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**A MATTER OF VALUE: CREATIVE WRITING STRATEGIES AND THEIR
TRANSFERENCE TO COMPOSITION**

A Masters Thesis

Presented to

The Graduate College of
Missouri State University

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts, Writing

By

Brandy Clark

May 2018

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A MATTER OF VALUE: CREATIVE WRITING STRATEGIES AND THEIR TRANSFERENCE TO COMPOSITION

English

Missouri State University, May 2018

Master of Arts

Brandy Clark

ABSTRACT

Creative writing and composition seem to be taken, at least in the academic world, as separate and unequal entities. While there are many questions in the research and answers in the research as to why creativity is important, its practical application in the composition classroom is not readily discussed because there is not unanimous agreement as to if creative writing even belongs in the composition classroom. Practical application of creative writing in the composition classroom gives teachers the opportunity to see why it is important, to see why it is valuable, and to incorporate it into already meticulous class standards. Using the data from a survey on what creative writing revision strategies students find helpful to use in their other courses, I designed a unit plan for a first-year composition class that incorporates both a creative writing assignment and these revision strategies typically learned in a creative writing class. I wish to show that while composition strategies are important in the creative writing classroom, that the opposite is also true: creative writing and creative writing strategies are important in the composition classroom.

KEYWORDS: creative writing, poetry, composition, first year composition, pedagogy, transference, strategies, revision, workshop, unit plan

This abstract is approved as to form and content

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Brandy Clark

A Masters Thesis
Submitted to the Graduate College
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For the Degree of Master of Arts, English

May 2018

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In the interest of academic freedom and the principle of free speech, approval of this thesis indicates the format is acceptable and meets the academic criteria for the discipline as determined by the faculty that constitute the thesis committee. The content and views expressed in this thesis are those of the student-scholar and are not endorsed by Missouri State University, its Graduate College, or its employees.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis was a labor of love. I have always held the strong belief that creative writing has value in the composition classroom, and it was a privilege to undertake this thesis and bring this belief to life. So many people helped me to bring this thesis to life. I would like to thank Margaret Weaver for her extensive help and comments, which assisted me *tremendously* in the revision process. I would like to thank Lanette Cadle for all her help and comments, and for suggesting I look at scholarship by Wendy Bishop; her work put into perspective just how important creative writing is in the composition classroom. I would also like to thank Sara Burge for looking at the poetry aspect of this thesis. I would also like to thank the professors I had during my Masters in Writing program: Margaret Weaver, Lanette Cadle, James Baumlín, John Turner, Ken Gillam, and Suneeta Thomas. You all have helped me look at rhetoric and composition in a different light, and for that, I thank you.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Creative writing and composition seem to be taken, at least in the academic world, as separate and unequal entities. Douglas Hesse, in his article “The Place of Creative Writing in Composition Studies,” points out that division of these two fields of study causes problems for students and teachers alike (34), such as what teachers can teach and research and how students understand writing (34). Patrick Sullivan also concurs, adding that creative writing is often considered “a separate and almost privileged place in the academy where art is produced” (17). In the literature that looks at the intersections of creative writing and composition, there seems to be many questions as to how and even if creative writing transfers over to composition: what is considered creative? What is considered different about the pedagogy for creative writing as compared to the pedagogy for composition? What makes creative writing a more advanced form of writing? What is the workshop model, and is it beneficial in and outside of the creative writing classroom?

The discussions about creativity and creative writing fall along the lines of standards, how to grade creative writing, and what benefits it has to offer composition students and the academic community. The discussions do not mainly focus on any one specific subset of creative writing (e.g., poetry, playwriting, creative fiction, and creative nonfiction) but instead look at creative writing as a whole. While there are many questions in the research and answers in the research as to *why* creativity is important, its practical application in the composition classroom is not readily discussed because there is not unanimous agreement as to if creative writing even belongs in the composition classroom. Practical application of creative writing in the composition classroom gives

teachers the opportunity to see why it is important, to see why it is valuable, and to incorporate it into already meticulous class standards. Creative writing is already seen as valuable in creative writing courses, and by using creative writing in the composition classroom, teachers will see, firsthand, *why* it is valuable without having to mull it over and decide its value before teachers even use it.

By giving the students in a creative writing course a survey on one such practical application (revision strategies learned from ENG 203—Creative Writing—Poetry course and workshop), answers will be determined on how to use creative writing strategies in the composition classroom, and these answers will guide the creation of a unit plan specifically designed for a first-year composition teacher. Students at Missouri State University take ENG 110 before taking classes such as ENG 203, thus the assumption exists that composition strategies are already valuable in creative writing courses. I wish to show that while composition strategies are important in the creative writing classroom, that the opposite is also true: creative writing and creative writing strategies are important in the composition classroom.

Writing and Creativity's Importance and Value

The word *value* is a common one that comes up in the research reviewed. Wendy Bishop, in her book *Something Old, Something New*, says, straightforwardly, that “Writing has value” (126). Jason Wirtz strongly emphasizes the value of creative writing in general—that it is the important sharing of personal experience and fostering of independent thought: “I value the sharing of personal experience, the development of a creative aesthetic...and the fostering of independent thought. These are the underlying

elements of my teaching that influence the structure of the lessons I present to students” (27). This seems to lead to the idea that whatever a teacher values is what he or she will present to his or her students. Therefore, what is valued is, in a sense, subjective—if creativity is valued, then its value will come through in the classroom. If a student sees a teacher care about and value creativity, then the student might harbor the same kind of enthusiasm for creativity as well.

Randall R. Freisinger, in his article “Creative Writing and Creative Composition,” says independent thought and creative writing has a personal value: “Writer and teacher must expose themselves, allow themselves, as Macrorie has urged, to become vulnerable. We [teachers] will encourage no such vulnerability assigning sanitized and prepackaged essay topics and patterns that have no relevance for most students” (284). Creative writing is a personal act, and Freisinger does not believe such things as the typical composition essay allows for much in the way of creativity. However, in terms of composition courses, teachers “can offer similar help [to get writing ready to share with others] if we provide guidance at the invention stages and if we encourage the students to view writing as a process. But if the students write only to fulfill an assignment, if they are not engaged with the process of writing, there can be no real therapeutic value” (284). So, the value of both writing and creative writing is viewing it as personal and therapeutic. The value of both writing and creative writing also comes from being engaged with what the student is writing.

Kroll poses an interesting question when it comes to creative writing’s value: why should its value need to be proven? (1) Kroll, a teacher at Flinders University in

Adelaide, South Australia, is straightforward as she mentions creative writing's value and benefits:

Creative writing has a range of purposes and benefits for the community. It provides entertainment and intellectual stimulation, but in a larger sense it preserves and promotes our heritage. Furthermore, as all art forms, writing is cultural capital in a quantitative sense, not simply purveying a national image, but exporting the art products a culture makes possible. (2)

Creative writing being seen as only having cultural capital value diminishes its potential. This leads people to believe that creative writing is only valuable if it is worth money, and this is not necessarily the case. Bishop quotes Caywood and Overing when it comes to the value of creative writing: "prewriting, free writing, rough drafts and their revisions, learning logs, reading diaries, journals and exploratory essays are as valued as the more traditional, linear modes of expression" (42). Bishop also quotes Jim Heynan: "This may sound outrageous, but if you can help that mass of students see the relationship between words and power, you may be opening the door to more personal and committed writing" (42). Creative, personal writings, and showing students that their words have power, is another reason why creative writing has value.

Some scholars view creative nonfiction as having more importance than other types of creative writing: "in looking through 'Writing Majors at a Glance (National Council of Teachers of English 2007), which announce up front it does not include *creative* writing majors, most writing majors include some form of creative non-fiction" (Martin 2). Though Martin makes the mistake of valuing one form of creative writing over another, at the least its value is recognizable.

Despite creative writing having value, Hans Ostrom notes in *Colors of a Different Horse: Rethinking Creative Writing and Pedagogy* that dismissal of creative writing by other academics (in his example, literature faculty) is a dangerous division:

The situation becomes even more complicated when parents and children of the dysfunctional English studies family mix it up. Literature faculty often dislike the apparent isolation of creative writing teachers and then do much to insure that the isolation will harden. They objectify creative writing by naming it “anti-intellectual” or “touchy-feely” then dismiss it--a process of bigotry that is not so different from racism, which always finds the enemy it seeks. (xvi)

In turn, he says that the writer-teacher (in this sense, the creative writing teacher), also causes division in his or her retreat from theory:

...they may think, “It’s damned hard to write, damned hard to publish, win fellowships, earn a living through writing. I can’t afford the time to theorize about teaching, even if I wanted to. What I desperately need is some luck, some time to write, and the courage to keep writing, none of which theory can give me.” (xv-xvi)

Ostrom sees these divisions as a direct result of the tendency of college creative writing teachers to retreat, naturally, from theory and pedagogy because of the assumption from what Ostrom terms as the “conservative text tradition” (xiv)—that Writing from Writers (Writing being from established, well-known Writers) is more important than writing from writers (in this instance, student writers) (xiv) because for creative writing to be valuable, it has to be marketable (xiv).

The division and assumption of creative writing being too “touchy-feely” or “not valuable” causes Ostrom to ask the rhetorical question that if creative writing is so useless, why is enrollment in creative writing courses so high? (xxi). His rhetorical question is a broad one, but perhaps it is meant to be. The reason for high enrollment in creative writing courses might relate to its usefulness in the job market. Howard Gibson, in the article “What Creativity Isn’t”, says creativity drives economic growth (151), as it

links to the needs of the economy and to the needs of the individual (151). Sullivan agrees with Gibson, and often stresses the importance and applicability of creativity to the job market. Sullivan mentions that creativity is a “key habit” for students and essential for twenty-first century thinkers (12). He further asserts the importance of creativity by paraphrasing Ken Robinson’s thoughts from the book *Out of Our Minds: Learning to be Creative*: “he links creativity to our finest achievements and accomplishments through the ages, and he positions creativity as essential for engaging the many complex economic, social, political, environmental, ethical, and medical challenges we face in the world today” (9). Sullivan also uses a quote from Robert J. Steinberg, author of *Wisdom, Intelligence, and Creativity Synthesized*:

The skills people need to succeed in their careers do not always closely resemble the skills needed to succeed in college courses, especially introductory courses. Life rarely presents multiple-choice or short-answer problems. As the report *How Should Colleges Assess and Improve Student Learning?* (AAC&U 2008) makes clear, this is not merely my own personal opinion: employers overwhelmingly reject multiple-choice tests and other traditional instruments of assessment. Moreover, the competencies such tests measure are not the ones employers value. What, then, are the skills they value? *College Learning for the New Global Century* (AAC&U 2007) identifies a number of such skills, including inquiry and analysis, ethical reasoning and action, and synthesis. (10)

Another quote Sullivan uses at the beginning of the article leads to the conclusion of creativity spurring economic growth. He paraphrases Lewis Hyde in his book *The Gift: Creativity and the Artist in the Modern World* by saying that creative expression is a unique and important way of producing knowledge and knowing the world (6). In other words, knowing how to think creatively is a skill valued by employers. It shows employees can synthesize information and “think outside the box”, so to speak.

What is Considered Creative

Julie Neff, in her essay “Voices from the Writing Center: Risky Business/Safe Spaces,” overheard an anecdote from one of the student workers in the writing center that “Creativity is the key to *any* good paper” (201). What is considered creative, however, is a question not easily answered. Wendy Bishop, in her essay titled “Crossing the Lines: On Creative Writing and Composing Creative Writing” says that “[writers] do not feel their academic writing is valid or valuable” (185). Bishop says that students are also disappointed when what Bishop calls the “myth of free creativity” in creative writing classes (186) is proven to be just that: a myth. Students expect creative writing classes to be free of restrictions and form, and once the students find out that creative writing has a form—much like academic writing, they wind up disappointed. Gregory Light comes to the same conclusion in his research. In the article “From the Personal to the Public: Conceptions of Creative Writing in Higher Education”, he interviewed 40 students from three separate universities and found that students equate creative writing with being more personal and having a greater sense of freedom in what they wrote and created (264). While creative writing is considered personal, as it is a form of expressivist writing, it does still have its form and structure. Poetry, for example, can be narrative and lyric. Poetic forms such as the villanelle, the sonnet, or the pantoum can be utilized (and even reinvented altogether, once poets master the concept of poetic form). Poets can use techniques such as varying the rhythm and line breaks to change the way the poem is read.

Such techniques were studied (creative techniques as a whole) by Linda Sarbo and Joseph M. Moxley, in their essay “Creativity Research and Classroom Practice”. Sarbo

and Moxley go into detail about the cognitive processes behind creativity, which affirms Sullivan's point that everyone has the capacity to be creative (8), as it is a unique way of producing and creating knowledge (6). Sullivan continues by saying "I would like to see us [teachers] establish for creativity an even more ambitious and foundational role in our discipline and our teaching practice. If we theorize creativity as a highly sophisticated and valuable form of cognition, it must also, then, by definition, be regarded as a necessary and indispensable part of any curriculum in a writing classroom" (19)¹.

A writer and a creative writer uses eight habits of mind to communicate, according to Sullivan (this is the second time he mentions writing in general as some form of habit). The habits are as follows: curiosity, openness, engagement, creativity, persistence, responsibility, flexibility, and metacognition (16). However, he laments that "discussions of writing proficiency, college readiness, and teaching writing still often end up focusing only on a narrow range of analytical thinking skills, typically defined as *critical thinking*" (16). Sullivan does not want to abolish critical thinking entirely; instead, he hopes to expand the term to include *creative and critical thinking* (16), because "all good thinking, after all, is creative in some way" (16).

