showing signs of hallucinations (Camille, 2017).

[...]

Then, she gave me some very strange medicine, told me to take it every three hours and left. After she left, strange things started to happen... I saw written in blood on the door: I’M COMING BACK, on the windows there were black shadows with dolls’ masks and in the place of the bed there was a passage and a note with the words “COME WITH ME.” Suddenly, I blacked out (Camille, 2017).

[...]

Chapter II: Mr. Midnight

“Mr. Midnight, do not take this.”

Hey, I remember that day, it was me, my parents and my aunt May, I was sitting down when they handed me a basket, after opening it, I saw what was inside, it was a kitten, his eyes were orange like the day and his fur black like the night, I already know his name will be Mr. Midnight. Then we played until late at night, it was one of the best days of my life, that day I got my best friend [...] (Camille, 2017).

As you can see, Camille structures the text into chapters (twelve in all) and names each one – this was her own initiative, which she did not take in story production situations prior to the intervention. Camille begins her text in an unusual way, with a scene in progress, in which the narrator is the main character herself. She chooses a sanatorium as the initial scenario for her story,

establishing coherence with the mystery and risk she wants to convey to the reader, which is complemented by the fantastic events that begin to unfold. She provides clues to the psychological characteristics of the first characters and uses a flashback that allows the reader to know the moment when the main character gets her cat. Let us see what happens in chapter III:

Chapter III: Where is he???

- Marlee, are you all right? - that voice sounded familiar.
 - Aunt May?
 - Yes, it is me, dear.
 - Why am I here? And where's Mr. Midnight?
 - Easy. You were very ill yesterday, so they helped you. Mr. Midnight is your cat, right?
 - Yes, exactly. You know where it is, don't you?
 - Unfortunately, it has not been found.
 - WHAT????????????
 - Excuse me.
 - WHERE'S MY KITTEN, WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO IT?
 - Calm down, we did not do anything to it, it must have got lost when you ran off and ...
 - Where are my parents? Do they know I am here?
- Before she could answer, the nurse entered the room:
- Visiting hours are over, please leave. Marlee, time for bed.
- They left and everything went dark... (Camille, 2017).

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Throughout the story, we verify that Camille maintains a climate of suspense and a fast pace of events that hold the reader's attention and feed their curiosity. An example of this is in chapter III, when, for example, the question about the whereabouts of her parents is temporarily left unanswered, as well as it is not clear where his cat is.

The excerpts from Camille's story provide us with evidence that children are capable of producing fictional texts. To arrive at this statement, we turn to Culler (1999), who defines some of the fictional characteristics of literary texts: the presence of non-historical individuals and the possibilities of interpretation offered by the text are characteristics that we observe in the narratives produced by the children. As well as the advances in the literary

qualities of Camille's text, we are also struck by the new configuration taken by other apprentices' texts, especially after their authors took part in the small group meetings.

We are going to share Felipe's productions, which also show the results obtained with the intervention. Unlike Camille, who is a child who likes to read and take part in all activities, Felipe used to get lost in school activities, lacked motivation to write and almost always left his texts incomplete.

From our knowledge of Felipe's personality and routine, we can see that he writes about his time, place and preferences, creating a protagonist whose profile blends in with his own. Here is Felipe's second story.

It was a Friday night and Pedro decided to call his family and friends to go to his beach house in Búzios city. When they got there, they went straight to the dunes and then went to sleep. The next day, they rented two quad bikes to ride through the dunes. Then they went to the water park, where he got a call from a famous motocross pilot telling him to go to the United States, which was his dream. So, he got on the plane Monday morning with his brother and father (Felipe, 2017).

[...]

When he called the pilot and the pilot told him where the track was and he got to the track, he did his exams and finished and his brother and father became official KM pilots (Felipe, 2017).

