

THE (CO)CONSTRUCTION OF COMPETENCE IN WRITING IN THE MOTHER TONGUE. A STUDY IN INITIAL TRAINING.

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Resumo

O projecto de investigação que se apresenta tem por finalidade investigar processos de aperfeiçoamento da competência de comunicação escrita de alunos de Língua Portuguesa, do 3º ciclo do Ensino Básico, e de Português, do Ensino Secundário, pelo professor de língua materna em formação inicial.

A partir dos contributos convergentes das Ciências da Linguagem e das Ciências da Educação, focalizámos o nosso estudo em processos de (co)construção da competência de comunicação escrita, considerando as três macro-operações recursivas da escrita processual cognitiva – planificação, textualização e revisão. Estes processos, a que juntámos ainda o portefólio de avaliação, desenvolvido em Oficina de Escrita, constituíram o cerne do nosso estudo de caso, ancorado na formação inicial, num processo de investigação-ação.

Na investigação, em contexto de estágio, que decorreu numa Escola do distrito do Porto, recorremos a diversas fontes de evidência, quer do subgrupo alunos quer do subgrupo estagiárias, utilizando uma metodologia mista. A análise qualitativa do discurso escrito foi privilegiada, complementada com procedimentos quantitativos. Os resultados estão alinhados com conclusões de outros estudos sobre o ensino-aprendizagem de processos de (co)construção da competência de comunicação escrita em língua materna, na medida em que o recurso à escrita (compositiva) processual e à avaliação por portefólio é validado.

Palavras-chave: Português língua materna; competência de comunicação escrita; escrita (compositiva) processual; portefólio de avaliação.

Abstract

This research project aims at studying processes of improving the communicative writing competence in the Portuguese language as a mother tongue of pupils in the 3rd grade of basic studies and the whole cycle of secondary studies by trainee teacher.

Considering the converging contributions of Language and Education Sciences we have focused our study on processes of (co)construction of the communicative writing competence, considering the three macro-operations inherent in the cognitive writing process – planning, textualization and revision. These processes, to which we added the assessment portfolio developed in writing workshops, were the centre of our case study, which is anchored in a teacher training action-research process.

During the research in the teacher training context, which took place in a school in the Oporto district, we used different sources of evidence from both the pupils' and the trainees' subgroups and employed a mixed methodology. The qualitative analysis of written discourse was privileged and complemented with quantitative procedures. The results are in line with conclusions of other studies about the teaching/learning of processes of (co)construction of the communicative writing competence in the mother tongue, since the recourse to processual (compositive) writing and assessment by portfolio is validated.

Key-words: Portuguese as mother tongue; communicative writing competence; processual (compositive) writing; assessment portfolio.

1. Introduction

A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops.

Henry Brook Adams (1907)

*I've had many teachers who taught us soon forgotten things,
But only a few like her who created in me a new thing, a new attitude, a new hunger.
I suppose that to a large extent I am the unsigned manuscript of that teacher.
What deathless power lies in the hands of such a person.*

John Steinbeck (1955)

Being a teacher in the European community in the 21st century constitutes a challenge to all teachers, particularly to those of the mother tongue. The changes that education has been going through demand that teachers foreground the complexity of the process of teaching and learning.

Language is the upmost symbol of collective and individual identity of any people. As a result, it is chanted by poets and writers. It is studied by linguists, psychologists and sociologists, in a multiplicity of perspectives and theories. It is used by ideologues and politicians, in the norms of one and the variations of the other. It is taught by teachers in its daily written and oral use, but also more formally and in the symbolic fiction of literature. With teachers who make the difference, similar to those evoked in the epigraphs introducing this article.

Having Portuguese as a mother tongue signifies developing a system of knowledge which we bring into play when we listen to and speak the language. Its use is broken down into comprehension and expression of oral discourse, the primary mode of human language through the voice. However, children and adults do not develop the capacity to comprehend and produce written discourse by immersion in a linguistic community, since formal teaching is necessary to learn how to read and write. The history of literacy demonstrates that reading and writing skills were developed in response to cultural and social contexts.

Therefore, the mother tongue is communication, thought, the individual identity of me and us. The mother tongue is belonging, culture, history, and homeland. In the case of Portuguese, it transposes the geographical frontiers of its origins and it becomes intracontinental and intercultural, diversely human and equally one. We can now redefine Portuguese in the context of a common Lusophonic linguistics, as the confluence between space and culture, territory and identity. It is our space of thought, action and recognition, besides the cultural differences. As the poet F. Pessoa (2000) states, language is the biggest symbol of the homeland, "My homeland is the Portuguese language," making possible common recognition and communication. This definition of the mother tongue evokes the creation of a symbolic and political supra-space of identity in the Portuguese language, justified by millions of speakers on all the continents. This fact underlines the importance of Portuguese in strategic international relations developed in social, political and economic macro-spaces. Therefore, it is necessary to reconsider, in the area of Didactics, the teaching-learning of the

mother tongue in writing, having in mind a crucial notion: writing is not a natural ability that automatically accompanies maturation.

2. Challenges of the Didactics of Portuguese, mother tongue

Didactics of the mother tongue for the 21st century has seen a renewed interest in the teaching and learning of languages in the European and national space.

At the Jornada Científica, held at the Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto, I. Alarcão (2007, p. 2), “starting from understanding learning as a process of interactive development”, focused on eight current challenges for the Didactics of Languages: globalisation; the role of languages in the development of human and social values; the computer age; the emergence of new publics in the learning of languages; the centrality of the pupil; interdidacticity; the approximation of the academic and professional worlds; the consolidation of Didactics as a disciplinary area.

A. Bolívar (Idem, 2007, p. 3), in turn, reflected on the basic competencies established for Europe in the 21st century, *The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (Council of Europe, 2001). The practice of citizenship and integration in professional and social life implies dominating the competencies of communication (mother tongue and foreign language), as well as mathematics, science and technology. The competencies for citizenship bring together education and social justice, in an application of the principle of equality, which is intrinsic in the education system, independently of the selective documented logics for the sociology of education. Also to be born in mind is the emergence of an understanding of linguistic perfection as a dynamic and cooperative process, through the centrality of the pupil.

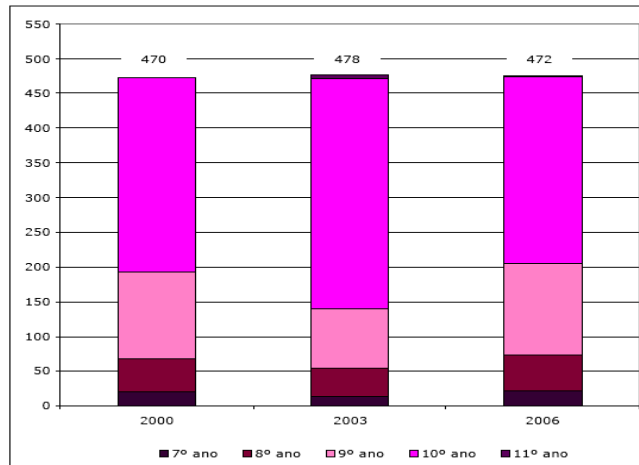
H. Vollmer (2006), in the document *Towards a Common European Instrument for Language(s) of Education*, reiterates as “language education policies”, plurilinguism and linguistic diversity, linguistic-cultural intercomprehension, democratic citizenship, learning for life and social cohesion, leading the way to a policy of shared education, in a collaborative European effort for active citizenship.

At the International Conference on the Teaching of Portuguese, in Lisbon 2007, the final considerations (C. Reis, 2007) focus on Portuguese as a language of knowledge; on the mistake of transgressing the rules of a linguistic system; on the interdisciplinary nature of teaching language and literature; on the role of grammar in learning a language; on informative literacy, which implies a cultural and technical-operative memory. The central recommendation resides in the initial and continued training of the teacher of Portuguese.