Returning to Sarbo and Moxley's thought that "a creative act must be original or novel, that is must be seen as valuable or interesting, and that it cannot be accidental", the conclusion can be drawn that all forms of writing (whether the adjective *creative* or *academic* is tacked in front of the verb *writing*) is a creative act—an act of creation. Creative is defined in different ways by different scholars but writing as an act of creation is the commonality among the different scholars reviewed.

Identity, Division, and Theory

One of the concepts that often appears when discussing creativity is the concept of voice. Identity, as found throughout the research, is defined primarily in terms of voice. R.M. Berry, in “Theory, Creative Writing, and the Impertinence of History” says that definitively, creative writing acknowledges the writer’s imagination and experience, and theoretically, an (abstract) audience (62), for the voice in writing is meant for an audience. however, in creative writing the audience is abstract and not necessarily present, especially if the writer is writing the piece for themselves first and foremost. The writer might acknowledge that, for example, he or she might write the story/poem for publication (though this audience does not exist yet, in the definitive sense).

Carl Leggo in “Voice(s) in Writing: Symphony and/or Cacophony”, finds voice to be rather difficult to define:

As a poet and a teacher I am constantly reminded that language is a slippery affair. Often (most of the time? all of the time?), I am only partially successful in using words to understand and make sense and communicate. Still I continue to try...I have advised my students in both high school and university classes: Write in your own voices, your personal, authentic, sincere, voices. But I am not at all sure that I know what I mean by “voice” (169).

The phrase “your own voices, your personal, authentic, sincere voices” is an expressivist idea. Writing *should* have the writer’s unique voice and personal flair, no matter whether the writing is being produced in a composition sense or in a creative writing sense.

Peter Elbow, in “Voices in Writing Again: Embracing Contraries” says an either/or conflict comes up in the discussion of voice, where people feel like they must choose between either this *or* that, how voice should fit either the writer *or* the speaker (169). A voice that fits the writer is one that embraces what Elbow calls “naturalness” (169) or staying true to oneself. A voice that fits the writer could possibly be a voice that

is not aware of an audience, at least not at the time the writer is writing. A voice that fits the speaker comes from, as Elbow says, a good man (169). A voice that fits the speaker acknowledges that there is an audience and that the speaker needs to portray a particular *ethos*. Ideally, the voice that comes through *should* be true to the speaker as it is true and natural to the writer, no matter how the audience receives the message. The natural speaking voice (i.e., how a person normally converses with others), might be considered too abrasive. Therefore, the speaking voice might need to be restructured so that the audience believes the speaker is worth listening to. Composition and creative writing students should recognize that there is an audience and make sure that their “voice” is clear and credible.

Elbow says we should embrace contraries, and think of them as both/and, rather than either/or:

...when I argue strongly for unplanned, uncensored freewriting, people often ignore my stated commitments to careful, planned, skeptical revising. When I argue for the believing game, I’m not heard insisting on the need for the skeptical, logical, critical thinking of the doubting game. When I argue for private personal individual writing, people have trouble seeing me affirm the social dimension of language and writing. (172)

Inherently, the discussions and critiques about voice are critiques about division and the division existing in the field of writing: Creative writing voice *or* composition voice.

Creative writing is most likely seen as the myth of free creativity, the unplanned voice, whereas composition voice is most likely seen as the one true voice, the voice that fits the speaker. The division should not exist; it should be “both/and.” Creative writing *and* composition. A writer composes writing for an audience, no matter whether the writer is in a creative writing course or in a composition course.

Ostrom, as previously mentioned, sees the division of creative writing and composition a little differently. He does not see it strictly in terms of what voice to use, rather, he sees the division between creative writing and composition mainly as a direct result of the tendency of some college creative writing teachers to retreat from theory and pedagogy. Creative writing teachers do this, in Ostrom's view, by falling back on the workshop just to go over poems and stories "in a big circle" and resort to "breaking up squabbles like a hall monitor" (xiv). Theories of voice are important for a creative writing teacher to learn when he or she teaches in a creative writing classroom. If a creative writing teacher better understands how students approach poetry and how they see poetry as an authentic voice, the teacher will be better equipped with the knowledge to help students understand that they *can* stay true to themselves. Also, they will be able to tell students that revision is an important part of the creative writing process. It is taking a piece of writing and continuing to make it better; it is "re-seeing" work in a new light and realizing that their voice is an authentic voice meant for an audience. It is uncertain how a creative writing teacher can retreat from both theory *and* pedagogy, as Ostrom describes. Even if the creative writing teacher uses the workshop in its simplest form, it is a form of pedagogy, and teaching poetry/how to write poetry is a form of expressivism, which is a theory of writing.

Likewise, composition teachers seem uncertain about creative writing in general. Alice Brand, in "On Seeing the Green Parrot and the Green Salad", talks about this division from the perspective of composition specialists who are creative writers:

By design, default, or sheer professional necessity, imaginative writing seems to have fallen away (or perhaps never was) for composition specialists. Serious fictive or poetic inclinations appear further out of reach emotionally. Whatever creative space once existed has been filled largely with scholarship—or remains a

black hole. The net result is a lost generation of composition specialists cum creative writers. They are an endangered species. (147)

Bishop mentions that:

creative writing as a composition research area...is generally ignored in spite of cross-the-line pedagogical raiding; compositionists have borrowed effective teaching methods from the creative writing workshop—particularly group-response sessions and portfolio evaluations...seldom discussed are the basic commonalities of writing a poem and writing an essay. (190)

An example that relates to Bishop's quote is when I took a course titled ENG 786—Form and Theory of Poetry and Prose. I meant to take it to study the forms of poetry, but I did not realize that in this semester, the course would mainly be focused on prose. I chose to stay in the course and found out that writers of prose and writers of poetry have commonalities, such as the concept of *detrterritorialization* and *reterritorialization*.

Deterritorialization is removing the characters from a world they know and putting them into a new situation; reterritorialization is putting them into a new world and situation and having them readjust to that world. Prose writers do it, as in the case of a story about the zombie apocalypse, where the characters' world is destroyed, and they have to readjust to this world and make a new world. Poetry writers do this as well, but the deterritorialization and the reterritorialization can come from either the reader having to enter the poet's world and construct meaning, or the writer taking the speaker of the poem and having them readjust to a new situation. The commonalities between poetry and prose were there, just as there are commonalities between writing a poem and writing an essay. The writers of each both must go through a process.

Ostrom offers his opinion that a retreat from pedagogy and theory may be because college creative writing teachers seeing themselves as writers first and teachers second (xii). The reasoning behind this is "such teachers rely on 'validation through

performance' (I write poetry successfully) and testimony (Here's how I wrote the stories I've had published" (xiii). However, "if as teachers we value performance and testimony exclusively, then we silence alternate ways of knowing, such as theory-building, research, and cognate, cross-disciplinary thinking" (xiii).

Hesse agrees and adds that there is a definite division between rhetoric, composition, and writing as academic discourses (38), which is unnecessary, for writing is an art whose techniques are transferrable from one situation to another (39), and we need to stress the similarities between the two (39). Hesse says that creative writing and composition should keep more open borders (42), and that the intersection of creative writing and composition is clear: both discourses have people in them who want to share, to learn, and to feel valued (46).

Where Brand and Bishop vary is that Brand talks about the uncertainties of composition specialists who want to be creative, and Bishop talks about the composition specialists who are content to borrow successful creative writing strategies without engaging in creative writing themselves. Ostrom differs from Brand and Bishop by putting his focus specifically on creative writers, where Hesse acknowledges division across rhetoric, composition, and writing (whether he means creative writing or writing in general is unclear). Regardless, Bishop proposes, "We need to be crossing the line between composition and creative writing far more often than we do. In fact, we may to eliminate the line entirely" (180).

In crossing this line, Donna J. Kain, in her 2003 publication "Teacher-Centered versus Student-Centered: Balancing Constraint and Theory in the Composition Classroom", says that

Based on fundamental issues raised by different theoretical perspectives, approaches to teaching composition might be loosely grouped into theoretical and pedagogical categories, including expressivist approaches, process and cognitive (and, more recently, social-cognitive) approaches, rhetorical/argument approaches, and social-epistemic and radical pedagogy. While these categories are not mutually exclusive in theory or in practice, operating under a predominant approach to teaching writing does mean making certain pedagogical choices within theoretical categories. In fact, James Berlin (1994: 10) encourages instructors to “become more aware of the full significance of their pedagogical strategies,” because “not doing so can have disastrous consequences, ranging from momentarily confusing students to sending them away with faulty and even harmful ideas.” (106).

Kain also warns that the failure to align theory and practice can lead to what she terms “modal confusion” (106). For example, “If a teacher assigns work that elicits an expressivist response from students and then assesses that work from a more classical rhetorical perspective, the students’ work is bound to fall short” (Kain 107). In other words, if a teacher assigns a piece of creative writing, which falls into an expressivist pedagogy, the teacher needs to assess that piece of writing from an expressivist standpoint, not a rhetorical standpoint.

Pedagogy and Balance

Erika Lindemann, in “Freshman Composition: No Place for Literature” asks this question: what is the purpose of a first-year writing course? Literature is often introduced in writing courses as a model for students to learn from, but studying literature, in her opinion, rarely teaches about style (314). Bishop discusses at length when creative writing needs to be taught and the purpose of a first-year writing course:

To start, I believe we should teach “creative” writing in the first-year program, as has been done at my school for many years with good effects, particularly on student and teacher attitudes, and no reported harm. Students are well prepared for future academic writing when they explore creativity, authorship, textuality, and so on, together, all at once. In fact, I suggest that they are more prepared to think about and perform the complicated act of writing when they study this way. Many

of our students pick up conflicting understandings about textuality from traditional courses, the ones that define writing or reading very narrowly and focus on skills rather than on active learning and process, or that offer only a naive theory of texts (if any). Understanding writing as a subject, I believe, aids the development of written products. And, certainly during the college years, if not earlier, a well-developed metacognitive and metalinguistic understanding of the demands of writing and reading enables a student to develop flexible responses to class-assigned or self-assigned writing tasks. (193)

Bishop also adopts the attitude that college teachers are “teaching writers who just so happen to be students” (193). This is an interesting attitude to have: to consider students as writers, first and foremost, and to teach “creativity, authorship, and textuality” all at once, as these are things that go hand in hand when learning about writing (and in academic writing, they tend to be taught in isolation).

Although Lindemann is quick to dismiss the incorporation of literature in a composition classroom, Carl Leggo disagrees. Leggo’s approach to purpose mirrors a quote he uses from Ronald Sukenick: “One of the main purposes of really good writing is to destroy other really good writing, to destroy all the old concepts and formulas that come out of the best of the past” (168). In other words: the goal of a writer is to take chances and to experiment. This approach is different from Lindemann’s approach, for she says that literature rarely teaches a writer about style, and Leggo uses Sukenick to say a writer *needs* to see the writing of the past so he or she can *develop* a style.

Wirtz concurs and experiments with the idea of style when it comes to his students and combines both research and the idea of what he terms an “alternative research paper” for the alternative research paper is a place “for both form and invention” (24-25). The alternative research paper uses historical research to write a creative short story, rather than a research paper. The idea behind it is to make the story come to life and to make it believable via the research (25). Students must research the historical details they want to

use in their stories. This gives the research meaning, and as Brand points out, the “objectives of formal composition and imaginative [creative] writing has everything to do with getting to meaning” (156). Wirtz also says as teachers, we tend to give students a form of writing and expect them to fill it with meaning (23). For example, we might tell students to write a research paper and expect for them to use the research paper form to produce a piece of writing that has meaning to them. As teachers, we might expect the students to gain meaning specifically because we assigned them a research paper.

Wirtz’s views might be compared with Lindemann’s thoughts on how teaching and using literature rarely teaches the student about style; however, Wirtz’s thoughts have more to do with teachers in general giving their students a form (research paper, memo, resume), whereas Lindemann’s thoughts have to do with giving students literature and expecting them to learn about style (which is an important component for a writer to develop) from reading literature. Students learn how to develop their own writing style from reading literature, and this is an important component in creative writing. A writer first takes influence from the other writers and poets he or she reads. In composition, it seems that students are denied the opportunity to engage with literature and extract its benefits altogether, according to Gary Tate. In his article, “A Place For Literature”, he discusses the benefits of using literature in the composition classroom and its place:

What literature in the freshman writing class has to do with my concerns seems obvious to me. If I want my students to think and talk and write about human lives outside the academy— “Writing Beyond the Disciplines”—then I certainly do not want to deny them the resources found in literary works, just as I do not want to deny them the resources found elsewhere. I do not advocate having students read only literary works. But they should not be denied that privilege altogether. They should be denied no resource that can help them. (321)

Tate also says that with not using literature in the composition classroom, imagination, as well as style, was lost: “And to ignore the study of style as just another of the many misguided concerns of current-traditionalists (lips curled, again), is to deprive our students of the linguistic possibilities that just might elevate their prose above mediocrity, to use another unpopular word (318). Literature in a classroom is not meant to give students content and meaning, and not just meant to give the teacher’s point of view on the piece of literature. Literature is meant to be digested and discussed. The more writers he or she reads, the more he or she develops a writing style. With the proper classroom environment and modeling from the teacher about what to expect from discussion, as well as teachers giving helpful, thought-provoking comments on student assignments, it will help with the transition from the students feeling that they are *not-so-good writers* to *I am a writer*.

