

**The Education of the Creative Writing Teacher:
A Study of Conceptions of Creative Writing Pedagogy
in Higher Education**

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
(English and Education)
in the University of Michigan
2016

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother, Patricia A. Manery, and to the memory of my father, Charles R. Manery.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would first like to thank the seven creative writing pedagogy teachers who participated in this study and whose dedication to creative writing pedagogy and willingness to share their experiences made this dissertation possible. Many thanks are due to the members of my committee, Lisa Lattuca and Greg Light, and particularly to my co-chairs, Anne Ruggles Gere and Petra Kuppers, for their guidance, patience, and goodwill. Stephanie Vanderslice and Graeme Harper have been kind and generous mentors and role models. My family, especially my parents, Charles and Patricia Manery, and my siblings, Robert Manery and Elizabeth Gleason, have provided invaluable emotional and material support. Friends and JPEE colleagues, including Karen Parrillo, April Nauman, Melissa Lindbergh, Paul Mack, Joanna Want, RuthAnna Spooner and Sarah Swofford, have shared advice and provided cheer and sympathy. Among the many creative writing teachers and scholars I have learned from, I especially wish to acknowledge Debi Richardson, Rosellen Brown, Greg Light, Rebecca O'Rourke, Graeme Harper, Kelly Ritter, Stephanie Vanderslice, and Wendy Bishop. To quote Malea Powell, "what I do well is to their credit; what I do badly belongs only to me."

PREFACE

This study brings together two of my abiding passions—creative writing and teaching. As a practitioner and teacher of creative writing, I want to understand how creative writers develop and maintain fulfilling and productive creative practices. As a teacher educator and scholar of writing pedagogies, I am interested in how teachers learn to make classrooms welcoming spaces where students can engage in and reflect on meaningful acts of literacy. My dissertation project combines these inquiries to focus on the education of the creative writing teacher. My study asks: *How do graduate creative writing programs train creative writing teachers? What are the methods and goals of this training? What conceptions of teaching and creative writing support these goals and methods?*

Readers familiar with the history of creative writing in America may recognize that these questions are more novel and provocative than they at first appear. Until quite recently, it has been assumed that the only qualification required of a creative writing teacher was to be a creative writer—the more celebrated, the better. Since the establishment of the first graduate creative writing program at the University of Iowa in 1936, the scene of creative writing education has meant the gathering of ten or twelve student writers and an experienced—often eminent--writer around a conference table to critique student work in progress. It was assumed that, if the teacher was a writer of sufficient talent, no training was required for such a method of instruction. The

metaphor of the creative writing teacher as a Master Craftsperson who oversees the apprenticeship of student writers in a writer's workshop was established at Iowa and remains prevalent 80 years later.

The centrality of the writer's workshop in creative writing education went largely unchallenged for more than 50 years except by critics who questioned the enterprise of creative writing education altogether, arguing that since creative writers are born not made creative writing can't be taught. Indeed, the philosophy of the Iowa Writers' Workshop, the oldest and still one of the most prestigious creative writing programs in the world seems to agree with this criticism, claiming only to be able to develop the talents writers already possess.

Calling the writing classroom a workshop suggests that student writers are apprentices who learn a craft by observing, assisting, and receiving feedback from a master at work. Yet it is clear that the business of the traditional writing workshop is quite different. Apprentice writers do not observe a master writer at work, much less assist in that work. While they receive feedback from the master writer, they receive as much or more feedback from other apprentices. Finally and perhaps most importantly, within the workshop itself the skill apprentice writers are most likely to observe and practice is criticism, not creative writing. Critical discernment is important to a writer's development, but it is not the same as creative practice.

Over the course of 25 years I have participated in writer's workshops as an undergraduate, a participant in writing conferences and continuing education courses, and finally as an MFA student. Although the emotional tone and the degree of authority the instructor assumed varied, the structure remained virtually the same from workshop

to workshop. Particularly after I had completed a Master's degree in literacy education, I increasingly felt that the workshop had more drawbacks than benefits as a method of instruction. Yet it was not until I began my doctoral studies in the Joint Program of English and Education at the University of Michigan that I discovered that creative writing teachers and scholars had been critiquing the way creative writing is taught since the 1980s and suggesting possible alternatives.

The late Wendy Bishop was the driving force in the early effort to revolutionize the way creative writing is taught and learned. One of Bishop's central aims was to introduce seminars or courses in creative writing pedagogy into graduate programs. Bishop died in 2003, leaving much of her ambitious agenda for the academic discipline of Creative Writing incomplete. While a new wave of creative writing scholars has brought fresh ideas and energy to the developing field alternatively known as Creative Writing or Creative Writing Studies, the question of whether—and how—creative writing pedagogy courses can impact teaching within the discipline has remained unanswered even as a growing number of graduate programs have begun to offer such courses.

This study builds on Bishop's pioneering work by investigating the teaching conceptions and practices of teachers of creative writing pedagogy. Using data gathered from phenomenographic interviews and the course syllabi of seven creative writing pedagogy instructors at six U.S. universities, I categorize these conceptions in terms of *pedagogic identity*, a term I borrow from Zukas and Malcolm's work in adult education to indicate views of self and others as teachers. Using Etienne Wenger's conception of communities of practice, I analyze the influence of creative writing communities of practice on how pedagogic identities are performed, discussed, and developed in

creative writing pedagogy courses. I conclude by suggesting five objectives for creative writing pedagogy courses that support a more complex understanding of creative writing teaching and learning.

This study uses evidence drawn from empirical research to support those teachers of creative writing and creative writing pedagogy who have already begun to question long-held assumptions about writing and teaching and to put new approaches to pedagogy into practice. Examining our conceptions of creative writing pedagogy and the metaphors we use to describe what we do is a critical first step toward realizing Wendy Bishop's dream of bringing innovative perspectives and practices to a nascent discipline and an ancient craft.

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CHAPTER I Introduction

Pedagogy is not just a question of how; it is also a question of who, of what, and of why. –Rebecca O’Rourke, “Creative Writing as a Site for Pedagogic Identity and Pedagogic Learning,” 504.

The creative writing teacher is a paradoxical figure in the United States. As Wendy Bishop and Stephen Armstrong point out in “Box Office Poison” creative writers who teach at the university level are often depicted in film as foppishly narcissistic (Grady Tripp in *Wonder Boys*) or cruelly abusive (Mr. Scott in *Storytelling*). Leonard, the central character in Theresa Rebeck’s stage play, *Seminar*, is a near-parody of the workshop tyrant, delivering scathing criticism of a student’s manuscript after reading a single line, sleeping with one student while anointing another as a ‘true’ writer. Yet despite the obvious shortcomings of their fictionalized counterparts, the established writers who teach in prestigious creative writing programs are held in awe. Advertisements for MFA programs in *The Writer’s Chronicle* commonly feature the names of creative writing faculty and visiting writers. The annual Association of Writers and Writing Programs (AWP) Conference feels less like the meeting of a professional organization and more like a place where fans of literature have a chance to meet celebrity writers.

Two assumptions underlie these seemingly disparate representations of creative writing teachers. First is the assumption that the sole qualification for being a creative writing teacher is to be possessed of—or perhaps by—a rare, God-given talent. The second assumption follows from the first: the primary aim of the creative writing teacher is to recognize and develop “true” talent, a task that only another “truly” talented writer can perform. Romantic conceptions of writers and writing still contribute to the belief that teacher training in the academic discipline of Creative Writing is irrelevant since talent and literary reputation are the only teaching qualifications that matter. Representations and conceptions that narrow the definition of “creative writing teacher” to a Master Craftsperson whose mission is to participate and supervise in the writer’s workshop diminishes the potential for the development of new methods and conceptions of teaching. With no recourse to pedagogic training, most creative writing teachers continue to use the most familiar method of creative writing pedagogy—the writer’s workshop instituted at the Iowa Writers’ Workshop for elite graduate students (Donnelly, *Does the Writing Workshop Still Work?*, 3). Without exposure to alternative pedagogic methods and the opportunity to reflect on their conceptions of creative writing and teaching, creative writing teachers may reinforce widely held beliefs that inherited genius, rather than instruction and diligent practice, is what distinguishes writers from lesser mortals.

There are, of course, competing rhetorics that contradict common assumptions about creative writing and teaching. These rhetorics are built on research and theory from international creative writing pedagogy scholarship, composition, literary theory, cultural studies, creativity studies, higher education, psychology, and neuroscience.

Discoveries in these fields have challenged the romantic view that creative talent can be developed but not taught, arguing instead that success in creative endeavors is the result of aptitude in combination with personality attributes and environmental factors (Piirto), knowledge (Baer and McKool), hard work (Sawyer), conceptual development (Light, "Literature of the Unpublished"), and persistence (Rosenfeld). Studies of teacher education and teaching conceptions in higher education, particularly studies using a phenomenographic approach, also provide insights into teaching conceptions and practice. Nevertheless, evidence of the teachability of creative writing has not eclipsed the belief that writers are born and not made as indicated by the stated philosophy of the Iowa Writer's Workshop, the original graduate creative writing program that provided a model for all other American creative writing programs, many of which were founded by Iowa alumni:

Though we agree in part with the popular insistence that writing cannot be taught, we exist and proceed on the assumption that talent can be developed, and we see our possibilities and limitations as a school in that light....We continue to look for the most promising talent in the country, in our conviction that writing cannot be taught but that writers can be encouraged.

Some teachers of creative writing have managed to hold the view that anyone can write *and* creative writing can't be taught without considering how these beliefs contradict one another.

Wendy Bishop believed that “One reason for the difficulty of accumulating and reflecting on knowledge in this field could be the simple result of our failure to invest in creative writing teacher education courses” (Bishop, “The More Things Change,” 240). Kelly Ritter’s 2001 survey of U.S. creative writing doctoral programs revealed that only four included any training in creative writing pedagogy (“Professional Writers”). Ritter concluded that creative writing graduate students were not nearly as well prepared to teach in their discipline as their counterparts in composition who routinely receive instruction in teaching first-year composition courses. For Bishop, the “deep revision” she envisaged for Creative Writing as a discipline would ideally begin with training in creative writing pedagogy (Bishop, Afterword, *Colors of a Different Horse*, 291).

Currently, at least 38 graduate creative writing programs in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom include creative writing pedagogy in their courses of study (Table 1.1). The growing number of creative writing pedagogy courses is encouraging, but with hundreds of graduate creative writing programs worldwide it is clear that programs offering creative writing pedagogy instruction remain in the minority. Furthermore, almost none of the burgeoning creative writing pedagogy scholarship has expanded Ritter’s initial investigation of creative writing pedagogy instruction in graduate programs. Aside from one article that describes a single creative writing pedagogy course, there is nothing in the literature that explains what is taught in creative writing pedagogy courses and why, even as these courses have begun to proliferate.

My interest in addressing this gap was the departure point for this study of creative writing pedagogy teachers’ conceptions of writing and teaching and how those

conceptions inform their teaching practice. By conducting and analyzing semi-structured interviews with these teachers and examining their creative writing pedagogy course syllabi, I sought to understand what is taught in creative writing pedagogy courses, the range of teaching conceptions held by creative writing pedagogy teachers, and how variations in conception may influence variations in teaching practice.

I began my investigation with the assumption, borne of my own experience at a university where MFA students teach undergraduate courses in creative writing as part of the requirements for the degree, that the creative writing pedagogy course existed to train creative writing graduate students for that task. Indeed, this appears to be the assumption behind the only textbook written for the creative writing pedagogy course, Stephanie Vanderslice and Kelly Ritter's *Teaching Creative Writing to Undergraduates: A Practical Guide and Sourcebook*. In fact, in my interviews with seven creative writing teachers at six U.S. universities, I discovered that two of the six programs did not offer graduate students opportunities to teach creative writing; in four programs, the opportunity to teach undergraduate courses was available but not guaranteed for every student taking the pedagogy course. Certainly preparation to teach undergraduate courses in the future was a focus of all of these courses, but some also included the teaching of graduate courses and teaching in community settings; many also concentrated on strategies for the academic job market. Most provided students with at least some understanding of the history and current debates around creative writing in higher education, a context few MFA programs—including my own alma mater—provide. Most also provided a forum in which students were invited to challenge the assumptions and practices that have shaped that history. In spite of these general

similarities, my study revealed significant variation in how and why creative writing pedagogy is taught. I will argue that this variation is due, in part, to differences between creative writing communities of practice and variation in the *pedagogic identity* of creative writing pedagogy teachers. Pedagogic identity is a term I borrow from the work of Zukas and Malcolm in higher education and which for my purposes I define as “*teachers’ beliefs and understandings of creative writing pedagogy, including their conceptions of themselves and others as creative writing and creative writing pedagogy teachers.*”

Admittedly, the seven teachers of creative writing pedagogy in my study do not represent all of the thinking about creative writing pedagogy in the field, although my sample represents more than one-fifth of U.S. programs and nearly one-seventh of creative writing programs worldwide that include a course in creative pedagogy (at least, those I have discovered through my own search of the Internet and informal surveys conducted at two AWP Book Fairs). Nevertheless, the interviews and syllabi of these seven teachers represent a wide variety of conceptions of creative writing pedagogy which led, in turn, to a broad range of readings, activities, and intended outcomes. For example, in examining the reading lists for these courses (which I discuss in Chapter Four), I discovered far less overlap in required readings than I anticipated given the relatively small body of literature on creative writing pedagogy available. In fact, there was not a single reading that all seven courses had in common. The absence of a common text in such a nascent field can be explained in part by the fact that the majority of the creative writing pedagogy teachers in my sample developed their courses from scratch and in relative isolation (a circumstance I will explore in Chapter Five) and

that many teachers in creative writing graduate programs, including some participants in my study, are largely unfamiliar with current creative writing pedagogy scholarship, much of which is published outside of the United States.

Creative writing pedagogy courses are a relatively recent addition to the 79-year history of graduate creative writing education; 1996 was the earliest year any of the teachers in my study sample had taught a creative writing pedagogy course. As I have mentioned, such courses have remained largely unexamined in creative writing pedagogy scholarship, as I will document in Chapter Two. None of the creative writing pedagogy teachers who participated in the study had taken such a course themselves. I could discover no authoritative source of information that could answer even basic questions—where and when was the first creative writing pedagogy course offered? How many are currently offered?—with anything like certainty. For this reason alone, then, I believe this study contributes to an understanding of a field to which many have pledged allegiance but few have attempted to understand.

Because Pajares and other educational researchers have argued powerfully that teachers' beliefs and conceptions strongly influence their behavior in the classroom, I was interested in understanding how creative writing pedagogy teachers' beliefs and conceptions may have influenced how they teach their subject. At the same time I recognized that, because the creative writing pedagogy course has so rarely been the focus of scholarly attention, I would need to lay some groundwork by offering a comparative analysis of the design and content of these courses. To compare conceptions, I chose to use a qualitative research approach known as *phenomenography* which I describe in detail in Chapter Three. Phenomenographic

studies seek to discover “the variation in ways in which people experience situations and phenomena in their worlds, generally studied with an educational research interest” (Marton and Booth, vii). In this study, I am interested in the variation in ways that creative writing pedagogy teachers experience their teaching. I supplemented phenomenographic interviews with an analysis of each teacher’s course syllabus and an analysis of the transcripts based on Wenger’s concept of communities of practice to triangulate the interview data by using other methodologies. By using these complementary approaches I was able to describe not only what and how seven creative writing pedagogy teachers teach—the topic of Chapter Four—but to get an understanding of what teaching creative writing pedagogy *means* to these pioneering instructors. In a field where discussions of pedagogy have largely been limited to arguing the pros and cons of writer’s workshop or sharing “what worked” for individual teachers, I hope that an empirical study of teacher conceptions of creative writing pedagogy will encourage greater interest in and understanding of what we teach when we teach creative writing pedagogy—and *why*.

Naturally, teaching does not happen in a vacuum. Teaching conceptions are formed within *communities of practice* which, in turn, are influenced by the conceptions and practice of individuals within communities. In Chapter Five, I use the concept of communities of practice proposed in Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger and developed by Wenger (*Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning and Identity*) to understand how the social context within which creative writing pedagogy teachers operate shapes their conceptions and practices of teaching. I had initially meant to examine only the creative writing pedagogy course as a community of practice, but it

was clear from the interviews that creative writing pedagogy classrooms are influenced by programs, which in turn are part of departments, which join other departments in colleges and universities. At the same time, creative writing pedagogy teachers are members of programs, departments, universities, professional organizations and groups focused on creative writing pedagogy. All of these communities of practice potentially influence what happens inside the creative writing pedagogy classroom. The discussion of creative writing communities of practice in Chapter Five is intended to complement and provide context for the phenomenographic study of pedagogic identities.

The range of meanings uncovered by a phenomenographic study reveals more and less comprehensive approaches to the phenomenon as defined by a set of categories. As Marton and Booth explain, individuals experiencing the same phenomenon will experience it at different levels of complexity. The categories of a phenomenographic study are distinct, logically related to one another and the subject under study, and parsimonious (Marton and Booth, p. 125). Most categories of description form a hierarchy describing a range of more or less complex experiences, although categories of description need not be hierarchical (Åkerlind, "Phenomenographic Methods"; Ziegenfuss). In Chapter Six, I present a set of categories of description of five qualitatively different pedagogic identities constituted from the interview transcripts. I then map these identities onto a hierarchical outcome space according to their structural (approach to teaching) and referential (focus of teaching) components to suggest how these pedagogic identities represent more or less complete conceptions of creative writing pedagogy (Prosser, Trigwell, and Taylor).

In Chapter Seven, I summarize my findings from Chapters Four through Six and suggest five objectives for creative writing pedagogy courses that support a more complete conceptualization of creative writing teaching and learning.

I believe such a reconceptualization is necessary if creative writing programs are to remain viable and defensible as educational institutions. Although Mark McGurl asserts in *The Program Era* that “the rise of the creative writing program stands as the most important event in postwar American literary history” (ix), the foundational beliefs and practices of creative writing programs are increasingly at odds with literary and composition theory, with the realities of a publishing industry increasingly driven by the bottom line, with an academic job market glutted with MFA graduates, and with technological innovations that have drastically changed how we understand the act of composing and distributing text (Vanderslice, *Rethinking Creative Writing*).

The call to reform creative writing programs has a long history, one I will briefly outline in the following chapter. I believe that the growing number of creative writing pedagogy courses is one of the most promising developments in that history. The creative writing pedagogy course has the potential to change creative writing program culture from within by influencing how creative writing teachers think of their teaching selves and what they believe about teachers and teaching. By demonstrating how creative writing pedagogy teachers’ conceptions of pedagogic identity inform their teaching practices, I hope to focus attention on the contribution creative writing pedagogy courses could make to the reform of creative writing programs that Wendy Bishop and the creative writing scholars who have taken up her work have long awaited.

Creative Writing Programs that Offer a Course in Creative Writing Pedagogy

U.S. Programs (33)

Antioch University
Ball State University
Boise State University
Bowling Green University
Chatham University
Colorado State University
Florida Atlantic University
Georgia College and University
Illinois State University
Indiana University
National University
Oklahoma City University
Purdue University
Regis University (Mile High Low-Residency Program)
Salem State University
San Francisco State University
Seton Hill University
Southern Illinois University
Spalding University
University of Central Arkansas
University of Central Florida
University of Cincinnati
University of Massachusetts (Amherst)
University of Massachusetts (Boston)
University of Nebraska
University of New Mexico
University of North Carolina (Wilmington)
University of North Dakota
University of Pittsburgh
University of South Florida
University of Southwestern Louisiana
Western Kentucky University
Western State Colorado University

Canadian Programs (1)

University of Calgary

United Kingdom Programs (4)

Keele University
Kingston University
Northumbria University
University of Gloucestershire

Table 1.1: Creative Writing Programs that Offer a Course in Creative Writing Pedagogy

CHAPTER II

Pedagogic Identities in Communities of Practice: A Theoretical Framework and Review of the Literature

In this chapter, I will explore the theoretical bases for my study of the creative writing pedagogy classroom as a *community of practice* where *pedagogic identities* are formed. I will define these terms, explain the concepts and how they apply to my study, and explain why this theoretical framework is appropriate for my study. I will review the literature on teacher training and teacher conceptions in higher education, including a number of phenomenographic studies. Finally, I will turn to creative writing pedagogy scholarship to examine how the writer's workshop as creative writing's most familiar community of practice has been contested and defended. I will also identify some of the pedagogic identities found in creative writing pedagogy scholarship and conclude with a review of the scant literature on creative writing pedagogy courses.

Theoretical Framework

Two pillars make up the theoretical framework for this study. One is the concept of a *community of practice*. The other is the concept of *pedagogic identity*. In this study, I argue that the creative writing pedagogy classroom is a *community of practice where pedagogic identities are formed*. I assert that creative writing pedagogy teachers'

conceptions of pedagogic identity can, in part, determine the development of their students' pedagogic identities. Because individuals are shaped by communities of practice and shape them in return, creative writing pedagogy teachers' conceptions have the potential to influence understandings of teaching and learning within Creative Writing as an academic discipline.

In this section, I will define the concepts of *community of practice* and *pedagogic identity* and explain why they provide a useful theoretical framework for my study.

Communities of Practice

Community of practice is defined by Lave and Wenger in *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation* as “an activity system about which participants share understandings concerning what they are doing and what that means in their lives and for their communities.” (98) Wenger further defines communities of practice as “groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly.” (“Communities of Practice,” n. pag.). He identifies three crucial characteristics: 1) A shared domain of interest: “Membership...implies a commitment to the domain, and therefore a shared competence that distinguishes members from other people”, 2) A community: “[M]embers engage in joint activities and discussions, help each other, and share information”, and 3) A practice: “[M]embers...are practitioners ...[who] develop a shared repertoire of resources: experiences, stories, tools, ways of addressing recurring problems” (n. pag.). In other words, people with a common interest can only be

considered members of a community of practice when they interact with one another in a practice in which they have a shared competence.

“Newcomers” to communities of practice learn from “old-timers” through a process of legitimate peripheral participation—as junior members of the community, they perform authentic but limited roles in the company of more experienced practitioners. Through this process, they grow to become full participants in the community of practice, or “old-timers”, who will in turn initiate newcomers into the community. This ongoing process promotes learning, not only in individuals, but in the community as a collective.

The idea of the community of practice as not only the site of learning but the collective that learns is an important concept for my discussion. As William F. Hanks states in the Foreword to *Situated Learning*, “It is the community, or at least those participating in the learning context, who ‘learn’” (16). Lave and Wenger recognized that, while the community of practice flourishes when old-timers initiate newcomers into full participation, there is also the potential for individuals to hoard knowledge and resources, preventing newcomers from becoming full participants and creating rifts in the community. In situations where the potential for mastery and growth is withheld from individuals, the community as a whole also suffers. In other words, communities of practice regulate learning by allowing or restricting information, resources, and opportunities for participation. Such regulation can potentially limit individual and communal growth.

Communities of practice overlap, and individuals may be members of numerous communities of practice. Some communities of practice may contain others; thus, in

addition to the classroom, creative writing pedagogy teachers are part of communities of practice that may include the creative writing program, the English department, a college or university, and a professional organization. Members constantly cross the boundaries of these various communities of practice, interacting with individuals who may share membership in some communities of practice but not others. Because of these shared memberships, the 'learning' of one community of practice has the potential to impact many other communities.

In *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning and Identity*, Wenger articulates a social theory of learning centered on the development of practice and identity within communities of practice. While it is impossible in this limited space to describe all of the complexities of this theory, I will introduce some key terms and concepts here that I found useful in understanding the communities of practice in which creative writing pedagogy teachers operate.

The Negotiation of Meaning

Wenger defines *practice* as “the process by which we can experience the world and our engagement with it as meaningful.” Communities of practice, then, are places where meanings are negotiated. According to Wenger, the negotiation of meaning involves “the interaction of two constituent processes...participation and reification” (51, 52). To understand how meaning is negotiated in communities of practice, it is necessary to examine these dual processes.