In the Portuguese reality, what is of interest to us are the results of PISA 2006 – *Scientific Competencies of Portuguese Pupils* (ME, 2007b), in literacy of reading. In Graph I, a comparative analysis of 2000, 2003 and 2006, it can be seen that, for literacy in reading, the value for 2006 (472)

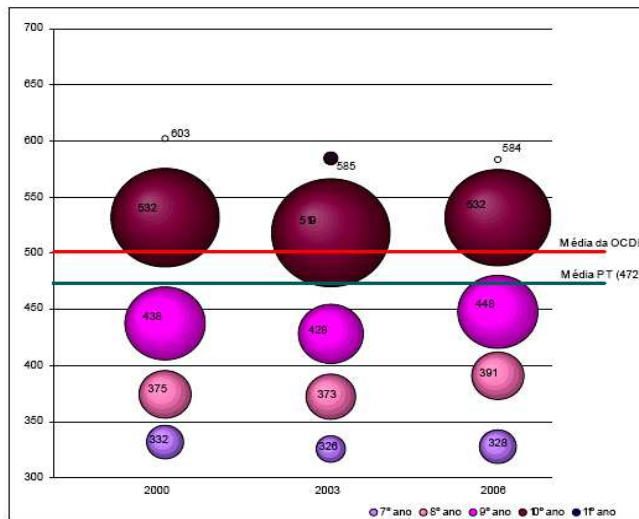
is higher than 2000 (470), but lower than 2003 (478). The PISA 2000 cycle focused particularly on literacy in reading, since it was considered the standard of comparison in this year.

Graph I – Average global performance of literacy in reading - 2000-2006



Source: *PISA 2000, 2003 and 2006 database* (ME, 2007b, p. 42).

Graph II - Performance of literacy in reading, by school year - 2000-2006



Source: *PISA 2000, 2003 and 2006 database* (ME, 2007b, p. 43).

Graph II shows that Portuguese pupils, with an average of 472, are still below the OCDE average of 500. While pupils of Years 7, 8 and 9 show modest results, when compared to the average of OCDE countries, Years 10 and 11 pupils show above average performances. The improvement in proficiency levels of these pupils should act as reinforcement to the continuous training of teachers and the implementation of the *National Plan for Reading* (ME, 2007a, p. 16).

This national project, first implemented in 2006-2007, has the overall purpose of strengthening reading competence, by motivating young readers (ME, 2006).

Even just a few years ago, teachers focused merely on the Portuguese reality. Nowadays, language teaching is part of an internationalised context, in an increasingly computerised society. Therefore, Didactics should open ways for other forms of interaction and learning, such as e-mails or forums, along with new reading and writing modalities. Didactics will also have to address the emergence of new publics. Portugal, which for many years has been a country of emigration, is today a country of immigrants.

Finally, the consolidation of Didactics as a disciplinary area is noted, within a highly contextualised subject, in a tri-dimensional format of training, professional and research in the convergence of Sciences and Language Education. Effectiveness is thus the goal to be achieved, which implies a new profile for the teacher of Portuguese (I. M. Duarte, 2003), who is doubly trained in linguistics and psycho-pedagogy.

3. Methodological presentation of the study

As we have previously seen, we understand that mastering written communication, in a national and European context, is of the utmost importance to an individual's scholastic and social success, through the transversal nature of linguistic knowledge.

In anticipation of empiric evidence, it is of interest to us to investigate the perfection of writing in the classroom, in the context of teacher training, more specifically in the Writing Workshop Project. We have taken into account the contributions of Language and Educational Sciences, namely the use of textual types appropriate to specific communicative situations, the cognitive operations in writing, and the assessment of the writing process and product by portfolio.

Among the **theoretical references**, we have used the theories of J.-M. Adam (1992; 1999; 2006) and J. Dolz & B. Schneuwly (1996) in the textual domain as well as J. Hayes & L. Flower (1980) and J. Hayes (1995) concerning pedagogic sequences and operations of writing. We have also selected, as theoretical research studies on writing in general, W. Grabe & R. Kaplan (1996), M. Pereira (2000) and V. Gorjão (2004). In relation to the Writing Workshop, we should mention J. Davis & S. Hill (2003) and G. Muschla (2006). With reference to the portfolio, we are interested in the initial and current American studies of N. Yang (2003). Finally, as a supervisory strategy of initial training, we have based our case study on research action, in accordance with the works of M. Moreira (2005), F. Vieira (2006) and M. Paiva, I. Barbosa & I. Fernandes (2006).

We start from the writing process, the area of textual sequences and types, as enunciated by Textual Linguistics and translated into linguistic and communicative behaviour in a situational context of reception and production. In the pedagogic sequence of writing, we consider the three

cognitive recursive macro-operations of planning, textualisation and revision. We also consider the formative assessment as an integral part of the teaching-learning of the writing process, to include the text-process and not just the text-product. From this perspective, the pupils will have the responsibility of regulating their own learning, in a way which is progressively autonomous. The space selected for perfecting compositional writing was the Writing Workshop, including individual portfolios.

As a result, our research problem, or in other words, the **base question** which has led to this work being carried out, and to which we have sought an answer, was:

- How can trainee teachers of Portuguese as a mother tongue perfect the competence of compositional written communication with pupils of the 3rd cycle of Basic Education and Secondary Education?

We believe that the constructive dimension of linguistic knowledge, in curricular transversality, justifies a consideration of the processual perfection of the competence of written communication by trainee teachers. To do so, we have formulated the following **hypotheses**:

- Hypothesis 1 – Perfecting the written competence of pupils presupposes a reflective domain of this competence by trainee teachers;
- Hypothesis 2 – Pupils’ identification of the characteristics of the different textual types allows application in writing;
- Hypothesis 3a) – The editing activity within pedagogic sequences allows pupils to perfect written competence;
- Hypothesis 3b) – Planning operations favour pupils’ perfection of written competence;
- Hypothesis 3c) – Textualisation operations allow pupils to perfect written competence;
- Hypothesis 3d) – Reviewing operations allow pupils to perfect written competence;
- Hypothesis 4 – Assessment by portfolio favours the perfection of the competence of written communication.

As a **general objective**, it is intended to check the textual types, the cognitive operations of writing and the processual assessment by portfolio, applied by trainee teachers while perfecting the compositional writing of pupils in the 3rd cycle of Basic Education and Secondary Education.

Our research work is based on the dynamics of pupil-teacher *versus* teacher-pupil:

- **Pupil-teacher *versus* teacher-pupil interaction**, in a dynamic and collaborative perfection of the pupil’s written communicative competence. This presupposes knowledge and know-how of the trainee, in the areas of reflection of Portuguese as a mother tongue, and the linguistic, communicative and cognitive process of (co)constructing written competence, in a model of reflexive training, based on cycles of research-action;

- **Pupil progress in the perfection of (compositional) written communication**, in learning how to learn, in interaction with **trainee teacher progression**, in learning how to teach writing. The proposed (co)construction processes are the cooperative application of processual strategies of writing (types and cognitive operations of writing) and the interconnection between writing and processual assessment through the pupil's individual portfolio;
- **Pupil-teacher-school-family interaction** through written projects, such as the Writing Workshop and the pupil's individual portfolio.

As a result, the research is based on a **qualitative-quantitative methodological strategy**, a case study focused on a process of initial teacher training. The study was implemented in 2006-2007, in a School where the researcher carried out the functions of orientator. The first sub-group included 3 students of the 5th year of the Master Course in Teaching Portuguese at Oporto University. The second subgroup was made up of 66 pupils, distributed over the orientator's classes, two in Year 7 and one in Year 12, in which the trainees carried out a regular and regulated pedagogic-didactic activity. These were supervised by the researcher and the university supervisor, through weekly seminars and cycles of class observations.

Bearing in mind the three cycles of research-action, developed in the teacher training context, we have sought sources of evidence in our study in the subgroup of trainees and the subgroup of pupils. In the descriptive data, obtained in relation to the former group, we have analysed: the annual Project of the Writing Workshop; trainees' lessons and units and processual written activities; reports of the three cycles taught by the trainees, based on writing activities included in the Writing Workshop lessons; the final report, which was presented individually, by each of the trainees.

In the descriptive data obtained from the pupils, we analysed: the self and external-assessment sheet of the Year 7 individual portfolios; the text of the portfolio with the final assessment of Year 12 pupils.