Sullivan says to help ease the transition for first year writers from not considering themselves writers at all to considering themselves writers, teachers need to design assignments for creative writing and composition by “desegregating creative writing in our curriculum and actively expanding our definition of academic writing” (21), along with focusing on who should writers become and why should they become that way (29), as it instills confidence in students. Confidence is a key factor in developing students’ personality as writers. In fact, Sarbo and Moxley say to foster creativity, people need to recognize writing as an act of personality (138) and maintain a balance between daily writing and levels of productivity, with no intervention in how our students engage in a writing task (141).

Lea Maisello, in “Voices from the Writing Center: It’s Okay to Be Creative—A Role for the Imagination in Basic Writing Courses” emphasizes the importance of instilling identity and confidence in writers (208) by helping writers revise their understanding of what it means to write and be a writer. A teacher does this, Maisello says, by giving “positive endorsement and recognition, and an individualized, self-paced approach to instruction” (212). Sarbo, Moxley, and Maisello’s approaches are more student-centered rather than teacher-centered and taking this kind of approach might make teachers uneasy. The literature provides many thoughts and questions to consider, as well as answers as to what teachers *should* do, but rarely gives much, if anything, in the way of examples or how to put these examples into practice. There are a few exceptions, as in the case of Wirtz and his embedded research papers. The lack of examples might also contribute to teachers’ unease about using a fully student-centered approach.

Freisinger says that before teachers can decide on a pedagogy to teach either creative writing or composition, that motives for taking these courses must be discovered (282). Judith Harris, in her article “Re-Writing the Subject: Psychoanalytic Approaches to Creative Writing and Composition Pedagogy”, says students tend to have different ideas or motives for taking writing courses: “Creative writing is fun, free-form; composition is hard, limiting, but real work” (176). When it comes to creative writing courses, Freisinger quotes Stephen Minot in that a creative writing teacher should “begin a creative writing class with the students’ motives and enthusiasms rather than our own: the scent of proselytizing can turn some students off at the outset. We do better when we

draw on the full range of student motives, recognizing each in that first class, legitimizing each as authentic” (282). If Minot’s quote is applied to composition, Freisinger says:

First, we must determine student motives for taking composition, beyond the immediate fact that it is required. What we may discover is that the students have no motive. They can find no compelling reason for taking freshman English, thus they can generate no enthusiasm. If this is so, we must provide them with a motive. And that is the second necessity. To supply that motive, we must summon forth their creativity. We must convince them of this special value of language, but we must do it quickly or they will tune us out. (282)

Obtaining student motives for taking the course can help a teacher with the planning of lessons, to help students achieve the motives they have for taking the course and getting to student motives should be a teacher’s concern.

Concerns

College teachers have a limited amount of time on their hands. They must plan lessons, keep office hours, have conferences with students, comment on papers and assignments, and enter grades. Perhaps it is with this consideration of the limited amount of time teachers have in their schedules that leads Kain to criticize both student-centered approaches and teacher preparation when it comes to using a fully student-centered approach in writing courses: “students are more receptive to traditional methods of teaching” (104), and she feels students are naturally resistant to “student-centered learning” (105). Also, “often they [the students] are not sufficiently prepared to receive a higher education, but teachers might not be prepared either” (105). Fully student-centered expressivist approaches, which require the student to self-reflect and go beyond critical thinking (for example, reflecting on assignments and writing in student journals), *do* take time to plan and to oversee.

Standards also must be considered. In education, teachers follow a set of state and/or national standards that ensure student mastery of the course material. The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) has a set of 11 standards when it comes to assessing writing of any sort. The standards are:

1. The interests of the student are paramount in assessment.
2. The teacher is the most important agent of assessment.
3. The primary purpose of assessment is to improve teaching and learning.
4. Assessment must reflect and allow for critical inquiry into curriculum and instruction.
5. Assessment must recognize and reflect the intellectually and socially complex nature of reading and writing and the important roles of school, home, and society in literacy development.
6. Assessment must be fair and equitable.
7. The consequences of an assessment procedure are the first and most important consideration in establishing the validity of the assessment.
8. The assessment process should involve multiple perspectives and sources of data.
9. Assessment must be based in the local school learning community, including active and essential participation of families and community members.
10. All stakeholders in the educational community—students, families, teachers, administrators, policymakers, and the public—must have an equal voice in the development, interpretation, and reporting of assessment information.
11. Families must be involved as active, essential participants in the assessment process. (2009)

The list of standards on the NCTE website includes a link leading the reader to a further description of what is exactly meant by each standard and what the standards of assessments are trying to accomplish and what needs to be done. Strict practical application and how to put the standards into practice is not listed. Because of this, it leaves the interpretation of the standards and how to best assess writing—whether it is creative or academic—up to the teacher of the writing course. The subjective nature of writing may lend to the problem of how to best assess writing.

At Missouri State University, ENG 110 and ENG 203 each has its set of course goals and standards, meant to help and guide teachers as to how to best assess writing and

what they should teach their students, along with what the students should learn by the time the course has concluded. ENG 110's course goals are seen in Figure 1.

Course Goals:

- Through writing and reading, students will examine the forces that act upon a given discourse, including audience, purpose, and context.
- Students will analyze written arguments.
- Students will analyze the interrelationship between audience and genre.
- In peer review and on their own through solid revision practices, students will work with conventions of writing including genre expectations and style.
- Students will engage in proofreading practice of their work to correct for grammar, mechanics, and usage error.
- Students will engage in research; finding, evaluating, and incorporating sources into their thinking and writing.

Figure 1. Written Communication course goals for the ENG 110 First Year Composition course at Missouri State University.

These goals are related specifically to writing and the writing process. The students *will examine, will analyze, and will work with conventions of writing*. In addition to journal assignments meant to assess concepts such as summary, critical thinking, and metacognition, the main form of assessment is a portfolio, turned in at the end of the semester. The portfolio consists of final drafts of student projects worked on over the course of the semester, such as an article summary, an argument analysis, and a researched argument. While grading of the projects and the portfolio can be subjective when the teacher looks at the overall quality of writing (because each teacher will value different things when looking at and grading the projects and portfolio), the projects and goals for the first-year composition course seem straightforward.

ENG 203's course goals and assessment standards are seen in Figure 2.

ENG 203 is a General Education course, meaning that it is geared toward instilling skills, concepts, and experiences that should be of interest to all educated persons, regardless of what careers they pursue.

Course Objectives

This course is a General Education course that satisfies two of Missouri State's General Education Goals (in the areas of Humanities and the Arts and Collaboration). Below, the course objectives are listed. Following those are the General Education Goals (with references to the Course Objectives that meet the specified Learning Outcomes of these General Education Goals).

1. The General Education students in the class, through their study of literary masters and theoretical frameworks, and through their own writing, contribute to a living literature. In literature, readers can empathize with the common humanity in characters vastly different from themselves in time and place, culture, and beliefs. Poetry writing in this class is a carefully crafted study in "empathy-ology" when it comes to understanding other cultures and identifying with them, while better understanding one's own culture.
2. The course places a high priority on creativity, and the General Education students in the class will learn to develop their own creativity by controlling the artistic limits that define it. Students will complete exercises designed to enhance poetry writing skills and have their poems discussed in a workshop format by their peers.
3. The General Education students in the class will learn the theory, technique, and terminology of poetry writing, and gain practical experience in the form (creating their own important texts). In doing this, they will read, write, and evaluate literary poems and complete exercises designed to enhance poetry writing skills.
4. The General Education students in the class will create a creative writing community of professional respect and practical mentoring, with the class as a whole participating in the critique of each student poem to be workshopped. All students have poems workshopped and participate actively in each critique, both in class discussion and sometimes written critique.
5. Effective, expressive writing is taught to the General Education students in the class through effective revision and editing. The teacher and the whole-class workshops serve as mentors for the student's revising and editing process, but, also, smaller peer editing groups are used for both shorter written exercises and poem revision. Sometimes for the workshop discussion, rotating groups of discussion leaders take more responsibility, writing in-depth critiques and leading workshop discussions.

Figure 2. Course goals for the ENG 203 Creative Writing – Poetry course at Missouri State University.

The ENG 203 goals start off with that it is a "General Education course, emphasizing that it is geared toward instilling skills, concepts, and experiences that should be of interest to

all educated persons, regardless of what careers they pursue.” The goals state that students *will study empathy-ology, will complete exercises designed to enhance poetry writing skills with a high priority on creativity, will learn the theory, technique, and terminology of poetry writing and gain practical experience in the form, will create a creative writing community of professional respect and practical mentoring, and will learn effective revision and editing.* The goals, while still in a list format, are descriptive, and let the teacher and student know exactly what to expect. While the final “practical experience” is a portfolio of poems that are assessed for a final grade, the grading of these poems—in terms of quality--are subjective, and it is left up to the teacher as to how to grade for participation and assignments. Final Portfolio requirements for both ENG 110 and ENG 203 can be seen in Appendix A, and the requirements hold both the student and the teacher to specific standards.

As seen above, composition and creative writing courses have standards. However, *standard* is a word that can have a negative connotation. Sullivan says creativity is ignored in the field of composition because of standards (6), and perhaps this is because creativity is not easy to assess. Indeed, the ENG 110 standards do not use the word *creativity* anywhere in the list of standards. Writing proficiency and standards in schools mainly seem to focus on critical thinking (Sullivan 16), and “a focus on creativity might loosen us from the stranglehold of standardized testing” (Sullivan 11), though standardized tests applies more to the public-school system than to the college system.

Critical thinking is a valid skill to learn; creativity and creation are just as important as critical thinking. Hesse concurs and says writing encapsulated in standards is narrow (43) and schools can kill creativity when they focus too much on critical

thinking and standards. (Hesse 38-39). Light gives a reason why creative writing might not be seen as useful in composition: some academic conceptions of creative writing is that it is “self-indulgent” and not “serious” (260), and it is also something not adequately assessed (260). Ostrom asks the same questions about exactly how to assess and evaluate creative writing (xx).

The difficulty in assessing creative writing is that it is subjective as to how well the student seems to accomplish the course goals, and it is left up to the specific teacher to decide how to best analyze a student’s writing as according to the list of course goals and assessments. While assessing both creative writing and composition is subjective, in ENG 203, a creative writing teacher assesses poetry in terms of quality when a writing portfolio is turned in at the end of the semester, which is not all too different from the way an ENG 110 teacher assesses writing (when a student turns in a writing portfolio at the end of the semester). Participation is assessed in terms of class discussion and participation during peer review and workshop; assignments such as blogs and writing journals are assessed according to what the teacher is looking for (e.g., in a summary assignment, the teacher is looking for a concise summary of an article). The workshop is the foundation of both the composition and the creative writing course.

The Workshop: Fundamentals and Standards

In *Keywords in Creative Writing*, Wendy Bishop and David Starkey define the creative writing workshop as having a certain structure. This structure comes from the University of Iowa’s Creative Writing program, which was established in the 1930s, and “the hegemony of the workshop model was quickly established, its naturalness as the

dominant form of pedagogy becoming a matter of common sense” (197). The typical structure of the creative writing workshop is as follows:

Over time, several shared qualities have emerged in most American creative writing workshops. Typically, the student whose work is under discussion will pass his story, play, poem, or essay out the class period before it is to be workshopped (the noun has long since also become a verb). The other students read and comment on the draft at home, then the piece is discussed in class. In order to avoid sessions that amount to nothing more than an extended self-defense of the work, the author is normally asked not to speak while discussion of his manuscript is in progress. After the workshop, students return their marked copies to further guide the writer’s revisions. (Bishop and Starkey 197-198).

When it comes to the research of theories behind the creative writing workshop model, the theories seem limited. Creative writers, as aforementioned, seem to want to stay atheoretical, and/or want to eschew theory altogether. However, a quote from Francois Camoin in Bishop and Starkey’s *Keywords for Creative Writing*, shows that theory abounds in creative writing whether creative writers think so or not: “we [creative writers] have our own stock of critical terms, familiar and non-threatening. Round and flat characters. Point of view. Narrative persona. Flashbacks. Showing versus telling. Because we do not name these discussions [of creative writing terminology] as theoretical does not excuse us (nor exempt our terms) from the realm of theory” (172). Bishop and Starkey continue to quote Camoin: “the theory (whether we want to call it that or not) is always there, though it’s often suppressed, disguised as craft, or common sense, or literary taste or *what-I-have-learned-in-twenty-years-of-being-a-writer*. But finally, it comes down to speaking about how texts mean, what they do, how they exist in the world, how they function” (172).

The workshop as the dominant form of creative writing pedagogy is a matter of common sense, because it connects the writer with the audience in a meaningful way.

Too, because the University of Iowa's creative writing program has produced distinguished graduates and college professors, the success of the workshop model has not been questioned. Therefore, there is little research that has been conducted regarding the workshop model. It is used in creative writing classes because it is "common sense". Bishop and Starkey point out "If the workshop personalizes literary criticism, it also implies that writing is a craft. Yet creative writing instructors tend to take this idea for granted and remain unaware of the significance it has for their pedagogy. Most importantly, the workshop model suggests that writing, like carpentry, *can be* both learned and taught" (198). Workshops are an important part of the writing pedagogy, for it is important for a writer to have his or her work critiqued by an audience.

