



Honors College Theses

4-27-2023

Teaching Creativity in Standards-Based Classrooms: The Impact of Personal Creative Writing to Teachers' Perceptions of Creativity in the Classroom

Katie Jones
Georgia Southern University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/honors-theses>



Part of the [Secondary Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Jones, Katie, "Teaching Creativity in Standards-Based Classrooms: The Impact of Personal Creative Writing to Teachers' Perceptions of Creativity in the Classroom" (2023). *Honors College Theses*. 866.
<https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/honors-theses/866>

This thesis (open access) is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons@Georgia Southern. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors College Theses by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons@Georgia Southern. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@georgiasouthern.edu.

Teaching Creativity in Standards-Based Classrooms: The Impact of Personal Creative Writing to Teachers' Perceptions of Creativity in the Classroom

An Honors Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Honors in
Secondary Education.

By
Katie Jones

Under the mentorship of *Dr. Nancy Remler*

ABSTRACT

Creative writing is rarely highlighted in public classrooms, yet it may be the key to development for both students and teachers. Due to restrictions such as time limitations, personal experience, pressures of testing, and more, teachers find creativity intimidating to teach. The Deep Center in Savannah, GA, a site of the National Writing Project, offers an intensive 10-day program for teachers that encompasses writing, creativity, and community. This qualitative case study utilizes the context of the Deep Center's Writing Project as a background to analyze participants' perceptions of creativity in their classrooms and their own personal engagement in creative writing. Individual interviews were conducted with five participants of the Deep Center and put through a thematic analysis. There are strong connections between creativity as a teacher skill and creative writing as a personal practice. Community, feedback, confidence, and challenges were some themes. This is a broad topic, and research needs to be done in the future on the subjects of creativity, creative writing, and teacher engagement to further understand its wide implications.

Thesis Mentor: _____
Dr. Nancy Remler

Honors Director: _____
Dr. Steven Engel

April 2023
Secondary Education
Honors College
Georgia Southern University

Acknowledgements

This project has been made possible by the partnership of the Georgia Southern Honors College and the College of Education. I would like to thank all those who offered their immense support in this project. I would like to thank my family and friends, without whom I would not have been able to even start this project. I would like to thank my mentor Dr. Nancy Remler, your constant support and input has shaped this project and helped to make me believe it was possible. I would also like to thank Dr. Meca Williams-Johnson, Dr. Taylor Norman, and Dr. Elizabeth Barrow for all of your various support in my research along the way. I would also like to thank the Deep Center and all those involved in the 2022 DWP. I expected to find a research project and ended up finding a community.

Introduction

In 1971, William J Flocker in the North American Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture (NACTA) wrote the following statement about teaching:

One of the amazing paradoxes is that a crisis in education exists at a time when the facilities of communicating are almost limitless... Yet, we as educators tend to ignore the fact that learning is done by the learner. We remain saddled with the idea that we teach by telling the student what we know, without sufficient concern for motivation or involvement... let us be creative in teaching learners how to learn (pp. 104-5).

Creativity is at the heart of teaching, and though creativity is rarely considered a focal point in classrooms, it may be the key to development for both students and teachers (Rinkevich, 2011). The quote above was written over 50 years ago, but the statements about teaching have only grown more relevant. Many teachers are reconsidering traditional ways of teaching at a time when teacher burnout and teacher shortages, especially in Georgia, are at a critical high (Owens, 2015; Stephens et al., 2015). The standards which dictate much of curricula and expectations in Georgia do not reflect an appropriate urgency for creativity despite its importance. The Citizens Review Committee in 2021 conducted a review of the ELA standards in Georgia and found that “the current standards do not foster creativity and autonomy” (Staff Reports, 2022). Standards are meant to reflect the needs of the community and of the students yet survey feedback from the review showed that this was not the case.