Felipe has created a story without a title, which apparently begins with the intention of situating the reader in relation to the time of the event, but without determining which Friday it refers to. Felipe opts for an observant narrator, with a plot that has no conflict, no climax and a light-hearted ending. The young author does not describe the place, as if he were relying on the reader's prior knowledge of the beach and dunes he mentions, nor does he detail the facts: we do not know, for example, why the main character took his father and brother on the trip, why the tests were carried out or how he, his brother and father became famous pilots.

As we have already mentioned, in the group 2 conference, Felipe was very comfortable with the questions that were asked by the other children and the teacher-researcher, who were interested in understanding how some of the facts in the story came about. Felipe started to talk about the story, as if all the details were kept to himself. He revealed details about the life of the

character's family and the sport of motocross. By expressing his ideas, which were possibly being mentally organized at the time, Felipe was able to insert facts that made the story much more engaging. One example was an accident that caused the pilot to withdraw from competitions – a conflict that could have guided the plot towards a climax and a more elaborate outcome. We would like to highlight the commitment of the group 2 colleagues who, as readers of the text, expressed their curiosities and extracted from the “fiction apprentice” what it did not initially offer.

Felipe revealed that, like himself, Pedro Henrique, his character, was also taken by his father to practice motocross. He said he was inspired by the movie *Supercross*, in which a father had an accident and died on the track in Tokyo – the same track where his character also had an accident. This detailing of the story brings us back to the discussion about the relationship between reality and fiction, in other words, how much world knowledge and fictional repertoire feed authorial production. It brings us back to Iser's (2013, p. 31) provocation about this unquestionable duality: “Are ‘fictionalized’ texts so fictional?”. And Amarilha's statement (2013, p. 80): “[...] fiction endows the imaginary with a certain concreteness”.

In another session, aimed at rewriting the texts, we put ourselves at Felipe's disposal, helping him to recover his colleagues' questions and the formulations he had made before he started rewriting. Throughout the revisiting of the text, we guided him to re-read it and to evaluate whether any adjustments were still needed, as we realized that the unfinished nature of his productions was also a consequence of the lack of revision of what he wrote. The following is an excerpt from the final version of the text, after the mediation situations that were socialized. It shows Felipe's investment in the climax and outcome.

Overcoming

It was a Friday night and Pedro decided to call his family and friends to go to his beach house in Búzios city. When they got there, they went straight to the dunes to play and, as they were very tired, decided to go to bed.

The next day, they rented two quad bikes to ride through the dunes. Then, they went to the water park. There, Pedro received a call from a famous motocross pilot called James Stuart, making him an offer to go to the United States, which was his dream. [...]

The pilot asked them to go to his house in the United States because he had a training track where he would be evaluated to be the official pilot. Pedro was very anxious to go home and tell his family. [...]

Pedro had his tests and everything was fine: he was healthy enough to race. He trained hard and dedicated himself to his first race among the official MXGP pilots. In his first races he managed to finish 2nd and 3rd. All this time they were living in the pilot's house.

By his 12th race, he was already very experienced, but, when he made a very high jump, he was already very tired and unbalanced in the air, falling headfirst into the tire barriers. His father, who was also racing, got off his bike when he saw his son had fallen, rushed to his aid and called the doctors.

Pedro spent a month in hospital and had a 90% chance of losing his memory. In fact, he only lost his memory a few minutes before the accident. He also heard the news that he had broken his leg and spent a season without running, doing physiotherapy. [...]

A year and three months later Pedro went to James Stuart's house and he was very happy to see Pedro with the same potential as before. From then on, this pair of pilots never missed a race [...] (Felipe, 2017).

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In the final version of his fictional story, Felipe defines a title that is coherent with the outcome of the plot and maintains the choice of the observer-narrator, who knows everything about what happens. The story is concerned with involving the reader, with the development of a plot in which the protagonist pursues a successful sporting career after recovering from a serious accident, which could take him away from this dream. Felipe takes on board the suggestions of his colleagues in the conference, detailing each fact in greater detail, which demonstrates the impact of the proposed interaction situations on the expressive improvement of his textual production. Felipe maintains the use of chronological time and uses temporal markers throughout the narrative to ensure the continuity and progression of the facts.