Though workshopping has become widely embraced in creative writing classrooms, there are some concerns that have been raised. One negative perception of workshops, as quoted by Bishop and Starkey, is that they produce pieces of writing termed *McPoems* or *McStories*; i.e., generic, bland pieces of writing (198). Also, there is the problem of teachers guiding students on how to approach varying responses on their work from their peers: "If Jim raves about the characterization of the protagonist while Joan finds it absolutely spiritless, does the author entirely ignore one or the other respondent, or does she split the difference and try to accommodate both?" (Bishop and Starkey 199). The role of the teacher in the writing workshop can be a source of confusion: "Does she use her superior wisdom and experience to firmly guide the classroom give-and-take, thereby undercutting the authority of student comments, or does she adopt a less directive position and place herself in the role of fellow writer and 'co-learner,' possibly allowing patented bad advice to go unaddressed?" (Bishop and Starkey

199). What is considered “good writing” is also a cause for concern in regards to the workshop: “ideological assumptions about what constitutes ‘good writing’ are rarely questioned in the workshop because good writing is essentially whatever the instructor and the class say it is” (Bishop and Starkey 199)². Mayers does not see workshop as a useful benefit for those not interested in academic careers (226) (i.e., those going into teaching), and there are questions as to whether such things often stressed in “good” composition (e.g., grammar) are needed in a classroom that uses the writing workshop model (Bishop 46). At Missouri State University, it is required in composition courses for the student to write in and use the principles of Standard Written English, and while this is important, revision of writing and the editing of grammar and Standard Written English are two different concerns.

Standards give us the fundamental and structural model of the workshop and help to eliminate some of the concerns. There are multiple formats for a writing workshop in any kind of college classroom, but the most important factor in a workshop is structure. Structure, according to the Drew University article “Why Use Writing Workshops and How to Use Them Well”, means the teacher “tells the class what to do, then does it, then comments on it.” If a student does not know the structure of the workshop, then he or she will not know how to approach their peers’ writing. The teacher is the person who sets the standards for the workshop, whether in a creative writing course or a composition course. If a teacher has no standards for the workshop and does not model the type of comments and feedback the students should be giving each other (whether via a model workshop session or via a form and a rubric), and instead just tells students to *read the papers and comment on them*, the teachers are only borrowing the workshop a la carte,

without recognizing that standards and structure make a successful workshop and help the students learn how to not only read writing from their peers, but also comment on writing from their peers. Without incorporating standards and structure, the workshops become something different—peer response groups.

Anne DiPardo and Sarah Warshauer Freedman, in the article “Peer Response Groups in the Writing Classroom: Theoretic Foundations and New Directions”, mention that peer response groups “present an arena for intervening in the individual’s writing process, for working collectively to discover ideas, for underscoring the writer’s sense of audience, for interacting with supportive others at various points in the composing process, and even, perhaps, for developing the writer’s intuition” (123). Michael H. Graner, in his article “Revision Workshops: An Alternative to Peer Editing Groups” (peer editing sometimes being a synonym for peer response groups), gives some backstory as to the start of peer response groups (as well as a definition):

Peer editing developed in the late sixties when Moffett and Wagner (1968) proposed writing workshops in which small groups of students exchanged papers and offered suggestions for improvement. Murray (1968) suggested a similar approach, restructuring the writing class into small groups where writers could read, edit, criticize, and compliment each other’s writing. Elbow (1973) and Macrorie (1976) added their support by advocating small groups in which writers share efforts and seek responses as they work toward greater clarity. Although some minor differences exist among advocates, peer editing can be defined as the use of groups to read and critique each other’s writing to improve each participant’s work. (40)

Peer-response groups could be considered a form of collaborative learning, where students work together to solve a problem or complete a task. Kenneth Bruffee, in his landmark article “Collaborative Learning and the Conversation of Mankind,” says collaborative learning helps students to “think better” (640) and “converse well” (640).

Bruffee goes into further detail about the job of a teacher when using collaborative learning:

Our [teachers] task must involve engaging students in conversation among themselves at as many points in both the writing and the reading process as possible, and that we should contrive to ensure that students' conversation about what they read and write is similar in as many ways as possible to the way we would like them eventually to read and write. (642)

Though a main concern of teachers might be that this form of learning is “the blind leading the blind” (Bruffee 646). In other words, “How can student peers, who are not themselves members of the knowledge communities they hope to enter, help other students to enter those communities?” (Bruffee 646). Students must learn about how workshops and peer-response groups function, and the teacher must model a workshop or a peer-response group. The teacher must also be clear and explicit as to what he or she expects. Over time, it will be less like the “blind leading the blind.”

The workshop and the peer-response group could be seen as similar: both models use groups, though the size of the groups might differ: peer-response groups can sometimes be smaller in scope than workshops. Workshops tend to be with the entire class, while peer response groups consist of 3-4 students (depending on how the groups are broken up by the teacher). Both models involve the critique of students' writing from the students, the teacher, or in some cases, both the students and the teacher. Both models involve receiving those critiques and using those as guides to help with revision, and as Emily Stewart stresses in her article “No, We're Not Teaching Composition All Wrong”, peer workshops can accomplish many goals, one of them being revision.

Stewart also stresses the importance of modeling when it comes to teaching the various aspects of composition, one of them being peer review: “show students how to

do peer review. We workshop thesis statements. And I ask for honest feedback from students about my assignments and how I can refine them so they are clearer to understand. I ask students about which of my in-class assignments worked — and which didn't — so that I can improve my teaching.” Teachers need to model so students will know exactly what to expect. If a teacher does not model or is not aware of how to model, he or she might encounter frustrations in the classroom. Joseph Teller seems to exhibit those frustrations. In the article “Are We Teaching Composition All Wrong?” Teller laments about peer workshops and peer-response groups:

In peer workshops, while students get more confident in sharing feedback on each other's work, they generally ignore their classmates' suggestions. And more often than not, when they do revise based on peer feedback, it's often unhelpful and inexperienced advice — for example, telling a student that the paper has a clear thesis when it has no coherent argument at all.

Teller goes further and disparages revision:

But substantial revision doesn't happen in our courses. I have tried requiring students to write only three essays developed over several drafts, each of which I comment on without a grade. I have used peer workshops to help students respond to each other's writing. I have used portfolio systems and deferred-grading schemes. I have cajoled; I have encouraged; I have experimented with more rubrics than I can count. The invariable result? Weak drafts remain weak; stronger drafts get slightly stronger, but not by much.

Despite the frustrations Teller exhibits about revision, peer-response groups, and workshops, peer-response groups have support when it comes to composition teachers. Graner mentions a study conducted by Ford in 1973 comparing student feedback (peer response) to teacher feedback and found that the student feedback helped students' writing quality more (40). Graner also mentions a study conducted by Lagana in 1974 regarding peer response and found that the peer groups made greater gains in writing quality than a teacher evaluation group (40). Peer response and feedback helps students'

writing, and that much is clear. Even with these positives, composition teachers' concerns about peer response mirror the concerns of creative writing teachers who use the workshop model. First, there is a concern with composition teachers that students "lack the skill to make effective evaluations" (40)—this mirrors the concerns about how to deal with "bad advice" or what constitutes "good writing" in the workshop model. Second, there is a concern that "students may come to class unprepared or uncommitted" (40), which will essentially make the peer response session worthless (40). This mirrors the concerns about the role of the teacher in the workshop model—how does a teacher address this? The last concern is about teacher control: "allowing student to operate in peer groups requires teachers to give up a large measure of classroom control...it is virtually impossible for the teacher to guarantee that these discussions do not become small talk or social chit-chat" (41). This also mirrors the concerns about the role of the teacher in the workshop model. In Graner's study of the structure of the peer response groups he conducted, he found that "three-quarters of the time is given to reading and critiquing others' work, and one-quarter is spent receiving feedback on one's own work" (41). After reviewing the literature about peer response groups, Graner found that "peer editors may be gaining insights into the writing process as they discuss each other's work and struggle to reach consensus on the merits of an essay" (41). There is research out there about whether complete consensus is needed in a discourse community of writers; however, judging from Graner's observations of how the time in a peer response group is structured, one could conclude that structure in a peer response group is as important as structure in a creative writing workshop.

The workshop model standards do seem like common sense, but how the workshop is run depends on the classroom teacher. Harris further explains this by saying

since standardization is rarely imposed upon most creative writing and composition syllabi, the institutional demarcations of what, in fact, constitutes a creative writing workshop, as opposed to a composition classroom, are defined by territorial considerations. Although it is generally assumed that self-exploration is a staple of creative writing workshops, which “mine the unconscious”, writing of this sort also goes on in the composition classroom. (176)

The workshop, no matter what course it is in or what it is called, helps students to see their writing as an audience sees it. If a teacher is currently using a workshop model,

Ostrom says that a teacher could do with some reflection:

All of us could probably benefit from taking a hard look at precisely how “the workshop” functions in our classrooms. What are our guidelines, and what assumptions underlie them? How explicitly do we probe the criteria for assessing work-in-progress? What is our role in workshops and group work, and how productive has this role been? What other roles might we experiment with? What else should go on in a workshop besides the workshop? To what extent are we “playing the old tapes” of workshops we took? What do we know about group dynamics, and what should we know? Who gets silenced in our workshops and why? How often do we/should we revise our workshop methods? When are the conversations in our workshops most productive and why? What might be gained by dismantling the workshop model altogether and starting from scratch? (xix-xx)

Summary

The research seems to offer teachers of creative writing and composition with many answers. Perhaps none of those answers are as definitive as teachers would like for them to be. Creative writing strategies transfer over, easily, to composition courses; creative writing is also useful in the composition classroom. A composition teacher does not need to decide if creative writing is valuable before using it in his or her classroom. A composition teacher needs to use it in the classroom to see, for himself or herself, *why* it

is valuable. If a composition teacher is open to borrowing creative writing strategies, such as the use of the workshop, then a composition teacher should be open to including creative writing in the classroom.

CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY OF SURVEY

When I taught a seated section of ENG 203 in the Spring of 2017, students made offhanded remarks to me about how they used the revision strategies I taught to them in the creative writing workshop—such as asking the “so what?” question of their poems and who they are writing the poem for—in their other writing courses. This made me wonder if using creative writing revision strategies was true for most students taking ENG 203. To explore this question, I created an anonymous student survey because ENG 203 is a personal and expressivist course—students are writing and sharing poetry they wrote, poetry that is personal to them. Students giving me answers anonymously via a survey, in my view, would make them more apt to be honest and open with their answers. My interest was focused on student perception, rather than if creative writing revision strategies are actually effective. In other words, I wished to find out if students believed the strategies are effective in other classes, rather than conduct observational research and textual analysis of papers from their other courses. I felt self-reporting was the ideal method. This survey and project was approved by the Missouri State University IRB (February 26, 2018; approval #2018-415).

The survey presented in this thesis draws on the analysis of six questions presented to a total of 124 students enrolled in Creative Writing – Poetry (the official course code at Missouri State University being ENG 203). The prerequisite for ENG 203 is ENG 110 (First Year Composition). ENG 203 is the second largest creative writing course at Missouri State University, with six sections offered in the Spring of 2018. ENG 215 (the official course code for Creative Writing – Short Story), is the largest creative

writing course at Missouri State University, with ten sections offered in the Spring of 2018.

I chose to give the survey to the poetry course rather than the short story course for several reasons. First, I am familiar with the workings of the Creative Writing – Poetry course as both a student and a teacher. I took ENG 203 (Creative Writing – Poetry I), ENG 303 (Creative Writing – Poetry II), and ENG 503 (Advanced Writing – Poetry) as an undergraduate student; I took two sections of ENG 607 (Advanced Writing – Poetry) and one section of ENG 707 (Graduate Poetry Workshop) as a graduate student. As a teacher, in addition to teaching a section of ENG 110 in the Fall of 2016 and in the Spring of 2017, I taught an online section of ENG 203 in the Fall of 2016 as well as in the Spring of 2017. Second, poetry courses at Missouri State University are consistent in their use of the workshop model. In ENG 203, both a whole group workshop model and a small group workshop model is used, and I am uncertain if the workshop model is used in ENG 215 (or if it is, I am uncertain as to what capacity it is used). Finally, it is my personal experience that students are receptive and open to poetry writing. In one personal portfolio reflection from when I taught ENG 203 in the Spring of 2017, a student says that writing poetry helped him through a lot of personal problems he had been dealing with over the course of the semester. Diane Lockward, in the article “Poets on Teaching Poetry”, quotes Maria Gillian as saying this about poetry and students: students are “extremely responsive and open to poetry, particularly when they realize that their own experiences are important and have validity in the context of a poem” (65). Lockward also quotes Lois Harrod: “most of them [students] find poetry says things they have been trying to say” (65). Harrod and Marie Howe also agree that poetry’s interest

does not lie with the “academic” students: “the less academic students are often the most responsive to poetry” (65). Poetry, both reading it and writing it, has value.

The students in ENG 203 ranged in ages from 18 – 22, as well as ranged in stages of undergraduate education (either freshmen, sophomore, junior, or senior). ENG 203 is a general education course at Missouri State University, as well as one of the requirements for the Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degree in English – Creative Writing, so the reasons and differences for enrollment in this course are most definitely diverse. The mixture of students in different stages of undergraduate education as well as in different ages and even different majors—again, since ENG 203 is either a required or a general education course, depending on the students’ majors—is useful, because I wanted to be assured that not just creative writing students saw the value of creative writing and creative writing strategies.

After obtaining IRB approval, I sent an email to the ENG 203 teachers asking them for permission to give the survey to their students. In the Spring 2018 semester, Missouri State University offered four seated sections, and three online sections of ENG 203, so I sent emails to a total of seven teachers. I gained this permission by asking them to send me their class lists by a certain date. Once the teachers sent me their class lists, I sent their students an email via the Missouri State University email server. This email had a link to the survey, which was on the survey platform Qualtrics. The students’ emails were in the blind carbon copy section of the email, so the students would not know who was taking the survey at any given time. The ENG 203 teachers were included as recipients in the emails sent.