There is much literature pointing towards the importance of creativity. Rinkevich (2011) showed that creativity can be beneficial to both students and teachers to make learning more meaningful and long-lasting for students' growth. According to Fitzgerald et al. (2012), teachers are even encouraged to “place creativity at the heart of their students’ learning” (p. 58). Including creativity in the classroom is encouraged in some pre-service education as well as higher education and professional development programs for teachers (Fitzgerald et al., 2012; Rinkevich, 2011). Yet, teaching creativity can be intimidating to teachers who do not personally engage with creative-based subjects, such as poetry (Sigvardsson, 2020). Furthermore, whether or not teachers feel inclined to include creativity in their teaching is highly influenced by their own education and experience (Begatto, 2007). Whether because of the pressures of high stakes standardized tests, the limits of day-to-day time, classroom management needs, or even a personal experience with creativity, many teachers are not able to focus on creativity in their classrooms (Au & Gourd, 2013; Rinkevich, 2011).

The Writing Project serves as a ideal environment for teachers to analyze and engage in creativity in the same way as it can be encouraged in classrooms. Fitzgerald et al. (2012) explains, “students’ creative writing can be stimulated and supported through learning in a creative, multisensory context within a community of peers in which risk taking is encouraged and supported in a safe and supported environment” (p. 67). Furthermore, community is key in engaging students with writing (Blythe & Sweet, 2008). An innovative, multi-age, playful, and collaborative environment is another strong way to cultivate creativity within communities (Miller, 2015). The Deep Center’s Summer Writing Project offers an experience utilizing these strategies. The Deep Writing

Project (DWP) is a Georgia-based intensive writing workshop for teachers in its surrounding area and school systems that focuses on building writing and community between educators of all kinds. The National Writing Project is a nationwide initiative with a history of impacting participants in writing, teaching, and learning to broaden their understanding of creativity and personal writing in the classroom (Whitney, 2008). This will serve as the context for my research, as a way to discuss and engage with teachers who are interested in creativity as offered by the DWP. The themes discovered in this process included the importance of creativity as a skill for teachers, confidence in personal writing, confidence in teaching creativity, challenges to creativity, and finally key features of including creativity in the classroom.

Research Question

As a preservice teacher, I have often struggled with the concepts of creativity in the classroom. I found creativity intimidating to teach because I felt I did not have enough experience. The importance of creativity juxtaposed with the lack of inclusion in many classrooms offers an opportunity for research. The purpose of this study is to explore how personal writing and community affects teachers' perceptions and confidence in teaching creativity in the secondary school English classroom. This study examines teachers' perceptions of creativity in the classroom and how personal writing and community affect these perceptions. The following research questions led this investigation on creativity:

How does personal creative writing affect teachers' confidence and incentive to teach creativity as a skill in the secondary English classroom?

Sub questions:

- What are the processes involved in the Deep Center's 2022 Summer Writing Project?
- What are teachers' perceptions of creativity in the classroom after their experience at the Deep Writing Project?
- How could these processes be transferred to the classroom?

Literature Review

Teachers' Perceptions on Creativity

Diehl (2021) discusses how creativity is handled in the classroom: "although teachers do feel the need to include [creativity], creative learning is often moved to the backseat" (p. 30). This view of creativity as a non-essential part of the curriculum in an already fast-paced environment results in creativity being briefly, if ever, taught. Many teachers' perceptions on creativity in the classroom are based on their personal background with creativity, positive or negative. Beghatto (2007) conducted a study which showed that many teachers who experienced creativity-diminishing environments went on to transform and create more creative environments for others. Some teachers are uncomfortable with teaching creativity and creative subjects because of a personal lack of experience with creative texts (Sigvardson 2020). Many teachers do not prioritize creativity in the classroom due to personal or professional experiences with it. The devaluing of creativity contradicts with the value it can bring to the classroom and shows an even stronger opportunity to strive for change for future teachers and learners.

David et al. (2022) focused on pre-service teachers' development into writers, and how writing is often intrinsically linked to identity for writers, “PSTs need experiences with a broad range of writing that invites identity development as both writer and teacher of writing” (p. 43). Including a diverse range of voices and forms of identity helps teachers to develop a connection to writing. Sigvardsson (2020) concludes similarly that “teacher education should scaffold pre-service teachers’ aesthetic experiences if they are to develop into confident teachers of poetry” (p. 964). It is important for teachers to understand and utilize their own creativity as early as possible in order to positively contribute to their student’s creative development.

