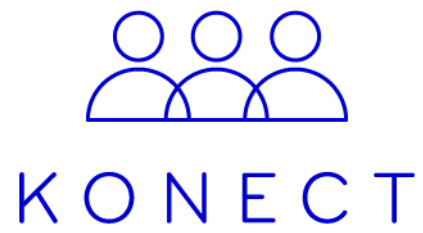


Fan Fiction for 21st Century Language and Literacy Development

A resource for teachers and teacher educators

Shannon Sauro





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These materials were developed for the KONECT project, with funding by the Spanish Ministry of Economy, Industry & Competitiveness: Proyectos I+D del Programa Estatal de Fomento de la Investigación Científica y Técnica de Excelencia

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Development**

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Shannon Sauro, Malmö University

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Introduction to the KONECT Teaching Materials

M. Dooly

There has been considerable talk about the future of research and practice in education. Occasionally the discourse tends to the euphoric, sometimes it strays more to the dystopic. Public debates often explore how educators can and should meet society's demands in the globalized, interconnected geopolitical situations of today. Voiced concern about learners (as future 'global', 'digitalized' citizens) regarding what skills and competencies that they must have and what knowledge they are constructing (or not), both formally and informally, are prevalent in frequent public debates. However, no matter where one stands on the issues of debate, there is a general consensus that education will be transformed in the next decades in order to accommodate the rapid technological, sociopolitical, geographical, and environmental changes the world is experiencing, not to mention the many changes on the human level that we all live on a daily basis.

Of course society –and subsequently education- have always undergone continual change. Nonetheless, the past decades have brought about an almost vertiginous sense of change. Twenty years ago Appadurai (1996) described these changes in model of 'transcultural flows' that theorizes five different domains of transcultural movements: ethnoscapas (involving flow of people); mediascapas (flow of information); technoscapas (flow of technology); finanscapas (flows of finance); and ideoscapas (flow of ideology or ideas). These changes have an impact on how the world is perceived: for milleniums social life was largely inertial; traditions marked and influenced learning and individuals perceived a relatively finite set of possibilities for their future.

Now education must find a way to encompass, address and embrace all of these shifting 'scapes'. This can be disconcerting. As the online journal 'Education Week'¹ has pointed out, "When it comes to predicting the future of work, top economists and technologists are all over the map". And faced with this uncertainty, teachers, administrators and policy makers inevitably feel consternation and anxiety. Educational research, carried out in conjunction with teachers and students, can provide key answers to how to shape the future of learning.

The KONECT² project (EDU2013-43932-P) set out to gather and analyze innovative approaches to education in primary and secondary education in several countries in order to draw up guidelines and teaching materials that are based on transnational, technology-enhanced, multilingual, interdisciplinary and issue-based teaching and learning. These materials are compiled in this set of teaching modules. The modules can be used as stand-alone materials or as whole sets and range across a wide array of themes and approaches, with the nexus of a focus on preparing students of today with some of the required competences for tomorrow (or to repeat a now familiar phrase, preparing them with 21st century competencies).

The modules do not follow a set format given that the subjects are very diverse and do not necessarily have to be addressed in a similar fashion. Moreover, in a nod to one of the

¹ <https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2017/09/27/the-future-of-work-is-uncertain-schools.html>

² Knowledge for Network-based Education, Cognition & Teaching (KONECT). Funded by the Spanish Ministry of Economy, Industry & Competitiveness: Proyectos I+D del Programa Estatal de Fomento de la Investigación Científica y Técnica de Excelencia, Grant number: EDU2013-43932-P; 2013-2017 (grant extended to March 2018). Principal Investigator: Dr. Melinda Dooly, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. <https://www.konectproject.com>

recognized 21st century competencies; creativity, we have opted to allow each of the teacher/author's 'voice' and personality to come through in the texts. And of course, these materials are aimed as guides, not as top-down models of how these topics should be dealt with in different classes around the world.