The six-question survey focused on revision strategies and how these revision strategies transferred from Creative Writing – Poetry to other writing courses the students might be taking in the Spring of 2018. Appendix B shows revision guidelines, as written by the head of the Creative Writing program at Missouri State University. The revision guidelines, such as choosing the strongest words and that “revision means re-seeing” are taught to all ENG 203 students.

The questions started off concrete and went toward the specific. The first two questions are concrete and ask the students how they are currently taking ENG 203, and how they took their other writing courses: seated (a synonym for on-site), blended (a combination of online and seated), or online. This set of questions is important because online workshops vary from seated workshops, but students do get to participate in the workshop in both the online and the seated versions of ENG 203. The workshop in both the seated sections and the online sections of ENG 203 involve submitting poems and receiving feedback from the students and the teacher. However, the grouping of the workshops are different. In the seated section of ENG 203, a teacher can use both the whole-group workshop model and the small group workshop model. Students can see the reactions to their poems in the seated course. In the online course, the student might not have the opportunity at all to see the teacher or the other students’ reactions to his/her work. The first set of questions is as follows:

1. How are you currently taking ENG 203?
 - Seated
 - Blended (seated combined with online learning)
 - Online
2. For any other writing courses you have taken, how did you take those courses?
 - Seated
 - Blended (seated combined with online learning)

- Online

The second set of questions is course-specific and involves what revision strategies the students are currently learning in Creative Writing – Poetry as well as what revision strategies the students used in past writing courses. The second set of questions is as follows:

3. What specific revision strategies have you learned in other writing courses? (e.g. color coding your essay, annotating—making notes—on a draft, cutting up your essay and rearranging paragraphs, reading your essay aloud, setting your essay aside and revisiting it later)? You can give examples of other revision strategies not listed here.
4. What specific revision strategies are you learning in ENG 203? (e.g., using oral feedback from your peers and instructor, using written feedback from your peers and instructor, going into more detail, showing and not telling via word choices, being mindful of your audience, answering the “so what?” question of a poem, not using clichés). You can give examples of other revision strategies not listed here.

The survey gives examples of Creative Writing - Poetry revision strategies, such as using oral feedback from your peers and instructor, using written feedback from peers and the instructor, going into more detail, showing and not telling via word choices, being mindful of audience, answering the “so what?” question of a poem, and not using clichés. The supplemental book to ENG 203, *Writing Poems*, specifically mentions these skills, goes over them in further detail, and provides examples, as in this example about clichés:

As we write our own poems, we might be tempted to resort to clichés—stale, familiar words, phrases, and metaphors. In fact, our first drafts may be loaded with them, as the most obvious and cliché expressions are often the first to rise...you can test for a cliché by asking yourself whether the word, phrase, or image you are using is particular or generic. If you’re writing about a rainbow, do you see a real rainbow with all its translucence, transience, and tenuousness? No rainbow looks exactly like another. (Boisseau et. al 7)

The survey also gives examples of composition revision strategies, such as color coding an essay, annotating—making notes—on a draft, cutting up an essay and rearranging paragraphs, reading the essay aloud, and setting the essay aside and revisiting it later. These strategies are taught to students in ENG 110 and are included in the First Year Composition course materials as PowerPoints and handouts. The reason for the specificity of revision strategies, as opposed to leaving the questions open-ended, is that students might know they are using revision strategies, but they might not know the specific name of the strategy.

In ENG 110, students learn how to revise via revision workshops. They learn specific strategies such as reading a paper aloud, color-coding an essay, and having their peers look over their work (via small peer review groups). In ENG 203, students read their work aloud, much like in ENG 110, though they share their work with the entire class via a whole group workshop. They learn how to focus specifically on word choice (via avoiding the use of clichés) and how the use of language is crucial in helping a reader to understand the poem (i.e., showing, and not telling, via word choices, where in ENG 110, students have to be specific and direct with what they are writing and, in some instances, tell, rather than show). They also learn that a line is different than a sentence in poetry writing, and how to revise and structure the line can change the entire meaning of the poem. I have taught both ENG 110 and ENG 203, so I have seen firsthand the differences in the revision strategies I taught to students.

The third set of questions has to do with the application of the Creative Writing - Poetry strategies to composition courses and how the students most like to receive feedback. The questions are as follows:

5. Are you using these revision strategies you learned in ENG 203 in your other courses? If so, why? If not, why not?
6. How do you most prefer feedback on your written work? Choose one:
 - Whole group feedback via peer review/workshop.
 - Small group feedback via peer review/workshop.
 - Electronic feedback (e.g., comments given via Blackboard).
 - Written feedback (e.g., Peer Review comments, Instructor comments)
 - Oral feedback (e.g., verbal Peer Review comments; verbal comments from your instructor)

Explain why you prefer this type of feedback.

The fifth question gauges students' perceptions of how well revision strategies transfer from one writing discipline (creative writing) to another writing discipline (composition).

The sixth, and final, question, allowed me to make a finer distinction: whether the students prefer the method of feedback learned in ENG 110 or in ENG 203. ENG 110 uses peer response groups (small groups), whereas ENG 203 primarily uses whole group feedback. This also allowed me to assess if the course modality affected their feedback preferences. ENG 110 relies primarily on written feedback, whereas ENG 203 relies primarily on oral feedback. In the analysis of my survey, I hope to find that ENG 203 students used the revision strategies they learned in ENG 203 in their other courses, whether they took ENG 203 on site or online.

CHAPTER THREE: RESULTS OF SURVEY

Out of the 124 students invited to take the survey, 20 students responded. Four teachers and six sections of ENG 203 agreed to participate. The results and analysis of the survey are broken down according to the sets of questions: questions about how students are taking ENG 203 and how they took other writing courses, questions about specific revision strategies learned in ENG 203 and in other writing courses, if the students are using revision strategies learned in ENG 203 in other courses, and what type of feedback students prefer (and why).

Results and Analysis of Survey Answers

ENG 203 and Other Writing Courses. Currently, as of Spring 2018, of the 20 students who took the survey, 13 reported they are taking ENG 203 as a seated course, and seven reported they are taking ENG 203 as an online course, which equals to 65% of the respondents taking the course as a seated course, and 35% of the respondents taking the course online. Given that only 20 students responded to the survey, this will skew the results and the percentages. Regarding other writing courses, 18 reported they took their other writing courses (such as ENG 110, etc.) as a seated course, and two reported they took their other writing courses as a blended course (mixture of seated and online learning). The significance of this question is that it allows me to compare answers between those who took ENG 203 seated and those who took ENG 203 online.

Specific Revision Strategies Students Learned to Use in ENG 203 and Other Writing Courses. Of the 20 students who took the survey, 17 chose to answer the questions about the specific writing strategies they learned to use in their other writing

courses, and 16 chose to answer the questions about the specific writing strategies they learned to use in ENG 203.

Revision Strategies Learned in Other Writing Courses. Specific revision strategies were presented in the question about what specific strategies students learned to use in their other writing courses, such as color-coding their essay, annotating their draft, cutting up their essay, reading their essay out loud, and setting their essay aside and finishing it later. Students were also encouraged to write down any other revision strategies they learned to use that were not listed on the survey.

The most popular strategies, according to the student responses, are as follows:

- Annotate drafts: eight students mentioned this strategy.
- Set essay aside and finish it later: six students mentioned this strategy.
- Re-read work: six students mentioned this strategy. This strategy was not listed in the survey I presented.
- Reading essay out loud: five students mentioned this strategy.

Other strategies students mentioned that they used are:

- Peer review/response/feedback (three students).
- Cutting up their essay (three students).
- Color-coding their essay (three students).
-

Several strategies, which I will call “outlier strategies”, were not listed in the survey I presented, and were unexpected answers. One student mentioned how he or she learned how to “write essays in chunks [as] opposed to all at one time”; another student mentioned how he or she learned to “read the essay backwards”, which is a proofreading strategy; another student mentioned that he or she learned “how to write paragraphs clearly and consistently”, and the final student mentioned he or she learned “how to construct a poem”. I feel it is also worth pointing out that in the mention of using the

“cutting up their essay strategy”, one student mentioned he or she learned the revision strategy of “cutting up my poem and rearranging it”.

The mention of poetry in answering the questions about what types of revision strategies the students learned in other writing courses is a curious finding. Poetry is not discussed in ENG 110, so this may indicate that the student is using strategies learned in ENG 110 and applying these strategies to poetry outside of class, or this may indicate that the student did not understand the question.

Revision Strategies Students Learned to Use in ENG 203. Specific revision strategies were presented in the question about what specific strategies students learned in ENG 203, such as using oral feedback from your peers and your instructor, going into more detail, showing and not telling via your word choices, being mindful of your audience, answering the “so what?” question of your poem, and not using clichés. Students were also encouraged to write down any other revision strategies they learned that were not listed in the survey. I divided the responses according to whether the student took the class as a seated course versus whether they took the class online. The reasoning behind this is to determine what the students learned in the online course versus in the seated course.

Seated Course. The seated ENG 203 course is taken on the Missouri State University campus. Some sections are structured a Master Class, where the teacher meets with the students to discuss poetry and writing strategies, and then students met with a workshop leader to go over their poems via whole group oral workshopping. Other sections are structured as to where the teacher and the workshop leader are one and the

same. Eight students gave their impressions as to what revision strategies they learned in the seated ENG 203 course:

- “Oral feedback from peers, going into more detail”
- “Currently, in ENG 203, all the students in my section are giving any oral feedback they are willing to share, however, that is the extent of our feedback. Although during our sessions, I often mark up copies of the speaker’s work and am tempted to give it to them after class if I feel it’s appropriate or if I’m confident enough.”
- “both peer and instructor feedback. poem is due about every two or three weeks. as a class we sit in a circle and everyone gives feedback on each persons poem.”
- “Oral feedback from peers and instructor, using imagery, writing notes around the poem, cutting up and rearranging”
- “I have learned to use oral feedback from my peers and instructor, going into more detail, showing and not telling via my word choice, being mindful of my audience, answering the so what question of my poem, and not using clichés [sp] all in my ENG 203 course.”
- “Using oral feedback from my peers and workshop leader and not using clichés.”
- “1) Listening to oral feedback of the workshop leader mostly, and sometimes listening to what the peer reviewers say. 2) Understatement works well for heavier topics, because it lets the readers arrive at the emotion themselves without seeming melodramatic. 3) Avoiding adverbs because they are usually fillers for verbs or adjectives that aren’t strong enough 4) Specificity”
- “oral feedback from classmates and professor, showing, not using clichés”
- “Less is more, more verbs less nouns”
- “Using oral feedback, paying attention to diction [word choice], minimalism”

Online Course. The online ENG 203 course is taken via the online platform

Blackboard. Six students gave their impressions as to what revision strategies they learned in the online ENG 203 course:

- “Peer feedback via Word document comments has been the most used revision strategy. This is helpful to me, especially in an online class, to be able to point out exactly where someone needs to change things. I think this is actually a really important skill to teach in an online course.”
- “Showing not telling, avoiding clichés”
- “I use feedback from my classmates as well as my friends to make revisions. I also read the poem aloud.”
- “Peer review, reading outloud, cutting out unnecessary words, word choice, punctuation choice, and not using clichés.”
- “Using more thoughtful word choices, trying not to using [sp] clichés.”

- “Reading work aloud, and comments from peers (via discussion board).”

The strategies unique to ENG 203 are the ones which mention clichés. Avoiding the use of clichés is important in poetry, because as a poetry writer, the writer wants to make sure he or she is delivering fresh and new information to the reader.

Analysis. In the analysis of the comments from students in the seated course versus comments from the students in the online course, I noticed students mentioned learning how to use feedback from both the students and the teacher/workshop leader in the seated course. In the online course, students said they learned to take the advice of their peers. The comments from the students in the online course made no note of if they learned to use teacher comments in the revision process.

Though instructor feedback is cited as being important to students’ online learning, and is considered important to teach to students, I cannot speculate as to the nature of the instructor feedback, or why the students did not mention anything about instructor feedback and revision in the online course, or if they trusted the feedback of the instructor. Rob Kelly, in the article “Creating Trust in Online Education”, quotes Nancy Coppola when she says the biggest factor in creating trust between the teacher and the students is to establish that trust immediately: “No matter how short or long the online course is going to be, the instructor needs to be there first and to provide constant, regular feedback” (par. 5) Kelly also quotes Coppola when she says that keeping an eye on the course is also important in establishing trust, especially when it comes to student comments: “Sometimes when you have someone with a strong presence come forward with a social emotional negative response, that student can shift the course. The instructor always has to be the leader—not dominate or be aggressive—but very clearly deal with

anything that can interfere with the cohesiveness of the group” (par. 9). The latter quote might apply to the online ENG 203 course, especially when it comes to feedback and student perception.

The online environment does shift the power dynamic. In a seated course, the teacher’s presence is hard to ignore; in an online course, the teacher becomes one among many readers. The teacher’s comments are given more weight in the classroom, especially if the teacher is using feedback as a teaching moment for the entire class. The implications of how to better implement the workshop model in an online writing course is worth further consideration and research, and how online teachers can make themselves more visible to students, so they are not just seen as one reader among the many readers in the course.

In the seated section, only one of the comments do not identify oral feedback as a revision strategy. In the online section, three of the comments identify that the students *read the poem aloud*, which is different from oral feedback. A seated section of ENG 203 allows students to receive oral feedback in a whole group workshop on a consistent basis. An online section of ENG 203 allows students to receive typed comments back from their peers in small group workshops (as my section of ENG 203 that I taught was structured), but with no opportunity for oral feedback. This is a significant difference in revision strategies, as oral feedback comes after the audience (teacher and whole group workshop) has read the students’ work, and reading the poem aloud shows the student how his or her poem sounds when read aloud, as he or she might not have an audience beyond just themselves.