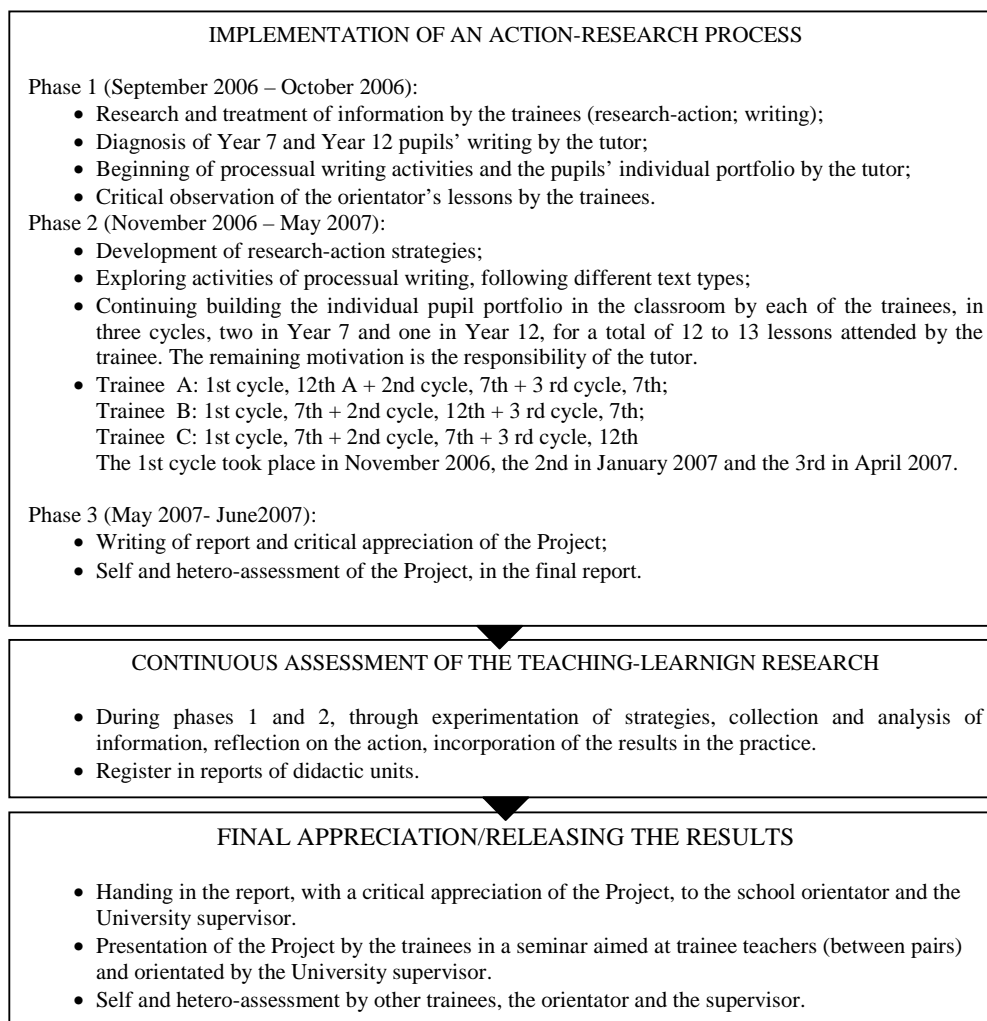
So that we could achieve the study goals, we used, on a complementary level, different analytical procedures: a **qualitative analysis**, with a categorisation code for the analysis of the semantic content of the written discourse, applied in the two subgroups; a **quantitative analysis**, applied to the categorical coding of analysed documents; statistical treatment of the assessment file of the portfolio of Year 7 pupils; a mixed type questionnaire for the subgroups of Year 7 and Year 12 pupils.

A total of 66 questionnaires handed in (100%), 43 in Year 7 and 23 in Year 12, were returned to the researcher. In the study we also had the individual assessment file of the portfolio, which was used to accompany the 45 Year 7 pupils in the first, second and third periods and the final portfolio assessment text in Year 12 pupils.

4. The Writing Workshop project

Lasting an academic year, the project had, as an ultimate goal, the perfection of the competence of pupils' written communication.

Figure 1 – The Writing Workshop, an action-research project



Source: M. Moreira, M. Paiva, F. Vieira, I. Barbosa & I. Fernandes (2006, p. 76) - adapted.

The Workshop was held in the academic year of 2006-2007, in trainees' classes, in Year 7 Portuguese Language and Year 12 Portuguese. It was considered to be a research-action project.

The question which has motivated the Project, as put forward by the orientator, in the context of teacher training, in September 2006, was **“Can writing be taught?”** We asked the trainee teachers to consider this question in the collaborative effort of the written work handed in,

at the end of the year, to the orientator and the supervisor. The trainees themselves synthesised the stage of the Writing Workshop project, to which they give the secondary title of “Learning to learn how to write”, focusing essentially on textual cohesion and coherence.

The trainees started by referring to a primary reflection before action, in the twice-weekly seminars in the school, starting from a revision of the literature. (Reg. 60, pp. 14-15):

Before we started our Writing Workshop Project for Year 7 and Year 12, we reflected on how to teach our pupils to write. (...) In the initial reflection phase, taking place in conjunction with the orientator in the Portuguese seminars in the school, we started with a diagnostic assessment of the pupils’ texts, considering a wider context of a generalised crisis in the teaching of writing. As causes, we identified the easier seduction of the oral and audio-visual, the television, the computer and the Internet. As a group, and also in the Portuguese seminars, we concluded that writing in schools is carried out many times hurriedly and only for a summative assessment, while, furthermore, being decontextualised and lacking phases.

Also during this initial phase, reflection in the twice-weekly seminars in the School was contextualised with a diagnostic assessment of the writing of all the pupils in Year 7 and Year 12. This was carried out during the first month of lessons by the orientator, since the trainees only began the first cycle of lessons in November. The diagnostic test consisted of a critical reflection on the texts, with a consequent systemisation of the difficulties detected. After the pupils’ problems with writing had been serialised, strategies to overcome them were used in all classes, which involved developing work files, as well as reviewing and rewriting texts.

With a basis in critical readings, recorded in the trainees’ portfolios and with the aim of perfecting the competence of written communication in the mother tongue, an intervention plan was drawn up which corresponded to the Writing Workshop project:

Faced with this situation, we started researching the works of various authors, whose reading files made up our portfolios. With this as the starting point – reflection and research – we arrived at the final version of the Writing Workshop, which was then put into practice by the orientator and the trainees. In this way, we selected texts which functioned as models and we constructed a set of materials, such as guide files, and processual assessment files. It is also important to note that we conceived and adapted informative files of practice and reflection, with the purpose of filling in the difficulties revealed. The majority of these files were supplied to students corrected, in such a way as to make them aware of their pedagogic course and to dominate the necessary metalanguage. All stages of the process, as well as all the materials, were discussed as a group and were subject to countless reformulations.

The successive reformulations, with the active participation of the Year 7 and Year 12 pupils, took into account the age group and level and led to a final version of the Project, which included the collaborative formulation of grids of criteria for evaluating processual writing, as well as the organisation of the writing portfolio. The last version of the project is presented.

Figure 2 – Project “Learning to learn to write”

What is it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A project aimed at developing the competence of pupils’ written communication and the capacity for self and hetero-assessment of the process in the Writing Workshop. • Study of base texts as a model for constructing texts according to the same textual type, so as to develop the written competence of pupils and work on textual sequencing.
Who for?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two classes from Year 7; • One class from Year 12.
Why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning how to write constitutes a way of rediscovering language. • The practice of writing develops thought and allows significant learning in all areas of Knowledge.
How to do it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From text to text: reading and analysis of textual models; • Creating work files, with exercises of application; • Doing functional writing exercises, since writing can only be learnt through writing, following textual types in pedagogic sequences.
What for? Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop reading comprehension; 2. Sharing the pleasure of writing; 3. Become aware of different writing models, following textual types; 4. Develop methods and techniques of work, following recursive sequences (planning, textualisation and reviewing); 5. Perfecting sequencing techniques in the construction of a text; 6. Instilling correct punctuation and spelling; 7. Using varied and carefully chosen vocabulary; 8. Perfecting written competence through self and hetero-correction; 9. Develop a working Project throughout the year; 10. Develop the capacity for self and hetero-assessment; 11. Develop an autonomous and critical spirit; 12. Promote writing as a means of enriching other writings and experiencing feelings to produce text.
How to evaluate?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Processual assessment, through self-correction files and self-correction grids; • Portfolio processual assessment, with a final assessment in the 3rd period.