Creative training through professional development can increase creativity in the classroom. Fitzgerald et al. (2012) revealed the impact of creative professional development through a writing conference. This study found that “what gives coherence and vitality to an effective teacher training programme...is a wholehearted, open-minded willingness to plan for, model and nurture creativity within trainees’ professional learning” (p. 57). Teachers’ creativity is crucial in the classroom and could be encouraged through teacher's education including on the professional level.

Teachers Perceptions of Creative-based Activities and Standardized Testing

Poetry is a creative, abstract, and often complex type of literature. While poetry is just one genre, it is highly creative and abstract and therefore the subject which many teachers think of when it comes to teaching creativity, particularly in the English classroom. Diehl (2021) states that poetry “offers a wide array of skills, such as critical thinking and analytical skills, but also dialogic and creative skills. Poetry is of great value

in the English classroom, from both a literary and a language point of view” (p. 24). Yet, teachers' perceptions on the subject of poetry reveal much about the concerns of teaching creativity as a whole in the English classroom. Sigvardsson (2020) identifies that “previous research into teachers’ experiences of poetry teaching has identified factors such as a lack of experience of poetry as well as subject knowledge and that high-stakes testing poses challenges” (p. 954). Teachers are intimidated by teaching poetic analysis in the classroom because of the classroom pressures and personal experience.

Standardized testing adds an increased pressure to teachers attempting to teach creativity. Diehl (2021) adds that “due to the pressure on learning the anthology poems and studying unseen poetry, there tends to be little time for exploring language play through poetry writing” (p. 29). Furthermore, Au & Gourd (2013) show the negative impact of standardized testing to all students: “The current focus on testing continues to build upon this legacy by limiting curriculum and opportunity for academic achievement for all students, while simultaneously limiting effective and engaging practices” (18). At the pre-service level, teachers lack a focus on creative writing. There is a generation of teachers in America who were taught in the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) era of schooling which had a focus on specific skills and grades as a way of perceiving writing, rather than through creativity (David et al., 2022). After NCLB ended, there remained a focus on standardization and test scores which did not value the creative side of writing. This emphasis on testing and accountability diminished the perceived value of creativity in the classroom (Rinkevich, 2011; Au & Gourd, 2013). Creativity is important to the classroom but the focus on high-stakes testing and pressures from curriculum creates challenges for teachers and students to engage in creativity.

Teachers' Creativity as a Skill

Though it can be difficult to incorporate into the classroom, teachers have been shown to use creativity. Plucker (2022) shows the importance of teacher's creativity: "Teachers employ creative thinking to plan lessons, which can then be presented creatively to learners who utilize their creative abilities to... express what they have learned in a creative way that is meaningful to them" (p. 47). Teachers have the opportunity everyday to include creativity in their teaching. This creativity may be in connections to their identity, as students and teachers make meaningful connections between content and real life. Teaching using creativity is intrinsic to the act of learning. As Plucker (2022) discusses the attitudes of teachers towards creativity, "Teachers need to reflect on past experiences with creative thinking activities and acknowledge how those have affected their personal attitudes regarding creativity" (p. 57). Therefore, the chance to strengthen teacher creativity and reflect on teaching can create great opportunities for growth.

Creativity through Community in the Classroom

Literary scholars and educators have introduced various ways of teaching creative writing in subjects like poetry. Blythe & Sweet (2008) introduced a new method of teaching creative writing with the writing community as a model in a college context. Through their study, they found that their students struggled to respond to traditional methods of teaching creative writing. So they introduced the writing community which focused on "groups with common purposes and similar strivings... to develop a sense of its own identity and community outside the guide and mentor" (p. 318). This approach

used a small group with common goals to build relationships and grow without relying solely on the teacher. This shows how important a close community of accepting peers can be to developing strong writing skills in the classroom.