Do Students Use ENG 203 Revision Strategies in Other Courses? In this survey, 17 students chose to answer if they used the revision strategies they learned in ENG 203 in their other courses. Most of the students answered *yes*. Eleven responses went into more detail as follows:

- “Yes, especially with reading aloud because this helps catch any mistakes.”
- “yes, to write papers for other courses”
- “Both. Everything builds and makes myself a better writer for any class. Obviously I can’t turn my ten page paper into a poem, but I can say only what is necessary by cutting out some of the extra fluff.”
- “Yes, because it helps me be a better writer.”
- “Yes I am, because I believe revision strategies can work for all writing.”
- “Yes. As mentioned in the first written response, I often use the same sort of revision strategies for all the classes I’m partaking in, unless such methods cannot be used (hardly ever).”
- “I do use these revision strategies in other courses, especially peer feedback because it is typically very raw and honest and will help you with revisions the most.”
- “Yes, because in my English 235 class, listening to peer’s feedback about how an essay sounds and its flow of logic often can point at the overall quality of the paper.”
- “I use detail focused revision focus on all my works.”
- “Yes, in most classes that involve writing.”
- “In my drawing class, yes, because it is of a similar nature.”

Six students answered *no*. The six responses went into more detail as follows:

- “No, it is not applicable to my other courses.”
- “I am not because I have not had the need to yet.”
- “no”
- “No, only due to the fact that no written work is required or assigned in my other courses. However, I do plan on using these strategies in skills in the future.”
- “I usually read my essays for other classes out loud to check for any mistakes, but I did that before this class. Other than that, I am taking mostly science courses so these specific strategies do not always apply.”
- “no because 203 is the only class I’m required to write in”

The *yes* responses show that the students feel like the strategies they learned are applicable to courses that require writing, with a few examples getting specific as to what

course the student was currently using the ENG 203 strategies in. The *no* responses were not *completely* negative: either the revision strategies were not applicable yet, or it was not applicable to the other courses for various reasons (the courses maybe did not require writing or ENG 203 is the only course that required writing). Whether the students answered *yes* or *no*, these answers show that students perceived revision strategies they learned to use in ENG 203 as being useful, even if the student could not use the strategies immediately.

Type of Feedback Preferred in Writing Courses and Why. Of the 20 students surveyed, 13 of the students preferred either written feedback from the instructor or their peers or oral feedback from the instructor or their peers. Four students preferred small group feedback via peer review/workshop, two students preferred whole group feedback via peer review/workshop, and only one student preferred electronic feedback (e.g., comments via Blackboard). The following sections go into more detail as to why the students preferred the type of feedback they chose; of the 20 students, four chose not to go into further detail.

Written Feedback. Seven students went into detail as to why they preferred written feedback. Written feedback can be taken separately from the small group feedback and whole group feedback because written feedback does not occur only in those scenarios.

- “I prefer written feedback so I can go back later and see exactly what needs to be changed.”
- “I like to be able to mull over each criticism. I feel if I can look back at previous critiques on things then I can use them to my advantage.”
- “I like reading the feedback so I can go back to it at times and see what I need to improve on.”
- “I work best with direct, written feedback from my peers and instructor.”
- “I prefer written feedback because I can see exactly what the suggestions are and where they need to go.”
- “so i dont [sp] forget what i was told”

- “I feel that oral feedback at times can be rushed and not consistent. I feel that written feedback gives the reviewer a chance to analyze the paper and then give feedback. It also makes it less personal which is an advantage to both because then feedback is more critical (in a good way) to improve the paper.”

Oral feedback is learned as a revision strategy in the seated section of ENG 203, and though this question was directed to both those who took ENG 203 as a seated course and online, this disjunction is interesting. Students in ENG 203 learn about using oral feedback, though they prefer written feedback. From the comments, this leads me to believe that for the students to fully apply the benefits of the workshop (one of them being the ability to receive immediate feedback from your peers), the students need a mixture of both oral and written feedback—oral feedback, so they can see how the audience reacted to their poem, and written feedback, so when they go back to revise their poems later, they will remember the oral feedback from the workshop.

Oral Feedback. Five students went into detail as to why they preferred oral feedback. As with written feedback, oral feedback can be taken separately from the small group feedback and whole group feedback because oral feedback does not occur only in those scenarios.

- “Personally, oral feedback is the best way for me to learn how my work has impacted the conscious of another person. Receiving their advice in person, allows me to see more of their emotions along that may have resulted from the piece along with key parts that they focused in on.”
- “I can ask them questions to fully understand their point/opinion on my work. I find it is more valuable to have a deeper understanding of someone’s feedback in order to implement it in my next revision.”
- “I prefer oral feedback from both the instructor and my peers because I can hear their comments and judge their body language to see what they may actually mean. I prefer feedback from both the instructor and my peers because I can get a sense of how normal readers would react to my poem and how someone with more literary experience would react.”
- “Those who speak often have good things to say.”
- “It feels more social and enjoyable. People tend to be more respectful in person.”

With oral feedback, students pointed out that they can get a sense of how their work has impacted others. Oral feedback is a primary strategy used in ENG 203, and the comments directly stating that, for example, “[oral feedback] allows me to see more of their [the teacher’s and the workshop group’s] emotions” and “I can get a sense of how normal readers would react to my poem” shows that this revision strategy is also important when a poet considers his or her audience. Oral feedback should not be ignored entirely, but as aforementioned, should be coupled with written feedback.

Small Group Feedback. Three students went into detail as to why they preferred small group feedback.

- “I like small group settings more and it seems more intentional.”
- “can get more thorough feedback”
- “It allows me to receive varying commentary in a smaller, and more secure environment.”

From these three comments, it is evident that these students believe small groups are more secure and that they can receive “intentional” and “varying commentary in a smaller, and more secure, environment”. ENG 110 relies primarily on peer response groups, though in ENG 203, the teacher has a choice of whether to use primarily whole group workshops, small peer response groups, or a mixture of the two. Writing is a personal act, and in both ENG 110 and in ENG 203, peer response groups with small group feedback can be beneficial with having student share their work with a few students, as opposed to the entire class. This could be used as a precursor to whole group workshops in ENG 203.

Whole Group Feedback. The two students who preferred whole group feedback did not give any detail as to why, and thus, analyzation was difficult.

Electronic Feedback. The one student who preferred electronic feedback further described why: “I actually would prefer a mixture of electronic (via email or Word documents) and written feedback. I do like comments over Blackboard but find if it is used improperly by a student or instructor, it can take forever to scroll through various replies. The Blackboard set-up is really infuriating and can really ruin a course for me if not [used] correctly.” Analyzation of this one comment is difficult, as this is the only comment related to preferring electronic feedback.

Summary

The survey revealed students did use the revision strategies they learned in ENG 203 in their other courses. If the students did not use the strategies, for the most part it was because they did not have the opportunity to do so yet. In ENG 203, students mentioned they preferred both oral and written feedback from the instructor and their peers in the seated course; in online courses, students were more apt to use feedback from their peers only. Small group and whole group feedback were not as preferred, even though overwhelmingly students said they preferred feedback from both their instructors and peers, depending on the course.

From the survey, I learned the strategies that hold the most promise for the composition classroom are the implementation of oral feedback in the form of a whole group workshop, as well as written feedback in conjunction with oral feedback. The implementation of this as a revision strategy in the composition classroom will be essential, along with the other revision strategies learned in ENG 203.

In ENG 203, students learn about how to show, and not tell, via their word choices. They learn to not use clichés, as these detract from their writing and in a sense drag the poem down. They learn to use oral feedback as one of the primary revision strategies. They learn that shaping the poem and where to break a line can change the entire meaning of the poem, and to focus on this during revision. As one student commented on about the usefulness of ENG 203 revision strategies: “Obviously I can’t turn my ten page paper into a poem, but I can say only what is necessary by cutting out some of the extra fluff” (which translates to clichés and answering the “so what”? question of a poem). Creative writing and creative writing revision strategies have applicability in the composition classroom and therefore, they should be taught. Using creative writing in the composition classroom is not just about implementing a workshop look-alike a la carte.

Many theorists have argued for crossover between creative writing and composition; however, there is still much concern about how to teach and respond to creative writing in the classroom. To help encourage composition teachers to use creative writing in their classrooms, I have created a sample lesson plan that addresses the biggest concerns teachers have: how to teach it, and how to assess it. Even though creative writing strategies are applicable to writing in other classes, the easiest way for students to learn them and see their value is through a creative writing assignment.

CHAPTER FOUR: UNIT PLAN FOR FIRST YEAR COMPOSITION

TEACHERS

As mentioned in the survey analysis, the survey revealed students used the revision strategies they learned in ENG 203 in their other courses. If the students did not use the strategies, it was because they did not have the opportunity to do so in their other courses. In ENG 203, students mentioned they preferred both oral and written feedback from the instructor and their peers in the seated course; in online courses, students were more apt to use feedback from their peers only. Small group and whole group feedback were not as preferred, even though overwhelmingly students said they preferred feedback from both their instructors and peers, depending on the course. The strategies that hold the most promise for the composition classroom are the implementation of oral feedback in the form of a whole group workshop, as well as written feedback in conjunction with oral feedback. The implementation of this as a revision strategy in the composition classroom will be essential, along with the other revision strategies learned in ENG 203.

This lesson will take creative writing strategies into account, as well as offer students either a chance to receive written or oral feedback from the instructor. Regarding feedback from their peers, they will have the chance to receive this from both small group and whole group feedback. This unit plan will have variations for both teachers of online courses or seated courses and is structured as according to the standards presented by the National Council of Teachers of English. The lesson has alternatives for those who might teach a First Year Composition course online.

Purpose of the unit: The overall purpose of the unit is to integrate creative writing strategies into a typical composition unit. The creative writing strategies to integrate

are those of oral feedback in the form of a whole group workshop, and written feedback in conjunction with the oral feedback, so students will have the benefit of receiving both. Students will also use various creative writing strategies, such as paying strict attention to diction (word choice), by not using clichés, and by paying attention to the line (stressing that in poetry, a line is different than a sentence).

Unit title: Research Poetry Projects

Key concepts: creative writing, composition, poetry, research

Subject area(s): First Year Composition

Desired outcomes: For students to use creative writing strategies and composition principles to compose a researched poetry project like the example provided in Claudia Rankine's *Citizen*.

Assessment types to be used:

- Informal: Project proposal, students turning in the project at various stages of the revision process to see if they are on track.
- Formal: The final researched poetry book, ten pages minimum, like the example of Claudia Rankine's *Citizen*.

- **Materials needed:** Computer lab; Claudia Rankine's *Citizen*, the Claudia Rankine interview; computer lab (if you do not have access to a computer lab, have students bring in their laptops or tablets to class for the working days), materials located in Appendix C .

Time allotment per day: The entire class period on either MWF or TR, depending on the course schedule. For example, at Missouri State University, MWF courses last for 50 minutes per class period, and TR courses last for 75 minutes per class period.

In an online course, this could be broken up into a module or two separate modules, depending on the course structure.

Number of days required to complete the unit: Anywhere from one month to two months, depending on the progress of the class. Lessons can either take up the whole class period or, if they go over the allotted time, carry over to the next class period. A teacher might consider making this the final project of the semester, as the final project of the semester involves research of some kind. The teacher can adjust for his or her class, depending on progress.

Background knowledge students should have: students should know, from previous lessons, that writing has a process of revision and specific forms and structures, depending on the style of writing, that writing in an academic setting requires research (no matter the form or structure of writing), and that writing is meant for an audience. Students should also be familiar with academic research and the school's library/library databases. Students do not have to have background knowledge of poetry for this lesson.

What is unique about the strategies you are using to teach this lesson? How does these reflect creative writing revision strategies? Remember, your focus should be on how to TEACH creative writing and how to RESPOND (using workshop strategies) in ways that are different from what a composition teacher might normally do.

Daily lesson plans for the unit:

Day 1: Start off with a background knowledge lesson. Students should be familiar at least with the concept of research papers (even if they have not written one yet). Have students do a 5-10 minute free-write about the following questions that follow about research papers. Have a whole group discussion about students' experiences with research papers: what do they think of when they think of the word *research*? What are their experiences with writing research papers? How is a research paper different from writing other kinds of papers? What kinds of topics did they write about?

For the next class, have students look over the structure of a research paper and the structure of a poem (materials located in Appendix C), and have them think about the following question before coming to the next class: what do they think of when they think of the word *poetry*?

Note: For an online course, it would help for the teacher to record a video and then upload it to YouTube. Link to the video on the online course platform. This video will go over the nature of the discussion questions.

An online course teacher can choose to either have the students post to the discussion board on the course platform or (if time allows), use a platform such as Google Hangouts to conduct a whole group discussion.

Day 2: Remind students of the discussion about research in the last class about research. Tell students that there is going to be another freewrite. Have students do a 5-10 minute free-write about the following questions about poetry: what do they think of when they think of the word *poetry*? What are their experiences with poems (reading/writing them)? Do they feel that a poem is different from a research paper?

Have a whole-group discussion about the answers to those questions. After this discussion, break the students up into small groups and have them compare the

structure of a research paper to the structure of a poem. Have the group decide on one student to be the note-taker for the group, and have the group appoint a person to be the spokesperson that will share their answers. (**Note:** A teacher can provide an example of a research paper and an example of a poem if he or she feels the students need explicit, exact examples, and the students can draw their answers from comparing the two examples).

