

# Teaching creative writing in highschool assignment

Literature



The earliest occurrence of creative writing courses emerged from a Harvard imposition class as an “ educational experiment” (Hake, 160). The purpose Of the experiment was primarily used to “ restore literary and education value to the teaching of rhetoric” (160). It was not until Norman Forester, a former Harvard student and found of the University of Sow’s Writer Workshop, “ institutionalized the study of writing as a separate enterprise” (160). Forester was able to combine the study of literature with the practice of literature.

For many years, the model of his program was the center focus for creative writing, which flourished across all English departments in the Universities. Many of the participants in the creative writing programs were veterans’ returning from duty, which was mostly “ funded by the G. L. Bill” (Hake, 160). As time passed, even after the Second World War, creative writing classes spanned across all English departments, recruiting newer and newer writers. Even writers during the time were quitting their jobs, like journalism, in order to teach the creative writing courses.

The objective of the creative writing courses was not designed to provide students with a “ venue in which they could produce their own literary texts” (158). The courses were instead designed to provide students with a “ fuller and deeper understanding of literature by approaching it from the inside” (158). Unfortunately, that is not exactly how the courses appealed the future writers. Many students, even in the present day, enroll in creative writing classes to fulfill their dreams of writing a best-selling novel, short story, poem, or other forms through creativity.

This is partly because of the way the courses are “ packaged” for the students. The students recognize that a teacher is a published writer, mostly, and enroll into a creative writing class in order to learn and produce a piece of literature that will be sitting on the top shelf of a bookstall at the front door of a Barnes & Noble. Hopefully in the present time, most creative writing programs and teachers are not presenting students with the belief that they will produce a best- selling piece of literature. It seems as though the idea that you cannot teach creativity is beginning to be understood.

Many peers suggest that creativity is something that you are born with. You either have the talent or you do not. What can be taught though, are the tools to access the creativity and develop s a successful writer in other areas through the creative writing programs. Teachers should have the approach of teaching students the tools to access their creativity while developing their critical and analytical skills. As Steven Bauer posits in his scholarly journal, ‘ the whole world needs to stop valuing product over process” (Bauer, 293).

We live in a time now that focuses much more on the processes and developments as an individual, rather than the finished products an individual produces. We need not to be more concerned about the goals of an individual. We should be more focused of how an individual reaches their goals. This becomes an important issue for those who teach creative writing courses. By instilling this type of idea into students, the students may be able to develop and benefit far beyond the enjoyment of producing a best-selling piece of literature.

As Steven Bauer points out, students would “ learn to read better, with more of an awareness of what it takes to write well consistently, and learn to write better too” (293). Of course, the issue lies in the hands of the teachers and English departments to instill this idea into the students. So where does the English department and teachers Of creative writing courses egg to implement this idea? It would be difficult to attempt to start instilling the idea at the higher levels of education institutions-junior colleges, universities, and graduate programs.

These students have already gone through the years of rigorous education and have a more developed mentality and brain that it would be extremely difficult to try and reshape their thinking and understanding. Implementing these ideas and creative writing courses into junior high schools or high schools though, the students are still in their prime of brain development, which would make them perfect candidates to start with. Their brains are still young; making them easily accessible for critical development, while still maintains their self-awareness and individuality.

A study experiment was conducted at the Sun Hat-seen University in China as a “ part of the reform in the teaching of English” (Dad, 546) as a second language to their students. The course was designed to incorporate the “ methods developed in western creative writing programs such as participation in workshops with a focus on using English as a second language” (546). The creative writing workshops became the prominent figure in the experiment that benefited the students most. For one, the students were able to learn to think critically and write critically.

They were able to learn the “ power of words” (555) by reading other students work and revising their own. Through creative writing workshops, students were able to “ show” their stories rather than “ telling’ them. It gave the students he freedom and opportunity to “ write what they wanted to writ?’, which “ change[De] the way they [felt] about writing” (555). More importantly, the students in the workshops were able to explore their own lives through writing. They were allowed to write stories that may have not been written before the workshop experiment.