Methodology

Qualitative research is best utilized for open ended critical inquiry projects that embrace ideologies and evolving ideas (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Case studies offer a way to investigate a group or community to develop a deeper understanding of its values and purposes (Woodside, 2017). National Writing Project has long been making impact on teachers through writing (Whitney, 2008), and the summer institutes nurture writing communities that warrant examination through qualitative means. Therefore, I conducted a qualitative multiple case study of teachers in the context of the Deep Center's Summer Writing Project.

Deep Writing Project Context

The Deep Center is located in Savannah, GA, and represents the potential impact of personal creative writing for both teachers and students. The mission of the Deep Center is to “empower Savannah’s young people to thrive as learners, community leaders, and agents of change” using “creative writing, cultural production, and art” (Deep Center, 2019, para. 1). The Deep Center seeks to create meaningful change in the youth of Savannah through creativity. The nonprofit started in 2008 with free creative writing workshops and since has “supported more than 4,500 young people with our free writing, arts, and leadership programs” (Deep Center, 2019, para. 5). The Deep Center was awarded the National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award in 2015. The Deep

Center became a site of the National Writing project in 2021. The National Writing project began in 1974 at the University of Berkeley as a program for teachers that “made central the knowledge, leadership, and best practices of effective teachers, and that promoted the sharing of that knowledge with other teachers” (National Writing Project, n.d.). The National Writing Project has sites in all 50 states and internationally. The Deep Center is one of five sites operating in Georgia as of this study.

The Deep Center engages with teachers to enhance personal writing and community through the National Writing Project. A previous teacher and collaborator at Deep said of her experience with Deep, “We haven’t been censored about what we’ve been writing, and it has really been a good opportunity for us to have a voice and be heard about what we’re going through and what we’re feeling as teachers” (“Deep Center Writes: Teacher Power,” 2017, 0:38-0:56). The Deep Center offered the teacher participants a supportive environment to share in the writing process and give each other feedback. The participants engaged in the practice of personal writing, received constructive feedback, and enjoyed the open space to explore. Fellows (the DWP name for participants) of the 2022 Deep Writing Project met for 10 days spread over three weeks starting July 6, 2022 - July 21, 2022 from 9am-4pm. Times varied based on needs and activities, and the last two days of the program took place over Zoom due to a case of COVID-19.

Participants

The Deep Center serves a wide population of people in Chatham County. The fellows in the DWP are local teachers in the surrounding community who want to

improve their own writing and the teaching of writing and creativity. These participants engaged in interviews over Zoom questions about their experience with the DWP and creativity in the classroom. These were recorded with permission and analyzed for themes. Participants are coded with pseudonyms chosen by the participants.

This study includes a wide range of teacher experience levels from pre-service like myself to teachers with years of experience across content areas. Furthermore, the range of my study includes a variety of gender, race, and age of participants. These differences further strengthen the importance of creativity for teachers of all kinds. Examining the views from diverse and varied voices show how creativity is involved for all teachers, not just those in a single content area or grade level.

Table 1. PARTICIPANTS

Pseudonym	Subject	Grade Level	Experience	Pronouns
Jane	Writing workshops	Middle & High school	3 Years	she/her
Ruby	Creative writing & advocacy	Teachers and Community	8 Years	she/they
Phaelyn	Research	College and Graduate	10 Years	they/them
Blanch	French	Middle School (6-9th)	11 Years	she/her
Jaques	English	High School	28 Years	he/him

Data Collection

I participated in the DWP for its duration, and remained deeply involved in the research site prior, during, and following the DWP's conclusion. As a fellow of the writing project, I maintain some bias for the procedures because of my investment in and knowledge of the participants and the research site. Therefore, I rely heavily on recorded interviews and their transcripts for interpretation. My data collection is more valuable and in-depth because of my close understanding of the processes at DWP. My personal relationship and interaction with other educators allowed me to have more open and engaging conversations with the Deep fellows and thus richer interview data. I conducted five recorded interviews with participants which were coded and analyzed for themes. All thematic analyses were reviewed and confirmed by the thesis mentor. I also engaged in debriefing sessions to ensure reliability and validity of analyses.