Participation and Reification

Wenger defines *participation* as “the social experience of living in the world in terms of membership in social communities and active involvement in social enterprises....It is a complex process that combines doing, talking, thinking, feeling, and belonging....It suggests both action and connection” (55-56). For example, creative writing pedagogy teachers participate in a community of practice by taking part in a shared enterprise (teaching and learning) and through their interactions with other members of the community including students, faculty members, and administrators. It is both the practice of teaching and the relationships developed through that practice that allows an individual to claim an identity as a creative writing pedagogy teacher and membership in a particular community of practice.

Wenger’s definition of *reification* is less straightforward since he wants to distinguish his use of the term from its general definition and from the way it has been used by Lukás and other Marxist theorists. For Wenger, reification is:

the process of giving form to our experience by producing objects that congeal this experience into “thingness”....With the term reification I mean to cover a wide range of processes that include making, designing, representing, naming, encoding, and describing, as well as perceiving, interpreting, using, reusing, decoding, and recasting....Any community of practice produces abstractions, tools, symbols, stories, terms, and concepts that reify something of that practice in a congealed form (58, 59).

Examples of highly reified processes and concepts in creative writing communities include the pedagogic practice of the writer's workshop and the metaphor of the creative writing teacher as a Master Craftsperson.

Wenger stresses that participation and reification are not a dichotomy but a duality:

Reification always rests on participation: what is said, represented, or otherwise brought into focus always assumes a history of participation as a context for its interpretation. In turn, participation always organizes itself around reification because it always involves artifacts, words, and concepts that allow it to proceed (67).

Although participation and reification are not always in alignment, it is through the interaction of both that meaning is negotiated and identities developed. For instance, through the process of participation a member may introduce a new practice into the community; through the process of reification that practice may or may not become part of the community's shared repertoire of practices.

Participation and reification are particularly important for understanding how a community learns or changes because they "offer two kinds of lever available for attempts to shape the future—to maintain the status quo or conversely to redirect the practice...Participation and reification are two distinct channels of power available to participants (and to outside constituencies)" (91). To use participation as a means of negotiating power, a participant may "seek, cultivate, and avoid specific relationships

with specific people.” To use reification to negotiate power, a participant may “produce or promote specific artifacts to focus future negotiation of meaning in specific ways” (91). For example, a creative writing pedagogy teacher may use or develop a relationship with a program administrator in order to make certain students ineligible to take a course. A creative writing pedagogy teacher’s syllabus may reflect changes in the design of the course that may be reified by gaining approval and acceptance from administrators and other teachers of the course.

An important aspect of participation is that it is a *trajectory* rather than a fixed form. Reification is also flexible as reflected in changes to a community’s *repertoire* of practice and *regime of competence*. I explain each of these concepts below.

Trajectories of Participation

A member’s engagement in community participation can be described in terms of a *trajectory*. By trajectory, Wenger emphasizes that he is not suggesting “a path that can be foreseen or charted but a continuous motion.” A trajectory, then, is the course that an individual takes as he or she goes through “a succession of forms of participation” within communities of practice (154). Wenger recognizes various types of trajectories including peripheral, inbound, insider, boundary, and outbound trajectories that describe both an individual’s level of participation within the community (for instance, as a peripheral participants, insiders, or members of more than one community) and the direction in which this participation is headed (for instance, inbound toward a greater degree of participation, outbound toward a lesser degree of participation or no participation at all, and peripheral, in which case the individual is

neither in the process of becoming an insider nor moving toward a lesser degree of participation.

Wenger argues that “our identities are constituted not only by what we are but what we are not,” or in terms of both participation and non-participation. One form of non-participation significant to this study is *marginality*.

Marginality

Wenger defines marginality as “a form of non-participation [that] prevents full participation” (166). Marginality can take many forms from a glass ceiling to a failure to win tenure. Wenger distinguishes marginality from peripherality in terms of their trajectories. Newcomers, for instance, are peripheral members of the community “on an inbound trajectory that is construed by everyone to include full participation” (166). In contrast, some long-term members of the community may be prevented from reaching full participation; they may be on a peripheral trajectory, neither inbound nor outbound, or an outbound trajectory that may lead them out of the community altogether.

Repertoires and Regimes of Competence

Wenger defines *repertoire* as “a community’s set of shared resources” that includes “routines, words, tools, ways of doing things, stories, gestures, symbols, genres, actions, or concepts that the community has produced or adopted in the course of its existence, and which have become a part of its practice.” Repertoires have “reificative and participative aspects”; for instance, writer’s workshop is a “way of doing things” that

developed as a practice of the Iowa Writer's Workshop and later became reified as Creative Writing's signature pedagogy (83).

Related to the concept of repertoire is what Wenger refers to as "a regime of competence", a community's expectations for competent membership. One of the ways a community of practice measures the competence of a community member is by his or her "ability to make use of the repertoire of the practice to engage in it" (137).

Alternatively, a community member can show competence by making additions to the community's shared repertoire. For instance, a creative writing pedagogy teacher can demonstrate competence by his or her skill in running a writer's workshop or potentially by introducing modifications to workshop practice if they are accepted into a community's repertoire.

In Chapter Six, I will use the terms defined above to analyze the contrasting experiences of two of my subject participants in order to illustrate the influence of communities of practice on teaching conceptions and practices.

Constructing Identities in Communities of Practice

Many other theories, including actor-network theory (ANT), describe interaction within and between social groups. I am particularly interested in communities of practice because they are described as places where identity is constructed. Wenger asserts that "building an identity consists of negotiating the meanings of our experience of membership in social communities" (145). In other words, identity is developed through interactions within communities and the meaning individuals assign to these experiences. At the same time, however, individuals are developing and influencing the

identities of the communities of which they are a part. Within a community of practice framework, Wenger emphasizes, it is “a mistaken dichotomy to wonder whether the unit of analysis of identity should be the community or the person. The focus must be on the process of their mutual constitution” (146). This social view of identity underscores an understanding of the reciprocal relationship between communities and members who both learn from the community and make up the community that learns. This multi-layered view is particularly appropriate for a study that focuses on teachers who teach teaching because it encompasses the conceptions and identities of individuals as well as the practice around which membership in this pedagogic community is based.

Another reason for using the concept of a community of practice as a pillar of my theoretical framework is because it is also the theoretical framework used by Zukas and Malcolm in their study of pedagogic identity. Zukas and Malcolm recommend the work of Lave and Wenger (1991) and Wenger (1999) because it provides “socio-cultural and pedagogic ‘lenses’ through which educational practice can be viewed” (2). They also assert that a community of practice framework is useful for understanding and analyzing different viewpoints both within local communities and across a field or “arena” of communities (Lave, 1988). For instance, in analyzing how creative writing pedagogy teachers approach their subject, it is useful to keep in mind not only the interaction between teacher and students in the classroom but the sociocultural moment in which the course is being taught. Embracing both individual development and social change, the concepts of community of practice and pedagogic identity offer complementary perspectives on a complex subject.

With exceptions (for instance, Webb and Melrose 2015, Neave 2014, Nelson and Cole 2012, Staples 2011, O'Rourke 2007,) the term “communities of practice” seldom appears in creative writing pedagogy scholarship, and almost never in scholarship initiated in the United States. Using the concept of communities of practice to examine creative writing classrooms, programs, organizations and groups provides a more complex understanding of how communities and practitioners develop, interact, and change one another. In the field of Creative Writing, writer’s workshop has come to signify not only a pedagogical method but the creative writing classroom and the creative writing graduate program in which workshopping is practiced. I will review a sampling of the literature on writer’s workshop later in the chapter. I will also return to the concept of community of practice in Chapter Five when I examine the creative writing communities of practice in which creative writing pedagogy teachers operate, both at the local level—classrooms, programs, departments, universities—and in the larger creative writing community, including AWP and online communities dedicated to creative writing pedagogy.

Pedagogic Identity

As part of their study of the conceptual divides between higher education and adult education, Zukas and Malcolm (2002) surveyed the literature on post-secondary teacher education and identified five common “pedagogic identities.” Although they don’t explicitly define this term, Zukas and Malcolm define pedagogy as “a critical understanding of the social, policy and institutional context, as well as a critical approach to the content and process of the educational/training transaction” (“Bridging

Pedagogic Gaps, 40) and “identities” as “‘versions’ of the educator” (“Pedagogies for Lifelong Learning”, 2). Pedagogic identities thus represent variations in how educators understand and perform teaching within a broader social context. For my purposes, I define pedagogic identity as *“teachers’ beliefs and understandings of creative writing pedagogy, including their conceptions of themselves and others as creative writing and creative writing pedagogy teachers.”*

While “neither exhaustive nor mutually exclusive,” the identities Zukas and Malcolm designated were meant to suggest “the range of understandings of pedagogic work apparent in the ‘mainstream’ higher education literature.” These pedagogic identities included the educator as: 1) critical practitioner, 2) psycho-diagnostician and facilitator of learning, 3) reflective practitioner, 4) situated learner within a community of practice, and 5) assurer of organizational quality and efficiency; deliverer of service to agreed or imposed standards. Zukas and Malcolm also developed nine “conceptual ‘dimensions’” which they used to “locate the characteristics and implications of each identity.” These dimensions are ranges defined by two opposing orientations to teaching—for instance, a “focus on process” and a “focus on product” (2,6).

Zukas and Malcolm, following Lave (1996), want to “conceptualize pedagogy and pedagogic learning as the interpenetration of persons and contexts,” but argue that discourse that positions “the teacher as charismatic subject, the...competent craftsperson, and the...reflective practitioner” interfere with a more complex understanding (71). Their project, then, is similar to mine in that they seek to replace a decontextualized understanding of teachers and teaching with a more nuanced view. An important difference between our projects, however, is that Zukas and Malcolm arrive at

their data by analyzing the literature of higher and adult education while my data is drawn from interviews with teachers discussing their teaching in specific contexts.

I first learned the term *pedagogic identity* from Rebecca O'Rourke's article, "Creative Writing as a Site of Pedagogic Identity and Pedagogic Learning." O'Rourke, a teacher of creative writing in Adult and Continuing Education at the UK university where Zukas and Malcolm began their collaboration, claims that "Pedagogic identity becomes a way of articulating the specific histories, politics, and values embodied by individual teachers: ways of being, as well as doing" (504). Using the concept of pedagogic identity to describe changes in her identity as a teacher at a time of institutional flux, O'Rourke concludes that "pedagogy is not just a question of how; it is also a question of who, of what, and of why" (504). In other words, a study of pedagogy must take into consideration the people involved and the context within which they interact. O'Rourke recommends pedagogic identity as "a potentially useful concept with which to explore the fascinating and prescient questions of what happens, and why, in a creative writing classroom" (511-512). I agree with O'Rourke that Zukas and Malcolm's conception of pedagogic identity is a useful way to think about teachers' conceptions of teaching and themselves and others as teachers which is why I have chosen it as the second conceptual pillar to frame my study.

I have found no other reference to Zukas and Malcolm's work in creative writing pedagogy scholarship outside of O'Rourke's article and my own (Manery, 2015), but there are numerous discussions of teacher identity in creative writing pedagogy scholarship. These include discussion of the hyphenated identities of teacher-writers, writer-teachers, and writer-teacher-researchers as well as the various ways creative

writers in the academy are perceived as ‘types.’ I will review this literature in the next section of this chapter, and return to the conception of pedagogic identity in Chapter Six where I will offer detailed descriptions of the five categories of pedagogic identity I identified from a phenomenographic analysis of my data.

Phenomenographic Studies of Teaching in Higher Education

Research on teaching in higher education provides context for my study of teaching conceptions of creative writing pedagogy teachers. Phenomenographic studies in particular have demonstrated the importance of understanding variation in teaching conceptions and practices. Phenomenography developed as a qualitative research approach to understanding variation in conceptions of teaching and learning in a variety of educational settings, beginning with a study of qualitatively different approaches to learning by Marton and Säljö in the 1970s that distinguished between deep and surface approaches to learning (Trigwell, Prosser, and Taylor). As such, phenomenography is a particularly appropriate approach for examining differences in teaching conceptions.

The work of Keith Trigwell, Michael Prosser and their associates confirms links between teaching conceptions and approaches to teaching (Lindlom-Ylänne, et al), and between teachers’ approaches to teaching and students’ approaches to learning (Trigwell, Prosser, and Waterhouse). Their work builds on David Kember’s description of teaching orientations as “a continuum ranging from a teacher-centered/content-oriented pole to a student-centered/learning-oriented pole” (Åkerlind, “Growing”, 376). By combining variations of teaching intentions and teaching strategies, Trigwell, et al describe teaching approaches ranging from a “*conceptual change/student focused*

(CCSF) approach” to “an *information transmission/teacher-focused* (ITTF) approach” (Trigwell, Prosser, and Ginns, 352, original italics). Their studies served as the foundation for the Approaches to Teaching Inventory designed to study variation in the teaching and learning of university-level science (Prosser and Trigwell, 1999; Trigwell and Prosser, 2004). Trigwell and Prosser’s work suggests that improving teaching and learning must begin with conceptual change (Trigwell, Prosser and Taylor). In relation to the present study, the work of Kember and Trigwell, et al provided the basis for the structural and referential aspects of teaching I use to define the relationship between pedagogic identities as shown in Table 6.10.

Related to Trigwell and Prosser’s work is Gerlese Åkerlind’s study of university teachers’ conceptions of teaching growth and development. This study also builds on Kember’s teaching orientations. Åkerlind describes a range of conceptions of teaching development from teachers’ growing sense of comfort and confidence in teaching and changes in teaching practice (teacher-centered conceptions) to “teaching development as a change in outcomes for the learner” (a student-centered conception) (“Growing”, 382). Like Trigwell et al’s findings on teaching approaches, Åkerlind associates more complex conceptualizations of teaching growth and development with a student-centered conception.

Most of Trigwell, et al’s studies focus on teachers of large, introductory courses in science and math. Like other studies of postsecondary teaching, the impetus for these studies was to move teachers away from instructional delivery via traditional lecture toward interactive teaching and learning focused on conceptual development. As such, they describe a very different teaching context than is commonly found in the creative

writing classroom and the writer's workshop in particular. Writer's workshops are small, typically no more 20 students at the undergraduate level. Interaction is built into the structure of writer's workshop as students are responsible for critiquing their peers and the central focus is on student-written texts. The lecture format of many traditional academic courses is not typically associated with the creative writing classroom. As such, I was curious whether the orientations used by Trigwell, et al and Åkerlind were applicable to teachers of creative writing or creative writing pedagogy.

Indeed, Elaine Martin and Paul Ramsden's 1998 study of approaches to teaching creative writing used very different categories of description than the phenomenographic studies discussed so far. Their study was based on phenomenographic interviews with six teachers of introductory courses in creative writing at two Australian universities plus surveys of their students and case studies of three of the study participants. The study resulted in three categories of description based on the focus of teaching: Established Literature, Skills and Craft, and Having Something to Say. Martin and Ramsden considered the latter category to be the most comprehensive. As a phenomenographic study of teaching creative writing, this study should have been useful in framing the present study; however, I found that my data outcomes bore very little resemblance to Martin and Ramsden's in terms of how my study participants focused their teaching. Although three of my study participants assigned Francine Prose's *Reading like a Writer*, none mentioned the study of literature as a central focus for the creative writing classroom. Having something to say was also not mentioned as a focus for creative writing instruction. In fact, three of the creative writing pedagogy teachers in my study assigned *The Triggering Town: Lectures and Essays on Poetry*

and Writing in which Richard Hugo, reflecting what is perhaps an American bias of form over content, quips, “If you want to communicate, use the telephone” (Hugo, 5). My own experience as a student, teacher, and observer in creative writing classrooms also suggests that Martin and Ramsden’s categories of description would not be particularly useful in describing variation in contemporary American creative writing classrooms.

More applicable to my study was Donna Harp Ziegenfuss’s phenomenographic analysis of how postsecondary teachers design their courses. Ziegenfuss identified five non-hierarchical categories of description for how course design was determined: Structure of framework, Needs Focused, Outcomes based, Process- or Sequence-driven, and as Part of a Bigger Picture. She noted that “faculty used several of the five course design categories simultaneously or in a particular sequence” rather than fitting into a single category (77). Ziegenfuss found that “phenomenography provided a detailed understanding of the scope of course design process variations, which will help faculty as they develop an awareness of their own conceptions about teaching, learning, and course design” and would aid professional developers focused on helping teachers rethink “processes and priorities that will lead to personal conceptual change” (78). In addition to a table illustrating the five categories of description, Ziegenfuss included a figure describing the “outcome space structure for the relationship of the five course design categories of description” that positioned one category, Part of a Bigger Picture, in a way that could potentially contain the others. The other four categories were represented as related to some categories but not to others, underscoring the complexity of the relationship between categories. Ziegenfuss’s study provided me with a model for

both presenting the categories of description of my study as non-hierarchical and mapping them onto a hierarchical outcome space using aspects suggested by Kember and Trigwell et al.

Finally, this study is indebted to the work of Greg Light whose doctoral dissertation, “The Literature of the Unpublished: Student Conceptions of Creative Writing in Higher Education,” inspired my choice of subject and methodology. In his phenomenographic study, Light examined the conceptions of creative writing students at three universities in the UK. He describes conception alternatively as “understanding and experience of a particular practice” (15), “practical understanding” (41), and “active understanding.” Light identifies seven types of student conception ranging from Releasing (in which creative writing is seen as self-expression, with no interest in an outside reader) to Critiquing (in which “the writer illustrates a deep sense of care for both their material and for how they integrate it with the reader” (223) but also integrates “a critical perspective toward particular issues of the prevailing readership” (224). By demonstrating that students’ conceptions changed as their creative writing education progressed, Light provided compelling evidence that creative writing can be taught. He also shows how qualitative research can be used to inform practice and build theory in Creative Writing.

In addition to his categories of description of student conceptions, Light’s ambitious study develops the only theory of creative writing I have ever seen. His insights into conceptual development as a marker of learning and his suggestion that this development strongly resembles the conceptual changes of composition students are of vital importance to teachers of both creative writing and composition.

Light's work convinced me of the value of studying creative writing pedagogy teachers' *conceptions* which for my purposes I define as *beliefs, understandings, attitudes, and values that guide behavior*. I am also indebted to him for introducing me to phenomenography. As a way of "describing the phenomena in the world as others see them" (Marton and Booth, 111) phenomenography is a particularly appropriate tool for investigating teachers' conceptions of their teaching experiences as I will demonstrate in the following chapter.

Other Research Useful to this Study

I also found value in additional education research, particularly research on *teacher beliefs and conceptions* and *teacher training*.

Research on *teacher beliefs* was important in helping me establish the importance of pedagogic identity as an influence on teachers' practices. "Few would argue that the beliefs teachers hold influence their perceptions and judgments, which, in turn, affect their behavior in the classroom, or that understanding the belief structures of teachers and teacher candidates is essential to improving their professional preparation and teaching practices" Pajares states, and cites a long list of research in support of this claim (309). Pajares argues that "beliefs are far more influential than knowledge in determining how individuals organize and define tasks and problems and are strong predictors of behavior" (311). What teachers do in the classroom is strongly influenced by what they believe, both about their subject matter and about teaching itself (Pajares, 304). Understanding this concept was important as I sought to

understand the conceptions of creative writing pedagogy teachers and how these related to their teaching practices as documented in their syllabi.

Much of the research on teacher beliefs, however, is grounded in the study of teachers in primary and secondary education, a population that has little in common with my study participants. While this body of research supports the value of studying teachers' conceptions, the communities of practice in which this research was conducted bears little resemblance to the creative writing pedagogy classroom.

The scant but important research on *teacher training*, particularly in higher education, demonstrates that pedagogic instruction for postsecondary teaching deserves far greater attention and emphasis. In the field of composition, where first year writing teachers are routinely introduced to teaching through a one- or two-day seminar, a study found that teachers' classroom practices showed little or no evidence of their pedagogic training. Researchers concluded that "a program of regular, formal, directed pedagogy education *must* continue beyond the first year if we hope to have any substantial, lasting effect on how TAs teach and think about teaching writing" (Reid, Estrem, and Belcheir, 61). The preponderance of research on teacher training in higher education focuses on teachers who receive brief seminars or participate in generic pedagogy courses offered by universities for new teachers across disciplines. It thus provides little insight into the effectiveness of full-semester, discipline-specific pedagogy courses, and none on creative writing pedagogy courses specifically. Furthermore, many of these studies focus on training in relation to teacher confidence and effectiveness. These factors are obviously important, but my particular interest is in how conceptions of teachers and teaching influence instruction in creative writing pedagogy. While it is

likely that a more mature conception of teaching and the development of a strong pedagogic identity could help new teachers feel more confident and be more effective, investigating that claim is beyond the scope of this study.

I now turn to a consideration of the literature as it takes up the issue of creative writing communities of practice, pedagogic identity, and the creative writing pedagogy course.

Review of Creative Writing Pedagogy Scholarship

Creative writing pedagogy as a subject of scholarship is relatively new, and the quantity and quality of that research cannot compare to the literature of related fields like Composition and Literary Studies. Creative writers in the academy have historically shown little interest in investing time and energy in research and theory-building, preferring to focus on their creative work instead. This understandable inclination has an added incentive in the U.S. where hiring, tenure and promotion of creative writers in academia are largely determined by literary rather than scholarly publication.

The preponderance of creative writing pedagogy scholarship is comprised of what Tim Meyers refers to as “craft criticism,” “critical prose written by self- or institutionally identified ‘creative writers’” in which “a concern with textual production takes precedence over any concern with textual interpretation” (*(Re)Writing Craft*, 34). Craft critics may write about their own writing processes or advise other writers on how to write. Craft criticism also encompasses books and articles on creative writing pedagogy of the “how-to” variety that recommend classroom strategies and activities based on the evidence that “it worked for me.” Ted Lardner called this type of writing about pedagogy

“recipe-swapping”; Kelly Ritter and Stephanie Vanderslice labeled it, along with other types of craft criticism, *lore* (*Can It Be Taught?* 2008, xiii). *Lore* is a term defined by composition scholar Stephen North as “the accumulated body of traditions, practices, and beliefs...that influence how writing is done, learned and taught” (xiii). While acknowledging that *lore* is “a powerful, complicated discourse”, Ritter and Vanderslice warn that “a field whose teaching practices and theories are relatively unexamined runs the risk of being dominated by an ever more unwieldy body of knowledge and practices, some of which have likely outgrown their usefulness or been misapplied” (xv). Nevertheless, creative writing pedagogy scholarship provides a rich resource for an examination of how creative writers in the academy understand and experience their pedagogic practice and the communities in which they work.

Creative Writing Communities of Practice: Writer’s Workshop

In this section I will consider scholarship focused on creative writing’s most familiar and contested community of practice, the writer’s workshop.

The term “writer’s workshop” (used interchangeably with “writers’ workshop”, “writing workshop”, and simply “workshop”) is used to refer to both the process of whole-group peer review that is the “signature pedagogy” (Donnelly, 2012) of creative writing as well as the physical space where this practice of “workshopping” takes place. The workshop is so central to creative writing education that “writer’s workshop” has come to stand not only for the creative writing classroom but the creative writing program itself. Because of these multiple meanings, I will refer to *writer’s workshop* as

any creative writing community of practice in which the workshop method of instruction is habitually practiced.