In the spirit of knowledge-sharing, the materials are open educational resource and are available in at least two of these four languages: English, Spanish, Catalan and Chinese (choice made by the individual authors). We hope that other teachers around the world find them useful for their own contexts and we would enjoy hearing about how others have used these materials in their own classrooms.³

Dr. Melinda Dooly
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

Reference:

Appadurai, A. (1996). *Modernity at large: Cultural dimensions of globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

³ Feel free to contact the lead researcher of the KONECT Project at projectkonect@gmail.com

Modules in the KONECT Teaching Materials

Module 1: Teaching critical digital literacy to combat fake news. A resource for teachers and teacher educators. Ron Darvin, University of British Columbia

Module 2: Teaching in and for plurilingualism in the 21st century. A resource book for teachers and teacher educators. Emilee Moore, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

Module 3: Fan fiction for 21st century language and literacy development. A resource book for teachers and teacher educators. Shannon Sauro, Malmö University

Module 4. Educational proposals to work and reflect on gender identities, gender diversity and gender equality. A resource book for teachers and teacher educators. Claudia Vallejo and Laura Giménez, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

Module 5. Emergent information gap tasks for language classrooms. A resource book for teachers and teacher educators. Ufuk Balaman, Hacettepe University

Module 6. A proposal for 21st century education: An introduction to dual language book reading. A resource book for teachers and teacher educators. Rahat Zaidi, University of Calgary

Module 7. Co-creating language learning journeys: A designerly approach to supporting experiential language learning practices. A resource for teachers and teacher educators. Brendon Clark and Nicholas B. Torretta, Umeå Institute of Design, Umeå University

Introduction to the module

S. Sauro

These teaching materials draw upon the language play and language learning found in online spaces where fans of television shows, movies and books congregate. The materials described here were first developed in Sweden, but can be adapted easily to different contexts by drawing on the literary and popular cultural interests of students.

Language and Popular Culture in Sweden

Sweden, like its Nordic neighbors, is a country where many foreign movies and television programs are broadcast in their original language with subtitles in the local languages (Hult, 2010), allowing Swedes access to the languages and cultures of different societies. The presence of multiple languages and subtitles in popular media also allows for multilingual storytelling in Swedish media, as illustrated by the internationally popular Scandinavian crime drama *Bron/Broen* (The Bridge) which takes place in the binational *Öresund/Øresund* region of Sweden and Denmark and features Swedish and Danish spoken equally among its cast of characters.

The pervasiveness of international media along with the accessibility of high speed, stable Internet access throughout much of Sweden also supports a high degree of online international media consumption and online interaction around popular media. In one recent example, the popular Norwegian teen drama *Skam* (Shame) broke online viewership records in Sweden and was credited with fostering connections and positive attitudes towards use of neighboring languages in the Nordic region. This is just one example of how online in the digital wilds, many young Swedes make use of the languages of the source media or English as an international language to play, create, and interact with consumers and lovers of popular culture around the world.

Online Fandom and Fan Fiction

These online citizens include those who consider themselves part of online media fandoms, “the local and international networks of fans that develop around a particular program, text or other media product and which foster the sharing of responses to the source material, including the production of novel fan-generated content.” (Sauro, 2014, p. 239) Perhaps the best known of this fan generated content is fan fiction, (spelled fanfiction by fans), which are stories that retell, remix, reimagine, or extend in some way the stories, characters and universes created by others. For many fans, fan fiction represents a tool for developing writing skills in their first or additional language, for exploring or recrafting identity, and for critiquing popular or dominant media (Sauro, 2017). As a result, teachers and researchers have begun to look at the development of fan fiction tasks to teaching materials in their classrooms to support language and literacy development.

For instance, in a class on teaching literature for future English teachers in Sweden, Sauro and Sundmark (2016) had students collaboratively write a missing moment from JRR Tolkien’s fantasy novel, *The Hobbit*. Each student was required to write from the perspective of a different character and publish the completed stories in blogs or online fan spaces. This type of role-play storytelling required students to pay careful attention to speech style, word choice, and key plot elements. In a similar role-play based activity inspired by fan fiction, this one situated in a secondary school literacy class in the United

States, students tweeted from the perspective of a specific character in Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* as it was read aloud in class (McWilliams, et al., 2011). This type of fan fiction inspired activity required students to capture their characters' personalities and speech styles while simultaneously being constrained by Twitter's (at the time) 140 character limit for tweets.