Despite his efforts to give the reader more information, Felipe does not characterize the characters or the spaces. About the outcome, he builds an ending with an idea of continuity.

We follow the young author's demonstration of satisfaction with the result of his text, in which he seems to be dealing with the realization of his own dreams. Compared to with the initial version, we see the use of his creativity,

which had to be brought out through the mediation of others. As well as recognizing Felipe's achievements, we are also self-critical of our mediation, which did not encourage the young apprentice writer to perceive the incompleteness that could make up his text – not for the usual lack of attention, but because of the intention to invite on his readers to participate in filling in the gaps. Let us remember what Umberto Eco teaches us: (1994, p. 55) “[...] the text is a lazy machine that asks the reader to participate in its work.”

By considering children as "fiction learners", we recognize that there is a process to be continued, with regard to their condition to invest more in the insertion of literary resources in their stories. If children are unique, just as their experiences with reading and writing, we understand the reasons that led Camille and Felipe, for example, to allow, to a greater or lesser extent, their readers to carry out part of the work of their "lazy machines".

Some thoughts on the process of reading and writing stories

In this article, the data provided allow us to make important considerations a conclusive manner. Regarding the effect of the mediation of literary texts in the production of fictional stories with children, we found the following aspects.

The fact that the children experiment, in their written productions, with other possibilities of configuring the narrative elements evidences the influence of the repertoire of reading literature, especially the work of Lygia Bojunga. In the narratives produced by the children before the intervention predominated narrator-observers, linear chronological time, absence of climax, outcomes with happy endings, among other characteristics that were modified according to each child's openness, such as omnipresent narrators, non-linear chronological time, insertion of climax and open outcomes.

The discussions promoted by reading literature also helped the children to consider the feelings that can be involved in the creative process and, consequently, to believe more in their own ability or potential to write. The choice of the literary work (Bojunga, 2007), of a metafictional nature, had a major impact on the new meanings attributed by the apprentices to the activity of writing. This evidences the "liberating effect" of the encounter between

the reader and the literary text, defended by Jauss (1994), with regard to the airing of ideas in fiction writing.

Regarding the role of interaction with peers and the teacher-researcher in improving the stories produced, we believe that: a) discussion of the literary work in groups, using the methodology of reading by “scaffolding” (Graves and Graves, 1995), favored the sharing of meanings among the children, broadening their understanding of the text and b) the collective situations of discussion and improvement of the stories instigated the creativity of the “fiction apprentices”, making them realize new possibilities and developments for their texts. These results reaffirm the importance of peer support for the construction/improvement of stories (Calkins, 1989).

Based on these findings, we argue that the intervention carried out was relevant to the formation of Elementary School 5th graders as readers and writers, as it considered their creative potential, the relevance of reading literature and the importance of peer mediation. Without intending to train writers of literature, or to use literature for this purpose, we hope that this study can encourage discussion about textual production practices in classes that are already literate.

We believe that access to literature is unquestionable, as is the child’s right to express their thoughts, respect their interests and the opportunity to improve as a reader and writer of fictional stories – rights that need to be guaranteed at school. We hope this institution be the privileged place for children to make “mischiefs with words.”

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Prof.^a Ms. Gildene Lima de Souza Fernandes
Doutoranda do Programa de Pós-Graduação em Educação
Núcleo de Educação da Infância do Colégio de Aplicação
Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte (Brasil)
Grupo de Pesquisa Ensino e Linguagem
Orcid id: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1348-5399>
E-mail: gilfernandes@nei.ufrn.br

Prof.^a Dr.^a Alessandra Cardozo de Freitas
Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte (Brasil)
Centro de Educação
Grupo de Pesquisa Ensino e Linguagem
Orcid id: <https://orcid.org/0009-0003-5036-0573>
E-mail: alessandra.freitas@ufrn.br
E-mail: alessandracardozof@yahoo.com.br

Nome e E-mail do tradutor
Affonso Henriques Nunes
affonsohnunes@gmail.com

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