Have each group share their answers, via the spokesperson the group appointed. Students should conclude that a poem and a research paper are similar in the following ways: *both are creative (acts of creation); both have a structure (paper has paragraphs, poem has stanzas); both have an introduction, body, and conclusion of sorts; both are written for an audience.* Some other conclusions students might draw: *in both, you must go through a writing process; both you put through a workshop or feedback; both might require some element of research.*

For the next class, have students go to <http://www.poets.org> and use either the “Poems” search function at <https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poems> or the “Poets” search function at <https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poets>. Have them choose one poem to print off and bring to class for a poetry reading.

Note: For an online course, it would help for the teacher to record a video and then upload it to YouTube. Link to the video on the online course platform. This video will go over the nature of the discussion questions.

An online course teacher can choose to either have the students post to the discussion board on the course platform or (if time allows), use a platform such as Google Hangouts to conduct a whole group discussion.

Day 3: Have the students move their desks in a circle. Start off the discussion by saying to truly understand the nature of poetry, a person must hear it read aloud. The teacher reads the poem he or she chose and talks about why he or she chose it. Then go around in a circle and have each student read aloud the poem he or she chose. Make sure to tell the students to specify the author and the title of the poem before they read it. Have students talk about why they chose the poem they wrote.

Key points to remember: if a student mentions or describes a poetic term, write this term on the board and say “*you just described an important poetic concept, the concept of...*” Some concepts that might come up in discussion:

- Diction (word choice) and clichés (if students don’t point clichés out, this is ESSENTIAL for them to know. A huge part of poetry is not using clichés).
- Structure and syntax. In poetry, a *line* differs greatly from a sentence. Also, a paragraph differs from a stanza.
- Obscurity vs. ambiguity: Being difficult in descriptions vs. having more than one interpretation of a poem.
- Showing, not telling. In poetry, a writer needs to tell. In directive research writing, at times a writer does need to tell and be very specific so the reader can understand.
- Subjects: poets can write about different subjects, though this is not just unique to poetry. Research writing has this as well.
- Figurative language: similes, metaphors, and nonsense language. Sometimes, a poem has words and a structure that makes little sense when read the first time.
- Tale, teller, and tone: Poems tell a story, and have a specific tone, though again, tone is not unique to just poetry. Research writing has a specific tone and is meant for a specific audience as well.
- Finding the poem: you find the poem by reading different types of poems. This was the purpose of this discussion, to read poetry aloud and hear how it sounds when read aloud.

Note: For an online course, it would help for the teacher to record a video and then upload it to YouTube. Link to the video on the online course platform. This video will go over the nature of the discussion questions.

An online course teacher should have the students upload an audio file of them reading the poem and discussing why they chose the poem. Then, the teacher can gather the poetic terms the students discussed and put them all into one document or post.

For the next class, read Claudia Rankine’s *Citizen*.

Day 4: The students, before this class, will have read (or at the least, skimmed Claudia Rankine’s Lyric Poetry book, titled *Citizen*).

Break the students up into small groups. Have the group decide on one student to be the note-taker for the group, and have the group appoint a person to be the spokesperson that will share their answers. Have them answer the following questions about this book of poetry: *Remember our discussion we had about structure of research paper and the structure of a poem. Do you believe it is structured like a traditional poem? Or do you feel it is structured more like a research paper? If neither, what kind of structure do you feel it has? Do you believe this poem required research? What kind of audience is this book meant for? How can you tell?* Have the spokesperson for each group share answers.

Have students look at the interview about how Claudia Rankine wrote *Citizen*, located at <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/dec/27/claudia-rankine-poet-citizen-american-lyric-feature> (either print it out or show it in class). Point out features about audience, who it is directed toward, and the type of research she did for the book and see the similarities between what the students pointed out and the article.

Note: For an online course, it would help for the teacher to record a video and then upload it to YouTube. Link to the video on the online course platform. This video will go over the nature of the discussion questions.

An online course teacher can choose to either have the students post to the discussion board on the course platform or (if time allows), use a platform such as Google Hangouts to conduct a whole group discussion.

Day 5: Point out that before starting in on any piece of writing, knowing what to write about is key. Have students create a list of topics they consider themselves an expert in, or things they have experienced in their lives (a la Rankine's *Citizen*). They should have no more than five or six topics. Share in small groups before sharing with the whole class. After this, discuss how students can convince someone of their knowledge or expertise in this topic—certain details, such as word choice and showing, not telling, sell the information presented, and this is what is needed in this research poetry project.

Write a proposal for the topic they want to write about for this poetic research project (assignment sheet located in Appendix C). Will be due one week from day assigned.

Note: For an online course, it would help for the teacher to record a video and then upload it to YouTube. Link to the video on the online course platform. This video will go over the nature of the research proposal assignment. Have them upload the assignment to Blackboard and then offer oral/written feedback, depending on the student's preference.

Day 6-7: Assign the research poetry project. Require that students do a Works Cited page in MLA format, like how Rankine cited her work in *Citizen*, and point out that the work does not have in-text citations, but sources must be used. It will also have a ten-page minimum, front and back, not counting the cover. Have the students split into small groups to create a rubric for this research poetry project. Ask the students to remember the discussions we had about research papers and poetry, and their similarities.

The rubric created by the small groups will be shared as a group, and then structured into a rubric. The wording may differ from class to class, and will at least have the following elements:

Structure: the poetry research project should be structured similar to Rankine's *Citizen*. It can be either one long poem, split into chapters, or separate poems, as long as it adheres to the page minimum and as long as it uses a legible 12 point font. There should be some logical sense of organization.

Research: Poems should show evidence of having research on the topic chosen and should be structured in a way that makes sense (point out that Rankine uses different ways of structuring her poems and remind students of the poems they chose to read aloud). Decide on the number of sources appropriate for this project. Point out that Rankine used 18 sources in her book.

Audience: Students should keep in mind their writing is for an audience. Rankine knew her book of poetry was for a poetry-reading audience, or those curious about poetry, and used pictures and images as well.

Grammar and form: Students should show evidence of using appropriate grammar and syntax, as per Standard Written English. Also remind students that a line is different from a sentence, and that a stanza is different from a paragraph.

Decide on an appropriate point total for this poetry research project.

Note: For an online course, it would help for the teacher to record a video and then upload it to YouTube. Link to the video on the online course platform. This video will go over the nature of the project. Break the students up into small groups via the online course platform and have them create the points of the rubric in a similar manner as the seated course. Then, make a discussion board to where the students can share this information with the whole group. From this, the teacher makes the rubric as described above.

Days 8-24: This is according to the structure of the course, whether it is MWF or TR.

Students will, on these days, have lessons and reminders about what we learned about poetry, the genre expectations of poetry (what does an audience expect), how to best use the form of poetry, and the overall structure of a book (as this is how the research poetry project will be presented). Remember to revisit the poetic terms along the way that students discovered in Day 3.

Have the proposal commented on by Day 8. Hand back the proposals at the beginning of class, and have the students share their proposal at first in small group workshops, then whole group workshop to get more ideas about how the students should approach their project.

Give the students in-class time to work on their poetry research project at various points throughout the project (a teacher may utilize a computer lab to be able to work on their research poetry project, or the teacher can allow the students to use their electronic devices to work on the poems).

As aforementioned, at various points along the way, have whole group lessons about genre expectations, research, how to incorporate research into a poetry project, how to structure poems and examples of poetic structure, how to put together a booklet of poetry, etc.

At various points along the way, students will bring copies of their work for both oral and written feedback from the class via whole group workshop. The whole group

workshop component is essential, as the point of poetry is to see how it resonates with an audience. An alternative is to have students show their project via a classroom projector (depending on the classroom setup), and the students can give oral and written feedback on the work in this manner.

A teacher can choose when to give these whole group workshops: three pages into the project; at the halfway point of the project, etc.. For an online course, a whole group workshop can be implemented using Google Hangouts; however, if this is not possible, or if time does not allow for this, then the same methods can be implemented in a small-group workshop format.

An example week for a MWF course could be as follows:

M: lesson and discussion about the genre expectations of poetry. Answer questions about the poetry project.

W: In-class working day/computer lab working day for the research poetry project.

F: Re-visit Claudia Rankine's *Citizen*, because I noticed students had questions and confusion about how to structure a book of poetry. Do a whole group workshop of what students have so far in the next class.

An example week for a TR course could be as follows:

T: lesson and discussion about the genre expectations of poetry. Answer questions about the poetry project. In-class working day for the remainder of the time.

R: Re-visit Claudia Rankine's *Citizen*, because I noticed students had questions and confusion about how to structure a book of poetry. Break students up into small groups so they can share what they have with their groups so far, and their concerns about the project.

Before the final project is due, either schedule a whole-group workshop day, where students can share their work and get feedback, or schedule a formal presentation assignment before students turn in their final project. An example of such work is in Appendix C.

Note: for an online course, the structure would most definitely vary, depending on the structure of the course. Students can be broken up into groups online, and large group discussions could be done in the student discussion area or via Google Hangouts. Oral feedback and written comments from the instructor could be uploaded and given to the students, and the teacher can give the students that option to give their feedback that way in small groups if they so wish. Lessons and materials could be uploaded to the online course, with the suggestion that the teacher uses visual/audio medium to present it (PowerPoint with narration, YouTube). An online course requires connection with the instructor and presenting lessons in this way will help the instructor to maintain that connection.

The questions teachers have about practical application of creative writing in the composition classroom, again, are not readily discussed because there is not unanimous agreement as to if creative writing even belongs in the composition classroom. Practical application of creative writing in the composition classroom gives teachers the opportunity to see why it is important, to see why it is valuable, and to incorporate it into already meticulous class standards. By giving a practical application of how to use creative writing and its specific strategies in the composition classroom, I hope that I have alleviated the worries of how to implement creative writing and its strategies in the composition classroom. Composition strategies, as aforementioned, are already valuable in creative writing courses. As composition strategies are important in the creative writing classroom, creative writing and creative writing strategies are important in the composition classroom.

NOTES

1. This, in a sense, contradicts Sullivan's earlier statement of everyone having the capacity to be creative, if he says creative writing is theorized as being *sophisticated*. Creativity being seen as *sophisticated* may lead a teacher or student to believe it is a more advanced form of writing. This could also lead to the teacher or student either embracing it or ignoring it altogether.
2. The standards established in the workshop *can* lead to the foundation of good writing. For example, if an assignment calls for a student to exhibit a particular skill, such as using metaphors in a poem, and the work does not include the use of that skill, then a teacher would have to try to objectively evaluate the writing in that regard. A teacher would also have to remember to model what he or she expects the students to do, so that the students might better display the need

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APPENDICES

Appendix A. Portfolio Checklists and Guidelines.

Portfolio Checklist (include this sheet in your portfolio)

Please use a two-pocket folder for your portfolio.

All the materials below marked with an **R** should be put in the right-side pocket, **L** in the left-side pocket. Place them in the portfolio in this order, please.

_____ **All changes have been highlighted (either by hand or via Microsoft Word)**

_____ **Reflective Introduction R**

_____ **P5 Final Revised Draft R**

Please clip these drafts together

_____ **P5 1st draft (Peer Review Draft) L**

_____ **P5 2nd draft (Draft with Instructor Comments) L**

Include these three projects in the portfolio (2nd Draft = the one with instructor comments):

_____ **P1 2nd draft L** _____ **P2 2nd draft L**

_____ **P1 revised draft R** _____ **P2 revised draft R**

_____ **P6 2nd draft L**

_____ **P6 revised draft R**

SafeAssign: I have been informed that 3 points will be deducted from my final grade for every assignment that I have not submitted to SafeAssign.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Consent for Research: I give the Composition Program at Missouri State University to use my portfolio for research purposes with the understanding that researchers will maintain my anonymity.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Appendix A.1. The Portfolio Checklist for the final assessed ENG 110 Portfolio at Missouri State University. It tells what is required, and the final portfolio (in the case of this class) is worth 50 points (as a teacher of this class, the total amount of points for this class is 100 points)

English 203: Final Portfolio Requirements **Due: Tuesday, May 16th**

Your Final Portfolio is worth 120 points and must include at least **eight poems** and a reflective essay. Bring your portfolio to Final Exam time on Tuesday, May 16th, from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Poems:

The eight poems must be comprised of:

- ✓ The six poems we have workshopped in class (remember, if you have not workshopped these poems; this will reflect in your final portfolio grade), revised. Use the critiques you received during the semester to help you make those revisions. Revised poems must still follow the original assignment guidelines, though your revised version may vary greatly from the original. For instance, you may want to try a new form for your formal poem. In that case, keep the subject matter and put it into a different form. Or you may change everything about a poem but the subject matter.
- ✓ Two brand new poems you have written on your own. These poems will show how much you have learned about poetry when it comes to creating first drafts. You can use prompts from the book or workshop assignments if you need help writing new poems (these new poems also may be based on any of the assignments). The only specific requirements for the new poems are that they cannot be centered and they must be at least sonnet-length. Aside from that, you should focus on creating the strongest first drafts you can.

The following are requirements for submitting the portfolio:

- A) The portfolio is due Tuesday, May 16th. The portfolio WILL NOT be accepted after May 16th—absolutely no exceptions.