Themes and Analysis

The following themes were determined through coding of transcripts and analysis of common ideas discussed for each of the five participant interviews. The most significant themes for this study were included. Themes were verified or contrasted to current literature for its validity. I personally knew each of the participants, which lended a sense of trust to the interviews and created a comfortable environment for discussion. I sent the interview questions to participants prior to the meeting. As a qualitative study, the questions shifted overtime to adapt to the flow of conversations with each participant.

The Importance of Creativity as a Skill for Teachers

Teachers are creative. As mentioned by Plucker (2022), teachers already utilize skills of creativity in their daily lives. Jane, in her lesson plans, believes that "there's

always room for creativity and choice.” In fact, teachers have to use creative skills routinely in order to create a growing environment for students. As Phaelyn adds, “A good teacher is someone who has to think creatively and also has to open space for creativity, not without challenge.” They believe that creativity is crucial for a teacher to engage with students in unique and challenging ways. This was reinforced by participant Blanch, who said, “The best teachers are the creative ones, trying to think outside the box and help students.” This uniqueness and outside-of-the-box thinking was encouraged by the Deep Writing Project. Throughout the workshop, each teacher had the chance to lead their own writing activity, participate in group discussions, and create their own projects and writings without restriction.

Confidence in Personal Writing

During the summer institute, all the participants had the opportunity to share their writing in both large and small group settings. The facilitator emphasized encouragement and feedback so that fellows would feel comfortable sharing what was often personal writings and thoughts. Feedback was one of the significant reasons the participants were able to gain confidence in their own writing. Phaelyn said that “When I’m sharing my work and then people give me feedback, whether it’s in the author’s circle or in small groups, hearing feedback helps me to feel empowered.” Blanch similarly adds, “it was just good to hear some like positive feedback. It felt really empowering to hear folks say ‘I liked what you did.’” Phaelyn said that a big takeaway from DWP for them was “having a greater confidence in sharing my creative work.” Positive feedback helped the participants to grow more confident in their personal writing.

Participants connected their feelings in personal creative writing to their students in the classroom. Blanch says: “I remember being their age and getting positive feedback or being encouraged.... it's really important to tell them those things.” Here she makes the connection between her experience and how it transfers to the classroom. The importance of feedback and sharing is a best practice already used in many classrooms, and this further shows how teachers can make connections between their teaching practice and personal writing. The community encouraged the growth of creative writing, supporting Blythe & Sweet (2008), and transferred to a meaningful connection between the DWP experience and a classroom environment. Creative writing and community in teachers personally can transfer to a greater connection to students’ experience.

Confidence in Teaching Creativity

Participants' confidence levels vary when it comes to teaching creativity to students. This section shows the confidence levels of teaching creativity as a skill to students, or in creative based activities, rather than engaging personally in creative writing. For example, Jane, a teacher with 3 years of experience in leading writing workshops, says “I'm fairly confident, I think I need to remind myself that I do have a handle on it.” Whereas Blanch, a public school teacher with 11 years of experience, says “It kind of depends. Sometimes I feel really confident about it, and other times I'm making this up as I go.” Which, as a note, further shows the validity of creativity as a skill intrinsic to teaching.

Finally, Jaques is a public school teacher with 28 years of teaching experience, and he says “I feel very confident in my ability to [teach creativity] and my ability to

encourage the kids to participate in things that seem a little non standard to them. They're not used to teachers asking them what they want to write about." From this data, more experienced teachers are more confident in teaching creativity to students. I was pleasantly surprised to find that no teachers felt entirely unprepared or unconfident to teach creativity in the classroom. Whether because of the experiences of the DWP or the type of educator that the DWP attracts, all fellows felt some confidence in engaging with creativity in the classroom.