Because of this, the students “ learned a lot about themselves and those around them” (555). It allowed them to reflect upon themselves and their lives, opening themselves up to others and developing their confidence as writers and individuals. The experience developed the students’ ability to recognize others as individuals with different backgrounds and acknowledge them as equal beings. Now it may seem a little farfetched to compare junior high and high school students in the United States to college students in China learning English as a second language, but they are indeed similar.

They college students attending Sun Hat-seen University are/were learning a completely new form of language. They were being exposed to a fresh idea, being unfamiliar with any other teachings of English as a second language. Unlike most students attending Universities where English is their native language, they have not been exposed to the vast amounts of the English language and structures of teaching. University students that speak English as their native language have the minds that have already been shaped by the years of education with literature theories and specific writing standards.

But at the junior high and high school levels of education, the students have not been exposed as nearly as much. These students still possess the developing minds that are easily influenced and developmental. The students of lower-level educational institutions are potentially subjected to the most beneficial outcomes that creative writing programs may offer if they are placed into their schools. This is mainly due to the creative writing environment that is used, which is the use of the “workshop.” The writers workshop is a place where students who dream to be published writers, love to write for the sake of writing or are intrigued by the idea of writing creatively, may come together in a “private space” in which they may call their “home” (Hake, 180). The students will experience and commit to “sustained practice in writing [and] exhaustive reading in the genres and canons” (181). By exposing the students to literature from many genres and canons, it creates room for multiple fields of English to enter into the workshop environment. This includes multicultural, feminist, Romantic, and other types of literature.

It gives the students the chance to excel in all fields of English, developing knowledge over the broader umbrella of English. This is, in part, due to the actual writing aspect of the workshop. Bombarding students with extensive reading can only do so much for them to understand literature and writing. By getting the students to write as well, they are learning first-hand about the literature they are reading. By adding the creative writing aspect to it, the students are able to construct their own narratives by picking and choosing from the varieties of literature they are exposed to.

A student may find that Virginia Woolf's stream of consciousness technique is something that they would like to recreate. By reading literature by Virginia Woolf, it gives the student a better understanding of her writing and how to write using her style, and requires the student to explore the historical backgrounds of her. The students, whether they consciously recognize it or not, are developing the tools to analyze literature and think and write critically through creative writing and the workshop. These tools also do not only remain within the creative writing workshops and programs.

It allows students to implement their knowledge, tools, and creativity through other fields of education. Terry Gifford, in his scholarly journal, demonstrates the benefits of creative writing in environmental studies. He uses "creative writing to raise environmental awareness through poetry, narrative and discursive writing, and short stories" (Gifford, 37). Gifford explains how the use of language in poetry "changes possible meanings by breaking the phrases and lines differently, spacing them differently on the page" (40). The calm sky waits contentedly Like a blanket on the bed. 2 The calm sky waits contentedly like a blanket on the bed. 3 The calm sky waits Contented as a blanket Over the bed of the valley. Not only does the poem change the possible meanings, but it also employs an emotional effect within the readers. The creative form can make the readers connect to the poem and the content on a personal level, instead of the generic form of facts. With the use of creativity, it may make an individual feel more inclined to help with the environmental issues.

The poem also demonstrates the use of creative writing within other departments of education and how students may be able to explore their <https://assignbuster.com/teaching-creative-writing-in-highschool-assignment/>

creativity. It becomes evident that the students would only be able to succeed in works, like the one Gifford supplies, if creative writing programs and workshops were implemented into the lower level and maintained in the higher-level educational institutions. It would be ideal, as Nick Everett posits in his scholarly journal, “ in which creative writing enhances and augments English without, in any way, impeding or threatening traditional literary study/’ (Everett, 241).

By combining other departments with the English Department, students will benefit by retaining traditional critical thinking skills and theories. Even more so, “ practice combines most effectively with study when [students] aims are respected and encouraged at the same time as their connection and complementarities are being fully explored” (241 As long as he students are able to explore their own creativity through writing, they will be able to produce their best work, while embracing the traditional uses of analyzing and critical thinking.