While no comprehensive survey exists, the vast majority of creative writing classrooms and programs in the United States could be considered writer's workshops under this broad definition. Donnelly's survey of 152 undergraduate creative writing teachers (Donnelly 2010: 3) confirms AWP's claim that "most teachers of writing find they are most effective in the workshop format" (AWP 2010, 2011), although Shelnett counters that "the assumption could easily be...that most teachers of creative writing find the workshop format effective because it is the only format they know" (16). Lacking a creative writing pedagogy course in which a critical examination of the workshop method could be made, most creative writing teachers rely on their own experience as students in a workshop to structure their own teaching practice. They may "fall back on the workshop in its simplest form: 'going over' poems and stories in a big circle, holding forth from time to time, pretending to have read the material carefully, breaking up squabbles like a hall monitor, marking time" (Ostrom in Bishop and Ostrom 1994: xiv). In other words, a lack of pedagogical training both discourages innovation and permits a version of workshop teaching that occludes the potential for deeper learning.

Despite its prevalence, the workshop has had its share of critics both within and without academia. In the 1980s and 90s, the workshop came under attack for producing "McPoems" and "assembly-line fiction" that were "charming and interchangeable" and "competently but unexcitingly written" (Hall, 1983; Aldridge 1992: 24). Mary Swander admits to having taught using "the abusive basketball-coach

method” and also having suffered under it (Leahy 2005: 167) while Iowa alumni Brady Udall explains that having a story “torn to bits” is “what comes natural in a Workshop class” (Grimes 1999: 654). The workshop has been viewed as pedagogically indefensible because “a program that relies on critiquing student work as the primary means of writing instruction” fails to provide students with “an understanding of the composing process” and assumes, often erroneously, that students have a sufficient background in literature and literary criticism to render literary judgment on their peers (Moxley, Shelnutt in Moxley 1989: xvi, 8). Michelene Wandor, one of the fiercest critics of the workshop, argues that “Untheorized (or, at best, very under-theorized) principles of ‘criticism’ are translated into by turns brutal or patronizing exchanges. ... The apparent sanctuary within which creativity is supposed to flourish turns out to be a repository for a set of Emperor’s clothes which do not fit” (131). What should be a community that supports creative practice has become, according to Wandor, an arena for feedback that adheres to no theory and encourages competitiveness.

While criticisms of writer’s workshop are numerous, comprehensive discussions of alternatives are less easy to find. Most suggestions for alternative classroom practices are described as exercises and activities that supplement rather than replace writer’s workshop. Even Tom Hunley’s *Teaching Poetry Writing: A Five-Canon Approach*, a book-length description of an approach to teaching poetry built on the structure of classical rhetoric that serves as a replacement for writer’s workshop, includes on-line workshopping as one of its components.

Among the limited scholarship on workshop alternatives, three books deserve special mention here. One is Hazel Smith’s *The Writing Experiment: Strategies for*

Innovative Creative Writing, a textbook for a semester- or year-long course in creative writing that offers a comprehensive alternative to the writer's workshop. Grounded in critical and cultural theory, Smith's book favors experimental texts and techniques that are worlds away from the straightforward realism and autobiographical narratives commonly written and critiqued in traditional writers' workshops. Smith teaches at the University of Canberra and presumably intended this book for use in Australian creative writing classes. Her approach to teaching creative writing is playful and process-oriented. It includes introductory and advanced strategies for writing that are not divided by genre as is common in American creative writing courses. In contrast to the realism favored by traditional American writer's workshops, Smith emphasizes "Postmodern F(r)ictions" that encourage students to develop plots and then subvert them, eschew "well-rounded" characters, and create new worlds and languages. Suggested strategies include techniques such as collage and erasure and include performance and mixed media. Unlike the writer's workshop approach that focuses on an untheorized understanding of "what works", Smith ends each chapter with a list of references including many works of postmodern theory.

The second book is Alexandria Peary and Tom C. Hunley's edited collection, *Creative Writing Pedagogies for the Twenty-First Century*. Modeled after Tate, Rupiper and Schick's *A Guide to Composition Pedagogies*, Peary and Hunley's book applies pedagogies familiar to compositionists—including Process Pedagogy, Rhetorical Pedagogy, and Writing Center Pedagogy—to the creative writing classroom. For instance, a process-oriented creative writing class might emphasize Invention Exercises and other forms of pre-writing; a rhetorical approach might encourage students to

consider the ethos of their characters; a writing center approach would focus on conversations about texts rather than attempts to “fix” them or decide “what works.” In addition to descriptions of alternative pedagogies grounded in theory, each chapter offers practical suggestions for incorporation into the creative writing classroom. The primary difficulty with this collection, which the editors acknowledge in their prologue, is that it may appear that the book is “advocating...that creative writers merely mime compositionists.” In addition to the approaches described in the text, Peary and Hunley’s book is valuable simply for helping creative writing teachers gain awareness that creative writing pedagogy need not be monolithic, warning that “workshop can become detrimental when allowed to function as the only pedagogy in a creative writing program” (2).

Finally, Stephanie Vanderslice’s *Rethinking Creative Writing in Higher Education: Programs and Practices that Work* describes innovative American and British creative writing programs that, while they may continue to use the workshop method, introduce complementary teaching practices such as community service, project-based learning, and publishing. Among the programs Vanderslice highlights are the Piper Center at Arizona State University which sends MFA students to teach writing in local schools; intermediate courses at Bath Spa University in the UK that require undergraduates to propose, develop, pitch, and market writing projects; and the Publishing Laboratory in the University of North Carolina Wilmington’s MFA program that gives students training and practical experience in editing and publishing. Included in some of the programs featured in the book are courses in creative writing pedagogy which, Vanderslice emphasizes, is “a development I would argue is essential to the

future survival of creative writing in higher education” (96). For Vanderslice and other creative writing scholars, instituting pedagogic training in graduate creative writing programs is vital for the future of Creative Writing as an academic discipline.

Rethinking Creative Writing would be suitable as a central text in a creative writing pedagogy course.

Although criticism of the workshop method is abundant, writer’s workshop also has defenders. In her introduction to *Does the Writing Workshop Still Work?* Dianne Donnelly briefly considers Tim Mayers’ rationale for why the workshop persists in spite of widespread criticism, including “creative writing’s investment in the notion that writers are born and not made [which] makes the whole issue of pedagogy suspect from the onset”, the “identity of authors as writers first, teachers second” and the “lack of explicit attention to pedagogy” (1). Instead of countering these charges, Donnelly suggests that “we need to ask: What might be gained by flexing the elasticity of the workshop model? How might we add texture and rigor to its applaudable merits?” (2). It is clear that for Donnelly, her title’s question has already been answered in the affirmative. Not surprisingly, the majority of the contributors to *Does the Workshop Still Work?* come out in favor of some form of writer’s workshop in spite of reservations, including Mayers:

The writing workshop model can still work *if* it is used within meaningful and enabling contexts, *if* writing workshops are clearly linked to other kinds of assignments and classroom activities, and *if* the workshop can be exploited as a site for highlighting the variable and complicated ways in which writers think (or do not think) about the readers they one day hope to reach. In fact,

the writing workshop may be the most fertile available site for such considerations... (103, original emphases).

While acknowledging that “the workshop model has received a considerable amount of ‘bad press’”, Mayers, himself a vocal critic of the traditional workshop method, maintains that “at its best, the writing workshop model can provide aspiring writers with insights into their own writing that would have taken a long time, and perhaps much wasted effort, to realize otherwise.” Mayers’ qualified advocacy of the writing workshop may be due, in part, to the dearth of other models that could provide developing writers with the “insights into their own writing” that Mayers credits the workshop model with providing, but without the demerits he also recognizes (96).

Like Mayers, other contributors to *Does the Writing Workshop Still Work?* suggest that the workshop method be supplemented rather than supplanted. “Workshops are the beating heart of creative writing teaching,” Sue Roe argues, because they are “popular, encouraging, they facilitate discussion” (194). Nevertheless, she advocates transforming the writer’s workshop into a “masterclass” in which “practitioners are simultaneously studying the work of established artists in their medium” (201). While “workshops have always been and will always be fundamental,” they are “launch pads rather than flights” where developing writers learn and practice “rehearsal strategies” rather than crucibles for transforming fledgling work into “polished and finessed performance” (204). Although voicing fewer reservations than Mayers, Roe’s advocacy of the workshop is contingent on substantial revisions to its form and methods.

Anna Leahy is perhaps the most outspoken advocate of the workshop model, declaring that “having taught for many years...I see how successful the workshop is and can be for decades to come” (63). She contends that “the workshop can beautifully balance guidance and innovation” (74) and “encourage great strides in students over and beyond an academic term” (75). Like Donnelly, Leahy points out the ubiquity of the workshop method in creative writing programs and AWP’s advocacy of this pedagogical approach. Also like Donnelly, Leahy is interested in recognizing writing workshop “as a signature pedagogy” that is “good for the profession” (75, 65). Although in her own edited collection, *Power and Identity in the Creative Writing Classroom* (2005) Leahy found the Iowa Writers’ Workshop philosophy that underlies the workshop method “ill adapted for the expanding field as a whole” (xii), five years later she is ready to declare that “the work our students do...is evidence of the workshop’s effectiveness” (Donnelly 2010, 64). Likewise Donnelly, while championing the writing workshop as Creative Writing’s “signature pedagogy”, acknowledges that “as a signature pedagogy, the traditional workshop model, without a more rigorous and intellectual focus, does not best represent the stability of creative writing as a discipline” (Donnelly 2012, 5).

Such confusions abound in creative writing pedagogy scholarship, in part because there is so little understanding of whether local instantiations of the workshop resemble workshops across the field. While Bizarro (2004) and Moxley (2010) both claim that the workshop has changed little since the establishment of the Iowa Writers’ Workshop in the 1930s, Leahy and Donnelly insist that the workshop has become more flexible and intentional and less subject to abuse, “two completely different responses that cancel each other out” (Vanderslice, 2011, 122). Without a more robust and widely read body of

scholarship or creative writing pedagogy courses that would invite practitioners to look critically at these opposing claims, it is unlikely that Creative Writing can establish its pedagogy or disciplinary status with certainty.

To summarize, the writer's workshop as a community in which the workshop method is practiced has been the iconic scene of creative writing education since the middle of the 20th century. Although many creative writing scholars have been highly critical of the practice, writer's workshop as a pedagogic method has also been defended and even championed as Creative Writing's "signature pedagogy." Some creative writing teachers claim that contemporary workshops are significantly different from workshops of the past while others claim the opposite is true; in the absence of empirical research on creative writing programs as a collective, no claims of change or permanence can be supported beyond the local. Because "the brunt of work on pedagogy inside creative writing studies has focused on dealing with the blessings and limitations of just one pedagogic model", it is not difficult to understand why some form of writer's workshop continues to be the predominant pedagogy of creative writing. Research into conceptions of creative writing pedagogy and the communities in which these conceptions are formed may spur greater awareness of the variety of teaching options available to creative writing teachers.

Creative Writing Teachers' Conceptions of Pedagogic Identity

In this section, I will use the concept of pedagogic identity to define the many ways creative writing teachers define themselves and other teachers of creative writing.

Interest in creative writing teachers' conceptions of teaching identity is not new. In 1999, Bishop wrote, 'Some days I am a writer-who-teaches (WT) and on others I am a teacher-who-writes (TW) but inevitably, always, I am one or the other' (14). Bishop invented a symbol, two arrows curved to form a circle, to represent the synthesis of these identities, the writer-teacher-writer. She hoped to invite 'other writing teachers to what for me is an imaginable parlor ... to become part of a company of writer-scholar-teachers who aim to make their practices more pleasurable' (28). Andrew similarly extends the examination of writer-teachers and teacher-writers to the "triple agency" of "teacher-researcher-writers", an identity more familiar in Australia than the United States (n. pag.). Bishop's training in both composition and creative writing inspired her belief that "Writing and the teaching of writing are mutually enriching activities" (Bizzaro and Culhane, xiii). Although her interest in using ethnography to capture the experiences of writing teachers was not well accepted by compositionists or creative writers, her example as a writer-teacher-scholar has inspired others with similar training to engage in creative writing pedagogy scholarship beyond self-reports of "what works" and arguments for and against writer's workshop. Empirical research, however, is still negligible, in part because there is no established tradition for creative writing research.

Katharine Haake observed "a fundamental schism between writer-artists and writer-(artist)-teachers. I thought of the former sometimes as mini-Shakespeares, and of the latter as dedicated worker-bee types" (2000, 4). Mary Ann Cain, writing about her own experience of studying fiction writing with a Famous Author while enrolled in a composition course, personified the divide between these pedagogic approaches as the

difference between Charming Tyrants and Faceless Facilitators when what she sought was a Mentor (2007). Haake and Cain represent writing teachers as one type of pedagogic identity or another while Bishop and Andrew advocate that writers who are also teachers and scholars synthesize their multiple roles in order to find new 'places to stand' in the gray area between composition and creative writing (Bishop 1999). Yet the manner in which creative writers conceive of and perform their roles as creative writing teachers seems to involve a more complex process than adopting a single pedagogic identity or developing a synthesis of the roles of writer, teacher, and scholar.

In the rest of this section, I will describe five pedagogic identities I have identified from the literature on creative writing pedagogy: The Master Craftsperson (Baldwin, quoted in Lockwood, 2), The Famous Author, (Ritter, "Ethos"), The Mentor (Moody), The Eccentric (Camoin; Ritter, "Writing Professionals"), and The Literary Intellectual (Dawson). I want to emphasize, as Zukas and Malcolm did in their study, that these pedagogic identities are neither exclusive nor exhaustive. Creative writing teachers may embrace more than one identity at the same time or different identities at different times. A further search of the literature, particularly the growing body of international scholarship that has accumulated over the past five years, would likely yield additional pedagogic identities. I will return to the identities I discuss here in Chapter Seven, where I compare them to the pedagogy identities I discovered in the interview transcripts of my study participants. In making this comparison, I am interested in whether the pedagogic identities discussed by creative writing pedagogy teachers conform to or depart from those identities familiar in the literature. I include this extra step because I am interested in whether the pedagogic identities discussed in the literature accurately

reflect the identities referenced by creative writing pedagogy teachers. A close alignment between the literature and the research data could imply that thinking about creative writing pedagogy has not changed as much as Leahy and Donnelly have suggested; differences between research findings and the literature could suggest that the conceptions of at least some creative writing pedagogy teachers have expanded beyond traditional norms.

The Master Craftsperson

The metaphor of the teacher as Master Craftsperson and student writers as apprentices is by far the most popular conception of creative writing education in the literature (McGurl, 35). Although references may go back even earlier, the creative writing teacher as master craftsman [sic] is referred to in Alec Clegg and Michael Baldwin's 1959 *Poetry without Tears*. Baldwin writes, "The classroom is not a lecture room; still less is it a courtroom. At most it is a workshop, with the teacher the master craftsman" (Lockwood, 2). The term Master Craftsperson assumes not only that creative writing teachers are masters of their craft, but that their relationship to students is defined in terms of the master-apprentice relationship. It is the pedagogic identity of the Master Craftsperson, and the master-apprentice relationship predicated on that identity, that gives rise to the workshop metaphor that defines the community in which the Master Craftsperson and his or her apprentices practice their craft. The Master Writer in the writer's workshop is meant to be analogous to the woodworker in her workshop or the artist in his studio, yet these analogies fall apart under scrutiny. The woodworker and the artist teach their craft to apprentices through modeling and

demonstration; apprentices assist Masters and their journeymen, guided by their directions and corrections, until they are sufficiently practiced in the craft to become journeymen or Masters themselves. The writer's workshop follows no such practices. As McGurl points out, "neither undergraduate nor graduate student writers typically sit alongside their teachers all day as they practice their craft, as the anachronistic term 'apprenticeship' implies....Moreover, the teacher's own writing is only rarely introduced into the workshop; class time instead is given over to the consideration of...writings by the apprentices themselves" (36). Master Writers do not demonstrate or seek assistance from apprentices on work in progress. Instead, apprentices bring works in progress into the workshop to be critiqued by the Master and other apprentices.

The Master Craftsperson has come to represent an experienced, usually well-published writer-teacher who moderates and contributes to the critique of student work in progress in the writer's workshop. The Master Craftsman may also contribute anecdotes and advice (such as "show, don't tell") based on their experience or the lore handed down from their own education as creative writers. Lastly, the Master Craftsperson may serve as a "living example of an actual author" or "a charismatic model of *creative being*" for beginning writers to emulate (McGurl, 4, 36).

The Master Craftsperson is so prevalent a figure in creative writing that it is possible to identify sub-categories within this pedagogic identity. Two of the following pedagogic identities—The Famous Author and The Mentor—can be thought of as special cases of the Master Craftsperson while The Eccentric and The Literary Intellectual may or may not overlap with this pedagogic identity.

The Famous Author

Few people would contest the fact that U.S. graduate creative writing programs are staffed with literary celebrities hired on the basis of their literary reputations rather than their interest or skill in teaching. While it is hardly unusual for senior faculty in any academic discipline to be hired on the basis of their research instead of their pedagogy, the difference is that, in the “‘star’ system of creative writing pedagogy”, faculty may enjoy fame that extends well beyond academic circles (Ritter, “How the Old Man Does It,” 84). In “a discipline with a stake in community fame,” creative writing programs rely on celebrity faculty to attract “public recognition and much-needed capital” (85). Thus, being a Famous Author may, in a sense, be a more important hiring qualification than being a good writer.

Like The Master Craftsperson, The Famous Author is a recognized authority whom students are encouraged to emulate. Unlike Master Craftspersons, Famous Authors—like Cain’s “Famous Author/Charming Tyrant”—may have reduced course loads and teach only small classes of exceptionally gifted students. While the presence of Famous Authors may be one of the primary reasons why potential graduate students apply to particular programs, Famous Authors may have only superficial interaction with the majority of the students, leading Jesse Lee Kercheval to describe her graduate education as “‘sharing an elevator with someone famous for a little while’” (Vanderslice, *Rethinking*, 51). Some students may seek to become “disciples” of The Famous Author, longing “to be associated with and valued by the faculty star” even as they “strongly desire to have [extra-institutional fame] for themselves” (Ritter, “How the Old Man Does It,” 86, 87).

No doubt some Famous Authors are excellent teachers as well as excellent writers, but the most common attribution of Famous Authors in the literature is a tendency to disdain teaching as merely the means by which they support their creative work, an attitude Hans Ostrom characterizes as, “Out of my way—I have classes to get through and novels to write” (Bishop and Ostrom, xiii). As such, the pedagogic identity of The Famous Author is a particularly poor choice for graduate students to imitate. Ritter argues that in graduate programs dominated by one or more Famous Authors, graduate students may function as “lower level writing apprentices” for whom “star faculty...serve as role models to emulate, rather than as true mentors positioned to help students professionalize themselves as writers *and* teachers” (“How the Old Man Does It”, 88-89). The situation Ritter describes is unlikely to provide graduate students with pedagogic training or improve teaching in undergraduate creative writing courses.

The Mentor

Rick Moody describes the idiosyncratic yet intimate teaching styles of his former teachers at Brown, Angela Carter and John Hawkes, as far better models for writing instruction than the graduate workshops he participated in at Columbia University, which he contends were “about sales and marketing...resembling a focus group or the test screening of a Hollywood film.” Moody admits that he wrote in order to please his teachers at Brown, “but the fact is that I got better by writing in order to please them, and their responses made me excited to go back and work, and excited to learn more.” When Carter “had the audacity to tell me that drugs were not good for my work and that

I was reading crap,” Moody experienced this advice as a valuable form of mentorship (Moody, n. pag.).

Many creative writing instructors consider mentorship to be part of their role as teachers. In his survey of 150 creative writing teachers, Vandermeulen found that 82% of them “indicated they served as ‘Mentor for at least one person—student, colleague, community member” (Vandermeulen, 119). Vandermeulen writes that a mentor “helps a learner move forward on a journey of becoming, and whether the journey is vocational, personal, or spiritual, the mentor is one who has traveled that road” (119). Like The Master Craftsperson, The Mentor is an established writer who can offer guidance to the developing writer based on his or her own experience. The relationship between a mentor and mentee, however, is more intimate than the relationship between master and apprentice. A Mentor functions as a trusted adviser who cares about students’ personal growth as well as their development as writers. Mentors may offer life advice as well as writing advice and may use their influence to help launch the writing careers of their students.

While a pedagogic identity as Mentor seems to appeal to many creative writing teachers, Haake warns against the mentor model of instruction because of “the dissidence that exists between the traditional male ‘mentor’ and his often female students” (1994, 80). Students who do not share the race, gender, sexual orientation, or stylistic preferences of their teachers may feel pressure to be or write like their mentors, a criticism frequently made of the relationship between teacher and students in the writer’s workshop.

Haake's caution also applies to creative writing graduate students learning to be teachers of creative writing. Petty (2005) confirmed how difficult it was for her, as a young African American woman, to teach as her mentor, an older white man, had. Yet without courses in creative writing pedagogy, new teachers have only the example of their own teachers to fall back on.

The Eccentric

Until quite recently, creative writers in the university were often seen in opposition to academics—scholars, generally holding doctoral degrees, who teach and conduct research within narrow specialties and whose publications are read primarily by other academics. Creative writers, by contrast, were described as “the exotica of English departments” who “wear funny clothes” and “get drunk in public” (Camoin, 3). Popular memoirs of the first decades of the Iowa Writer's Workshop contain numerous reports of famous writers hired to teach for a year or a semester whose erratic, often self-destructive behavior is viewed with either disgust or amused tolerance (Dana, Olsen and Schaeffer). An anecdote of a creative writing teacher at another writing program who “turned up to teach class, drunk and with a Colt .45” is repeated with relish as evidence that “the American writers' workshop is a party” (Jones, quoted in Bishop, “The More Things Change,” 237-238).

While creative writing programs today have significantly less tolerance for outrageous behavior, even from celebrity writers, Ritter points out that eccentricity, viewed as a mark of creativity, is often viewed as a qualification for teaching a course in creative writing, alleviating the need for creative writing pedagogy training:

Many argue that teachers of creative writing are “eccentric” and thus appealing to “creative students.” How many university officials would use this argument to rationalize the teaching of mathematics, science, or technology? How many officials would feel confident saying to the parent of an engineering student, “Johnny will benefit much more from being in Wacky Bob's fundamentals course than being in Properly Trained Pete's course. Bob is so entertaining, he doesn't believe in research or experimentation. The kids just kick back and soak it all in.’ Absurd? Of course, but only because I've changed the department in question. In creative writing programs all across the country, it's perfectly acceptable for us to assert that we value creativity over pedagogy (as if the two were mutually exclusive) and devalue process, documentation, and preparation (“Professional Writers”, 215).

While I would not want a “Properly Trained” teacher to teach a creative writing course that remotely resembled a traditionally taught course in an academic subject like mathematics, I agree with Ritter that an eccentric personality should not in itself be considered a qualification to teach creative writing. The Eccentric as a pedagogic identity may appear to be an appealing alternative to the “buttoned-up” academic, but Ritter points out that the “collective anti-academic identity” of creative writers in the academy “carries with it frequent exclusion from the regular theoretical, pedagogical training that other...disciplines might automatically seek to provide” (210). Teachers of creative writing who have had pedagogic training, whether or not they are “eccentric,”

would understand the purpose behind their teaching methods and the learning goals they want to help their students achieve.

The Literary Intellectual

The Literary Intellectual is the least prevalent of the pedagogic identities I mention here. Australian teacher and writer Paul Dawson, author of the highly respected *Creative Writing and the New Humanities*, conceives of a Literary Intellectual as “an intellectual who practices oppositional criticism”, (191) a form of criticism which “breaks with the tradition of *evaluation*” and focuses on “relating literary works to the social forces of cultural production and consumption” (189). Dawson believes that “as well as professional artists who pass on their knowledge to literary aspirants, university teachers of writing must be recognized as academics who practice criticism in the workshop.” This criticism should be based on “a poetics which encourages a view of literature as a public intellectual practice, rather than a means for the empowerment of individual identities” (204). While other Australian creative writing scholars have embraced this term (for instance, Andrew, “Double Agents and Triple”), it is a position at odds with both the American practice of hiring celebrity writers and the anti-intellectual stance of many writers teaching in universities. Not surprisingly, then, it is not a term that has been taken up by American creative writing scholars.