Challenges to Creativity

In day-to-day life, it is difficult for participants to prioritize creative expression. The participants reflected on some of the reasons why engaging with creativity can be a challenge. Participating in writing as a form of creative expression offered its own difficulty, as participant Blanch said, "sharing stuff, that was hard... just being vulnerable in front of other folks." The vulnerability that comes in creative expression is a hurdle that teachers and students alike have to face. Participant Phaelyn shared the need for creative expression, saying that "As adults, we crave that because so much of our life has now moved away from creativity...there's a devaluing of creative writing." They feel that people are not able to focus on creativity and especially creative writing because of the demands of other responsibilities. As mentioned in Sigvardson (2020), this could be a reason why teachers do not feel confident in creative-based subjects when they are not able to engage in it personally.

Though personal confidence or lack of experience can be a struggle, many teachers want to include creativity in the classroom but are held back for other reasons.

As Diehl (2021) and Au & Gourd (2013) expressed, curriculum pressures and lack of time are some reasons that teachers struggle. In addition, participant Jaques says that “Unfortunately we still have a number of administrators who think about teaching and learning in a very archaic way.” Administrative pushback is a factor in teachers ability to include creativity in their pedagogy practice. Cultural or political pushback is another factor that many teachers have to address. Phaelyn said, “we can't talk about race and racism in particular ways, and we can't espouse personal beliefs, so you have to approach that context creatively how if you wanted to still encourage students to think about these issues.” They feel that they are not able to discuss things because of certain restrictions, and that creativity becomes part of their teaching as they try to work in their system. Because creativity and creative writing can be difficult and challenging subjects both personally and professionally, it is even more crucial for teachers to have appropriate training, support, and practice in order to serve students using creativity in classrooms.

Including Creativity in the Classroom

Each teacher is unique in how they teach and approach creativity in the classroom. At the end of our interviews, I asked each participant the following question: “What do you think is the most important part of teaching creativity in the classroom?” This question received a variety of answers, some of which are included below from each participant. While ultimately every teacher must learn and grow to include creativity in the classroom in their own way, the participants' answers offer strong encouragement and insight of their perspectives of creativity in the classroom.

- Jane: I think that you can't really force it, so I think it's important to leave things a little open and leave room for creativity.
- Phaelyn: Be prepared to embrace the chaos...people are going to pull things you have no idea they would pull out... and “prepared” for me as a teacher means I need to give up the desire for control.
- Blanch: I feel like creativity helps [students] connect personally with what we're learning... that being able to control a little bit of what they want to see happen gives them so much more ownership over their learning.
- Jaques: It's about autonomy [for teachers] to do themselves and trust that you have hired the person who can do the job that you hired them for.
- Ruby: I think the most important part of teaching creativity is to believe that every single person is already an artist, and is a writer, and is capable of creating something that is worthwhile.

Creativity is a key part of teaching, and these teachers represent just a small part of what it means to include creativity in the classroom. Key points include letting students and teachers have autonomy in their classrooms, leaving room for creativity, and believing in learners' ability to be creative.

Discussion

Teachers require creativity as an essential skill of teaching, yet teachers are infrequently able to engage in their own creative writing. In this study, I realized how intrinsically connected creativity, creative writing, and teaching creativity are to each other. Teachers cannot confidently teach creativity without being creative themselves,

and personal creativity can be strengthened through personal creative expression in writing. Analyzing and focusing on creative writing in the DWP allowed me and other teachers to be creative without as many restrictions or push backs, though not without some challenges. This study focused originally on creative writing and how to teach creative-based writing forms, yet it has grown to encompass both the creativity of teaching as a whole and the impact of creative writing on teachers personally and professionally. The Deep Center and the Writing Project offered a unique space for examining creativity and writing in a small population of highly creative teachers. This context provided a valuable look into the concerns and perspectives of creativity in the classroom for teachers overall. Creativity is an ever-evolving field of study in the realm of education, and this study serves as a basis for further research into the implementation of creativity in the classroom for both students and teachers.

