

Chapter 5

Rethinking Creative Writing Pedagogy in a Multilingual Composition Classroom: Creative Writing in Teaching Composition

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ABSTRACT

This chapter aims to redefine creative writing pedagogy in terms of a literacy practice to identify the role of creative writing in establishing community literacy in ESL classrooms and to determine the ways in which creative writing might be implemented in the ESL composition class with a view to fostering community literacy. The chapter defines the scope of the following concepts and defines the corresponding working terms in the chapter: community literacy, creative writing pedagogy, composition classroom, etc. The first part of the chapter provides the overview of the theoretical works of the researchers whose views and concepts serve as the foundation for the current research. The second part of the chapter identifies specific creative writing techniques to be utilized in the ESL classroom for establishing community literacy.

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INTRODUCTION

In her article on cultivating citizenship as a goal for writing instruction, Amy J. Wan (2011) refers to “a call to research and articulate new composition, a call to help our students compose often, compose well, and through these composings, become the citizen writers of our country, of our world, and the writers of our future” expressed in 2009 NCTE report “Writing in the 21st Century” (Yancey, p. 1). This call is as urgent today as it was at the time of the report publication because “production of the citizen remains an uncontroversial stronghold in the rhetoric surrounding educational objectives” (Wan, 2011, p. 28).

Creative writing pedagogy has always been something that most composition educators want and strive to use in FYW classes. This research resonates with the above-mentioned call as my goal is to explicate a view of creative writing pedagogy as a restorative literacy practice, which is fundamental to fostering rhetorically-grounded community literacy in the multilingual composition classroom. Moreover, this investigation presents a worthwhile response to the widely expressed call for a new pedagogy “for active citizenship, centered on learners as agents in their own knowledge processes, capable of contributing their own, as well as negotiating the differences between one community and the next” (Higgins, 2006, p. 7). I make emphasis on positioning this research in the multilingual composition classroom since college writing courses are essential for shaping our students as committed citizens. Indeed, as Wan (2011) points out that,

Because first-year composition and other institutional writing courses serve a preparatory function and are common elements of most general education curricula, they become positioned as integral to student success and achievement through attempts to transform students into literate and engaged citizens. The first-year writing classroom, the primary space for literacy distribution at the university level, often lies at the nexus of tensions between the higher education goals of vocational and citizenship training. (43)

While this scholarship situates creative writing pedagogy as a complex concept, with creative literacy as the central element, this work forwards a view of creative writing pedagogy as a restorative literacy that can be crucial for establishing a community-based literacy in the composition classroom.

Very little research has examined how we can incorporate creative writing techniques in the everyday writing practices that our multilingual composition classrooms are engaged in, with a view to fostering community literacy, which constitutes a significant theoretical and pedagogical gap. My present research attempts to contribute to this underexplored area, while focusing on the primary

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