As I have stated, I do not mean to suggest that these are the only pedagogic identities of creative writing teachers present in the literature, although I would suggest that some variation of the Master Craftsperson is the most prevalent. What I am

interested in is how these pedagogic identities shape our perceptions of creative writing teachers and our understanding of how creative writing can or should be taught. I am especially interested in how these pedagogic identities overlap with those identified by the seven creative writing pedagogy teachers in my study, a subject I will return to in Chapter Seven.

I now turn to the discourse on creative writing pedagogy courses which serves as the slender but essential foundation for my study.

The Creative Writing Pedagogy Course in Creative Writing Pedagogy Scholarship

As early as 1994, Wendy Bishop called for the establishment of creative writing pedagogy seminars to better prepare teachers of creative writing. Declaring her hope for “nothing less than to change our profession”, she affirmed that “[l]earning to teach better is tough, exhilarating, and possible. I’m talking here about the need I see for a deep revision of what it means to teach and learn creative writing, a reprioritization of products and processes, a curriculum that investigates itself, that denounces old premises, topples myths, renames, and reaffirms” (“Afterword,” 291-292). The seminar she envisioned would “address theory, research, and practice; it can and should include writing and workshopping; it should address what we know and what we need to know—how to design courses, how to grade; it should take a student and a teacher beyond the boundaries of what they themselves have experienced into investigation of alternatives, into deeper understandings of students, into broader examinations of cultures, politics, and institutional systems” (292).

Bishop envisioned the creative writing pedagogy seminar or course as a community of practice where writer-scholar-teachers could investigate not only what and how we teach creative writing, but why. She blamed “our failure to invest in creative writing education courses” for “the difficulty of accumulating and reflecting on knowledge in this field” (“The More Things Change,” p. 240). Other creative writing scholars (Ritter, “Professional Writers,” Leahy, *Power and Identity*, Donnelly, “Establishing”) have joined their voices with Bishop’s in deploring the absence of creative writing pedagogy courses and suggesting what such courses should encompass. Absent from this scholarship is an examination of the creative writing pedagogy classroom as a community of practice in which pedagogic identities are formed.

Also absent from Bishop’s discussion of creative writing pedagogy courses is an examination of existing courses. While Bishop shares testimonials from students in her own pedagogy seminar, (“Afterword,” 293-294) she does not provide specifics about what her own seminar entailed or provide a model for a course in creative writing pedagogy that would achieve her ambitious aims. This study is, in part, an attempt to fill that gap.

In 2001, Kelly Ritter became the first scholar to publish a study on creative writing pedagogy courses. Her 1999 survey of 25 U.S. creative writing Ph.D. programs revealed that only four offered any teacher training specifically for creative writing, although most required candidates to complete a course in composition pedagogy. She concluded that “most U.S. universities have no specific training in place that would prepare candidates to enter the creative writing classroom even remotely as well

prepared as their rhetoric and composition Ph.D. counterparts” (“Professional Writers/Writing Professionals”, p. 213).

Ritter’s study has been important in calling attention to the lack of emphasis on teacher training in even creative writing Ph.D. programs, but as a map of the current state of creative writing pedagogy communities of practice, it has significant limitations. First, Ritter looked only at the 25 U.S. creative writing Ph.D. programs then in existence; her survey did not include MFA programs which, at least today, are as or more likely to include a pedagogy course than Ph.D. programs. Second, Ritter was primarily interested in pointing out the rarity of creative writing pedagogy courses rather than describing courses already in existence. While she provides some specifics about teacher training available to creative writing students in the University of Georgia’s Ph.D. program and for graduate student instructors at the University of Michigan (which has no Ph.D. program in Creative Writing and whose pedagogic training is geared toward the teaching of composition), she does not include detailed descriptions of course objectives, reading lists, and assignments. Finally, Ritter’s study was conducted 16 years ago; the information she gathered in 1999 is no longer current. For instance, Western Michigan University, listed as one of the four Ph.D. programs to include a course in creative writing pedagogy, no longer offers such a course. At the same time, the number of creative writing Ph.D. programs has grown from 25 to 42, meaning that Ritter’s study examined only slightly more than half of the Ph.D. programs now in existence. Nevertheless, Ritter’s study continues to be cited in professional articles and dissertations because it is one of only two published articles to offer any documentation of creative writing pedagogy courses.

The other article is “English 890,” Kwame Dawes and Christy Friend’s 2003 article describing a course they co-taught at the University of South Carolina. Published as part of *Composition Studies’ Course Designs Series*, it includes a wealth of detail: a syllabus complete with a course description, major assignments, reading list, topic listings, and course schedule; a critical statement; and reflective comments by both teachers. Even among creative writing pedagogy courses, Dawes and Friend’s course was unusual as a teaching collaboration between a well-known poet and a composition specialist. The course, described as “a broad-ranging introduction to theories, research, and methods of teaching creative writing” was open to MA and Ph.D. English students, creative writing MFA students, and graduate students in English Education. As such, it included consideration of teaching in primary and secondary schools and community settings as well as in undergraduate and graduate creative writing programs. Topics included creative writing processes; teaching, learning, responding to, and assessing creative writing; creative writing as literary art, therapy, and sociopolitical activity; and professional issues. In addition to its team-taught design, some of the course’s most distinguishing features were its incorporation of readings from creative writing, composition, education, and creativity studies; a variety of writing assignments in creative and academic genres; a requirement that all students “develop and actually teach creative writing lessons at sites of their choice” (116), and a “rich mix of theories, research and practice that would help students draw on the resources of both composition and creative writing to approach their writing and their teaching in more thoughtful ways” (116). Drawing on scholarship by Wendy Bishop, Tim Mayers, and Harriet Malinowitz, Dawes and Friend “believed that an interdisciplinary seminar on

creative writing pedagogy would provide a space to extend the conversations and collaborative projects already underway and to more rigorously explore connections between our two fields” (115). While many scholars have suggested connecting creative writing and composition pedagogies, Dawes and Friend’s course actually did so, opening a space for productive conversation with students from composition, creative writing, and English education.

What actually happened in the course was both unexpected and instructive. Friend explains that, in the third week in the course, class opinion divided on the issue of who is qualified to teach creative writing. The MFA students, comfortable with the master/apprentice model most familiar in creative writing programs, insisted that only published creative writers were qualified to teach creative writing to anyone but beginning students and children. Some non-MFA students disagreed, believing there were more similarities than differences in the teaching of creative writing and composition. Students on both sides of the divide took offense, believing their own qualifications for teaching had been questioned. Friend admitted that “the class atmosphere for a significant portion of the semester was quite uncomfortable,” although she felt that divisions had largely dissolved by the time students were presenting the results of their teaching experiences to one another.

The unanticipated polarization of students in this otherwise carefully designed course exemplifies the need for—and the difficulty of—changing perceptions about creative writing pedagogy. “Both Kwame and I failed to foresee the degree to which we and our students would be unable to avoid reproducing the conflicting aesthetics, values, and pedagogical perspectives of the traditions in which we’d been trained,”

Friend acknowledged. “We were both, I think, shocked that the ‘genius writer/apprentice’ model of teaching—which we were trying to move past—reared its head so often in our class discussions” (120). Dawes concluded, “What should be clear is that the pedagogy of teaching creative writing is in desperate need of critical attention” (123).

Unfortunately, critical attention is precisely what “the pedagogy of teaching creative writing” has lacked. After “English 890,” no text concerned solely with the teaching of creative writing pedagogy would appear until the publication of Stephanie Vanderslice and Kelly Ritter’s *Teaching Creative Writing to Undergraduates: A Practical Guide and Sourcebook* in 2011. Intended as a textbook for a creative writing pedagogy course or as a self-help guide for the graduate student or new teacher assigned to teach an undergraduate course without benefit of training, this text was clearly a response to the authors’ own early teaching experiences. In the preface, Vanderslice and Ritter state, “We want to help students who look just like us, those many years ago, starting a teaching career and learning on their feet, stumbling and struggling as they go along” (2).

The publication of *Teaching Creative Writing to Undergraduates* speaks to a clear recognition of the need for guidance and resources in creative writing pedagogy for graduate students and new teachers assigned to teach undergraduate courses. While its reader-friendly style and classroom-tested syllabi, exercises, and assignments offer novice teachers useful guidance for planning their own courses, only Vanderslice’s syllabus for a multi-genre, concept-based course provides a model unlikely to have been encountered by graduate students in their own undergraduate workshops. While

sources for further reading are included in the ample bibliography, the text itself gives scant attention to creative writing pedagogical history, theory, or international perspectives. Also missing are any guidelines for the teacher of creative writing pedagogy for how to design a course using this text, how to supplement the book with additional materials and topics, and a discussion of the ways in which teaching a course in creative writing pedagogy differs from teaching a course in creative writing.

My main concern about what I generally consider a useful and necessary text for creative writing and creative writing pedagogy teachers is Chapter Six, entitled “Houston, We Have a Problem: Troubleshooting in the Creative Writing Classroom.” In this chapter Vanderslice and Ritter discuss their techniques for dealing with sensitive, resistant, and mentally ill students (regrettably, Vanderslice and Ritter also consider the inclusion of students of different ethnicities, gender identities, and abilities in this “troubleshooting” chapter instead of considering the heterogeneous classroom as normative). Vanderslice and Ritter are to be commended for warning new teachers of the difficulties that will inevitably arise as a result of bringing together a group of individuals to work collaboratively on a sensitive and complex task. They do not, however, consider whether the teachers’ pedagogic methods rather than the students themselves are contributing to—or even creating—the problem. When a student refuses to be silenced during the workshopping of her piece or finds it emotionally unbearable to hear his work critiqued out loud by 10 or 15 peers, it is the students’ resistance or sensitivity that is considered to be at fault and in need of correction, not the workshop method.

This faulting of students' negative emotional responses to workshop is not unusual. In fact, in her *Perspectives from the Field* following Chapter Six, Aileen Murphy reports that "the sort of generic problematic experiences I have seen many times are students tearing up, or attempting not to tear up, or outright crying because something that we are discussing is still too fresh for them to have put in front of us" (109). Since nearly every creative writing instructor rightly insists that writing turned into class should be the work of the current semester, it is difficult to understand how students can distance themselves from their work, particularly when they are often encouraged to write from personal experience. Murphy's solution to the "problem" of the crying student is to "talk to him or her afterward to make sure all is well before they leave" (109). What Vanderslice and Ritter unfortunately fail to acknowledge is that the source of the difficulty may not rest with the "problem" students but with the pedagogical practice that so many find distressing.

The paucity of information, let alone research, about creative writing pedagogy courses is what inspired me to conduct the present study. It is my hope that this research will encourage further discussion about including creative writing pedagogy instruction as part of graduate creative writing education.

Conclusion

I have argued that the creative writing pedagogy course is a community of practice in which pedagogic identities are formed. Pedagogic identity is a particularly pressing issue in creative writing because many of the writers who teach in creative writing programs identify themselves as writers rather than teachers. Some continue to

claim that creative writing can't be taught even as they make their livings teaching. The perceived conflict between writerly and pedagogic identities have made creative writing teachers reluctant to engage in creative writing pedagogy scholarship and have convinced graduate program directors that literary achievement and time spent in graduate writing workshops adequately prepares graduate students to teach undergraduate courses.

As a result, the “signature pedagogy” of creative writing remains the writer’s workshop despite ongoing criticism of this method. The place of Creative Writing, within the English Department and the university, continues to be debated and its pedagogic goals and methods contested. For this reason, the creative writing pedagogy course as a community of practice becomes a critically important site where pedagogic identities can be discussed and developed in ways that can potentially impact disciplinary thinking on how creative writing teaching and learning is enacted.

Whether, and how, creative writing pedagogy courses can influence the discourse and practice of creative writing pedagogy within Creative Writing as a discipline depends, in part, on the conceptions of creative writing pedagogy teachers as they build a syllabus, select readings, choose activities and assignments, and set learning goals for their students. It also depends on how receptive creative writing communities of practice—including creative writing classrooms, graduate programs, and the discipline as a whole—are to the pedagogic knowledge constructed in these courses.

In conducting interviews with creative writing pedagogy teachers and examining their syllabi, I was interested in discovering the range of conceptions of pedagogic identity held by these seven teachers and analyzing how these conceptions influence the

creative writing pedagogy course. In the next chapter, I will explain the methods I chose to do so.

Chapter III Methodology and Research Methods

Introduction

The aim of this mixed-methods study is a critical examination of creative writing pedagogy teachers' conceptions of pedagogic identity and how these conceptions influence the ways creative writing pedagogy is taught in graduate creative writing programs. As more graduate programs offer creative writing pedagogy courses, I was interested in discovering whether such courses tended to replicate or resist the familiar image of the Master Craftsperson and the writer's workshop or could lead, as Bishop hoped, to "radical revision" in the creative writing is understood and taught. Because Pajares and others educational researchers have established that "beliefs are far more influential than knowledge in determining how individuals organize and define tasks and problems and are stronger predictors of behavior" (311), my study examines the conceptions of seven creative writing pedagogy teachers to explore how they shape the communities of practice in which future teachers of creative writing develop pedagogic identities.

This research was conducted and analyzed using phenomenography, document analysis, and an analysis based on Wenger's conception of communities of practice. In this chapter I will first describe these research approaches and explain why they are appropriate for my study. I will then explain my methods of participant selection and

present profiles of each participant. Finally, I will describe the methods of data collection and analysis that resulted in the syllabi comparisons in Chapter Four, the analysis of creative writing communities of practice in Chapter Five, and the phenomenographic categories of description described in Chapter Six.

Methodology: Phenomenography

Phenomenography is a term coined by Ference Marton to describe a research tradition that “seeks the variation in ways in which people experience situations and phenomena in their worlds” (Svensson, quoted in Marton and Booth, vii). Like phenomenology, phenomenography is interested in human experience, defined by Marton and Booth as “an internal relationship between the person and the world” (206). Unlike phenomenology, in which philosophers seek to discover the “singular essence” of their own experience, the phenomenographic researcher investigates the experiences of others, focusing on the different ways people experience a phenomenon in order to develop an “architecture of this variation in terms of the different aspects that define the phenomena” (Marton and Booth, 117). An *aspect* is defined as “a dimension of variation” (Marton and Booth, 2007). From the perspective of phenomenography, it is the discernment of the possibility of variation that makes learning possible.

Phenomenographers view differences in understanding, not as right or wrong, but as more or less complete experiences of a phenomenon. Experiencing a phenomenon involves the discernment and simultaneous awareness of various aspects of the phenomena, including the whole, its parts, and the relationship between these. Phenomenographers argue that there are a “limited number of qualitatively different

ways in which something is experienced” due to limitations in the number of aspects of a phenomenon people can discern and simultaneously hold in awareness. Thus, “[m]ore advanced ways of experiencing something are...more complex and more inclusive (or more specific) than less advanced ways of experiencing the same thing” (Marton and Booth, 107).

The phenomenographer seeks to uncover the qualitatively different ways a phenomenon is experienced. Phenomenographers don’t distinguish between immediate experience and conceptual thought; instead, they are interested in trying to “describe relations between the individual and various aspects of the world, regardless of whether relations are manifested in the form of immediate experience, conceptual thought, or behavior” (Marton, “Phenomenography,” 194). The unit of analysis in phenomenographic research is “a way of experiencing something” (Marton and Booth, 111). In other words, the unit of analysis is neither the phenomenon nor the person experiencing the phenomenon, but the relationship between the two. This focus is consistent with phenomenography’s recognition that “we cannot describe a world that is independent of our descriptions or us as describers” (113). By examining the qualitatively different ways a phenomenon is experienced, phenomenographers are attempting to understand what accounts for this variation.

Semi-structured interviews are the most common form of data collection, although other methods are possible. In phenomenographic interviews, the interviewer is “trying to elicit underlying meanings and intentional attitudes towards the phenomenon being investigated.” The interviewer uses concrete examples of the phenomenon provided by the interviewee “as a *medium* for exploring the way in which

the interviewee is thinking about or experiencing the phenomenon, that is, those aspects of the phenomenon that they show awareness of” (Åkerlind, “Learning about Phenomenography,” 65, emphasis in the original). For instance, in discussing their experiences as an undergraduate student of creative writing, one of my study participants revealed a preference for teachers who approached teaching creative writing as a craft rather than an art, a pragmatic approach that they also used as a teacher of undergraduate creative writing and modeled for graduate students in the pedagogy course.

While there are variations in the way phenomenographers analyze their data (Åkerlind, “Variation and Commonality”) Åkerlind describes an iterative process wherein the researcher exhaustively examines the data, looking for variances and commonalities within and across transcripts (“Learning about Phenomenography”). Data (in the form of whole transcripts, excerpts, and transcript summaries) are read, re-read, compared, sorted, grouped and re-grouped with an eye toward distinguishing dimensions of variation in one or more aspects of the phenomenon under study. Out of this analysis emerges a structured set of categories of description, “concise accounts of the various perceptions of [the phenomenon] as elucidated within the transcripts” (Barnacle, 48). Categories of description represent “a reasonable characterization of a possible way of experiencing something given the data at hand” (Marton and Booth, 136). These categories usually form a hierarchy such that the category that represents the most complete way of experiencing a phenomenon contains within it elements found in less developed ways of experiencing the same phenomenon. The outcome space produced by phenomenographic research can have significant value in describing

differences in ways of experiencing a phenomenon, including effectiveness in teaching and learning (Micari, et al).

Phenomenographic research has been “particularly aimed at questions of relevance to learning and understanding in an educational setting” (Marton and Booth, 111). Initially used by Marton and his associates in Sweden and elsewhere to understand the different outcomes of learning among schoolchildren and university students, phenomenographic research has also been used to examine understandings of teaching and learning by academics as illustrated by the work of John Bowden and Gerlese S. Åkerlind in Australia. Phenomenographers view the most fundamental aspect of learning as “the way in which we experience acts, situations, and phenomena” (Marton and Booth, 205).

What makes phenomenography a particularly appropriate research approach for exploring *conceptions* of practitioners within communities of practice is that it focuses on what Marton and Booth call “second-order perspectives” (118). First-order perspectives are positivist in orientation; the goal is to describe the world as objectively as possible. Second-order perspectives, in contrast, are phenomenological in orientation; the focus is on how people experience the world. This difference is important to note. “Essentially, a phenomenologically oriented researcher argues that what people believe to be true is more important than any objective reality; people act on what they believe” Fetterman argues. “Moreover, there are real consequences to their actions” (Fetterman, 18). Because phenomenography focuses on second-order perspectives, it privileges the perspectives of the study participants rather than that of

the researcher. As Marton and Booth explain, “In phenomenography the researcher is exploring other people’s experiences by reflecting on *them* (120, original emphasis).

Teaching is “an activity that deliberately sets out to bring about some sort of change in another member of the same species” where the activity is persistent and the results can be evaluated (166-167). While insisting that there is no universal method of bringing about learning, Marton and Booth argue that successful pedagogy requires that the teacher “take the part of the learner” to “bring about a meeting of awareness.” The teacher accomplishes this by first building a relevance structure, “a sense of aim, of direction, in relation to which different aspects of the situation appear more or less relevant” (143), and secondly by introducing variation so that students “are made aware of the variation, the dimension of variation, and of the fact that their own view is just one view of several possible views” (186). In this way, “the teacher can be instrumental to the constitution of the learner’s awareness of the phenomena being addressed” (210). For instance, a primary purpose of this study is to identify different conceptions of pedagogic identity in order to help creative writing teachers gain a critical awareness of their own conceptions of pedagogic identity and how these influence their teaching decisions.

While phenomenography has been widely adopted in Sweden, the United Kingdom, and Australia, like any research approach it has attracted criticism. Viewing phenomenography through a deconstructivist lens, Webb argues that, in spite of its qualitative methods, phenomenographic research is more interested in “a quest for positivist generalisation than the development of hermeneutical understanding” (198). He also argues that phenomenographers are naïve to the influence of their own biases in

interpreting conceptions and to the power dynamics of phenomenography as a privileged educational discourse.

Some of Webb's objections are addressed in Marton and Booth's *Learning and Awareness*, unpublished at the time Webb's article went to press. Marton and Booth emphasize that no conception of a phenomenon can ever be viewed as complete, and explain how phenomenographers have adopted the phenomenological practice of "bracketing," or suspension of judgment, when collecting and analyzing data (Marton and Booth, 119). Åkerlind's description of the rigorous practice of checking and re-checking categories of description against the transcripts is another example of how phenomenographers guard against imposing their own values and preconceptions on the data. The accusation of power privilege is one that any powerful discourse may fall prey to, including deconstruction itself.

Supporters of phenomenography also recognize its drawbacks. Åkerlind cautions that, due to the amount of data that must be managed and the rigorous process of analysis, phenomenography is time-consuming and demanding. Even in my limited study, the data filled hundreds of pages. Phenomenography also requires a "change in world view" for the researcher more familiar with a positivist or constructivist paradigm ("Phenomenographic Methods", 63). Trained as a constructivist, it took multiple readings of Marton and Booth's *Learning and Awareness* and other phenomenographic texts for me to appreciate how phenomenography complements more familiar approaches to empirical research while remaining distinct from them. Barnacle, a phenomenologist, warns that a published phenomenographic study may give the false impression that the categories of description describe individuals rather than a

collective description of a range of conceptions, and that unless accompanied by a description of the ambiguities and complexities of the analytic process, the categories appear neater and more transparent than the data actually reflect. At the time I was devising my initial categories, I had to frequently remind myself not to identify individuals with pedagogic identities, a hazard that I believe may be more easily avoided when two or more researchers work together.

While taking these concerns under advisement, I believe that a phenomenographic approach to research has much to offer, particularly in connection with my interest in creative writing pedagogy teachers' understandings of pedagogic identity. Situated within a qualitative paradigm that honors individual experiences, multiple perspectives, and respect for context, phenomenographic research provides a rigorous process of exploring variations of experiencing a phenomena. If, as Trigwell asserts, "good teaching is about teachers becoming aware of their own conceptions of teaching and learning" (24), then a phenomenographic analysis of teachers' experiences of teaching can provide a powerful description of more and less complete understandings that may serve to raise awareness and improve practice. For this reason, I believe that a phenomenographic approach structures my study in ways that afford a thoughtful, rigorous, and useful contribution to the research on creative writing pedagogy. By presenting various pedagogic identities I identified in the data along with descriptions of teaching practice, I hope that teachers of creative writing can recognize: 1) how their teaching beliefs and practices emanate from their own pedagogic identities, 2) traits they may share with one or more of the pedagogic identities described here, and 3) alternative pedagogic identities they may not have considered. These recognitions are

particularly important to creative writing teachers since one pedagogic identity—the Master Craftsperson—has long been the dominant metaphor of the creative writing teacher.

Methodology: Document Analysis

In addition to phenomenography, I used the qualitative research method of document analysis to examine the syllabi and course readings. Bowen describes document analysis as “a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents” that “requires that data be examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; see also Rapley, 2007)” (27). Referring to Atkinson and Coffey (1997, p. 47), Bowen defines documents as “‘social facts,’ which are produced, shared, and used in socially organised ways” and that “contain text (words) and images that have been recorded without a researcher’s intervention” (27). Documents that are “produced, shared, and used” thus provide important information about the communities of practice in which they circulate.

The syllabus, in particular, is a document that contains vital evidence about how an educational community of practice is structured, its goals and practices, and how members of the community interact with one another. Bawarshi argues that “the syllabus establishes the course goals and assumptions as well as the means of enacting these goals and assumptions—both the structure of the course and the rhetorical means of instantiating that structure as situated practices” (112). Bawarshi describes the syllabus as “a site of action that produces subjects who desire to act in certain

ideological and discursive ways. It establishes the habitat within which students and teachers rhetorically enact their situated relations, subjectivities, and activities” (115). The syllabi of my study participants offered valuable glimpses into the “habitats” in which they taught creative writing pedagogy.