By this point, the rest falls upon the approaches by the creative writing teachers and the assignments they distribute. Hartley Lowdown, a teacher of creative writing in high school, suggests a “ realistic approach of creative writing rather than a romantic” (Lowdown, 20) approach in his scholarly article. The difference between the two is recognizing that creativity in itself is “ nothing extraordinary’ and the jobs as searchers is “ something slightly more than encouraging students to express themselves” (Lowdown, 20).

There are thousands of writers who retain the “ talent” of creativity and it is not the job of the teacher to instill the idea that all will be rewarded with a



published text. However, the teacher is there to encourage the students to continue writing using their own experiences to draw from, while understanding the techniques of writing and reading. This is all done within the workshop that is constructed through a creative writing program. Lowdown approaches the workshop with a small group of students, usually about ten to fifteen in a room “ who have creative writing as a principal objective” (20).

This is not meant to exclude those students who wish to explore creative writing for the sake of exploring, but it does allow more time to be focused and specific, without having to teach the basics Of writing and grammar. Once a workshop is constructed to the standard number of students Lowdown finds adequate, he tends to focus on the use of the short story. He believes the form benefits the students most because it “ requires the writer to do something very definite in a limited amount of time and space” (22).

This requires and enables the students to think critically about the language they are using in order to develop a story within a certain amount of space. This process keeps the traditional aspect of literary study while exploring the creative aspects the student contains. The focus becomes more about the process of writing and less about the product that is being produced. Loading’s main objective with the workshops is to “ develop the inner resources of the individual: refining feelings and enlarge the sympathies, increase capacity for enjoyment, and broaden the ability for understanding’ (Lowdown, 24) within a student.

Of course, Hartley Lowdown is not the only teacher with this sort of objective. Charles Webb, a psychotherapist and a creative writing teacher, approaches the workshop from a “ psychological perspective” (Webb, 331). Webb, much like many other teachers, also believes that the talent of writing creative cannot be taught. Instead, Webb believes that the “ students can be taught to examine their worlds-inner and outer” (331). By doing so, he can help develop the students aspects of writing to “ see more clearly, record their observations more accurately, and therefore, [produce] more originality’ (331 ) through their works.

It is an approach that allows the students to develop their own style through their own beliefs and values. By demanding the approach, which is similar to a therapist, it helps students “ find his/her own vision, without correcting it, or moving it towards the teachers own vision” (332). If the students were guided correctly and sensitively, then it would contribute to their development and increase their writing skills. Whether the approach of a teacher is psychological, environmental, principled, or even spiritual, like the approach that Alan Davis uses in his creative writing courses, the objectives are the same.

The students are give the opportunity to make “ what’s invisible become visible” (Davis, 297) by exploring their own lives and writing about it creatively in their own styles. The students become more aware of themselves and the real world by participating in the creative writing programs. The programs do not only enhance the skills of a writer, but also enhance the writers’ Persephone. Through the creative writing workshops, students are required to share their stories with other classmates and read <https://assignbuster.com/teaching-creative-writing-in-highschool-assignment/>

their works of literature aloud to them. Immediately, the students are developing self-confidence by speaking in front of their peers.

We have all experienced the stage fright from standing in front of the class during speech class, but most of us are thankful that we took the opportunity to take that course. Public speaking alone enhances communication skills in the real world, which may be beneficial for those in business. The process of reading aloud to the students' peers also allows the reader and listeners to hear the language of creativity. It brings the work to a new life the reader hears in his or her own head. The creative writing workshops allow students to explore their emotions and share them with their peers as well.

Many times I have heard that writing, specifically creative writing is something that is only aimed inwardly. That means it is only intended for the creator of the literature. The workshop destroys that idea by requiring the students to share their personal stories. It enables the reader of the story to open his character up and allow the readers to benefit from his or her story. Perhaps the story or poem is about a child's abuse, by reading and recognizing the language and content, recipients of the story may feel inclined to help or stand up to their own fears.

By recognizing the countless numbers of approaches to teaching creative writing and the benefits the students receive by participating in the programs, fields of English and other departments begin to recognize the same accomplishments. The departments begin to combine with each other and realize that the bond between them is due to the creative writing programs that were instilled in lower level educational institutions. The

students are capable of developing the necessary skills to contribute to a creative writing course, while maintaining the traditional literary skills of reading and writing.