Character-based role-play is just one of the many fan fiction genres available. Other genres include those which reflect features of the source material, encapsulate common critiques and tropes found among different fan communities, or reflect the plurilingual nature of a fandom's writers and readers. For instance, fan fiction based on crime procedural books and television shows (for instance, the Sherlock Holmes mysteries or the science fiction television series X-Files) often elicits the fan fiction genre known as casefic, stories which follow the storytelling structure of the source material and ask characters to investigate and solve a mystery or case. Another common fan fiction genre popular across fandoms and often written by younger writers is that of author-insert fan fiction (sometimes referred to as Mary-Sue fan fiction) in which the author writes him or herself into the universe of the story they are a fan of (e.g. the author imagines herself at Hogwarts with Harry Potter and his friends). Research on multilingual Mary-Sue fanfiction has explored how teenage Finnish fans use this type of genre to engage with or critique social issues facing them in their daily lives (Leppänen, 2008) or to index their multilingual identity as global citizens (Leppänen, et al, 2009).

Taken together, these fan fiction genres and practices can serve as models for teaching language, literature and culture in a manner that taps into the language, literary and digital citizenship skills required for 21st century learners. Accordingly, the materials in the follow section represent a progression in using fan fiction or fan fiction related activities in the classroom. Modifications are included for carrying out these activities collaboratively online with a partner class or partner students engaged in virtual exchange.

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Materials set 1: Story outline and purpose



Author: Shannon Sauro

Planning for Writing

Writing creatively is challenge for even an experienced writer, and planning is necessary to make sure the writer (or teams of writers) have a clear idea of where they would like to take the story and what they would like to achieve with it. For this first step, students will plan their fanfiction by creating an outline and a brief description of what they hope to achieve with their story.

Instructions

Step 1: Carefully review the instructions for the specific type of fan fiction you will be writing (see, for example possible genres in Materials Set 3).

Step 2: Brainstorm ideas for the focal character(s), the setting, the connection of your story to the plot of the source material, key ideas, and phrases and concepts you would like to use to capture the flavor of the source material.

Step 3 (Optional): Depending on the source material, you may find it helpful to draw a map of where the events of your story will take place compared to the events of the source material. This can be particularly helpful if your fan fiction includes a major journey or quest that brings your characters through very different communities and geographic features.

Step 4: Generate an outline with goals and key ideas to be shared in a collaborative document (for example GoogleDocs) or in a group blog where it can be referred back to during the writing process.

Modifications for Online Collaboration and Publication

For students who are writing collaboratively with remote partners, such as in a virtual exchange or in distance learning situations, the same steps as above can be followed using collaborative tools to facilitate the brainstorming and planning process. Here are a few suggestions:

[Coggle](#): a free mindmapping application

[Mindmup 2](#): a free online mindmapping resource

[Padlet](#): collaborative tool for images, text and video.

Recommended Reading

Sundmark, B. (2014). "Dragons Be Here": Teaching children's literature and creative writing with the help of maps. *Thinking through Children's Literature in the Classroom*, (pp. 64-78). In A. A. Reyes-Torres, L. S. Villacañas-de-Castro & B. Soler-Pardo (Eds.). Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Press

Materials set 2: Alternate point of view



Author: Shannon Sauro

Quick Creativity in the Classroom

Sometimes students who have less experience with creative writing may lack the confidence that they can write fan fiction in a second language. The purpose of this in-class activity is to give students a heavily scaffolded creative writing activity with a time limit that allows them to engage in low-stakes creative writing with a time limit. The results of this in class activity do not necessarily need to be incorporated into the final fan fiction project (see Materials Set 3) but may instead to provide confidence building or familiarization with possible creative writing techniques that students can use later.

Instructions

This activity will take place after students have viewed the film/television show or read the book that they will write fan fiction about. For this activity, students will be organized small groups. Each group will be randomly assigned a scene or page from the movie, book, television show being used as the source text. This can be done in a variety of ways. For instance, the teacher can write pages or scenes on a sheet of paper, and a member of each group can randomly select it from a bag. Or students can roll two the three dice with the number on each representing the page in the book or minute in the movie.