Methodology: Analysis Using Wenger’s Conception of Community of Practice

As I mentioned in Chapter One, I had not initially intended to look beyond the creative writing pedagogy classroom in this study. Comments from study participants describing external influences on their teaching conceptions and practices convinced me to take a wider view. Wenger’s conception of communities of practice, described in Chapter Two, complemented the phenomenographic and document analysis and provided a contextualized view of the teaching conceptions and practices that the phenomenographic study and document analysis alone would not have afforded. In Chapter Five, I use the example of two of my study participants to illustrate the influence of creative writing communities of practice on teachers of creative writing pedagogy.

Participant Selection

In identifying potential participants for my study, I had two requirements. The first requirement was that participants had to have taught at least one course in creative writing pedagogy. This specification excluded individuals who had prepared syllabi for

such a course but had not yet taught it, individuals who had taught a workshop or seminar on creative writing pedagogy but not a formally organized course for academic credit, individuals who had taught creative writing but not creative writing pedagogy, and individuals who had taught a pedagogy course focused on the teaching of composition even if it included some discussion of teaching creative writing.

The second requirement was to include as much diversity as possible within the pool of participants. I was looking for a diverse group of individuals (as defined by gender, race, age, education, writing specialization, and years of experience) as well as other kinds of diversity (including type of program, size of university, and geographic location). A diverse participant pool was important in order to provide the widest possible range of experience from which to devise a set of categories of description. The greater the diversity of the study population, the more the resulting categories are likely to describe the range of possible experiences of teaching creative writing pedagogy.

Finding participants for my study posed numerous challenges. To begin with, the population I was interested in interviewing—teachers of creative writing pedagogy courses in graduate creative writing programs—is already extremely limited. The first difficulty was identifying those programs which offered creative writing pedagogy courses since neither the AWP nor any other source I could discover had current, accurate information pertaining to the creative writing pedagogy course. Ultimately, I conducted an Internet search, an informal survey at the 2014 and 2015 AWP Book Fairs, and posted a request for information on the Creative Writing Pedagogy *Facebook* site to find the programs listed in Chapter One.

The second difficulty was in finding creative writing pedagogy teachers willing to be interviewed. After identifying 28 programs with pedagogy courses (I discovered five more programs after conducting my research), I sent emails to 20 creative writing departments or directors asking to be put in touch with teachers of creative writing pedagogy and to be sent sample syllabi. Twelve creative writing departments forwarded my emails to instructors. I received no response from seven creative writing departments even after a follow-up email and received one email that indicated that the program no longer offered a pedagogy course. I received 12 responses from individual teachers, 10 of whom sent syllabi. Once I had sent an Internal Review Board consent form and attempted to schedule an interview, however, five of the teachers who had initially responded no longer returned emails. In addition to the undeniable fact that creative writing professors are busy individuals, I believe that many potential participants were daunted by the unaccustomed formality of academic research, a rare phenomenon in U.S. creative writing departments.

Ultimately, I was fortunate to find seven study participants, four women and three men, who represent a range of experience as creative writing pedagogy teachers from veterans with more than 20 years' experience to a new hire teaching creative writing pedagogy for the first time (Table 3.1). Participants specialized in different genres (fiction, poetry, nonfiction, and screenwriting); many wrote in more than one genre. At least one writer characterized himself as "experimental." All the participants are published writers, but their literary publication credits vary from publication in journals to multiple books. All the participants are teachers of creative writing, and some have won awards for their teaching. Their engagement in creative writing

pedagogy scholarship is varied, from a noted authority in the field to a teacher who found such scholarship “boring.” Participants hold a variety of degrees including MFAs and PhDs in creative writing, a DA in English, and MAs in English and composition; five hold more than one graduate degree. Participants’ academic positions range from full professor to untenured Instructional Assistant Professor. I was unable to achieve racial diversity in this sample as I knew of only three creative writing pedagogy teachers of color, all of whom declined to be interviewed.

There is also variation in the creative writing programs represented. All of the programs are at American universities, but in six different states and three different regions (Midwest, South, and West Coast). Of the six programs represented (two of the participants work at the same university) five are residency programs and one is a distance learning program. One program is offered through a private, online university; the other six are located at state universities with enrollments ranging from less than 7,000 students to more than 43,000.

In the next section I will provide a more detailed description of each study participant (pseudonyms are used throughout).

Participant Profiles

Corey

Corey is Associate Professor and Lead Faculty for a distance learning MFA program and the developer of the “course shell” for the creative writing pedagogy course. Although not the originator of the course, Corey substantially revised the course

into its present form. Corey was not teaching at the time of our interview, but the online instructors who were teaching the course were all using the course shell Corey developed. Corey holds an MA in Rhetoric and Composition as well as an MFA in Creative Writing from a well-known program and is the author of two books of poetry.

The creative writing pedagogy course in Corey's program is an asynchronous, four-week course. It is offered five times a year, far more often than any other course in the study sample. Enrollments range from a low of eight students to as many as 25 (a far larger potential enrollment than any other course in this study). It is a requirement for all MFA students. There are no traditional or on-line teaching opportunities for MFA students included in the program.

Drew

Drew has taught creative writing for over 20 years in at least three creative writing programs. Drew's publishing credits include two books as well as short fiction, nonfiction, and articles and blogs about creative writing pedagogy and creative writing as a profession and academic discipline. Drew holds an MFA from a well-known program and serves as an Associate Professor and administrator in the English Department that houses the creative writing program.

The creative writing pedagogy course at Drew's university is an elective open to all graduate students of English, including MA in English—Creative Writing students. Introductory creative writing courses are taught by adjuncts and lecturers, not graduate students, although all of Drew's students taught a week-long unit in an introductory class as part of their coursework for the pedagogy class. Although Drew had taught a

creative writing pedagogy course at another university, Drew was teaching the course for the first time in 15 years at the time of our interview. Of the eight students enrolled in the course, two were doctoral students in rhetoric and composition; several other students were simultaneously enrolled in a composition pedagogy course.

Hayden

Hayden is an associate professor and Area Director of a program that offers both an MA and a PhD in Creative Writing. The graduate of a highly regarded MFA program, Hayden has published five novels as well as short fiction and nonfiction.

The creative writing course in Hayden's program was initiated in 1997 by Terry, who also teaches in the program, and has been offered sporadically since then. After a survey of graduate students and other creative writing PhD programs, an effort has been made to offer the course every other year although Hayden and Terry are the only faculty members currently interested in teaching pedagogy. Hayden taught the course for the first and only time in the winter of 2012, two years prior to our interview. The course is an elective for Creative Writing PhD and MA students, but required for Education majors.

The PhD students in Hayden's program are guaranteed an opportunity to teach an introductory course in creative writing, and many also taught creative writing and/or composition as MA or MFA students. MA students teach composition only. All the students enrolled in the pedagogy course at the time Hayden taught it were concurrently teaching either composition or creative writing.

Kai

Kai was a recently hired Assistant Professor at the time of our interview, teaching creative writing pedagogy for the first time. Kai earned a PhD in Literature and Creative Writing (creative dissertation) and has published a novel as well as short fiction and nonfiction, including an award-winning essay.

Prior to Kai's hire, the creative writing pedagogy course had been a required, "theoretical" course. Kai was asked to teach a combined creative writing and composition pedagogy course, but requested instead to teach these as separate courses in subsequent semesters. Because MFA students complained about having to take two required pedagogy courses, the creative writing pedagogy course became an elective instead of a requirement after Kai taught it for the first time.

All MFA students had a chance (but no guarantee) to teach an undergraduate course in creative writing prior to Kai's hire. After Kai required pedagogy students to teach a unit in Kai's undergraduate fiction course as part of their coursework, the program director instituted a new policy. Subsequently, Kai told me that two MFA students who had completed the creative writing pedagogy course would be selected to teach undergraduate creative writing courses with the stipulation that students enrolled in the pedagogy course would teach units within them.

Eight students were enrolled in Kai's course which Kai taught the semester prior to our interview.

Lee

Lee is Instructional Assistant Professor in the English Department of a university that offers PhD and MA degrees in English with a concentration in Creative Writing. Lee holds an MA and DA (traditional dissertation) in English and is the author of numerous books of experimental fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and criticism and co-author of a screenplay and two articles on creative writing pedagogy. At the time of our interview, Lee was teaching the creative writing pedagogy course in its new designation as a graduate course. Previously, the course had been an upper-level undergraduate course open to both graduate and undergraduate students, but was made a graduate-only course Lee's urging. Of the seven students enrolled in the pedagogy course, five were concurrently teaching and two had never taught.

Robin

At the time of our interview, Robin was a Professor in a stand-alone writing program and Director of the Creative Writing MFA program. Robin holds an MFA and PhD (creative dissertation) in Creative Writing and has authored, co-authored, and co-edited four books and numerous blogposts on creative writing pedagogy in addition to writing fiction and nonfiction. Robin has received awards and significant recognition for teaching and creative writing pedagogy scholarship.

Robin originated the creative writing pedagogy course at the university which was first taught as an undergraduate course. The pedagogy course is required for MFA students but is also open to other graduate students, including education majors, as well

as creative writing undergraduates. At the time of the interview, Robin was teaching the course with 15 students comprised of roughly equal numbers of MFA students, education majors, and creative writing undergraduates.

Terry

Terry originated the creative writing pedagogy course at the suggestion of a graduate student in 1997, making Terry among the first teachers of creative writing pedagogy in this study. Terry has taught the course three times.

Terry teaches at the same university as Hayden in a program that offers an MA and a PhD in Creative Writing (see Hayden's "parlor" for more details about the program). Terry holds an MFA from the University of Iowa, is the author of four books of poetry and two books about poetry, and has won multiple teaching awards.

Terry had taught the creative writing pedagogy course the previous semester at the time of our interview. Five students had been enrolled in the course, although it was more usual for enrollment to be about ten students.

To summarize, all but one of the subject participants had extensive teaching experience, and all but one had published at least one book in a creative genre. All but one had an MFA in Creative Writing and five had more than one graduate degree, including the PhD. Participants varied from full professors and program directors to untenured assistant professors. Their familiarity with creative writing pedagogy scholarship varied considerably, from little or no interest in scholarship to familiarity with older publications to a leading scholar of creative writing pedagogy. Comparisons between study participants are charted in Table 3.1.

I now turn to a consideration of my approaches to data collection and analysis.

Phenomenographic Data Collection

After contacting creative writing pedagogy teachers and obtaining their consent to be study participants, I requested that they send me a copy of their most recent syllabus for a creative writing pedagogy course. These syllabi constituted one data set. The second data set was the 232 pages of transcripts resulting from the semi-structured interviews I conducted with each study participant. These transcripts ranged from 12 to 57 pages in length.

Drawing on two data sets, as well as complementary qualitative research methods, provided me with means to triangulate the data. To triangulate data, according to Bowen, is “to seek convergence and corroboration through the use of different data sources and methods” (28), a practice that intends to provide “a confluence of evidence that breeds credibility’ (Eisner, 1991, p. 110)” (Bowen, 28).

During each interview, I had a copy of the syllabus that the study participant had sent me to which both of us could refer. The syllabus acted as a memory aid for the participant and a useful springboard for me to ask follow-up questions. In analyzing the data, the subject participants’ recollection of the course as narrated in the interview was given greater weight than the syllabus, which I recognize as an *a priori* blueprint of what the instructor intends rather than documentation of the course itself. Nevertheless, in

some cases it seemed useful to note when there was significant dissonance between the courses as described by the participant and as chronicled in the syllabus. For instance, although Kai assigned students to read an entire book on the subject, in the interview Kai only mentioned creative writing pedagogical history in passing. In contrast, Robin and Lee assigned less reading on the subject, but both emphasized the importance of teaching the history of creative writing pedagogy in their interviews. That being said, the syllabus gave me a view into the course that did not depend on the subject participant's power of recollection at the moment of the interview.

Five of the semi-structured interviews were conducted in person and audio recorded; two were conducted and video recorded using a video conferencing service. In accordance with phenomenographic practice, the interviews resembled a conversation as much as possible in order to put participants at ease and to maximize the depth and range of topic coverage. Interview audio and video recordings were kept confidential; whole transcripts were kept confidential; I use gender-neutral pseudonyms throughout this study to protect confidentiality.

The interview protocol (Appendix C) asked participants to describe their creative writing pedagogy course from the first day to the last in as much detail as possible. It asked participants to describe both what they were doing as teachers and what their students were doing both in and out of class to complete course assignments. Follow-up prompts, such as, "Why did you decide to do that?" "Why was that important?" and "Could you give me an example?" invited respondents to clarify or elaborate on their initial responses. While the focus was on the teaching of creative writing pedagogy, some participants also discussed their teaching of creative writing courses. In line with

Åkerlind's recommendation, I tried to maintain a focus on gaining as complete an understanding of the respondent's experience of teaching the creative writing pedagogy course and/or creative writing course as possible, "avoiding any attempt to classify or categorise during the interview" (108). I assured participants that I would not reveal their identities to anyone and that I would use pseudonyms instead of their names in the study to maintain confidentiality.

Phenomenographic Data Analysis

I began the process of phenomenographic analysis by reading and re-reading the interview transcripts multiple times. I did not develop a set of codes or categories prior to reading the transcripts. Instead, I read transcripts using the constant comparison method to find patterns of significant similarities and differences. In this sense, phenomenography is a grounded approach. The codes I developed to mark and manage sections of the transcripts included: 1) Descriptions of creative writing teachers or teacher "types", 2) Descriptions of teacher preparation and teaching, 3) Statements of belief about teachers and teaching, 4) Value statements about teachers and teaching, 5) Statements of affect about teacher preparation and teaching, 6) Statements about influences on teacher preparation and teaching 7) Statements indicating a change in teaching beliefs and/or practices, and 8) Metaphors used to describe teachers, teacher preparation, and teaching. Excerpts could be included in more than one coding category. Table 3.2 shows the codes paired with examples from the transcripts from which these codes were developed.

After coding the transcripts, I began to group together excerpts that suggested similar conceptions to form a preliminary set of categories of pedagogic identity: Expert Practitioner, Critical Theorist, Facilitator, and Co-Creator of Knowledge. Transcripts were then re-read with the revised categories in mind to analyze whether the set of categories represented a complete and accurate representation of the variances I saw within the transcripts as a whole. I added the Vocational Trainer category after I found that the many references to vocational preparedness in the transcripts were not represented by these categories. I further felt that Critical Theorist described one method by which some teachers sought to influence students' conceptions; that intention, rather than the use of theory, seemed more characteristic of this pedagogic identity. I also added the category of Teacher/Artist to describe a pedagogic identity modeled after a teacher of another arts discipline, but felt that this pedagogic had much in common with the Expert Practitioner. I ultimately included Teacher/Artist as a subtype of Expert Practitioner along with Master Craftsperson and Famous Author and changed Critical Theorist to Change Agent. In refining and clarifying the categories, I was following Marton and Booth's criteria that required categories to be distinct and stand in logical relationship to one another and for the set of categories to be as parsimonious as the data allowed (125). As a part of this refining process, I identified goals and values for each category. By selecting excerpts from the transcripts to illustrate each category, I was able to demonstrate that my categories arose from—and could be confirmed by—the data. For instance, when Terry claims that the basis of writer's workshop is “a master/apprentice kind of relationship”, they are describing an approach to teaching I associate with the pedagogic identity of the Master Craftsperson.

When Hayden states that “I didn’t want to come in and say, here’s a prescription for teaching creative writing” but instead wanted to encourage students to “think about what pedagogical approach suited them”, they are describing a pedagogic approach I associate with the pedagogic identity of the Facilitator. Detailed descriptions of each category are found in Chapter Six.

The next step in my analysis was to map the categories onto an outcome space that would highlight the relationships between categories. In other words, having identified distinct pedagogic identities, I was now interested in defining how these identities were similar and different according to particular aspects. While there are many possible relationships between categories, following Trigwell, et al I focused on relational and structural aspects. I represent the outcome space of my study as a set of five pedagogic identities situated within a matrix defined by two axes: Teacher Strategy (teacher-focused or student-focused) and Teacher Intention (skill-development, conceptual development, or conceptual change). I will describe this relationship between pedagogic identities in greater detail in Chapter Six.

Document and Communities of Practice Analyses

Prior to the phenomenographic interviews, the subject participants each sent me a copy of the syllabus for their most recent creative writing pedagogy class. While I was conducting the phenomenographic analysis of my interview data, I was also analyzing the participants’ course syllabi, the subject of Chapter Four. The first step was to identify what information to focus on in the syllabi. While the syllabi varied significantly in the

amount and detail of information contained, I was able to narrow my focus to three general areas: 1) The course description and course objectives 2) Required and recommended reading lists, and 3) Activities, assignments, and artifacts. The second step was to graphically represent variation in these areas by creating data tables (shown in Chapter 4). The final step was to compare this information from the syllabi with the goals and values I had identified for each pedagogic identity to suggest some possible correlations. I will discuss these relationships in Chapter Six.

I found comparing subject participants' syllabi to be a particularly useful way to look for variation in participants' approaches to teaching creative writing pedagogy. My primary method of analysis was to focus my attention on particular elements of the syllabi and chart them in order to reveal similarities and differences. For instance, simply charting the major reading assignments for each course revealed a surprising lack of overlap. The readings each instructor selected for the course was thus revealed as a significant indicator of teaching conceptions and the instructor's position vis-à-vis creative writing pedagogy scholarship.

Finally, I used an analysis of the transcripts based on Wenger's conception of communities of practice to discern the influence of local and global creative writing communities of practice on teaching conceptions and practices. I used Wenger's terms, defined in Chapter Two, to describe the experiences of two of my research participants. This analysis is the subject of Chapter Five.

Limitations of the Study

As I will discuss in Chapter Seven, this study's most significant limitation is its sample size of seven teachers. I had initially aimed for a minimum of 10 study participants in keeping with Trigwell's ("A Phenomenographic Interview") recommendation that 10 to 15 interviews be required to demonstrate the full range of variation within an experience. Since the pool of potential participants for my study was already quite small, finding 10 or more creative writing pedagogy teachers proved to be an insurmountable challenge. While Marton and Booth emphasize that no outcome of a phenomenographic study can be assumed to be complete, adding more participants to the study may have increased the range of variation. The five pedagogic identities developed from this preliminary study, however, indicate that conceptions of creative writing pedagogy are more varied than the ubiquitous practice of writer's workshop might lead one to believe. As such, it is an indicator that more research into conceptions of creative writing pedagogy is warranted.

Summary

In this chapter I identified the aim of my study as a critical examination of creative writing pedagogy teachers' conceptions of pedagogic identity and how these influence the way pedagogy is taught in graduate creative writing programs. I described the research design of my study which incorporates the research approaches of phenomenography, document analysis, and an analysis based on Wenger's conception of communities of practice as described in Chapter Two. I gave a brief overview of phenomenography as a research tradition interested in examining the qualitatively different ways in which a phenomenon is experienced, resulting in a set of categories

that describe this variation in terms of pedagogic identities. I explain how these identities were analyzed to show variance in both teacher strategy and teacher intention. I also described how an analysis of course syllabi was used to relate teaching decisions and practices to particular pedagogic identities. I provide descriptions and comparisons of my seven study participants, all teachers of creative writing pedagogy in U.S. graduate creative writing programs. I describe the semi-structured interviews used to obtain the data and the process of analysis by which I arrived at a set of categories of pedagogic identity that I describe in Chapter Six. In the next chapter I turn to a comparison and analysis of seven creative writing pedagogy courses as described by the syllabi and interviews with my study participants.

Course Teacher	Position in Program	Degree(s) Earned	Teaching Experience*	Literary Publications*	Involvement in CWP*†
Corey	Associate Professor	MFA, M.A. (Rhetoric and Composition)	Moderate	Moderate	Limited
Drew	Associate Professor, English Dept. Administrator	MFA	Extensive	Moderate	Considerable
Hayden	Associate Professor, Area Director of CW	MFA	Extensive	Considerable	Limited
Lee	Instructional Assistant Professor	M.A., D.A. in English (traditional dissertation)	Extensive	Extensive	Moderate
Kai	Assistant Professor	MFA, Ph.D. (creative dissertation)	Limited	Moderate	Limited
Robin	Professor, MFA Program Director	MFA, Ph.D. (creative dissertation)	Extensive	Limited	Extensive
Terry	Professor	M.A., MFA	Extensive	Moderate	Limited

Table 3.1: Profile of Study Participants

*In comparison to other study participants

†Includes scholarly and other publication as well as presentations and participation in groups, organizations and activities related to creative writing pedagogy.

Codes	Examples from the Data
Descriptions of Creative Writing Teachers or Teacher Types	<p>...somebody who's known or was known at some point...and maybe they'll take everybody out drinking afterwards.</p> <p>...the wise, experienced instructor hands down advice and certain kinds of edits...</p>
Descriptions of Teacher Preparation and Teaching	<p>I spend, like three months just being tortured about writing the syllabus, but then the class can kind of go forward on its own.</p> <p>We're going to make this together, and it's going to be about what you're concerned about for when you become a teacher.</p>
Statements of Belief about Teachers and Teaching	<p>It's almost like a craft guild...I think that's the model, and I truly believe it.</p> <p>I feel very much like—I cannot make you a good writer if you're not a good writer.</p>
Value Statements about Teachers and Teaching	<p>I feel very strongly, I don't want [composition] to be what creative writing is like.</p> <p>I'm hoping to see excitement and involvement in....the whole process of making art with words.</p>
Statements of Affect about Teacher Preparation and Teaching	<p>I've loved teaching pedagogy...more than I would have thought.</p> <p>That is always my little utopian fantasy of selling a screenplay and saying goodbye to this [teaching] once and for all.</p>
Statements about Influences on Teacher Preparation and Teaching	<p>Students...and their parents have an expectation that...this will lead to a better job...</p> <p>We got 16 weeks here where we can see anywhere from 18-30 students in each of our classes twice or three times a week.</p>
Statements about Changes in Teaching Beliefs or Practices	<p>My teaching approach has really changed over the years that I've been doing it.</p> <p>A lot of my syllabus now is trying to make them aware of issues...I didn't address at all 15 years ago.</p>
Metaphors Used to Describe Teachers, Teaching, and Teaching Preparation	<p>It's ...like a craft guild... that's the model, and I truly believe it.</p>

Table 3.2 Codes and Examples from the Data

Chapter IV

Imaginable Parlors: Inside the Creative Writing Pedagogy Classroom

I would welcome other writing teachers to what for me is an imaginable parlor—so they have an opportunity...to become part of a company of writer-scholar-teachers who aim to make their practices more pleasurable.

--Wendy Bishop, "Places to Stand," 1999, p. 28.

Introduction

In this chapter, I take the reader on a tour of "imaginable parlors"—the creative writing pedagogy classrooms or virtual spaces where pedagogic identities and practices are performed, discussed, and developed by my study participants and their students. I depict the teaching practices that occur within these spaces as described by the study participants in the interviews and their course syllabi and include the participants' explanations of their teaching choices. I then compare the course parameters, readings, and assignments of these courses in order to analyze variances in how creative writing pedagogy is taught. In so doing, I hope to offer a more comprehensive view of what it means to teach creative writing pedagogy.

It is important to reiterate that this “tour” is not based on observation but on course syllabi and my study participants’ memories of and reflections on a course they were teaching at the time of our interview or had taught in the past. As interesting as it undoubtedly would have been to conduct observations of these courses, the purpose of this study is to discern creative writing pedagogy teachers’ conceptions of teachers and teaching. These conceptions, however, are best viewed within the context of teachers’ actual choices and practices; detailed descriptions of each course provide this context. My first objective in this chapter is to present a portrait of each course as described by the instructor and with reference to the syllabus. My second objective is to explore variance among these courses by analyzing the syllabi and other course data and comparing course parameters, readings, and assignments.