The “Learning to learn to write”, the alternative title given by the trainees to the Writing Workshop Project, is presented as a formative course in the (co)construction of competence in processual writing. It is evaluated by self-corrective grids, files and individual portfolios. A transversal interconnection of all areas of the modern tongue, orality, reading, writing and language function has been observed, namely from the passage of (read) text to (written) text.

It was also observed that throughout the year pupils from Year 7 and Year 12 had contact with different types of text, given in rotation by the trainees in the orientator’s groups, since they were not given their own groups. The model texts for written tasks were selected from the obligatory works contained in the programme or suggested and supplied by the trainee teachers in a variety of supports. As a consequence, it is important to mention the adaptation and/or production of materials during the 2006-2007 academic year, which included texts, guide files and work files

concerning the functioning of language, as the trainees have confirmed in their written work at the end of the academic year (Idem, p. 19):

Guide files were also distributed for each activity of written production, so as to guide the pupils through the phases of planning, textualisation and review. These were applied to each activity of the Writing Workshop and allowed the pupils to carry out self-assessment, not only in the first version but also the second and/or third versions, thus respecting the different rhythms of learning.

Throughout the processual procedure of widening and consolidating learning, so as to offer remedial work for any difficulties demonstrated by the pupils, work files were put together. They contained a variety of exercises, among which were ones considering textual cohesion and coherence. It is also important to mention that these exercises took into account the level of the pupils.

The trainees' words refer to a processual and formative writing, which reinforces the centrality of the pupil as the cognitive subject of their own development. This progressive autonomy implies a collaborative (co)construction in written competence between pupils and trainee teachers. It is an interactive work, leading towards perfecting and autonomy. We will now analyse the trainees' efforts in perfecting the pupils' compositional writing.

5. Written records on the Writing Workshop

5.1. Categories and indicators of contents analysis

The first aspect of our study takes into account a *corpus* made up of the trainees' written records, including pedagogic rationale, lesson planning, unit reports, final report and dissertation, making a total of 60 documents. Bearing in mind the three cycles of research-action, a contents analysis was then carried out, referring to the moment before and after the action, as explained in the characterisation of the Writing Workshop Project. Although we had privileged a qualitative analysis of written discourse, we have also applied a complementary quantitative analysis, by what has been described and shown in the process and perspectives of those taking part.

The analysis categories and indicators were taken and adapted from the literature review on processual writing (V. Gorjão, 2004, p. 117).

In an analysis of the contents of documents written by the trainees A, B and C (EA; EB; EC) we have used three categories: text types; processual writing; support to the writing process. The first category contains four indicators: descriptive text; narrative text; expositive text; discursive text. The second category equally includes four indicators: planning; textualisation; review; assessment. The third category has two indicators: support materials; the teacher as support.

The contents analysis of the written records is made up of two interconnected aspects. The first, the individual analysis of the records of each trainee teacher before the action (rationale/planning of didactic units) and after the action (final and unit reports), which has

privileged a qualitative analysis. In the second, we have carried out a comparative analysis of the trainees' written records, as teachers reflecting on writing, using a mixed, qualitative-quantitative, methodology.

5.2. Comparison of trainees' written records

The planning of didactic units, as discourse under construction, allows anticipation to take place, as far as the trainees' performance is concerned. The text of the didactic unit, with a linguistic component guided by Text Linguistics and Discourse Analysis, implies a secure and fundamental textual competence taking place in the pedagogic procedure, an activity of textual matrix. In turn, the lessons, as a discourse carried out by the trainee teachers, influence the pupils in the appropriation of discursive strategies which favour their development as receptors and competent producers of diversified types of text. As a consequence, it is important to make a comparative analysis of the trainees' records and their awareness of being mediators in the learning-teaching of writing.

The trainees' reflective competence, concerning making the Writing Workshop Project dynamic, is visible in the description of strategies and activities, consistent with pedagogic rationale, in the critical appreciations seen in the didactic unit reports and, in an overall fashion, the final report.

For a wider research base, we have carried out a comparative analysis of the trainees' records concerning the processes of (co)construction of written communication competence in pupils from Year 7 and Year 12, while considering the previously defined categories and indicators. The first analysis has the objective of counting the text types, the processual activities of writing and support to the writing process. In a total of 21 documents / 7 per intern), with 1064 sentences, we have identified approximately 400 instances of indicators from the different categories.

For a quantitative appreciation of the result, we drew up the information in the form of a matrix (using Excel), generating the sum of the occurrences of each item, as can be seen in table 1.

In the category **text types**, all the trainees gave value to textual diversification. Through these indicators, it can be seen that the most frequent types in Year 7 are the narrative text (NT) and descriptive text (DT), while in Year 12 the expository text (ET) and discursive text (DT) are more prevalent. The trainees privileged the passage from text to text through macro study (sequential structure) and micro study (linguistic markers) of model types.

On comparing the trainees in the category of **processual writing**, as far as planning is concerned, all of them considered it indispensable to text construction. However, there seem to be differences in the way the trainees motivate the pupils in organising text planning. In trainee A's units, planning before textualisation is not considered in a majority of the activities and it is absent

from before and after the action. Generally speaking, a degree of discontinuity can be observed in the 1st and 2nd cycles between the proposal in the pedagogic rationale, the planning and the unit report. On the other hand, trainees B and C presented a majority of complete activities for processual writing from the beginning.

Table 1 – Quantitative appreciation of trainees A, B, and C’s written records

Categories	Records	1 st P.R.			2 nd P.R.			3 rd P.R.			1 st REP.			2 nd REP.			3 rd REP.			FINAL REP.		
	Trainee Rec. Indicators	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C
		1	21	41	7	27	47	13	33	53	6	26	46	12	32	52	19	39	58	20	40	59
Text Types	Descriptive text	1	2	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1		1	1		1	1	2	1	1
	Narrative text		1	1	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	4
	Expositive text	1	1	1	1	1	3	2	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	2	1	1	3	1	1	3
	Discursive Text	2			1	1		1		1	1		1		1		1	1	1	1	1	1
	TOTAL	4	4	3	4	4	5	5	4	6	5	4	5	3	4	4	3	5	6	5	5	9
Processual Writing	Planning	1	2	2		1	1	1	2	1		1	1		1	1		2	1		5	1
	Textualisation	1	3	1	1	3	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	2	3	4	2
	Review	1	3	2	2	3	1	4	2	1	1	2	1	3	1	1	1	3	2	4	5	2
	Assessment	1	2	1	1	2	1	3	2	1	1	2	1			1	2	2	1		4	3
	TOTAL	4	10	6	4	9	4	9	9	4	3	6	4	5	3	4	4	9	6	7	18	8
Support to the Writing Process	Support materials	6	4	5	6	5	4	6	6	6	4	3	4	6	3	3	4	4	5	10	10	11
	The teacher as support	6	2	3	4	1	1	2	2	1	4	1	1	3	1	1	2	1	1	2	2	2
	TOTAL	12	6	8	10	6	5	8	8	7	8	4	5	9	4	4	6	5	6	12	12	13
Total sentences		28	39	41	38	43	31	34	40	29	18	35	23	19	34	23	25	38	27	202	151	146

Abbreviations: P.R. – pedagogic rationale; Rep. – report; Rec. – records (with n°).

With the indicator **textualisation**, we can see that the three trainees included indications on coherence, cohesion and the appropriateness to the communicative situation, as well as respect for spelling, lexical choice, morphology and syntax. Throughout the three cycles, textualisation is carried out in a similar manner by the three trainees, through the analysis of selected texts and work files on the functioning of language.