Step 1: Go to the page number in the book or minute in the movie that your group selected and carefully read the scene on that page. It may be necessary to read a page or two before or after to find a full scene. Please note, if a scene is very dialog-heavy or contains a lot of general description, it may be necessary to roll the dice again to locate a different scene.

Step 2: After rereading the scene, brainstorm individually or in groups a different character whose perspective this scene could be retold from. This could be another minor character in the scene who is mostly an observer, the antagonist or opponent to the main character, or an original character that you insert into the scene in some way.

Step 3: Flash writing – in no more than 15 minutes, rewrite this scene from this other character's perspective. You may find it useful to keep identical dialog and to keep in mind your character's their personality, history, and relationship to the other characters as this will affect how they interpret the same scene.

Step 4: When time is called, share what you have written with the other members of your group.

Step 5: If you generated something you particularly like, keep note of it to see if you can reuse some of this in your actual fan fiction story (Materials Set 4).

Materials set 3: The story isn't over until I say it's over



Author: Shannon Sauro

Individual and Collaborative Fan Fiction

Building on the map, outline and writing goal in Materials Set 1, students will write a piece of fan fiction based on a common source text. This can be done independently, collaboratively, or online. The length and particular genre of fan fiction should depend on the curriculum, students' interests and proficiency. Below are four different types of fanfiction directions, followed by online modifications that were originally developed for high intermediate to advanced second language writers (B2-C1 on the CEFR).

Each student will be responsible for contributing at least 1000 words to this collaborative story. This necessitates careful attention to plot, descriptions, language, dialog, and character by all members so the different parts of the story merge together.

Individual Instructions

For this creative writing activity, each student will select one of the four story genres from below and pay careful attention to plot, descriptions, language, dialog, and character so that the fanfiction in some way shares a clear connection to the source materials.

Option 1 – (Alternate Point of View) Many books primarily follow the point of view of its main character. Thus, the reader is given access to a wide range of this character's thoughts and understanding of what is happening. However, rewriting a scene from a different character's point of view (whether a minor character or an opponent) lets writers explore very different perspectives, delve more deeply into a minor character's psychology, and perhaps tell an entirely different story. For this option, you will retell a scene from the book/film/television series from a different character's point of view.

Option 2 – (Prequel or Sequel) In the first Harry Potter book, Harry and readers are gradually introduced to the history of a parallel magical world and Harry's own personal history which has been kept from him. While much of this history is explored further in the later books, a great deal is unexplored or described without detail. Another popular fanfiction trope among fans who were not ready to say goodbye to their favorite characters is to continue the story. Thus, stories which explore an event or characters that existed before or after the events of the book represents prequels and sequels. For this option, you will write a story that takes place either before or after the events of the book/film/television series.

Option 3 – (Missing Moment) Many popular books are rich in characters. This means that while all attention is on the main character (and whomever she or he is with at the moment), many other parallel stories could be going on at the same time. In other cases, for the purpose of pacing, the author may skip forward in time a few days or a few weeks between chapters. These are missing moments. For this option you will write a story that fits into one of these missing moments from the book/film/television series.

Option 4 – (Alternate Universe) Not everyone is a fan of the same thing, include the text/movie/television show from this course. But what if students could connect their assignment to something that they actually like? For example, the Harry Potter stories are set in the wizarding world created by author JK Rowling. But what would happen if Harry, Ron and Hermione found themselves working in a coffee shop in your home town or battling orcs in Middle Earth, or going on adventures with Pippi Longstocking? For this option, you will write either an original story or retell a scene from the course book/film/television series in an alternate universe (either real or fictional).

Modification for Collaborative Writing

For this collaborative creative writing activity, each student will be responsible for contributing at least 1000 words to the story. This necessitates careful attention to plot, descriptions, language, dialog, and character by all members so the different parts of the story merge together and sound like one unified story.

Modifications for Online Collaboration and Publication

For this collaborative creative writing activity, each partner (class) will be responsible for contributing at least 1000 words to the story. This necessitates careful attention to plot, descriptions, language, dialog, and character by all members so the different parts of the story merge together and sound like one unified story.

Step 1: Students should schedule online meetings to brainstorm, share and edit their drafts.

Step 2: Contributions should be shared in a collaborative online writing space such as GoogleDocs, or a shared wiki or blog.