I have tried as much as possible to use the study participants’ own words in describing these courses. Within each section, unattributed quotations are from the interview with the study participant whose course is being described; quotes taken from the study participant’s syllabus are so indicated.

The reader may have noticed that I have chosen gender-neutral pseudonyms and have avoided using gender markers when describing my subject participants. I have done this specifically to provide the reader with the opportunity to take this parlor tour without the possibility of gender bias. Following this chapter, I will use of gendered pronouns to identify subject participants.

A Tour of Imaginable Parlors

Parlor 1: Corey

The Writing Workshop and the Invisible Classroom

How can we create a workshop experience where things are taught, that we use some of the valuable things from the traditional workshop, but also make it a safe place where people don't get silenced or feel discarded or left out... a creative space where we don't get... [a] group aesthetic or cookie-cutter criticism?

Corey's was the only course in the study sample taught entirely on-line. The four-week, asynchronous course design meant that students and instructor never "met" in real time, even virtually, and that all readings and coursework had to be completed within four weeks.

Corey's course focuses on a single issue—the pros and cons of the traditional writing workshop and, by extension, the metaphor of the creative writing instructor as Master Craftsperson:

The course is structured around the idea... that a text can be improved with the workshop model – where the wise, experienced instructor hands down advice and certain kinds of edits, and the text is the focus of the workshop. ... And then

all the ideas that stem from that metaphor of the Master Craftsperson, the idea that the Master Craftsperson gives the writers tools [and]...fixes what's wrong with a text...

The course takes a deliberately balanced approach, asking students to consider the merits and demerits of this approach to pedagogy and then suggest ways to improve the workshop while retaining its advantages.

The course is divided into four week-long units. In the first, the class reads Stephen King's *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft* (2000) and considers the traditional workshop model including a brief history, benefits of the workshop, workshop rules (including the silencing of the writer being workshopped) and "the idea of the master craftsperson and all the ideas that stem from that metaphor." In the second unit, the class considers criticisms of the traditional model and some pedagogical alternatives found in Wendy Bishop and Hans Ostrom's edited collection, *Colors of a Different Horse: Rethinking Creative Writing Theory and Pedagogy* (1994) and Katharine Haake's *What Our Speech Disrupts: Feminism and Creative Writing Studies* (2000). Corey in particular notes that "one of the side effects of that pedagogy [workshop] is that some writers can feel left out or silenced" for a variety of reasons:

One of the most detrimental things that we bring up is that the traditional creative writing workshop model simply makes some people stop writing, and that's the idea of being silenced or feeling like your voice isn't legitimate

because you might not be doing something that the Master Craftsperson approves of or even your classmates, who might get into a kind of group-aesthetic type thing.

Corey reported that “there’s a little resistance in that second unit usually,” especially to Haake’s feminist critique from “older male, traditional-type people who are coming in and really want that model of, like, I need to learn from a better writer” although “other people really identify.” One of the assigned readings is Patrick Bizzaro’s “Reading the Creative Writing Course: The Teacher’s Many Selves” which Corey describes as a discussion of “the instructor being a guide who presents the different aesthetics, but without judging, saying one is better than the other” in contrast to the Master Craftsperson, who is often the final arbiter of aesthetic judgment in the traditional workshop.

In the third unit of the course, “we get into solutions” for the problems discussed in the second unit. Corey asks:

How can we create a workshop experience where things are taught, that we use some of the valuable things from the traditional workshop, but also make it a safe place where people don’t get silenced or feel discarded or left out.... a creative space where we don’t get... [a] group aesthetic or cookie-cutter criticism?

Corey asks students to synthesize what they have learned in the first and second units in order to propose an approach to pedagogy that includes the best features of writer's workshop while checking its disadvantages. Corey uses compositionist Peter Elbow to introduce the idea of the classroom as a place of safety. This unit also examines the idea of creativity and uses a short article by Mary Klages to introduce the contrast between humanist and postmodern perspectives.

In the fourth and final unit, students are introduced to “where the current conversations on creative writing pedagogy are happening (namely the AWP)” (Syllabus) and are given an overview of teaching prospects available to MFAs, culminating in tips for applying for adjunct positions in composition.

The major assignment for the course is the writing of an 8-to-10 page paper that “synthesizes the course readings and expresses the students [sic] teaching philosophy toward creative writing” (Syllabus). Students can write a traditional research paper or opt for a creative alternative:

I do allow them to do a creative version of this paper if they so choose, and I've had students do anything from imaginary conversations between Katharine Haake and Stephen King, or a screenplay, or two different teachers are talking to each other and disagreeing, to fiction. But most of the time when they do a creative thing, it ends up being a conversation between two people who disagree about pedagogy. Kind of like a slow, Socratic dialogue.

Other required assignments include the creation of a creative writing exercise (as modeled by Corey) and responses to readings and to other students' comments on the class discussion board.

Corey's is the most theory-oriented of the courses in the sample both in terms of including readings and discussions of composition, feminist, humanist, and poststructuralist theories and in favoring theoretical understanding over practical application as the primary learning objective of the course.

Curiously, the advantages and drawbacks of distance-learning pedagogy are never mentioned in this on-line course. There is also no mention of teaching in a creative writing distance learning course as a possible avenue to pursue upon graduation. Instead, students are encouraged to focus on what is considered the likeliest of their employment options: adjunct instructor of composition. The chronic problem of the academy's increasing dependency on low-paid, temporary workers is not discussed.

Although Corey's course raises serious misgivings about the traditional writing workshop, Corey admits that "ironically, we use pretty much the traditional method" in the MFA program's writing courses because "the online format just doesn't work so great for non-traditional methods." Despite the criticisms raised, workshop pedagogy is entrenched in both the program and course design.

Parlor 2: Drew

Identity and Ambiguity

If their writing is strong enough, if their publications are strong enough, I feel like I can help prepare somebody to really [be] the best teacher possible,

to get a job, to keep that job and to be a very effective creative writing teacher generally. But...I want to actively...dissuade some of my students from doing that.

In describing the course, Drew says that “about a third is how you would teach creative writing in an academic setting. But another third of it is teaching and talking about the opportunities to teach outside of academia such as in prisons, in community centers.” The other third of the course is focused on “trying to make [students] aware of issues within the discipline and within academia,” a topic that is clearly of great importance to Drew.

On the first day of the course, Drew assigns students to read an article from *Inside Higher Education* to help students “think about...our lives as writers and as academics. And whether or not we think those two things are the same thing.” From the outset, Drew focuses students on issues of identity:

I really want to make this class be about helping them to form the identity they want to have as professionals...because one of the things I think is interesting about the problem of creative writing pedagogy is that writers identify primarily as writers of creative work, that is where we derive our identity. We do not derive our identity from writing pedagogy. Although some do. ... I find that a lot of the people who are interested in creative writing pedagogy, they don't derive their identity as professionals as much from being published writers.

...I really wanted to foreground that my class is intended to help them figure out what their identity is.

Drew distinguishes creative writing teachers who identify as teachers from creative writers who teach but “do not derive our identity from writing pedagogy.” Drew associates with the latter camp. In helping them “form the identity they want to have as professionals,” Drew wants the distinction to be clear to students so that, in the event that they are unable to find work teaching creative writing, they will not feel as if their identities as writers are imperiled. Maintaining an identity as a writer rather than a teacher is more important to Drew, even in the context of a pedagogy course.

In the second week, “I try to give them a sense of the history of creative writing” using excerpts from D.G. Myers’ *The Elephants Teach*. Drew was struck by the fact that “as we were reading the Myers book he was announcing that he had lost his job,” underscoring Drew’s warnings about the dismal state of the academic job market. After introducing students to the history of creative writing as a discipline, Drew gives students “a sense of creative writing’s place within the academy and then start working towards what are the primary pedagogies of creative writing.” Drew contrasts composition pedagogies, which are based on theories and scholarship, with creative writing pedagogy: “We don’t have that foundation. So I kind of introduce the problem of that.” Students turn in a statement of principles “that undergirds your approach to teaching creative writing” (Syllabus).

From the second week on, students take turns presenting a “resource tip” that they archive in an online folder in Google Docs. Drew models this presentation the first

week of class and asks students to imagine they are compiling “a ‘Teaching Creative Writing’ handbook/website” for all of the instructors of creative writing at the university.

By the third week of class, students are expected to have made contact with a teacher of Introduction to Creative Writing to schedule a week of observation and a week in which they will teach the class. In the fourth week, they turn in a proposal for that unit. At the same time, students read numerous articles, blogposts, and book chapters on creative writing pedagogy and write discussion questions and weekly responses to the material. By week five, students have completed their observations of Introduction to Creative Writing teachers and have turned in a “two-page analysis/description of your host teacher’s course materials and teaching” (Syllabus). Weeks five and six are dedicated to syllabus construction, with students drafting and workshopping syllabi for a multi-genre introductory course as well as a single-genre intermediate course. In week eight, they present their teaching unit to the class and get feedback, after which they do their guest teaching in host teachers’ classes in week nine. The three weeks following an academic break are spent drafting and refining a teaching statement and exercises, readings, and discussions about grading assessment.

Drew’s course then takes a rather unusual turn for a pedagogy course. Week 14 is devoted to academic and nonacademic jobs for writers. The week’s readings cover teaching writing in schools and prisons, non-teaching jobs for writers, and the dismal realities of the academic job market. Drew’s foremost concern is to help students find ways to support themselves and continue their careers as writers:

I would say my goal is not to have them all teaching creative writing in academic situations, but to be resourceful....We had a student last year who is now at the career center of a nearby college...and I want her to continue to do this job that is a very good job, that is going to get her health insurance and whatnot, and if there is a way for her to be teaching creative writing, either in or out of academia as a way to help make the world a better place, then I think that is great. But I actually don't want my students to feel their identity is based on whether or not they are employed by a university because I think it is that way of thinking that has created the adjunct crisis in our discipline...

Drew's incorporation of teaching possibilities outside of academia as well as discussion of jobs for writers that don't involve teaching at all seems to indicate that students' identity as writers should take precedence over their identity as teachers. In this, Drew mirrors traditional conceptions of creative writers teaching in universities who see themselves as writers first and teachers a distant second. Drew's decision to highlight students' roles as writers over teachers even within the context of a pedagogy course calls to mind Wendy Bishop's experience of having her "growing joy in teaching as a graduate student" held against her as "one more mark of nonachievement" ("Afterword," 284). Being a writer, according to creative writing lore, must trump all other interests, especially teaching which has traditionally been understood as a way for writers to pay their bills. While Drew does not make this view explicit, it is implied in the decision to include a discussion of non-teaching jobs—alternative means to a paycheck—in the content of a creative writing pedagogy class.

In the 15th week of the course Drew covers conferences—AWP, a regional professional conference for teachers of English, and an on-campus creative writing conference—as well as conference and residency listings in *Poets & Writers*. The following week students are tasked with “Taking the Next Step” by drafting a conference proposal; application letter for a position, residency, or graduate program; or a query letter for an agent. While students can draft application letters for academic teaching positions, the assignment gives students other ways to make the transition from student to “literary citizen.” In the final week of the course students turn in teaching portfolios that contain a course policy, syllabus, and sample assignment for a multiple-genre introductory course and a single-genre intermediate course; a statement of teaching philosophy; a pedagogy paper; notes, materials, an analysis, and student evaluations from guest teaching; and three original creative writing exercises.

Drew admits that “part of the reason I became an academic is the professors I had, my creative writing professors were so important to me. To honor what they had given me was to become just like them. And I was able to do that because I came of age when there were jobs for me to be able to do that but that situation...doesn’t exist right now.” Drew recognizes that many graduate students long to teach in emulation of their professors as well, but feels that is a dream they should not be encouraged in:

Graduate students often...look at their teachers and they say, ‘I am getting a degree in creative writing professor’ because...they think being a professor and being a writer are the same thing and they are not the same thing....I am asking my students to think really long and hard about whether a career in academia is

really what they want.... [A] lot of my syllabus now is trying to make them aware of issues within the discipline and within academia.”

Despite ambivalence about training students for teaching positions that are rare at best (“there is [sic] not enough jobs in creative writing to be funneling people towards them. I feel ethically I shouldn’t do that”) Drew’s course does more to prepare students for the academic job market than any other course in the study. Students read and discuss current articles about “the adjunct crisis” and other disciplinary issues in addition to reading a range of articles and books on creative writing pedagogy, many of them written in the last five years. Although MFA students do not have the opportunity to teach introductory courses in creative writing, Drew made arrangements for each pedagogy student to observe and then teach a week-long unit in an introductory course in order to gain practical experience. The final assignment, a teaching portfolio, contained a variety of materials often required for a job search.

Assignments were designed to be useful for students who would be looking for teaching positions, but they were also designed to help students “[think] about how the things they do relate to the things they believe about teaching creative writing, or about what are the most important things that a particular class should achieve....What I am trying to get them to articulate is the reason I am doing *Activity A* or *Exercise A* is because I believe *this*.” When asked why this was important, Drew responded:

If you want to get a job in this market you have to...be able to reassure hiring committees that...you are somebody that thinks deeply about your teaching,

that it is not just about going into the class and winging it....the better job we can do to teach them now about how to articulate to yourself and to others why you do the things you do in the classroom, the better we are at preparing them for the job market and the realities of being an academic and a college professor, that's my answer.

At the same time, Drew does not shirk telling pedagogy students the realities of the market: "It is a weird thing to say to a pedagogy class...but the thing that is going to enable you to get a tenure track job is significant publication in your field...you will not get a job based on how good a teacher you are."

In teaching a class in creative writing pedagogy, Drew faces a moral as well as a personal dilemma. Drew believes that pedagogic training can enhance creative writing teachers' performance, and Drew's combination of hands-on experience and readings of current scholarship and disciplinary discourse demonstrate a balanced approach between pragmatism and an interest in underlying conceptions of creative writing pedagogy. At the same time, Drew clearly finds it uncomfortable to train graduate students for jobs teaching creative writing when so few jobs are available. Drew also confessed to feeling like an "impostor" teaching a pedagogy course because Drew clearly identifies as a writer first and a teacher second. This may explain Drew's decision to include a discussion of jobs unrelated to teaching in the context of a pedagogy course. While ensuring that students are well prepared to teach "if their publications are strong enough," Drew's primary concern is that students can maintain their lives as writers by any job available to them.

Parlor 3: Hayden

Teaching What You Wish You'd Been Taught

I hope to see a confident and engaging teacher who is communicating a clear sense of what the class is trying to achieve.

At the beginning of Hayden's course, "we started out talking about our own experience in the creative writing classroom and what kind of teachers we had, and what we liked and disliked about their approaches." Hayden mentions familiar "types," for instance, "the kind of personality of teacher you get a lot in creative writing...somebody who's known or was known at some point, and there's this sense that you're learning a little by osmosis by being in their presence, and maybe they'll take everybody out drinking afterwards." On the opposite end of the spectrum are teachers who "come from a practical, handbook, let's do lots of exercises, let's kind of train in certain skills approach." Within a "free-floating discussion", the class considered:

What kind of teacher do we want to be? Is there a teacher we had before that is a model, either as a positive or negative influence? What would we take from this teacher? ...What is the primary thing we're meant to be imparting?

The aim of the course was for students to work out their own approach to teaching based on "what suits who they are as a person and a teacher and what rules they are trying to achieve."

Hayden's own teaching style was very much influenced by Hayden's experience as an undergraduate in a liberal arts school that offered creative writing courses only on a selective basis: "the list was posted on the door." The fiction writer "was very encouraging" to Hayden, but could be dismissive of other students' work:

He was just completely of that old school, "You're good/You're not good. We didn't do any exercises, and we didn't do any outside reading. Just workshop....Did I learn stuff in there? I'm sure I did, but could I articulate what it was? No.

Although a fiction writer, Hayden preferred taking a poetry class from a professor with a very different pedagogical style and sensibility:

We would read sonnets; we would have to write a sonnet....There was a rigor in that and a sense of training yourself to do things that you couldn't automatically do that made me really come out of his class...feeling like I've gained something, something concrete from being in them.

This undergraduate experience may have led Hayden to a teaching style that is "very practically minded....I want the student to...walk away having learned something, and I feel like the thing that I'm confident I can teach them is something about technique." For this reason, Hayden says, "I don't like a strict workshop model...because what you're talking about shifts with every single story that you have to address, and the

student's own emotional condition in having their work in front of the classroom makes it hard to hear the technical stuff that's being discussed."

Another reason for Hayden's pragmatic teaching style may be conceptual. Like many creative writing teachers, Hayden appears to believe that craft, but not art, can be taught:

I very much feel like – I cannot make you good writer if you're not a good writer. I cannot do that. Nevertheless, you signed up for this class and paid your money, because you think I can do that. The only thing I can really do is try to teach you some technical things so you have indeed learned something when you walk out of my classroom. And that's brought me to this very exercise based, practical approach.

Not surprisingly, Hayden's approach to teaching creative writing pedagogy is also pragmatic. Assignments and readings were chosen on the basis of what was likely to be useful, either in the classroom or on the job market.

Each week students read and discussed one or two books on the required reading list and two or three creative writing syllabi collected from Hayden's friends and associates. While these syllabi offer students a range of models to emulate, Hayden was careful not to force personal teaching preferences on students, a mistake likened to writing teachers forcing their own aesthetic on their students:

Just as we all have our own aesthetics, but we have to try and find a way to teach...somebody who doesn't necessarily want to write exactly what we think they should write...I try to think about teaching the same way. So I have certain ideas about how creative writing should be taught, and obviously those are going to influence how I teach a creative writing pedagogy course. But at the same time, I didn't want to come in and say, 'Here's a prescription for teaching creative writing.' So what I tried to do was encourage them to think about what pedagogical approach suited them.

Although careful to avoid being prescriptive, Hayden recognizes that "because we're not typically trained to teach creative writing, and because the workshop model was just the accepted model for a long time...most of us have just imitated what we saw." Nevertheless, Hayden does not seem to introduce alternative approaches that stray far from the traditional workshop format. Instead, the focus is on differences of personality and approach, beginning with those of the students' own creative writing teachers.

Hayden's required readings were selected on the basis of "their possible use in the undergraduate or graduate classroom" (Syllabus). They included four selections from Graywolf Press' "The Art of" series as well as classic texts such as E.M. Forster's *Aspects of the Novel* and Richard Hugo's *The Triggering Town*. In addition, students selected a book from a recommended list to read and present to the class. In the interview, Hayden explained that "what I wanted to do was just read a lot of different craft books that not only proposed different approaches to writing in general but also

might give the students a resource to draw on as they go into their own teaching.” The creation of the course list was instructional for Hayden, as well:

In an autodidactic way I thought, I never read *Aspects of the Novel*. And then I read it and thought, oh my God, I can use this. Here's a way I can explain to the students a concept I've been trying to – you know. So partly what I was trying to do was just give them resources, and then I found that the ones that I didn't already know before the class, I ended up using. So it was useful for me too in that way.

In addition to the book presentations, Hayden’s students developed and presented 30-minute teaching demonstrations, a sample class in which students could “lead discussion on an aspect of the craft, present an exercise or a brief reading, or some combination of the two” (Syllabus). For these, Hayden recruited undergraduates to sit in and participate in the lesson and then “jot down notes for the grad student: what worked and what didn’t work about the lesson that they had just been given.” Hayden said the pedagogy students found the teaching demonstrations “useful”:

We got to see a range of approach...There’s going to be people like me who are like, here’s how the first person works. Here’s some variations on how the first person works. Let’s practice that technique. Then there are people who are like, let’s tap into your childhood....Ideally a student in a creative writing program would get a little of each, you know?

Hayden added that the demonstrations were “good job market training, because you’re often required to do that when you go for a campus interview.”

The culminating assignment for the course was the creation of a teaching portfolio that included “a formal statement of teaching philosophy (1-2 pages) and two sample syllabi for a creative writing class, plus an informal explanatory note (2-3 pages) about those syllabi. The syllabi should be for two different courses—one could be an intro and one an advanced, for example, or one a forms class and one a graduate workshop” (Syllabus). In addition to giving students something useful for the job market, Hayden “wanted them to be thinking about, what am I trying to achieve as a teacher, and how has that given rise to this particular approach?”

Hayden was the only study participant whose required reading list was composed, with a single exception (Aristotle’s *Poetics*), of what Tim Mayers terms “craft criticism”: “critical prose written by self- or institutionally identified ‘creative writers’” in which “a concern for textual production takes precedence over any concern with textual interpretation” (Mayers, 2005, p. 34). Hayden’s exclusion of any creative writing pedagogy texts was deliberate: “I found some of the writing about pedagogy dry, and sometimes I was sort of fretting about stuff that didn’t seem worth the energy I was expending on it.” Hayden felt that pedagogical issues were best addressed through discussions among the students themselves, all of whom had taught or were currently teaching creative writing or composition: “The discussion that they’re going to have amongst themselves about whether the workshop works seems to me to be more lively than an article about whether the workshop works.” Yet many of the texts Hayden chose

for the course offered very little in the way of pedagogical guidance, and Hayden complained that one, Ellen Bryant Voigt's *The Art of Syntax*, "was awful. It was really dry. We all hated it," implying that Hayden had not yet read the book before assigning it.

Because Hayden seemed uninterested in disciplinary history or theory, Hayden's stated belief that "I cannot make you a good writer if you're not a good writer" is not surprising. Although appearing to make fun of the concept of famous writers teaching by "osmosis," Hayden later stated that "there are some people for whom that cult of personality approach might be the most effective way for them to enter the classroom."

Looking back, Hayden admits that "when I first started to teach, I taught the traditional workshop model....That's how I've been taught, and that's the only way I've ever been taught, and that's what I did." As an Area Director of Creative Writing, Hayden says that "nobody does straight workshop on the intro level anymore. None of the grad students." On the rare occasions when Hayden teaches an introductory course it is half workshop, half exercises. "I've spent a lot of time thinking about my teaching approach and what I was trying to achieve, and my teaching approach has really changed over the years that I've been doing it....We're always sort of teaching...what we wish we had been taught."

While Hayden has not been involved in creative writing pedagogy scholarship, Hayden's own experience as a teacher has moved further away from the traditional workshop, a trend that seems to be common for teachers of undergraduate creative writing at Hayden's university. As one of only two teachers of creative writing pedagogy at that university, Hayden clearly has an interest in creative writing pedagogy, but values a practical, hands-on approach over an investigation of the conceptions of

creative writing and teaching that drive practice. The lack of interest in examining conceptions of creative writing pedagogy may, in part, be responsible for seeming contradictions in Hayden's approach to teaching. While Hayden rejects hiring celebrities to "teach by osmosis," Hayden seems to believe that personal charisma is a particularly useful characteristic for teachers of creative writing. Hayden supports a variety of approaches to teaching creative writing while also voicing the opinion that writing can't be taught. The set of pedagogic identities that are the outcome of this study are a useful way to understand and perhaps integrate these seeming contradictions.

Parlor 4: Kai

Studio Dreams

I think that they [Kai's pedagogy students in the future] would be teaching classes that were as creative as their writing...It wouldn't all be structured around a table....They will have more interdisciplinary aspects to what they do. There will be more collaboration in their classes....They'll be...really inspired and interested by their own classes.

Kai's course began with "my overview about what I think about creative writing pedagogy and its problems" including the issue of whether creative writing can be taught. Kai felt that a course centered on this question was "the usual route of teaching creative writing pedagogy" based on an assessment of articles on creative writing pedagogy and syllabi sent by friends. For Kai, the question of whether creative writing can be taught was "a troll question", one that "people ask...to rile you up" and "I didn't

really want that to be like a big consideration of our class.” Instead, Kai chose to “concentrate on different ways of making teaching creative writing interesting.”