References

- Au, W., and Gourd, K. (2013). Asinine assessment: Why high-stakes testing is bad for everyone, including English teachers. *The English Journal*, 103(1), pp. 14-19.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/24484054>.
- Beghetto, R. (2006). Creative justice? The relationship between prospective teachers' prior schooling experiences and perceived importance of promoting student creativity. *The Journal of Creative Behavior*, 40(3), 149-162. doi:10.1002/j.2162-6057.2006.tb01270.x.
- Blythe, H, and Sweet, C. (2008). The writing community: A new model for the creative writing classroom. *Pedagogy*, 8(2), pp. 305-325.
<https://doi.org/10.1215/15314200-2007-042>.
- David, A., Grote-Garcia, S., Trout, I., Hall, S., & Harding, L. (2022). Learning to teach writing by becoming a writer: An examination of preservice teachers' engagement with the writing process. *English Education* , 55(1), pp. 28-43.
- Deep Center. (2017). *Deep Center writes: Teacher power*. YouTube.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fnlzmiqepw&t=56s>
- Deep Center. (2022). *Our mission, our story*. Deep Center.
<https://www.deepcenter.org/about/our-mission/>.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2018). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (Fifth edition.). SAGE.

- Diehl, M. B. (2021) The trouble with poetry: Teachers' perceptions on poetry teaching and learning in the secondary classroom. *School of Education Durham University*, pp. 22-34. <https://dro.dur.ac.uk/33474/>.
- Fitzgerald, B., Smith L., & Monk, J. (2012). Celebrating creativity collaboratively: inspiring PGCE English trainees to teach creative writing. *English in Education*, 46(1). <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1754-8845.2011.01115.x>.
- Flocker, W. J. (1971). Why not creative teaching? *NACTA Journal*, 15(4), 104–105. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43762678>.
- Miller, D. L. (2015). Cultivating creativity. *The English Journal*, 104(6), 25–30. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24484423>
- National Writing Project. (n.d.). *Who We Are*. <https://www.nwp.org/who-we-are>.
- Owens, S. J. (2015). *Georgia's teacher dropout crisis: A Look at why nearly half of Georgia public school teachers are leaving the profession*. <https://www.gadoe.org/External-Affairs-and-Policy/communications/Documents/Teacher%20Survey%20Results.pdf>.
- Plucker, J. A., (Ed.). (2022). *Using creativity in your teaching*. Routledge Press.
- Rinkevich, J. (2011). Creative teaching: Why it matters and where to begin. *The Clearing House*, 84 (5). pp. 219-223. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41304376>.
- Sigvardsson, A. (2017). Teaching poetry reading in secondary education: Findings from a systematic literature review. *SCANDINAVIAN JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL*

RESEARCH, 61(5), pp. 584–599.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/00313831.2016.1172503>.

Sigvardsson, A. (2020). Don't fear poetry! Secondary teachers' key strategies for engaging pupils with poetic texts." *SCANDINAVIAN JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH*, 64(6), pp. 953–966.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/00313831.2019.1650823>.

Staff Reports. (2022). *New Georgia K-12 ELA standards released for recommendations*.

Carl Vinson Institute of Government. <https://cviog.uga.edu/news/021022-ela.html>.

Stephens, C., Hall, T., & McCampbell, C. (2015). *The 2015 Georgia public P 12 teacher workforce* . <https://www.gapsc.com/media/workforce2015.pdf>

Whitney, A. (2008). Teacher transformation in the National Writing Project. *Research in the Teaching of English*, (43). <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40171763>.

Woodside, A. G. (2017). *Case study research: Core skills in using 15 genres* (2nd ed.). Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

Appendix

Semi-structured interview questions, altered and adjusted as needed for participants.

1. How did you feel about using creativity in the classroom prior to the Deep Center's Summer Writing Institute? What is something that surprised you about the Writing project or that challenged your perception?
2. How have you seen creativity in your classroom? Do you feel like creativity is important to your skills as a teacher?
3. How confident do you feel in your ability to teach and lead creative-based topics or activities such as creative writing?
4. Do you feel more confident in your ability to write personally after the DWP? Can you think of a time where you felt empowered in your own writing during the institute?
5. What procedures used at the Deep Center's Writing Project inspired you that you would like to use in the future?
6. Can you tell me about a time an activity in DWP challenged you? How might you use this activity or similar activity in the future?
7. What do you think is the most important part of teaching creativity in the classroom?