With the **review** indicator, we can see that the trainees believe a text to be unfinished until it has been reviewed. This reviewing is carried out through successive readings, with the support of guide-files and review files, which contain check lists, working simultaneously at the macro-textual level, with structuring and sequencing, and the micro-textual level, with superficial linguistic markers. In the development proposed for 3rd cycle lessons, there is a greater emphasis on reviewing and self-correction, through guide-files and grids, with indications focusing on perfecting and re-writing the text in successive versions. However, in trainee A's planning, despite noting a more active role of the pupils in the 3rd cycle of lessons, the teacher took a central role as orientator (this aspect is recurring in the category "the teacher as support", as it will be seen).

The indicator **assessment** shows us that the trainees interconnect correction and assessment. However, it was seen that everybody privileged self-correction, to the detriment of hetero-assessment, which was always taken on by the trainees. Peer co-reviewing and assessment was never mentioned and only rarely is assessment by portfolio suggested, since 12 or 13 lessons per year is not enough for a portfolio project.

Although integrated in the year-long project of the Writing Workshop, the portfolio was not assessed in observed lessons by the trainees but in the orientator's lessons, which means that it is rarely referred to in the written records of the three trainees. As for the assessment criteria, these were constructed collectively with the Year 7 and 12 pupils.

Finally, when we compare the trainees in the third category, **support to the writing process**, we can consider that, above all in the second cycle of lessons, all trainees reinforced its implementation in the teaching-learning process, by supplying support materials and preventing an attitude centralised in the lesson-space.

The **support materials** are diverse and appropriate to various teaching and learning contexts and to the age of pupils learning Portuguese Language in Year 7 and Portuguese in Year 12, taking into account situations of diversified written communication.

The teacher as support is understood as an orientator, as a tutor in a recursive process of writing which culminates in the printing and publishing of writing in the communicative circuits of the school, and family environment. Trainee A presented most publications of their pupils' work, but also took a more centralised role in teaching-learning. In contrast, trainees B and C reinforced the idea of pupil autonomy from the 2nd cycle of lessons onwards. As a complement, trainees B and C's reflexive comments in their written records are of note, since they constitute a discourse supporting the implementation of strategies in processual writing, reflecting on both before and after action. They consider writing a goal-directed and contextualized activity, with interactive composing processes. They believe that, in order to create student motivation, they need to generate a commitment to writing and become researchers with respect to their own practice.

While trainees B and C developed a reflexive theoretical, practical and ethical discourse, which covers both the teaching and learning of writing in learner training, this reflection is practically non-existent in trainee A's written records.

For a quantitative synthesis of results, we have calculated the percentages concerning each indicator by category and for each trainee, which can be seen in the following table.

Table 2 – Quantitative synthesis of the written records of trainees A, B and C

CATEGORIES	INDICATORS	TRAINEES		
		A	B	C
1. Text types	a) Descriptive text	17.2%	30.1%	18.4%
	b) Narrative text	27.6%	33.3%	28.9%
	c) Expository text	31.1%	23.3%	42.2%
	d) Discursive text	24.1%	13.3%	10.5%
2. Processual writing	a) Planning	5.6%	21.9%	20.0%
	b) Textualisation	27.8%	26.6%	25.7%
	c) Review	44.4%	29.6%	28.6%
	d) Assessment	22.2%	21.9%	25.7%
3. Support to the writing process	a) Support materials	64.6%	77.8%	79.2%
	b) The teacher as support	35.4%	22.2%	20.8%

To sum up, in the category **text types**, trainees A and C favoured the use of expository texts (31.1% and 42.2%), while trainee B concentrated more on the narrative text (33.3%). However, the trainees did not limit themselves to one type of text in their lessons. They trained their pupils in all types of writing, which is in accordance with the need for textual diversification, using patterns of essay organization in perfecting writing.

In the category **processual writing**, trainees B (21.9%) and C (20.0%) re-inforced planning operations in a similar manner. In contrast, as has already been noted in the individual analysis, trainee A paid little attention to the planning phase (5.6%). In textualisation, as in assessment, the three trainees present similar percentages. As far as reviewing is concerned, this is the operation that trainee A focuses on the most, which shows an imbalance in the various phases of processual writing proposed by this trainee. In the case of trainees B and C, an equitable balance of between 20 and 30% can be seen between all operations and aspects of processual writing.

In the category **support to the writing process**, the trainees display a diverse use of materials, supporting all phases of processual writing. Taking into account the objective of (compositional) writing in the mother tongue, to create increasingly competent and autonomous

writers, all the trainees contribute to a greater decentralisation of the teacher as a support in the writing process, through the use of self-correction and guide files. A comparison of the percentages concerning the writing process, through materials and the teacher as support, shows that trainee C is the most dynamic in creating progressive autonomy in the pupil as writer (79.2% - 20.8%), followed by trainee B (77.8% - 22.2%) and finally trainee A (64.6% - 35.4%).

In conclusion, the written records of these trainees, although to a different degree, show an effective practice of sustained writing, through the introduction of diversified activities and strategies, following textual types and with assessment incorporated in the writing process itself. This is a systematic and continuous practice developed during the academic year in the Writing Workshop. In this way, a number of important composing strategies are brought to a conscious level and they become part of writing strategy instruction.

Generally speaking, the trainees attribute to the pupil, as a cognitive, social being, a progressive responsibility and autonomy, in the regulation of the process of learning compositive writing of Portuguese as a mother tongue.

6. Assessment of the pupils' written competence by trainees

As we have previously seen, during the initial phase of training the teacher should set about creating the basis for reflexive knowledge. This being the case, it is of interest to cross-reference our analysis of the written records of planning with the trainees' reflexive assessment, by looking at the individual final reports (TA, Rec. 20; TB, Rec. 40; TC, Rec. 59) and the joint work (TA, TB, & TC, Rec. 60), which include a critical appreciation of the writing project.

The assessment of pupils' written competence has its basis in the effective perfecting of written communication competence of pupils in the trainees's class from Year 7 and Year 12. So as to check the pupils' progress, the trainees' computerised versions of texts written by the pupils in October and November, in the initial phase of writing, and, in May, asked the pupils to correct these texts, by using the self-correction grids. This is an exercise in reviewing and rewriting the narrative text in Year 7 and the expositive-discursive text in Year 12 which, at the end of the year, tested the progression in processual writing, according to text types and regulated by self-assessment. We now present two proposals for a processual writing activity, as well as two self-correction grids (TA, TB & TC, Idem, pp. 32-33), as resources to provide feedback on student writing and to permit students to perform to the best of their abilities.

The writing review grids for narrative text in Year 7 and expositive-discursive text in year 12 were constructed after being outlined in the Portuguese seminar, in collaboration between trainees and pupils. This resulted in two discursive-linguistic instruments of correction and review: a grid for reviewing the writing of narrative text in Year 7 (Figure 3) and a grid for reviewing the writing of expositive-discursive text in Year 12 (Figure 4).

Figure 3 – Grid for reviewing the writing of narrative text in Year 7

Throughout the year you have been perfecting your competence in written communication, planning, drafting and reviewing your output. We propose a textual (re)construction and reviewing exercise, based on the texts you wrote at the beginning of Year 7.

- 1st Read the text you wrote in October (1st version).
- 2nd Self-correct the first version, filling in the appended grid.
- 3rd Rewrite the text (2nd version).
- 4th Reassess it (2nd version).

Writing review grid	1 st version		2 nd version	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Level of text				
I drafted a narrative text.				
I structured the text correctly.				
I used suggestive, varied and precise vocabulary.				
I used an appropriate language register.				
I used verb tenses appropriate to the type of text.				
I constructed paragraphs correctly.				
Relationship between sentences				
I articulated paragraphs and sentences, using expressions which indicate time, space, manner, cause...				
I omitted repetition of ideas.				
I substituted repeated words.				
I used verb tenses correctly.				
I respected the rules of agreement.				
Sentence				
I used correct punctuation.				
I constructed sentences correctly.				
I respected spelling rules.				
I respected the rules of verbal conjugation.				
I used capital and lower-case letters correctly.				

Both writing review grids for narrative text in Year 7 and expository-discursive text in year 12 consider writing a problem-solving activity. However, in the correction-assessment grid for Year 12 a metalanguage concerning the macro-structure and micro-structure of the expository-discursive text is used. At advanced levels, students' awareness of notions such as textuality, cohesion and coherence is important. The trainees recognize the need for students to attend to formal aspects of their writing, when they are working on revising and editing.