Kai encouraged students to reflect on “their own experiences in creative writing classes” which “they hadn’t thought about” critically before taking the course. Kai’s students, all in the second year of the creative writing MFA program, “really had fun in undergraduate writing classes” and “still just loved everything about the class.” By asking them to critically reflect on their experiences, Kai was preparing students to imagine alternatives to familiar practices, something students initially found difficult to do. For instance, when Kai questioned them about such common practices as silencing the author during workshop critiques, opinion broke along gender lines—“the girls [sic] in my class all thought...it was the wrong kind of thing, but that they were strong enough and could withstand it. And the men thought that’s what, you know, what writers should be taught.” Whether or not they supported the practice of silencing the author, students in the early days of the class simply accepted it as the way “writers should be taught.”

Within the first two weeks of the course, students read Paul Dawson’s *Creative Writing and the New Humanities*, arguably the most comprehensive history of creative writing available. Dawson’s book covers historical conceptions of writers and “creative writing”, the origins of Creative Writing as an academic discipline, workshop poetics, and the course of Creative Writing’s development, particularly in Australia. Although Kai said very little about this considerable reading assignment during the interview, Dawson’s book questions many unexamined conceptions of creative writing including the belief that creative writing can’t be taught. It is likely, then, that Kai assigned this text early on to provide students with a scholarly critique of common assumptions and

pedagogic practices as well as a history of the discipline. Students reflected on weekly readings and class discussions in an on-line journal.

Following the first week, the course was divided into three parts: (1) The Creative Writing Workshop as We Have Known It, As We Want It to Be; (2) Writers as Teaching Artists: Presentations on the Arts; and (3) Craft. Part 1 comprised weeks two through six of the course. During this time, students read a variety of articles and book chapters on creative writing pedagogy. Class themes included Professionalization, Workshops, Authority, Critiques and Criticism, Grading and Rubrics, and Revision. Week Five was dedicated to a discussion of Race, Class, Gender, and Diversities; as part of this discussion, students read Toi Derricotte's *The Black Notebooks*. "One of my separate concerns as a person is the low number of minorities that end up in writing programs," Kai noted. "I really think it has to be a conscious effort on the part of the teachers" to help students—"especially white students"—understand the difficulties facing people of color in creative writing programs.

The primary assignment of the first six weeks of class was for students to "interview students and professors from another [arts] discipline" and observe "a 'workshop/lab/doing' class and [a] 'working/lecture' class" in this discipline (Syllabus). Prior to conducting their interviews, "we had brainstormed like 100 relevant questions that you...might possibly ask." Following the interviews and observations, students were to write "a comparative analysis between the teaching you study and composition pedagogy" (Syllabus). Kai encouraged students to write the paper with a possible presentation at an AWP panel in mind. Explaining the rationale for this assignment, Kai observed:

The way that we keep on considering creative writing...is about how you can use comp [composition] to teach creative writing.... So I thought, well artists—you know, creative writers are also artists...so I decided instead of...thinking of that comp connection, I was going to go to the artistic connection...I would send my students out into classes that other teaching artists taught.

Since far more research and theory has been generated in composition than in creative writing, it is natural for creative writing scholars—particularly those who have expertise in both composition and creative writing—to turn to composition for theory-based models of pedagogy. Kai, who had taken a composition pedagogy course in graduate school, decided instead to emphasize creative writing as an art and to have students view teaching in other art disciplines as potential models for creative writing pedagogy. Kai felt that this assignment was “the heart of the class.”

The second part of the class, titled “Writers as Teaching Artists: Presentations on the Arts,” was given over to two weeks of student presentations based on their interviews and class observations “along with a couple articles about the pedagogy” specific to the disciplines of the courses they had observed (Syllabus). “Observing the artist teaching really blew my students’ conceptions about what it means to be a teacher of an art,” Kai noted. “There are a lot of things that we assume, as creative writing teachers, must be the way they are, and it was very clear that other artists don’t feel that way.” For instance, Kai’s students discovered that “in the other arts, an assignment is an assignment; it’s not a finished product” whereas in creative writing courses, “we’re

always treating [assignments] as if they're already masterpieces." Students in other arts actually work on their art during the class; teachers often "go over your shoulder" to make changes or corrections to a work in progress. In contrast, "you would never give a writing assignment in a creative writing class."

After Kai's students had compared other methods of teaching art to the way creative writing is habitually taught, "Nobody was a fan of that workshop anymore." In other words, after eight weeks, Kai's students had practically reversed their conceptions about how "writers should be taught." "After seeing the art classes and after doing lots of different kinds of readings... [students] realized how unconsiderate [sic] most of the classes they'd ever taken were and that there were other ways of doing things that produce results." While admitting that "I didn't know that would happen," Kai asserted that the assignment "was really liberating for them...they were all really fired up."

Also due at the end of Part 2 was a bibliographic essay, assigned at the beginning of the course, "on a topic of teaching creative writing that they were interested in." Students shared their essays and presented them during the final weeks of class.

Part 3 of the course was entitled "Craft." Students read Francine Prose's *Reading Like a Writer*, "looked at several different craft textbooks in creative writing" and "talked about how those kinds of books had conversations with each other, and what they implied about who would use what kind of textbook....I was trying to convince them that they could use more than one kind of textbook, you know?" The reason for having students examine multiple texts was so "when...they wrote their syllabi...they didn't just use the book they used in high school...or...college."

To begin work on a syllabus, the assignment “our class was building up to,” students first created a one-page “dream syllabus” that challenged students to imagine the most creative class they could think of: “It could even be teaching...on Mars.” After students had shared and defended their imaginary classes, they were asked to write a “real” syllabus “that had to be influenced by their other one.” Kai’s justification for the “dream syllabus” assignment was that “creative people...limit their creativity to their writing...and then when they come to write a syllabus or an assignment...it’s like they block out their creativity.” In fact, Kai wanted to convince students that writing a syllabus was much like writing an essay: “you should have an arc to your class, and you have...this vision and this heart.” Kai felt students accepted the idea of “this essay course” because “my own course was built that way” and “they could really see how it looked.”

Since Kai “didn’t like not having a teaching component” in the course, pedagogy students taught a unit in an introductory fiction course that Kai was also teaching that semester, a development I will discuss in more detail in the next chapter.

The next assignment was to develop a teaching statement since “it’s one of the first things you need when you go on the job market, but also...you should be able to articulate what it is that you believe about teaching, right?” On the last day of the course students turned in a portfolio that contained their teaching statement, syllabi, essays, and a reflection.

Based on Kai’s interview and a rough syllabus, Kai’s course appears to be one of the most rigorous and comprehensive of all those included in the study sample. Kai’s is the only course to require substantial scholarly work (two 15-page papers, including a

bibliographic essay) in addition to the practical experience of teaching a lesson to undergraduates, producing a professional portfolio containing a syllabus and teaching statement, and completing readings and other coursework. However, Kai's syllabus, like the majority of syllabi in the study, does not reflect substantial reading or discussion of theory.

The assignment that distinguishes Kai's course from the others (the one which Kai describes as "the heart of the class") is the comparative analysis based on observations and interviews conducted in other arts courses. Visiting classes in which students were actually practicing their craft instead of critiquing a product seemed to inspire not only Kai's students but their teacher: "What if creative writing class was six hours and...you wrote a piece in that class? And people were correcting you as you go, and it was OK because it was just, like, the work of that class for the day?"

Kai was the only study participant who reported that every student in the course experienced significant conceptual change. The focus on challenging students to confront their conceptions of creative writing pedagogy, along with Kai's student-centered approach to teaching, were surprising given Kai's relative inexperience as a teacher. From the evidence of the interview and syllabus, it appears that Kai's students received a creative as well as a comprehensive introduction to the subject.

Parlor 5: Lee

Survival Training

Teaching is a long-term proposition, right? You have to survive it.

Because “one of my main concerns is basically history,” Lee frames the course “in terms of what institutional history is at stake in teaching.” The first assigned reading is Andrew Delbanco’s book, *College: What It Was, Is, and Should Be* “to give us a shared institutional sight and to try and pull out of each student, and myself really, what our convictions might be, our assumptions might be as to what the purpose of an education, a college education is.” This is important to Lee because “you have to have a sense of why you think the way you do, which has to do with the way you have been taught....[T]o be educated in one sense is to be educated by education because you have to understand how you have been taught.”

At the same time, Lee is “creating a place where people feel comfortable, can trust one another, and can talk about what anxieties they have, either in their own teaching or in anticipation of teaching, and then I can—because I have taught for a long time—I can perhaps help them through some of those anxieties and give them tips and explain my own frustrations.”

After discussing the Delbanco book, Lee’s students read D.G. Myers’ *The Elephants Teach: Creative Writing Since 1880* “to get a sense, to specify a little bit more precisely where we exist within the institution....And that history for some people is eye-opening.” In particular, Lee’s students are surprised to discover that “there is an awful lot of the history of composition in general...which predates it [the history of creative writing instruction].” With this historical knowledge as background, students then read *A Guide to Composition Pedagogies* edited by Gary Tate, Amy Rupiper, and Kurt Schick to get “a sense of what these different emphases might be and see if they can locate themselves more with expressive pedagogy or process pedagogy or critical pedagogy,

feminist pedagogy, or some combination of them.” Students frequently want to take a smorgasbord approach, selecting “a little of this, and a little of this” from different pedagogical approaches. “I try to explain that pluralism is fine,” Lee cautions, “but there are pitfalls to trying to do all of those kinds of pedagogies at once....there are convictions guiding those pedagogies, and you might find yourself at odds with yourself when you try to mix and match too much.”

Five weeks into the course, Lee asks students for a three-page “prospectus” described as “weighing out what they think their convictions might be by way of preparing themselves to get what we call a teaching statement by the end of the semester.” Lee writes responses to these, being supportive but also calling attention to possible problems. Lee emphasizes that “I don’t want them to tow my line at all.... [T]he issue is for them to find their own sea legs if you will, but I am there trying to guide that process as well as I can.”

For the rest of the course, Lee aims to “put a number of different documents in front of them to provoke different kinds of responses.” Assigned readings include excerpts from Mark McGurl’s *The Program Era* “which I think was the most important book in the last ten years that had to do with creative writing.” From McGurl, Lee hopes students will understand that “if you are going to take a job as a creative writer...then I think it is important to understand what your colleagues are doing” since “someone like McGurl shows you how at the hands of a really smart critic the very experience they are having in their creative writing workshops themselves will have ultimately something to do with the writing they are producing.” At the same time, Lee believes McGurl “is also poking at this notion that MFA programs are bad, he is saying look at all the fiction that

we venerate and...I have shown you how this fiction bears the marks of its workshop origins. How can you say that it is simply bad?"

Students read about and discuss such topics as declines in reading, distinctions between literary and genre fiction, "schmoozing," agents, and the impact of electronic publishing on the publishing industry. Students also "bring things into the room" from their own classrooms, if they are teaching, "and I do, too." Lee wants to break the barriers between the classroom and the world:

[O]ne of my issues with teaching is it tends to cordon off so much of what is going on in the world around us. It almost makes it seem as if these things have nothing to do with one another. The fact is...these aren't just people presumably who are teaching creative writing. Presumably these are people who are doing creative writing. ... [T]here is a huge zone of creative writing activity that circulates around academia but that is not the only zone for creative writing.

Students prepare for class discussions by writing a 250-word response to the reading in advance of each class session unless they are leading the discussion for that class. Lee admits that "sometimes we do digress. Occasionally it might be worth talking a little bit about what's going on in Crimea, for instance..."

For the penultimate class, students turn in a teaching statement (ten pages minimum) and a two- to four-page syllabus. The point of the teaching statement is "to see if you can articulate a provisional sense of your assumptions as to how best to

proceed in the creative writing classroom generally” using “the historical record” as “the basis for understanding what one is up against in terms of institutional inertia.” The statement “must engage with the question of theory” and address the “sticky matter of classroom authority.” The syllabus “should be a rough outline of texts, exercises, logics you hope to employ over a fifteen-week semester” which shows “some sense of progression.” For the final class, students turn in “a 250-word freewrite assessing your contributions to the classroom community, your strengths and weaknesses and plans for future study.” (Syllabus)

Lee contextualized the class within the current debates about higher education as well as the history of creative writing pedagogy, yet Lee seemed less concerned with issues of employment than any other teacher in the study. Lee included far more theory than most, having students read a compendium of composition pedagogies that provided numerous alternatives to the traditional workshop. Lee balanced theory with pragmatism: “I try to tell them not to set their sights too high, it is like not putting too much into your syllabus....You have 16 weeks, you have to decide what’s most important in 16 weeks... but let’s be realistic about what you can achieve in that period of time.”

Lee’s goal for students was for them to become teachers who could engage students in a way that allowed them to be “animated and enthusiastic and talking and feeling and actively creating things and thinking about what they are doing and sharing their work with other people openly.” However, Lee admitted to not always being successful in engaging pedagogy students in the same way: “I don’t necessarily think that’s what you see when you walk into my classroom. I strive for that but I don’t

necessarily think it happens....What we are trying to do is really quite difficult and there are times I have a limited capacity for believing in it.”

Regardless of the content of the curriculum, Lee presents pedagogy students with a model of a teacher who has become “progressively alienated from certain kinds of academic goings on.” Since Lee claims that “the way I just talked to you is the way I talk to them,” Lee’s students are likely to take away the impression that teaching is disheartening, even if a teacher’s intentions are good. As Lee says, “the classroom is this very human place and so I try to create space in it for exactly that, for people, and myself, too. ... That is what makes it so difficult, so exhausting.”

Lee brings twenty-five years of experience as a writer and teacher of creative writing to the teaching of creative writing pedagogy. On the evidence of the interview and transcript, Lee attempts to balance reflection guided by theory with “tips” gained from classroom experiences, but Lee’s evident exhaustion and disillusionment are a stark contrast with Kai’s enthusiasm as a new teacher of creative writing pedagogy. I will offer a comparison of Lee and Kai’s experiences in Chapter Five when I consider the influence of creative writing communities of practice on the teaching of creative writing and creative writing pedagogy.

Parlor 6: Robin

Passing the Torch

I would like to see [creative writing teachers] be as hands-on as possible and not about anointing and deciding who’s best and who’s not. I would like to see those myths a completely distant memory.

Emphasizing that “I really want them to understand the place of creative writing in the history of writing instruction”, Robin assigns students to read the first four chapters of Wendy Bishop’s *Released into Language*. For Robin, it is important to demonstrate that “composition developed first,” and “though they didn’t develop hand-in-hand, there is a natural progression” between the development of composition and creative writing instruction. Robin does “a mini-lecture...about the progression” and then assigns groups of students to make “a visual representation on a piece of poster board of the history of creative writing”, reminding students that “everything I do in this class I’m modeling for them, because you are going to go and teach.”

Guided by the second chapter of *Released into Language* and an article by Patrick Bizzaro, the class discusses both the value and dangers of relying on writers’ self-reports as guides to understanding the process of creative writing, acknowledging that some may reinforce the notion of writers as inherently gifted. “We’ve got to bust these myths,” Robin argues, “which is really ironic because—I’m even still dealing at the time with graduate students who are telling me, ‘There’s no myths,’ at the same time that they’re clinging to myths and not being very self-knowledgeable about that.”

Students read Stephanie Vanderslice’s *Rethinking Creative Writing in Higher Education: Programs and Practices that Work* which highlights exemplary undergraduate and graduate creative writing programs in the United States and the UK. Robin shares “my views” of teaching undergraduate creative writing but “I don’t insist that they ascribe to my views at all. I just want them to know what they are.”

Robin uses the first three or four weeks to establish the groundwork for the course through the history, readings, and “my feeling and my background on it,” after which Robin tells students, “we’re going to make this together, and it’s going to be about what you’re concerned about for when you become a teacher. ... So really from that point of the semester on, every class is different, because it depends on whose articles are being discussed that week.”

Because “I’m pretty big on choice,” Robin asks students to select an article from one of three recent books on creative writing pedagogy—Donnelly’s *Does the Workshop Still Work?*; Drew, Rein and Yost’s *Dispatches from the Classroom*; and Ritter and Vanderslice’s *Can It Really Be Taught?*—which the whole class will read and discuss, with the student who chose the article leading the discussion. All students turn in talking points prior to the discussion “to make sure that they’ve done the reading.” Robin emphasizes that “I really want them to know what’s absolutely happening in the last few years, that this is a very vital field. It’s becoming more and more so. I want them to know what the current debates are.” Asking students to serve as discussion leaders is intended not only to involve them in the content of the readings but to give them experience in an aspect of teaching practice. Robin notes that students will often begin “by having everyone write first about something, or they’ll do some neat thing to start out the discussion, which always makes me happy...because they’re getting it.” With students taking turns leading discussions and the whole class having talking points to refer to, “we have very rich discussions.”

Each student also chooses a book to read from a long list that Robin provides (“choice within a spectrum is a really good teaching practice. I...learned that from being

in the National Writing Project for so many years”) and makes a digital presentation about the book to the class (“every class that I teach has a digital aspect”). The purpose of the presentation assignment is for students “to get a good sense of 14 other books that they might want to dip into.”

Students then team up to research, develop, and teach a lesson in some aspect of creative writing to the class. Lessons must “be grounded in a theory” and include an explanation of why the lesson would be useful, directions for teachers to follow, and a list of references (“you always have to have references, because you always want to be able to tell your principal, your department chair, a parent, well, the reason why I do this...this isn’t just lore....[T]hese...researchers have said that this is a good way to teach description....[Y]ou always want to be thinking about that”). Robin has students present in pairs because “they get a little nervous” and teaming up students is a practice advocated by the National Writing Project. Presenting the exercises in class provides each student with several exercises they can use in their own teaching.

Robin differentiates the next assignment. Undergraduates observe a creative writing teacher for two classes, interview the teacher, and then write a 5-7 page paper. Students can observe a professor in the department (excepting Robin) or a high school teacher, “which makes me happy usually, because it’s always interesting.” Graduate students write an abstract/proposal and 10-15 page paper “on an issue of interest in teaching creative writing” which is “intended to give you something you can present at a conference or publish.”

For their final assignment, students compose a text or digital creative writing literacy narrative. It can take the form of an essay or a digital story, but it must include

references to at least two sources read over the course of the semester and include a works cited list (Syllabus). “I want them to write about...their experience as a creative writer in school from whatever age they want to start. And I want them to bring in what we’ve read all semester...because I want them to look at it in terms of themselves....That’s to make sure they’ve really engaged with everything all semester.”

Robin’s approach to pedagogy is grounded in considerable experience as a teacher as well as deep involvement in creative writing pedagogy scholarship and advocacy. More than any other teacher in this study, Robin is familiar with current creative writing pedagogy and incorporates four book-length pedagogy texts in the course (but does not include recent articles or web-generated material). Because there are creative writing MFA students, education majors, and undergraduates in the course, Robin differentiates assignments and provides students with choice and opportunities to lead discussions, present to the class, and make decisions about course topics. Incorporating digital artifacts, group work, observations, and interactive learning, Robin’s course provides students with teaching approaches that extend well beyond the traditional workshop.

Parlor 7: Terry

The Master and the Mentor

I’m hoping to see excitement and involvement in the students’ [engagement] with the whole process of making art with words.

For the first class meeting, students were asked to bring an original poem or piece of short fiction. Terry is interested in having students “explore the ways in which a creative-writing instructor’s own poetry or fiction informs and energizes the workshops he or she teaches” (Syllabus). Students were also requested to have read an excerpt from John Barth’s *The End of the Road* in which Barth’s protagonist, Jacob Horner, struggles to decide whether to teach “prescriptive or descriptive grammar.” This sets Terry up to ask the question:

How prescriptive should we be? How descriptive? To what extent does the teacher lay down the law and say, “This is good” and “This isn’t. This is how you do it”? ... I mean, you’re always going to have to make selections, but how much do you tell them? There’s no easy answer for that.

Terry answered the question this way: “I think the best way is to admit that you have your own opinions but not try to force them on people.” This stance is reflected in many of Terry’s pedagogical choices. More than most study participants, Terry assumes the role of peer mentor in relationship to students. Of the 14 class meetings, five are student-led: two of these feature students’ presentations on two self-selected books on creative writing pedagogy and three are dedicated to the students’ presentations of one-hour classes. Terry writes and completes exercises along with the students and occasionally shares work in progress with them. For Terry, sharing work “doesn’t mean that you should force your poems on students and workshop your own poems, but it does mean to talk about the problems you have in drafting poems.”

What matters most to Terry is that “the teacher needs to be an active practitioner. Not necessarily publishing, but actively writing and involved with that.” While many creative writing teachers and scholars have sought to dissolve the boundary between creative writing and composition, Terry prefers to keep that division firmly in place:

I think there’s a problem maybe with composition studies, where the teachers don’t seem to necessarily be involved with their own writing. I don’t get it. If I were teaching composition, I would want the students to read like crazy and write with enthusiasm and energy about anything. I don’t think that’s the drift of [composition] at all. I feel very strongly, I don’t want that to be what creative writing is like.

In addition to the book presentations and one-hour classes, students develop and present three writing exercises (Terry models this); draft a “publishable essay” about “your experiences in creative-writing workshops” that begins with an in-class writing assignment and is developed over several weeks; and create a syllabus for a fiction, poetry, or mixed-genre workshop. Terry provides “examples of my own syllabi and also of my colleagues” that differ “very radically, and that’s part of the point, that there’s no one format that should be used. I guess I would urge people to very much go on their own instincts and, you know, just not follow any kind of present pattern.”

Terry acknowledges that students “have not been exposed to many books that would be about teaching creative writing.” Course readings range from theory (Roland Barthes’ *The Pleasure of the Text*) to craft criticism and books of creative writing

pedagogy (“I want to give them a little bit of that, but not necessarily indoctrinating them, you know?”).

Terry is conscious of a being a role model for students, but is also aware of the need “to foster an atmosphere where people can say things and not feel they might be penalized for it.” As a graduate student of the famed Iowa Writers’ Workshop, Terry remembers that a famous poet who was a teacher there “would comment on student work based on how much he thought a student could take a joke or kidding,” an inconsistency that could lead students “to think he was unfair and was favoring certain students.” Terry feels that “especially with undergraduates,” a teacher should be consistent in the way he or she treats students. With graduate students, the teacher-student relationship is different:

You certainly have to be aware of what they’re working on, and treat them as—well, not just as students, but as—I don’t want to say colleagues, but people [who] are already immersed in the art and trying to do something. You can nudge them, suggest things, but I think you have to be careful about that, too.

The course culminates with students taking turns teaching an hour-long class, “the sort of thing you might have to do during a campus interview” (Syllabus). This is the only direct nod Terry makes toward preparation for the job market, although the creation of a syllabus is useful both for acquiring a teaching fellowship and for the job search.

Terry's egalitarianism in the creative writing pedagogy classroom is surprisingly at odds with a stated loyalty to the master/apprentice paradigm of the traditional workshop:

I think that's the whole basis of having it as a workshop, as really a master/apprentice kind of relationship. It's almost like a craft guild that they're in. I think that's the model, and I truly believe it.

While Terry values consistency in the treatment of students within a course, consistency in how creative writing pedagogy is taught within the program is not a goal: "I could do what I wanted, and the next [faculty member] could do what he or she wanted. We didn't have a particular system, and I would change it each time."

Terry's allegiance to the master/apprentice model likely stems from an Iowa Writers' Workshop education, but Terry's interest in writing with students, sharing work in progress and discussing process difficulties, and giving authority to students are pedagogical practices more in line with composition theorists such as Donald Graves and Donald Murray. Terry urges students to "go on their instincts", perhaps in recognition of the fact that most of Terry's students are unfamiliar with the literature on creative writing pedagogy. All but one of the books and articles that make up Terry's required reading list are at least 15 years old, suggesting that Terry may not be acquainted with recent creative writing pedagogy scholarship. While the readings include a range of critical approaches taken by creative writing teachers (the excerpts from Alberta Turner's *Poets Teaching* are particularly good at showing responses to

student writing that range from dictatorial to deliberately vague) most of these presume that these variations occur within the workshop format, not as alternatives to it. Instead, students are guided by their own experiences in workshop and their “instincts,” making it unlikely that as teachers they will look outside the workshop for pedagogical models.