- B) The poems must be submitted in a two-pocket folder, with the Reflective Essay in the left pocket, as well as the eight poems in the right pocket. If you want to include the drafts with my comments so I can see exactly what you revised, you may (but this is not a requirement).
- C) All poems must be titled and indicate the particular assignment for which they were written. For the new poems, simply indicate that they are new. Example:

**Poem Title
(for the Metaphor Assignment)**

- D) All poems must have undergone careful revision. Simply adding a comma or changing a title will not fulfill this requirement. Some of your poems will need more revision than others, but no poem should go completely unrevised. Consider workshop comments, and also think about the following questions:
- Have the **assignment requirements** of the poems been followed?
 - Is the poem's **dramatic situation** clear?
 - **Is something at stake in the poem?** Could someone ask "Why is this poem being written?" If so, add the "why" element to the poem.
 - What **clichés or typical phrases** does the poem contain, and how should you change them?
 - Is it **overwritten / underdeveloped**?
 - Is the **imagery** original? Do you need more concrete images to help show instead of tell?
 - How can you strengthen the **diction**?
 - How can **line breaks** be strengthened?
 - Does the **look** of the poem work with or against the **content**?
 - Are there **grammatical corrections** that need to be made? (If there are grammatical / punctuation errors, the poems will lose points. Punctuate your poems.)
 - Is the **title** helping, hurting, or doing nothing for the poem?

These are just a few things you should think about when revising. When revising, you may try highlighting or circling the strongest parts of the poem, discarding the rest, and writing it again. You may want to put the poem aside and write it without looking at the original.

- E) Skill is considered. A collection of strong poems will earn you a high grade, and if the poems aren't as skillfully executed, the grade will be lower. If you have shown improvement over the course of the semester, this will positively affect your grade, but it still does not automatically mean you will receive an A on the portfolio. If you ignore guidelines—whether it be on the entire portfolio or on particular poems—the grade will be lower.

I do not expect the poems to be perfect, but I do expect to see thoughtful revision. Consider why your subject is important and what you are attempting to communicate to your readers. Take your workshop critiques into consideration.

Finally, do not wait until the last minute to work on your portfolio. It will take time to write the new poems, and it also takes time to revise. Typically, that's when most of the hard work is done.

Due: Tuesday, May 16th, by Final Exam time, 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Rubric for Final Portfolio

*For each missing poem, one letter grade will be deducted.

An A portfolio will have the following characteristics:

- Poem and Portfolio Assignment Guidelines have been followed.
- Poems are all identified by assignment. Poems all have titles.

- Poems have been thoughtfully revised.
- Poems all have something at stake.
- Poems are free of clichés and sentimentality.
- Poems are clear (dramatic situation is understandable).
- Poems are free of and grammatical errors.
- Imagery, figurative language, and overall diction are evocative.
- Use of sound devices—such as alliteration, assonance, slant rhyme—contribute to the meaning of the poems.
- Attention has been paid to most of the following poetic elements: line / stanza lengths, sentence structure, white space, placement of words / lines on the page.

A B Portfolio will have most of the following characteristics:

- One poem did not meet Assignment Guidelines or Portfolio was not submitted in a single Word document.
- One or two poems were not identified or don't have titles.
- Most poems were thoughtfully revised, but one underwent basic revision.
- One or two poems did not have anything at stake.
- Only a few instances clichés or sentimentality.
- One or two poems were confusing.
- A few instances of grammatical errors (this includes missing punctuation / capitalization).
- Only few poems tell instead of show due to a lack of imagery and figurative language. Rare instances of diction that is labored and unnatural.
- Use of sound devices—such as alliteration, assonance, slant rhyme—contribute to the meaning of most of the poems.
- Most poems pay attention to sound, rhythm, line / stanza lengths, sentence structure, white space, placement of words / lines on the page.

A C Portfolio will have most of the following characteristics:

- Two poems did not meet Assignment Guidelines.
- Three or four poems were not identified or don't have titles.
- Most poems were thoughtfully revised, but two or three underwent basic revision.
- Three or four poems did not have anything at stake.
- Several instances clichés or sentimentality.
- Several poems were confusing.
- Several grammatical errors (this includes missing punctuation / capitalization).
- Several tell instead of show because images and figurative language were rarely used, or they were used in a way that did not add to the poems.
- Use of sound devices—such as alliteration, assonance, slant rhyme—were underused, overused, or did not contribute to the meaning of several poems.
- The form does not work well with the subject matter in a few poems due to inattention to line and stanza lengths, sentence structure, white space, placement of words / lines on the page.

A D Portfolio will have most of the following characteristics:

- Three poems did not meet Assignment Guidelines.
- Poems were not identified and rarely contained titles.
- Majority of the poems have undergone the minimal amount of revision.
- Majority of the poems have nothing at stake.
- Almost every poem contains clichés or sentimentality.
- Almost every poem is confusing.
- Poems are difficult to understand at times due to grammatical errors (this includes missing punctuation / capitalization). Words are misused or unclear.

- Majority of the poems do not use imagery or figurative language—it is rare to see a poem show instead of tell.
- There is consistently confusing or inappropriate use of sound devices.
- No attention has been paid to line and stanza lengths, sentence structure, white space. Poems may be centered or used a non-standard font ("fancy" font)

An F Portfolio will have the following characteristics:

- Four or more poems did not meet Assignment Guidelines.
- Poems have undergone the minimal amount of revision, if any.
- Poems have clearly been written / revised right before Portfolio was submitted.
- None of the poems have anything at stake. Readers are provided with nothing to care or think about.
- Every poem contains clichés or sentimentality.
- Every poem is confusing.
- Poems are almost impossible to understand due to grammatical errors (this includes missing punctuation / capitalization). Words are misused and unclear.
- Poems make no use of imagery or figurative language—every poem tells instead of shows.
- Sound devices are inappropriate or confusing.
- Form of the poem is not appropriate to the subject.

OR

- Portfolio was not submitted by the due date and a zero was given for the Final Portfolio grade.

Appendix A.2. The Portfolio Requirements for the final assessed ENG 203 Portfolio at Missouri State University. It tells what is required, and the final portfolio (in the case of this class) is worth 120 points (as a teacher of this class, the total amount of points for this class is 400 points)

Appendix B: ENG 203 Revision Guidelines.

REVISION GUIDELINES

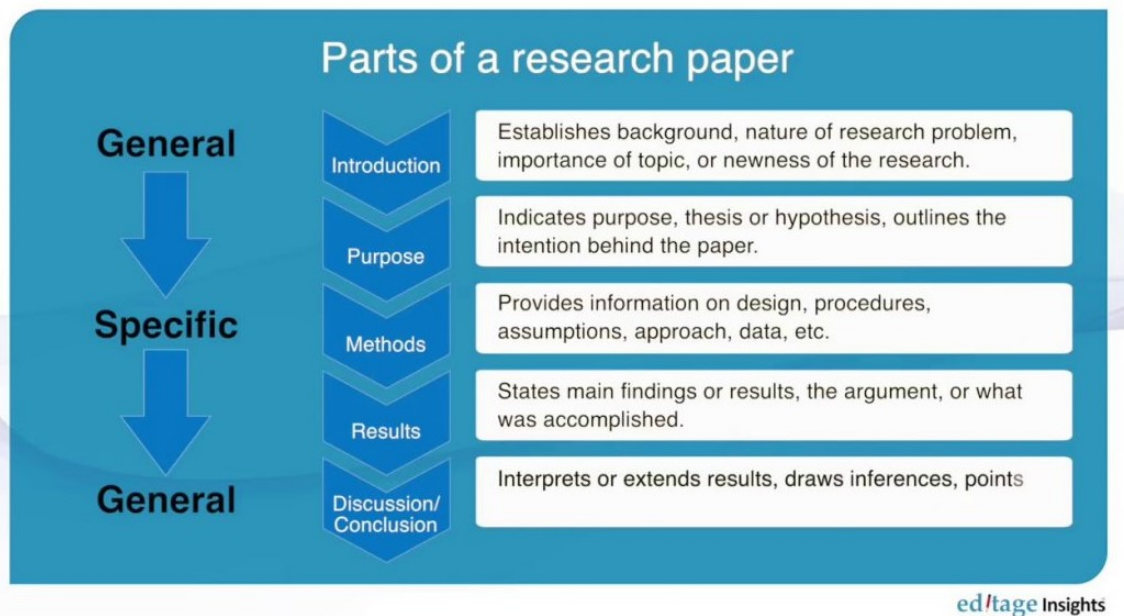
- What could be left out without changing or losing meaning? Are you repeating the same ideas without moving the poem forward?
- What's missing? Try to read the poem as an outsider. What places might be confusing? What might the reader need to know that isn't included in the poem?
- Look for abstract words. Are there images you could use to replace those abstractions?
- Look for broad generalizations. How much time are you covering in the poem? If you are covering too much time, you often end up generalizing. Try to cover a smaller chunk of time in more detail.
- Look at line breaks, stanza breaks. Have you broken your lines on "live" words? Are your lines enjambed, end-stopped? Can you play with them to make the poem move faster or slower down the page? How about line length? Are long or short lines appropriate for this particular poem?
- Are you stuck? Consider starting from scratch, rewriting the poem without even looking at the original. Remember, revision means re-seeing. Often drastic cuts and changes have to be made in early drafts.
- Focus on word choice. Have you chosen the clearest, sharpest words? Can you substitute more connotative words to help shape the emotion of your poem a bit more clearly? Are there any key words or phrases that might benefit from repetition?
- Look at your verb tenses. Have you used the most active form of the verb? Can you eliminate "ings" and passive constructions (she was chased by the dog)?
- Look at the overall direction of the poem. As a writer, are you surprised by what the poem reveals, or have you made up your mind too early? Remember, writing involves the process of discovering something new. Does your poem reflect how you really feel, or have you held yourself back emotionally? Don't be afraid to take chances.
- Is the essential core of meaning clear? Have you started the poem too early? Too late? Have you established a clear context for the poem in your opening lines, grounded the poem in place and time? How about the ending? Have you written beyond the ending? Or have you stopped the poem too soon? Have you summarized the poem at the end, or have you ended on an image that will allow

the reader to decide for him or herself what your poem is about?

- Is your title helping set a context for the poem? Does it help to establish tone, attitude, toward the subject of the poem?

- Think you're done? Play around with the poem some more. Don't fall in love with your poems too quickly. Or, if you do, get over it quickly. After the initial inspiration comes the hard part – revision. In poetry, no change is too small. Through revision you can make a bad poem good, a good poem great.

Appendix C. Materials for Unit Plan.



Appendix C.1. The parts of a research paper infographic, from <http://www.pngdown.com/discussion-and-conclusion-in-research-paper/structure-of-a-research-paper-youtube-discussion-and-conclusion-in-maxresde/>. Showing the research paper as a visual process will help students see how it is structured.

Structure of Poetry	
Structure	Definition
Stanza	A stanza is a group of lines in a poem. It is often called a "verse".
Rhyme	Rhyme is a pattern of words that contain similar sounds.
Meter	Meter is the rhythmic structure of a poem. Sometimes you can feel the meter/rhythm by tapping for each syllable.
Line Break	A line break is where a line of poetry ends. It causes the reader to pause and will determine how the poem is read.
MENU	

Appendix C.2. The structure of poetry, from <https://www.slideshare.net/sharingiscaringepisd/structure-of-poetry>. Showing the poem as a visual process will help students see how it is structured and reading Claudia Rankine's *Citizen* will show a unique way and structure of poetry.

Research Poetry Project Proposal
Due _____.

The proposal for your research poetry project should describe the following: *your poetry topic, why you want to discuss this topic, how you wish to structure your project, and what sources you think you might use.*

Part A

Explain, in no more than half a page, what poetry topic you have decided on and how to wish to structure your project: as one long poem or multiple poems that cover your topic. Discuss why you are thinking of structuring your project in the manner you chose.

Part B

In no more than half a page, describe specifically the sources you think you might use for this project. Discuss why you think you might use these sources, and how they will add to your topic.

Appendix C.3. A sample research poetry project proposal assignment. The teacher can get as specific or as detailed as he or she would like.

Presentation

5 to 7 minutes

You will give a brief, approximately five to seven-minute presentation on your Research Poetry Project. Presentations will take place during _____. Presentation sign-up will occur during the week of _____. You may use any medium that best represents your project, including but not limited to PowerPoint, handouts, working from the board, a group activity, a video, or a discussion. Please keep all content classroom appropriate. Your presentation should answer the following questions about your project.

Presentation Criteria:

1. What is your research poetry project about?
2. How did you become interested in this topic?
3. What research did you use to help you with this project?
4. How did you use this research?
5. What is your audience for this poetry project? Who were you directing this towards?
6. Give a brief excerpt from your project.

Presentation Points: ____ *total*

Presentations will be graded on a ____-point scale, in which each point corresponds to a letter grade as detailed below. Missed presentations will receive zero points.

POINTS	LETTER GRADE	CRITERIA
—	A	Presentation surpasses the minimum five minutes, the presenter answers all the above questions in thorough detail, and the presenter uses a creative, detailed, and informational medium or mediums in the presentation.
—	B	Presentation meets the minimum five minutes, the presenter answers the above questions with some detail, and the presenter uses an informational medium or mediums.
—	C	Presentation meets the minimum five minutes, the presenter mentions all the above questions but does not provide detailed answers, and the presenter uses an adequate medium.
—	D	Presentation is under the five minutes, the presenter answers only some of the above questions, and the presenter uses no medium or an extremely vague one.
—	F	Presentation is well under five minutes, the presenter provides answers to few or none of the above questions, and the presenter uses no medium in addition to their oral presentation.

Appendix C.4. A sample presentation rubric for a research poetry project that a teacher could use in lieu of a whole group workshop. Blanks indicate that the teacher can choose the point total, the dates of sign-ups, and the dates of presentation.