Figure 4 – Grid for reviewing the writing of expository-discursive text in Year 12

Throughout the year, you have been perfecting your competence in written communication, planning, drafting and reviewing your output. We propose a textual (re)construction and reviewing exercise, based on the texts you wrote at the beginning of Year 12.

1st Read the text you wrote in November (1st version).

2nd Self-correct the 1st version.

3rd Rewrite the text (2nd version).

4th Reassess it (2nd version).

Writing review grid	1 st version		2 nd version	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Level of text				
I used the appropriate type of text for the situation.				
I suited the discourse to the target reader.				
I structured the text correctly.				
I presented information pertinent to the topic.				
I used precise, varied and suggestive vocabulary.				
I used a language register appropriate to the situation.				
I used verb tenses appropriate to the type of text.				
The handwriting was neatly presented.				
I constructed paragraphs correctly.				
Relationship between sentences				
I used textual organisers.				
I articulated paragraphs and sentences with connectors.				
I respected the non-contradiction rule.				
I respected the non-repetition rule				
I respected the progression rule.				
I respected the relationship rule.				
I used verb tenses correctly.				
I respected the concordance rule.				
Sentence				
I used punctuation correctly.				
I constructed sentences correctly.				
I varied the construction of sentences.				
I emphasised the information principal.				
I respected spelling rules.				
I respected conjugation rules.				
I used capital and lower case letters correctly.				

The results of the rewriting and reviewing exercise were considered, by the trainees, indicative of the progress of each pupil in Years 7 and 12 in perfecting their writing, as they state in their individual reports (TA, Rec. 20; TB, Rec. 40; TC, Rec. 59) and in the assessment made at the end of the project in May 2007, as part of their joint report. In this final written record (TA, TB & TC, Rec. 60, pp. 20-21) the trainees wrote:

Concerning Year 7 of Basic Education (...) the majority of students presented a well-constructed text, to which they correctly applied the mechanisms of textual sequencing, specifically those of textual cohesion and coherence, with appropriate recourse to

paragraphs and diversification of articulators. Also in relation to textual cohesion, of note is the progression seen in the use of systematically applied punctuation marks, which are used pertinently and intentionally. This demonstrates an understanding of the clarifying and expressive function of these marks.

The significant evolution seen in the learners' work is also shown in the areas of vocabulary and syntax. As far as the former is concerned, pupils demonstrated a more varied lexical repertoire, by choosing pertinent vocabulary appropriate to the text, although with some incidence of terms belonging to the oral register, while rare, in work where there were still spelling mistakes. As for syntax, most students demonstrated a good grasp of syntactic structures, correctly constructing sentences and using appropriate concordances and collocations, despite some learners still showing some difficulties in intrasentence connection processes.

Although at distinct linguistic-discursive levels, Year 7 and 12 coincide in the same progression in **compositive written communication competence**, in accordance with the descriptive assessment carried out by the trainees (Ibidem):

As for Year 12, the pupils showed a clear progression in the level of writing competence when treating the proposed theme, without distractions, respecting the type of text; in the production of coherent discourse, without any type of ambiguity; respecting the rule of non-repetition; in the correct structuring of text, with a clear articulation between the introduction, development and conclusion; in the appropriate use of connectors. However, there are still very occasional expressions coming from colloquial language. There is also a degree of resistance to a second textualisation, contrary to what is seen in Year 7 pupils.

In conclusion, the activity has been seen to be extremely rewarding, since most learners were able to self-correct and self-assess their written production according to criteria. As a result, an effective improvement has been seen in all areas of textual production, with the consequent perfecting of written communication competence. It is also important to mention that, in tandem with this competence, the capacity for self-reflection has also been developed throughout the year, as well as pupil autonomy, which is fundamental in the complete education of the individual (...).

Another aspect which was positively assessed has to do with the **integration of texts, selected by pupils and consistent with the writing portfolio, in communicative circuits**, as the trainees state (Idem, p. 19):

Some texts (...) were placed in communicative circuits, since writing (...) is a communicative activity in the social sense. As a result, a number of books concerning written productions were developed throughout the year: "The Magic of Words", "Our Fables", "My Hero and my Villain", "Meeting Poetry", "Mystery Tales" and "My Favourite Book". Some of these pieces of work were also exhibited and accompanied by pupils' illustrations. Moreover, these written productions took their place in the exhibitions "Our Fables", "My Hero/My Villain" and "Detective Stories".

7. Trainees' final reflections

The trainees demonstrated a reflective conscience not just in perfecting pupils' processual writing but, simultaneously, in **perfecting their own writing as teachers and writers**. This was the conclusion reached, based on the results obtained and the course of processual writing undertaken by the pupils (Idem, p. 3):

Finally, it is important to mention that the present work has implied a double reflection, as trainees and learners, in the dynamic of pupil - teacher / teacher - pupil. In fact, the activities carried out in textual sequencing in the classroom, have helped perfect the written communication competence not just of the pupils but also of the trainees.

In the joint critical appreciation, the trainees responded to the initial project question (Idem, 14-15) as raised in the Portuguese seminar by the orientator:

Now to answer the question **“Is writing teachable?”** we believe that yes, it is possible and desirable not only to learn how to write, but also to learn how to teach writing, while always focusing on the process.

The teacher cannot ignore, in either accompanying their pupils’ reading activities or in writing production activities, the elements which distinguish and characterise the text as a communicative whole, according to different text types.

Therefore, as part of learning the mother tongue, mastering the written text is a fundamental element both in reception and production, through constant practice. (...) [Therefore], on reflection, we have proposed that developing the project “Learning to learn how to write” can also be interpreted as learning how to learn the teaching of writing.

The development of the trainees’ reflective capacities is evident concerning the reality in which education activity takes place, thus substituting “the need to obtain answers so as to raise questions” (M. Paiva; I. Barbosa & I. Fernandes, 2006, p. 79). As the trainees mentioned in their reports (TA, Rec. 20; TB, Rec. 40; TC, Rec. 59), the seminars in the School constituted a time-space for critical exploration and reflection on writing.

In a research-action project such as the one described, it is of interest to reinforce this capacity of reflection-action-reflection, related to perfecting pupils’ written competence with the teacher of the mother tongue’s ability to reflect on this competence, in initial training. We will let the trainees have a word on the final evaluation of the project and its assessment, as teachers in general and teachers of writing in particular (Rec. 60, p. 23):

(...) It is important to mention that we, as trainees, have adopted a reflexive attitude and have grown with the pupils, and have seen our competence progress, both in the teaching of writing and our individual mastery of writing.

As teachers in initial training, we have learnt, above all, to work using interaction-action, to reflect on our own practices, and to research various models of teaching-learning. Furthermore, we have learnt to make these former points appropriate to the concrete situation of our classes and the learning of writing, as well as using assessment as a factor of growth in a process of individual and collective socialisation.

In the final assessment of the project, carried out in May 2007, to which we have given a classification of Good, we believe that it was an enriching and motivating element in our linguistic and human growth, as well as that of our pupils. In fact, the Project has contributed to perfecting the written competence of both teachers and learners alike.

Finally, it has to be mentioned that the entire process has given us another perspective of what it is to be a teacher. Being a teacher involves personal growth and helping the pupil to grow, constructing the necessary means for self-knowledge. Therefore, our project is not just learning to learn how to write, but also learning how to learn teaching writing.

8. Analysis and interpretation of the pupil questionnaire results

What follows is a presentation of the results obtained from 66 questionnaires completed by 43 pupils from Year 7 and 23 from Year 12. The data have been treated and analysed in SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Science). After identification, which allowed us to characterise the sample, the pupils responded to two series of questions, from a double perspective:

1st - pupils' perception of the trainees' performance as teachers of writing (questions 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12);

2nd - pupils' perception, as cognitive beings, of their own development in writing (questions 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23).