Step 3: Once the fan fiction has been edited and completed, students can publish it online to share with others. This can include an individual blog or in an online fan fiction archive such as Fanfiction.net, Archive of Our Own or Wattpad.

Examples

Below are excerpts from collaborative fan fiction stories written by Swedish university students based on the Harry Potter novels using one or a combination of the options above.

The Diary of Tom Riddle

by PotterProject

He walked into the shop. The door closing behind him as he ever so solemnly made his way over to the section he was looking for. His eyes met those of the shopkeeper. The little boy had known what he was looking for even before setting foot in the dark little boutique. He soon found what he wanted, and walked slowly over to the man behind the counter, asking him to make an engraving on the front of both books. Tom Marvolo Riddle. After that, he left rather quickly, two notebooks in his hand as he surely made it back to the school.

As the young boy would soon come to realise, journaling was not an easy task.

He thought back to the little girl at the orphanage, Mildred, and her words. In frustration he put the books in the desk drawer and never looked back. At least not for a very, very long time. By the time he did pick up the journal again, he had grown quite a bit. Had you known him, you'd be surprised by the young Tom Riddle even thinking about the journals again, after having dismissed them such a long time ago. But he had started planning, and he soon found that the journals might come to great use. And so he started his diary. The diary of Tom Riddle.

Read the full story online: <http://archiveofourown.org/works/13191435>

The Petti-Wallflower

by S_theSwede

Megan Jones: a plain-Jane, a wallflower. Her father left, some say 'disappeared', before her birth.

Raised by her loving mother, Megan is as normal as any other muggle - maybe a bit too invisible, though. But the past of her unknown father catches up with her when she receives a letter. One that her father had once received, as well. Her name is written on it in emerald green ink. The wax seal read the letter 'H'. Our heroine has been accepted to Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry! Come along on her journey into the world of magic! Experience it all with her as she visits Diagon Alley with her newly acquainted wizard cousin, P.J., gets her wand, goes to Hogwarts and finds out more about the father she never knew. Feel the nostalgia and familiarity (as well as some rather shocking reveals) as Megan meets some of the most beloved (and despised) characters of the popular franchise that is Harry Potter! Do you want to know what it'd be like to attend Hogwarts with the famous trio of Potter, Weasley and Granger? Is there a hidden side story that was never told, an adventure that the world never got to experience? Secrets that were never revealed?

Well, then you are one page, one click away from finding out...

Read the full story online: <http://archiveofourown.org/works/13270431/>

Neville Longbottom and the Rebel Uprising

by lxp2

It's Neville Longbottom's seventh year attending Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, but nothing is the same. Harry, Ron and Hermione are missing, and, of course, the gossip is spreading. They are trying to defeat He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named and end the ongoing war. When Snape takes over as Headmaster of Hogwarts, and appointing known Death Eaters as teachers, it becomes abundantly clear to Neville that he and the other students are in no position to wait for Harry to rescue them. They needed to start an uprising, they needed to rebel. And with their main fighter out of the picture, Neville needs to pick up the sword.

Read the full story online: <http://archiveofourown.org/works/13203357/>

Materials set 4: Reflective essay



Author: Shannon Sauro

Deepening Learning through Reflection

Reflective writing is one way of deepening learning through raising awareness of the language and literary decisions made during creative writing portion of the fan fiction task. In this wrap-up activity, students are asked to reflect on what they learned and to identify and provide examples of at least two linguistic and two literary features they paid careful attention to in writing their portion of the fanfiction.

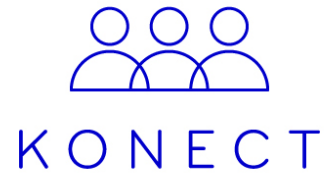
Instructions

In this activity, please reflect upon what you have gained through the collaborative creative writing process. In your reflective paper (approximately 500- 750 words) please answer the following three questions, including examples from group discussion or interaction, the text/movie/show you based your fanfiction on and examples from your own writing to support your points.

1. What did you learn as a result of this project?
2. Describe at least two aspects of language that this writing project forced you to pay careful attention to. Give an example of each of these language aspects.
3. Describe at least two literary or stylistic features you engaged with in writing your section. Give an example of each of these features.

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