Since the questionnaire is divided into two parts, one concerning the pupils' perception on the teaching of writing, as carried out by the trainees, and the other concerning the pupils' perception of their own learning of processual writing, this is how the discussion of the results will be organised. This will also be applied to the results of the analysis of the trainees' written records and the processual assessment of the pupils' portfolios. In relation to **“learning to learn how to write”** (1st part of the questionnaire), the pupils perceive the trainees' teaching of writing based on text types (Year 7, 51.2% and Year 12, 65.2%), with the trainees developing syntheses, in files or on the board (Year 7, 79.1% and Year 12, 91.3%), and giving an appropriate explanation of the writing task, with an indication of the type, topic/theme, number of words and other information (Year 7, 69.8% and Year 12, 100%). In contrast, the majority of pupils (Year 7, 46.5% and Year 12, 52.2%) believed that the trainees gave examples with their own texts only occasionally, which conforms with the analysis of the trainees' written records, in particular TA. The Year 7 and Year 12 pupils perceived that, despite teaching processual writing, the trainees did not put themselves in the position of writers, thus avoiding compositive writing.

Furthermore, most pupils stated that the trainees asked for a plan of the text to be written (Year 7, 51.2%, and Year 12, 95.7%) and gave sufficient time in the Writing Workshop for the writing phase (Year 7, 58.1%, and Year 12, 91.3%); corrected what the pupils wrote with clear instructions and symbols (Year 7, 72.1% and Year 12, 87.0%) and requested a processual assessment of the written work (Year 7, 60.5% and Year 12, 91.3%).

Cross-referencing this data with the assessment of the written records of the trainees' didactic units, we can confirm the pupils' perceptions, with the exception of requesting a plan. Although the trainees state the importance of the planning phase as a pedagogic fundamental, we can see that TA, in most of the written compositive activities, did not include text planning in the class (5.6%). The same is practically absent in the reflection after the action, which is consistent with the unit reports and final report. As far as reviewing is concerned, it is the phase which is given most emphasis, excessively so in the case of trainee A (44.4%), which shows the need for balance in the writing process, as practised by trainees B and C.

In relation to “**learning to learn how to write**” (2nd part of the questionnaire), the majority of pupils confirm the practice as writers of processual compositive writing. In fact, with reference to **type characteristics**, most pupils always recorded in the portfolio (Year 7, 62.8% and Year 12, 65.2%), after textual analysis and interpretation activities. However, some pupils did not carry out this recording regularly, despite the terms stating the trainees’ care in planning the didactic units which included diverse text types. There is no reference to this fact in the trainees’ reports, which means that nobody effectively checked that the pupils recorded in the portfolios the collaboratively constructed syntheses, board writing or computer-based information.

Furthermore, we can see by looking at the trainees’ records that in Year 7 the narrative text and descriptive text predominate, while in Year 12 the expositive and discursive text are privileged, which conforms with the programme guidelines for the respective years. This data can also be confirmed with the information in the processual self- and hetero-assessment files in the Year 7 portfolio and the assessment texts of the Year 12 portfolio. In these records the Year 7 pupils choose the story as their favourite type of text, while Year 12 chose the expositive-discursive text, which is consistent with the three analyses.

In carrying out the **planning operations** the pupils state that only “sometimes” was it a **communicative situation**, (Year 7, 69.8% and Year 12, 47.8%), with there also being some cases of “never” (Year 7, 2.3% and Year 12, 8.7%). The same did not happen with text type, which was taken into account by the majority (Year 7, 55.8% and Year 12, 73.9%). These results coincide with the analysis of the processual self- and hetero-assessment by portfolio and with the trainees’ practice, which privilege type diversification and characterisation in the classroom. However, the communicative situation is only mentioned in the presentation of the writing activity and the processual reviewing grids. We can conclude that some pupils neglected the communicative situation in their plans, which could lead to the construction of inappropriate texts for communicative objectives and intentions.

In carrying out **textualisation operations**, Year 7 pupils foregrounded the rules of grammar, text and sentence (always a 65.1% majority). In contrast, Year 12 pupils (a majority of 56.5%), since they have already mastered a textual metalanguage, evaluated the writing of their texts more rigorously, taking into account textual cohesion and coherence, although there was a greater resistance to textualisation, when rewriting. These results concur with the analysis we have done of the trainees’ written records, specifically in the reviewing-correction grids for Years 7 and 12. We can conclude that all the trainees used, in the materials designed for each year/group, a language register which was appropriate to the different ages and development of the pupils.

In carrying out **reviewing operations**, the maximum values are achieved in the self-correction reviewing operations, (Year 7, 62.8% and Year 12, 82.6%) and rereading the teacher’s corrections (Year 7, 69.8% and Year 12, 95.7%), with greater autonomy in Year 12. These operations will allow the cognitive being to regulate the writing process, passing through perfecting

the text to a second phase of retextualisation. It should be remembered that these results are consistent with the trainees' efforts in the reviewing phase.

In carrying out **textualisation-rewriting operations**, the majority of pupils complied with rewriting the text up to the final version (Year 7, 65.1%), although in Year 12, this can only be seen in an approximation of the percentage values of "always" and "sometimes" (56.5% and 43.5%). This could indicate less of a need for textual reviewing, for structural-linguistic correction of the 1st version or an attempt to avoid rewriting the text. This relative interest in rewriting and progressive textualisation could also occur, only in Year 12, because these pupils, not having been faced with processual writing throughout their scholastic career, are used to writing a one off product. The fact that the trainees occasionally give textualisation and rewriting as homework, as can be seen in the individual and comparative analysis of their records, also reinforces this type of behaviour.

In conclusion, while everybody carried out the rewriting and textualisation operation, the Year 7 pupils did so more systematically.

As for **self-assessment of the writing process**, we can see that pupils archive their processual assessment in the portfolio (Year 7, 76.8% and Year 12, 87%), which is in accordance with the results of the self- and hetero-assessment files of the year 7 portfolio.

Year 7 and Year 12 pupils indicate, as **preferred activities** in the Writing Workshop, respectively story writing, as a narrative type, and essay/discursive texts, which were preferred by 57% of respondents in Year 12. The pupils present as a justification the fact that they are creative, fun acts. This affective-ludic motivation gives greater value to the trainees' role in the (co)construction of writing activities which motivate the pupils to processual writing and the building up of portfolios.

In accordance with the results, we can state that all those questioned in Year 7 and Year 12 converge (100%) in the perception of their perfecting their written communication competence, with reference to the year of working in the Writing Workshop. These results concur with the trainees' assessment in their written records.

In addition, the **interconnection between the perfecting of written competence of the trainees and pupils**, from the perspective of reflection and processual self-regulation, should be emphasised once again. Among the reasons given for an improvement in writing in Years 7 and 12, the pupils point above all to the rewriting of various versions (average 33%), systematic practice throughout the year (average 23%) and self-correction (average 19%). In a comparative analysis with the trainees' written records, it should be remembered that it was precisely these processes of (co)construction that were most valued by the trainees, in the didactic units of the Writing Workshop. Therefore, there is a correspondence between the pupils' choices and more intense practice in lessons given by the trainees.

9. Conclusions

The starting point for this study was to examine perfecting writing in the classroom, in the context of teacher training to Year 7 and Year 12 pupils of Portuguese, mother tongue.

Bearing in mind the contributions of Education and Language Sciences, in the area of Linguistics, Psychology and Sociology, their consequent effect is questioned in a global theory of learning (compositive) writing. At the interface of the reference subjects, we have situated a Didactic of contextualised writing, with the pupil always at the epicentre of the process of perfecting cognitive writing in curricular transversality.

As processes of (co)construction of competence in written communication, we have selected, at the meeting point of literature and programme guidelines, text types, communicative situations and cognitive operations inherent in the writing process (planning, textualisation and reviewing), integrated in pedagogic sequences. We have added the assessment of the process by portfolio, opting for a formative, processual assessment, as an integrated part of a course regulated by the writer, starting from problem situations of writing.

9.1. On the processes of (co)construction of written communication competence...

In this study, we have focussed on the perfection of writing in a Writing Workshop Project, developed throughout the academic year by three trainee teachers of Portuguese. The trainees taught in rotation, three of the orientator's classes, two from Year 7 and one from Year 12, in three cycles of didactic units. The research work on the perfection of written communication competence in Portuguese is based on a pupil-teacher dynamic, which is separate yet interactive and collaborative. In our study we have seen and concluded that:

The perfection of written competence of pupils presupposes the reflexive mastery of this competence in trainee teachers (Hypothesis 1).

An inter-relationship is seen between trainees and the pupils. Faced with the cognitive overload of the task of writing, the trainees displayed appropriate preparation and were secure in their knowledge, while reflecting on teaching-learning strategies, which translated into effective writing practices. We have concluded that the trainees made progress throughout the year in their understanding of dynamic and pluralistic writing, from a constructive perspective of learning in action. We believe that the reflexive professional course, begun by the trainees, will lead them to strengthen their capacity for self-reflection and analysis, as teachers of processual writing.

Pupils' identification of the characteristics of different types of text allows the respective application in writing (Hypothesis 2).

We have seen that the reference to the activity of writing text types is indispensable and is based on a macro and micro-structural coding. From the referential field of Textual Linguistics we

have selected the didactic idea that there is no overall mastery of writing, but a learning of different types and genres of texts/discourse. In collaboration, the trainees and pupils applied text types in the passage from text to text (J. Dolz & B. Schneuwly, 1996), in the Writing Workshop. The type of syntheses, constructed collaboratively and recorded in the portfolio, function as linguistic-structural models (J.-M. Adam, 2006), at the confluence of the text and the context, in a coherent architecture, with a cohesive textual thread. We have concluded that the meeting point of reading and writing in *continuum* (W. Grabe & R. Kaplan, 1996; M. Pereira, 2000) is seen as essential in an education project for written textuality.

The editing activity by pedagogic sequences makes pupils' perfection of written competence possible (Hypothesis 3a).

The pedagogic sequences of writing, such as macro-devices of planning and didactic application, imply a processual writing (A. Tusón, 2003; G. Muschla, 2006). In this sense, we have focussed on the sequence of writing according to the cognitive process model, put forward by J. Hayes & L. Flower (1980), and reformulated by J. Hayes (1995). We consider it the most appropriate for training how to write, for its consideration of individual, affective and cognitive styles, in the presence of the heterogeneous group that is the class. Based on the written records, we have analysed the implementation of the three recursive phases of operation: planning, the orientating plan of the text production process; textualisation, the set of linguistic and structural operations necessary in constructing textual coherence; reviewing, (re)reading the text to perfect it. We can certify to the effectiveness of systematic, recursive and pedagogic sequences of processual writing.

Planning operations favour the perfecting of pupils' written competence (Hypothesis 3b).

In different aspects of our study, we have stated that the trainees did not always reserve enough time for planning, above all in the first cycle of the Writing Workshop. However, the trainees and pupils gradually started to train in textual planning. We conclude that allowing for planning, which implies conception with recourse to the semantic memory for the selection of information, effectively contributes to reinforcing written competence. Therefore, we consider it fundamental to develop planning with objectives, problems and strategies.

Textualisation operations make the perfecting of pupils' written competence possible (Hypothesis 3c).

We believe that trainees should include in their units indications on coherence, cohesion and appropriateness of the communicative situation at the level of lexis, morphology and syntax. There should also be a reinforcement of support materials on textuality, through self-correction work sheets. Nevertheless, it is important that the pupil has time, while he is writing, to talk with the teacher and exchange ideas with colleagues. Therefore, we have seen that textualisation operations, in a text-process dynamic, imply managing a set of discursive, textual and linguistic

elements to practise in the Writing Workshop. We have concluded that textualisation operations, integrated in writing sequences, function as a process for perfecting communicative competence.

Reviewing operations allow the perfecting of pupils' written competence (Hypothesis 3d).

Reviewing is seen as a critical reading to detect inaccuracies and perfect the text, which translates into correction and new textualisation. The trainees privileged numerous self-corrections in the planning, reviewing and assessment activities, with support materials such as grids, assessment-correction lists and correction codes, some of which were (co)constructed with the pupils. The strategies implemented place the pupil in an active, autonomous role, while attributing the work of (co)reviewing the text to the teacher. We conclude that rewriting work, concentrating on rough versions or unfinished and intermediary versions of the text, was seen by both pupils and trainees from the perspective of progression. The pupils effectively improved their writing, when self and hetero-corrected during the composition process, prior to the editing phase.

Assessment by portfolio favours the perfecting of written communication competence (Hypothesis 4).

We have seen that the portfolio allows the selection, organisation and assessment of texts representative of processual writing. The pupils were capable of casting an objective eye over their progress in writing, when this is based on assessment criteria and assessment files which have been constructed cooperatively between the pupils, trainees and orientator.

We believe that applying a portfolio also favours the interaction between the pupil, in situations regulating their autonomy, and the teacher, as the catalyst in this development, in a reflexive I-other dialogue. Joint assessment of the portfolio, by both the pupil and the teacher, allows access to the essential dimension of knowledge: the capacity for self-regulation of the processes of knowledge construction (N. Yang, 2003). We conclude that the portfolio allows pupils of different age groups to perfect the reflexive acquisition of organised structures of social, personal and cognitive knowledge. This brings about cognition in inter-relation with metacognition and promotes the general quality of learning and assessment of processual compositive writing.

As a general conclusion, it is our pleasure to note that, in this case study, there was an effective perfecting of written communication competence in Year 7 and Year 12 pupils, which is interconnected with the development of the professional identity of the trainees. As vectors in this reflexive evolution of writers (students) and writers and teachers of writing (trainees), we foreground the **(co)construction of processual strategies of writing**, specifically cognitive operations, different types/genres of texts, and the interconnection between formative **writing and assessment**, through lists and grids of self and hetero-assessment and the pupil's individual portfolio. The framework for this multiple development was the writing in a project, founded in a teacher training action-research process. The adoption of a cooperatively based teaching model, in projects of the **Writing Workshop** and the pupil's **portfolio**, was a determining factor in the

effective perfecting of written competence, in the two age groups. The teaching-learning of writing emerges, in the present study, as a multiple process of linguistic and personal growth in the pupils and the trainees, as part of social cooperation activities.

9.2. From the initial and continued training of teachers (of writing)...

There is no doubt that writing is at the centre of the didactic system in the mother tongue. Therefore, making writing didactic constitutes the core of the role of the teacher of Portuguese, by promoting writing as part of a project, Workshop or individual portfolio. This has the ultimate goal of making the pupils learn how to solve problems of writing. As a consequence, this implies the knowledge and know-how of the trainer, through a reflexive mastery of Portuguese and the cognitive, communicative and linguistic processes of (co)construction of written competence.

Leading on from this, **a reflexive initial training** is defended, when **founded in action-research cycles**. To learn how to teach writing it is necessary to objectify the constituent parts of knowing how to write, which is an indispensable condition in a Didactic of writing.

As a living example, the trainees should compose and read to the class the written texts they propose to their pupils. To accomplish the role of reflexive writer, the trainer accesses the intelligibility of the complexity of the act of writing, by constructing a representation which does not function as an epistemological obstacle to the practice and learning of writing, but which contributes to its facilitation. As we have seen in our study, by data cross-analysis, pupils were aware of the fact that the trainees did not always give examples with their own texts for the proposed tasks. The difference between the trainees' writing habits and those they want their pupils to acquire does not help motivate writing. Attentive to the cognitive overload of written problems without a single solution, it is fundamental that the pupil observes how the teacher deals with the doubts, advances and setbacks inherent in compositive writing.

Continuous training of trainee orientators is also fundamental, through training actions on writing, in relation to pedagogic practice. Furthermore, education institutions should structure double training plans, so that they would include both trainees and orientators.

Finally, in Schools, it is desirable that teachers of Portuguese as a mother tongue were motivated to share their pedagogic experiences, given that planning, carrying out and reflecting on common writing projects constitutes a possible method for an effective and substantive teaching of processual writing. Above all, for a teaching-learning which can have as a caption the words of John Steinbeck (1955), which brings us back to the initial epigraph:

*I've had many teachers who taught us soon forgotten things,
But only a few like her who created in me a new thing, a new attitude, a new hunger.
I suppose that to a large extent I am the unsigned manuscript of that teacher.
What deathless power lies in the hands of such a person.*

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