Having completed the parlor tour, I now turn to a comparison of these seven creative writing pedagogy courses by considering variation in course parameters, assigned readings, and course assignments.

Parallel Parlors: Comparing Creative Writing Pedagogy Courses

In this section I will look at the similarities and differences among the creative writing pedagogy courses taught by the participants of this study. I will first focus on the course parameters—the context of each course within the larger community of practice in which it is offered. Next, I will examine required readings, looking at the various kinds of readings assigned as well as any overlap among readings. Finally, I will look at required assignments, noting both the variety of activities and artifacts required of students as well as similarities and differences in the assignments included in each course.

Creative Writing Pedagogy Course Parameters

As noted earlier, I was surprised to discover that creative writing pedagogy courses were not limited to MFA and PhD students of creative writing tasked with teaching undergraduate courses in creative writing. In fact, as shown in Table 4.1, the students who enrolled in creative writing pedagogy courses included other graduate

English majors, graduate Education majors, and, in one course, undergraduate creative writing majors. Only two of the seven courses were required of creative writing graduate students, and only the PhD students in Hayden and Terry's program were guaranteed an opportunity to teach undergraduate creative writing (although they were not required to take the pedagogy course in order to do so). To be fair, Drew, Hayden, and Kai each provided pedagogy students with the opportunity to practice teaching undergraduates as part of the course, but these opportunities were limited to a lesson taught over the course of a week or even a single class period. Ironically, in one of the two courses that required students to take a pedagogy course, there was no chance whatsoever for students to even practice teach.

Also surprising was how infrequently creative writing pedagogy courses were offered and how few graduate creative writing students enrolled in these courses. Four of the six programs represented in my study offered the pedagogy course only every other year, and in some cases not even that often if classes were cancelled due to low enrollment. Three participants reported enrollments of fewer than ten students in their classes, even though the course was only offered every other year. These findings suggest that, in the five programs that do not require creative writing graduate students to take the course, the creative writing pedagogy course may have a limited influence on students, faculty, and program culture. In other words, simply including creative writing pedagogy among the course offerings does not necessarily indicate that pedagogic training is a priority for students or faculty. More research is needed to determine whether and how creative writing pedagogy courses have an effect on conceptions of pedagogy and teaching practice within creative writing communities of practice. The

variance in creative writing pedagogy course parameters I found was unexpected and prepared me for further surprises when I examined the required reading lists for each course.

Creative Writing Pedagogy Required Readings

When I compared the required readings for each course represented in my study, I was surprised at the many types of readings assigned and how few readings the courses had in common. Without listing all of the readings for each course, it is difficult to demonstrate the sheer variety of the readings assigned, ranging from book-length creative writing pedagogy texts to blogposts. In Table 4.2, I chart the various types of readings represented in all seven pedagogy classes as well as which teachers include what types of text on their assigned lists. I also include totals for how many teachers assigned particular text types as well as the total types of text included on each teacher's required reading list.

Two things about my category selection require explanation. First, I did not include any recommended readings on this list, although some teachers (including Drew, Lee, and Robin) included recommendations on their syllabi and others may have suggested texts for further reading in class. Second, although "student choice" is obviously not a text type, I include it as a category if students were required to select a reading on their own or from a list. I do so because I believe that providing students with reading choice reflects a particular orientation to pedagogy that I felt needed to be acknowledged in the discussion of reading requirements.

As Table 4.2 shows, 14 types of text were assigned across all pedagogy courses. There were significant differences in the variety of readings included in each course. Drew's reading list was the most varied with 13 types of text while Hayden's list was the least varied with two types of text. The reading lists of the other five teachers ranged from four to seven types of text. Although variance of text type is not meant to measure the appropriateness or quality of the assigned readings, it is particularly worth paying attention to the types of texts least assigned to consider whether potential sources and topics for creative writing pedagogy courses have been underutilized.

While pre-2005 creative writing pedagogy texts, works of craft criticism, and disciplinary histories frequently appear on required reading lists, far less common are texts on theory, cultural studies, education, and current events related to postsecondary teaching. As far as I could tell, only one teacher (Kai) assigned a text whose sole author was a person of color (Toi Derricotte's *The Black Notebooks*). The failure of many creative writing pedagogy teachers to present teaching and learning within a social context and to represent diverse perspectives requires further attention.

The most surprising finding of this comparison was that not a single reading appeared on every teacher's reading list despite the limited number of creative writing texts available. In fact, as shown in Table 4.3, only three authors appeared on three or more reading lists (I've combined Kelly Ritter and Stephanie Vanderslice as a fourth author because they have frequently been co-authors).

One author, Wendy Bishop, appeared on six of seven reading lists although she is represented by four different texts. This is not surprising given Bishop's iconic status among scholars of creative writing pedagogy. However, Bishop died in 2003, meaning

that all of these texts were published at least 13 years ago and in some cases far earlier. There are many reasons why Bishop's texts remain relevant (Robin is particularly convincing on reasons for including chapters from Bishop's out-of-print *Released into Language*). Bishop led the movement for creative writing pedagogy reform and was among the first to advocate for discipline-specific pedagogy training in creative writing programs. Her design for an undergraduate creative writing class which incorporates composition theory and practice remains a useful model.

Drew, Kai, Lee, and Robin include Bishop's work along with more contemporary creative writing texts, but neither Corey nor Terry use pedagogy texts that are less than ten years old. Corey and Terry's omission of more recent creative writing pedagogy scholarship raises the question of whether they are familiar with such texts. Many recent works of creative writing pedagogy scholarship are published overseas or by very small presses; teachers may find them difficult to locate if they don't already know where to look, a concern I bring up in the next chapter.

Notably, Hayden deliberately avoided using any works of creative writing pedagogy scholarship for the course. In fact, Hayden used only two types of text: craft criticism (primarily guides for writers such as John Gardner's *The Art of Fiction*) and creative writing course syllabi. Hayden defends this choice because of a belief that experienced teachers of creative writing have more to learn from one another than from texts. Hayden's position on creative writing pedagogy texts reflects the worrisome divide between creative writing scholars and creative writing teachers suspicious of theory and scholarship. While Hayden clearly takes teaching seriously and has moved away from an exclusive focus on writer's workshop, Hayden's resistance to scholarship reflects a

familiar belief that as long as creative writing teachers are practicing writers, they can learn how to teach creative writing simply by doing it.

In summary, a comparison of the required reading lists for the seven creative writing pedagogy courses represented in my study reveals a surprising variety of assigned texts given the limited body of creative writing pedagogy texts available. While some teachers include numerous types of texts in their reading assignments, including recent books and articles on creative writing pedagogy, others included only a few types of text. No text was assigned in every course, and only three authors and a pair of co-authors were represented on three or more lists. An examination of Tables 4.2 and 4.3 suggest that underrepresented sources, topics, and perspectives deserve further scrutiny. With only four of the seven teachers including at least one creative writing pedagogy text published in 2005 or after, this text comparison serves to raise concerns that some creative writing pedagogy teachers may be unaware of current trends in creative writing pedagogy scholarship, a gap that may reflect the distance between many creative writing teachers and creative writing scholars as well as the uncertain status of Creative Writing as an academic discipline.

I now turn to consideration of variance in course assignments.

Creative Writing Pedagogy Course Assignments

As I did for the course readings, I looked at the major assignments for each course and charted what activities were assigned in each course. Table 4.4 lists ten common assignments and shows which teachers included these assignments in their

course design as well as how frequently these activities were assigned across all seven courses.

Comparing course assignments also led to some surprising findings. First, only one assignment —written reflections on readings and class discussions—was required in every course. All but one of the seven teachers asked students to create creative writing exercises or lesson plans, share a book or resource with the class via a report or presentation, and write at least one formal paper. I found it quite surprising that two of the seven teachers did not require pedagogy students to create a syllabus or write a teaching statement; I was particularly surprised that Robin, a leading creative writing scholar, did not require either. This may be because Robin's class included undergraduates for whom such assignments may have been less appropriate.

Only three teachers out of seven required students to lead discussions, assemble portfolios, make observations of other teachers, or teach a unit or lesson to undergraduates. The lack of teaching practice in four of the seven pedagogy courses is somewhat offset by the chance some of these students had to teach undergraduate creative writing courses, but as shown in Table 4.1, teaching assignments were not granted to all students and in some courses no such opportunity was available. Kai, Drew, and Hayden went to considerable trouble to give their students a chance to teach at least one lesson to undergraduates by making arrangements with other teachers, having pedagogy students guest teach in one of their undergraduate courses, or giving extra credit to undergraduate students to participate in demonstration lessons in the pedagogy class.

Of all the teachers in this study sample, only Kai included all ten activities into the course design. This is somewhat surprising since Kai was by far the least experienced teacher in the study. Inexperience may have led Kai to crowd the course with too many activities; Kai admitted that students had complained about one of the two formal papers assigned, perhaps feeling that they were overworked. Then again, Drew, one of the most seasoned teachers in the sample, included nine of the ten common assignments. At four, Corey's class contained the fewest assignments, but this can be explained by the shortness of the course—only a month—and the online course delivery which made certain types of assignments difficult, if not impossible, to complete.

Clearly, quantity is not the same as quality, and teachers who chose to include fewer of these common assignments—or chose different types of assignments altogether—may have taught classes as or more effective than courses crowded with activity. The primary purpose for comparing activities is to reveal the variation in creative writing pedagogy courses, a variation that points to differing goals and objectives. For instance, Drew, Kai, and Hayden all assigned portfolios and provided students with opportunities to teach; these activities suggest a focus on practical training for the classroom and the job market. Lee, on the other hand, required two drafts of a ten-page teaching statement where most teachers required a much shorter statement if they required one at all. It can be assumed that Lee's concern was primarily in having students think deeply about their pedagogy and the theoretical and philosophical reasons behind their teaching choices.

The purpose of this chapter has been to present a description of how creative writing pedagogy teachers plan and teach their courses from the teachers' perspectives to complement the phenomenographic analysis described in Chapter Six. One of the distinguishing characteristics of phenomenography is its focus on second-order perspectives (those of study participants) over first-order perspectives (those of researchers). By using the creative writing pedagogy teachers' own words to describe their conceptions and practices of teaching, I am honoring phenomenography's commitment to understanding the contexts from which varied conceptions of phenomena arise. As Prosser, Trigwell, and Taylor point out, "conceptions need to be identified and described within particular contexts, in terms of particular tasks and from the perspective of the teacher or learner within that context engaged in a particular task" (219).

At the same time, Prosser et al emphasize that "conceptions are not hypothesized to reside within individuals, but are relations between individuals and a particular task and context" (219). The categories of description that I present in Chapter Six thus represent the range of conceptions identified from the transcripts as a whole; in other words, there is no one-to-one correspondence between individual study participants and pedagogic identities. While phenomenographic studies identify conceptions within context, the categories of description that are the outcome of these studies are decontextualized to make them useful in identifying conceptions in similar contexts (Prosser, Trigwell, and Taylor). My intention in this chapter has been to describe the contexts that gave rise to the pedagogic identities I discuss in Chapter Six. Before I turn to the phenomenographic portion of this study, I will examine the creative writing

communities of practice of which my study participants were members and reflect on how this membership may have influenced their teaching.

Course Teacher	CWP Course Offered	Students Eligible to Enroll	Required?	Opportunity to Teach Creative Writing?
Corey	Every semester	MFA students	Yes	No
Drew	Every other year	MFA students, other English grad students	No	No (All students teach a unit while enrolled in the course)
Hayden and Terry	Every other year	English/Creative Writing Ph.D. and MA students; Education students	No (Eng/CW students) Yes (Education students)	Yes (Eng/CW PhD students) No (All others)
Lee	Every other year	English/Creative Writing Ph.D. and MA students	No	Limited
Kai	Every other year	MFA students	Formerly required; now elective	Limited to 1-2 students (All pedagogy students teach a unit while enrolled in the course)
Robin	Every year	MFA students, Education students, Creative Writing undergraduates	Yes (MFA students)	Limited (Some MFA students)

Table 4.1: Creative Writing Pedagogy Course Parameters

Type of Text	Corey	Drew	Hayden	Kai	Lee	Robin	Terry	Total
CW pedagogy books—pre-2005	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	5
CW pedagogy books—2005 and after	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	4
Articles from peer-reviewed journals	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	3
AWP pedagogy papers, articles	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	2
Other articles (print and online) and blog posts	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	3
Craft criticism	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	5
Author memoirs	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	2
Creative writing disciplinary history	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	5
Theory/poetics	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	3
Cultural studies	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	1
Disciplinary news, professionalization	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	1
Creative writing course syllabi	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	2
Education Text	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	1
Student Choice	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	2
Number of text types represented (n=14)	6	11	2	7	7	4	4	

Table 4.2: Required Reading Assigned by Creative Writing Pedagogy Teachers

Author	Text(s)	Assigning Teacher (n=7)
Wendy Bishop	“Afterword:--Colors of a Different Horse: On Learning to Like Teaching Creative Writing” (<i>Colors of a Different Horse</i> Ed. Bishop and Ostrom)	Corey, Lee, Terry
	<i>Keywords in Creative Writing</i> (Bishop and Starkey)	Drew, Lee
	“Contracts, Radical Revision, Portfolios, and the Risks of Writing” (Leahy, <i>Power and Identity</i>)	Kai
	<i>Released Into Language</i> (Introduction, Ch. 1-3)	Robin
Richard Hugo	<i>The Triggering Town</i>	Drew, Hayden, Terry
Francine Prose	<i>Reading Like a Writer</i>	Hayden, Kai, Terry
Stephanie Vanderslice Kelly Ritter	<i>Rethinking Creative Writing</i> (Vanderslice)	Drew, Robin
	<i>Can It Really Be Taught?</i> (Ed. Ritter and Vanderslice)	Robin
	<i>Teaching Creative Writing</i> (Vanderslice and Ritter)	Robin
	“Teaching Lore: Creative Writers and the University” (Ritter and Vanderslice)	Drew
	“Professional Writers/Writing Professionals” (Ritter)	Kai

Table 4.3: Authors Appearing on Three or More Required Reading Lists

Type of Assignment	Corey	Drew	Hayden	Kai	Lee	Robin	Terry	Total n=7
Teaching philosophy or statement	Yes	Yes 1-2 pgs.	Yes 1-2 pgs.	Yes (multiple drafts)	Yes 10 pgs.	No	No	5
Syllabus for one or more courses	No	Yes (2)	Yes (2)	Yes (2)	Yes (1)	No	Yes (1)	5
Exercise, activity, or lesson plan	Yes (1)	Yes (2)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	No	Yes (1) (teams)	Yes (3)	6
Supervised teaching practice	No	Yes	In-class	Yes	No	No	No	3
Review, report, and/or presentation of a book or resource	No	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (2)	6
Teacher observations	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes (under- grads only)	No	3
Written reflections on course readings, class discussions, and/or learning applications	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	7
Student-led discussion	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	3
Formal Paper(s)	Yes 7-8 pgs.	Yes 1-2 pgs.	No	Yes Up to 15 pgs.	Pros- pectus 3 pgs.	Yes (grads only)	Yes	6
Portfolio	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	3
Assignments Included (n= 10)	4	9	7	10	6	6	5	

Table 4.4: Required Assignments for Creative Writing Pedagogy Courses

CHAPTER V

Creative Writing Communities of Practice

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I looked at seven creative writing pedagogy classrooms as communities of practice in which pedagogic identities and practices are performed, discussed, and developed. I identified variations in teaching practice that I will argue are predicated on different conceptions of creative writing pedagogy. In Chapter Six I will describe these different conceptions as categories of pedagogic identity. First, though, I will make a closer examination of how local communities of practice—such as programs, departments, and universities—and global communities of practice—such as professional organizations and Internet groups—influence creative writing pedagogy teachers’ conceptions and practice of teaching.

I had not planned to look beyond the creative writing pedagogy classroom as a community of practice when designing this study. However, during the course of the interviews each of my study participants alluded to the influence local and global communities of practice had had on their teaching. Their experiences convinced me that conceptions of pedagogic identity are best understood in the context of creative writing pedagogy teachers’ participation in communities of practice.

Communities of Practice

In Chapter Two, I introduced Wenger's definition of communities of practice as "groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly." He identifies three crucial characteristics: 1) A shared domain of interest: "Membership...implies a commitment to the domain, and therefore a shared competence that distinguishes members from other people", 2) A community: "[M]embers engage in joint activities and discussions, help each other, and share information", and 3) A practice: "[M]embers...are practitioners ...[who] develop a shared repertoire of resources: experiences, stories, tools, ways of addressing recurring problems" ("Communities of Practice", n.pag.). "Newcomers" to communities of practice learn from "old-timers" how to become full participants in the community of practice and will in turn initiate newcomers into the community. This ongoing process involves learning, not only for individuals, but for the community as a collective.

Each of the creative writing pedagogy teachers in my study described the influence on their teaching of local and global communities of practice. To demonstrate this influence, I will first describe the experiences of two of my subject participants within their local communities of practice. I will then discuss three global communities of practice that impact the way creative writing pedagogy teachers view and practice their teaching.

Creative Writing Pedagogy Teachers in Communities of Practice

While all of my study participants alluded to ways they were influenced by their communities of practice, Kai and Lee were perhaps the most affected by the context of their teaching. Each represents a different possible trajectory within a community of practice. As a newcomer, Kai was a peripheral member of her community who moved towards fuller participation. Lee, an old-timer, remained a peripheral member of his community due to marginality. While these are only two of many possible trajectories, they illustrate the necessity of considering the context of local communities of practice when comparing creative writing pedagogy conceptions and practices.

From Peripheral Participation towards Full Participation: Kai

Kai was the only one of my study participants who was not an experienced teacher. In fact, at the time of her hire, she had only taught creative writing in the community and not in a creative writing program. Nevertheless, Kai was assigned to teach a pedagogy course her first semester at her university:

I was given this class, and I felt like, why would they have a first-year teacher come and teach this pedagogy class? ... I was in my first semester here, and I was kind of resentful. (Kai)

Since Kai herself did not know why, as a new hire with no experience teaching creative writing at a university, she was tapped to teach a creative writing pedagogy class, it is impossible to say definitively why this decision was made. Nevertheless, using Wenger's theory as a guide I will speculate on some possible reasons if only to point out

conceptions and practices in creative writing communities of practice that deserve further scrutiny.

Reification, in a positive and negative sense, may explain why Kai's university assigned her to teach a creative writing pedagogy course her first term. Although Kai had no experience in the classroom, she held a PhD in creative writing from a well-known university and was the author of an award-winning essay and a published book. She had also taken a composition pedagogy class as part of her doctoral coursework. Because creative writing programs value literary publication and universities value the doctorate, the reification of these markers of professionalism may have made Kai appear qualified to teach a pedagogy course based on the community's regime of competence. Since the experience of having taken graduate writing workshops is considered sufficient qualification for teaching graduate or undergraduate creative writing courses at most U.S. universities, Kai's coursework in composition pedagogy may have been taken as further evidence of her competence.

At the same time, the reification of the writer's workshop means that it is the most prestigious teaching assignment in a creative writing program. With the exception of Corey, all of my study participants were one of at most two faculty members who taught the creative writing pedagogy course. Hayden stated directly that "[Terry] and I are the only ones interested in doing it [teaching the course]." When I pressed her for a reason she responded:

One of my college friends, he teaches straight workshop. That's all he's interested in teaching. He does it on every level [graduate and undergraduate]. So why

would he teach [a] creative writing pedagogy course? ... He doesn't...feel any need to challenge that model. (Hayden)

The more senior creative writing faculty members at Kai's university may have shared this notion that "anyone who's been in a workshop knows how to run a workshop" and see no reason to teach a creative writing pedagogy course (Hayden).

Another possibility is that these faculty members didn't feel competent to teach a creative writing pedagogy since it is unlikely that any had ever taken such a course. They may share Drew's hesitancy about teaching pedagogy because "I don't have to time to really engage as a pedagogy scholar....So I feel oftentimes like I am a pedagogy impostor" (Drew).

Kai's assignment to teach a pedagogy class during her first semester of teaching was further complicated by the fact that she had no access to the syllabus or teaching materials of the previous instructor:

Kai: [T]he person who I'd taken the class over from left, and he didn't – no one – I couldn't get a syllabus of his, and I couldn't figure out what he had been doing except by talking to people. But from what I gathered, he was teaching theory of creative writing. I'm not even sure what that means, you know? So... [Pause]

Interviewer: OK, all right. So you're starting from scratch –

Kai: I started from scratch.

Interviewer: – and you basically had to invent your syllabus?

Kai: Right.

Issues of participation are at stake in Kai's predicament of being a newcomer without access to experienced old-timers. Kai was left to her own devices to plan the pedagogy course.

Fortunately, Kai was supported by department administrators who, though unable to offer her very much information about the previous instructor's approach to teaching the pedagogy course, were willing to listen to Kai's suggestions and approved the changes she requested:

So, what they wanted me to do was [teach] creative writing and composition [pedagogy] as the same class and mix it all together.... But I told them that was not a good idea....there's a lot you need to know in comp pedagogy that's very different from what you need to know in creative writing pedagogy. It's really kind of robbing people who want to be teachers of, like, their professional opportunities to really become an expert in something.... [T]here's a lot riding on comp and a lot of pressure on composition teachers. And I think that they need their own class just to, like, understand that and understand how they can best teach within the structure....I told them I didn't want to do [them] mixed. (Kai)

Kai was able to make a case for teaching creative writing and composition pedagogy separately instead of in the same course. As a result, MFA students would have been required to take two pedagogy courses. The students complained with the result that, although the courses remained separate, the creative writing pedagogy course was no longer required. While Kai was able to teach the course as she wished, separating the pedagogy course into two courses had the inadvertent effect of dropping creative writing pedagogy as an MFA requirement.

Kai also made a curriculum change that ended up significantly changing the structure of her creative writing program. Before she was hired, there was no allowance within the pedagogy course for students to practice teaching. Kai felt strongly that the course should include some kind of teaching practicum, and made room in one of her own writing courses for her pedagogy students to try out their skills:

Kai: I didn't like not having a teaching component, so – and I was teaching intro to fiction that semester, so I had all of my students come in and present a unit in my class on the elements of fiction to my students.

Interviewer: OK, so let me get this straight: Your creative writing pedagogy students came in to present to your undergraduate fiction students on an aspect of fiction?

Kai: Yeah, it was really fun. But my program director saw that and he said that next time I teach creative writing pedagogy...they were going to have...two

creative writing classes attached to it. Those will be taught by graduate students who've already taken this class... [Creative Writing Pedagogy]. But just like I had people come in and teach in my class, it's like a requirement of those two graduate students, if they want a class, then there's going to be people coming in and giving units for the class.

In Kai's program, the director was not only willing to support her in making significant changes to the pedagogy course—he also made changes to the entire program based on his observation of her work, thus adding to the community's repertoire. Initially Kai was frustrated because the lack of knowledge about the previous instructor's approach to teaching the pedagogy course interfered with her ability to become a full participant in this community of practice. When her program director responded to Kai's request for changes and was able to incorporate her improvements into the program's structure, he supported her trajectory toward becoming a full participant. At the same time, the community benefited from Kai's innovations as they inspired permanent alterations in the structure of introductory creative writing courses that provided all creative writing pedagogy students with an opportunity to practice teaching.

As a newcomer, Kai is a peripheral member of this community of practice, but once she had been authorized to make significant changes that will affect the way creative writing and composition pedagogy will be taught for years to come, she was on an inbound trajectory toward full participation in this community. Had she not been supported by old-timers in this community, her trajectory might have been peripheral—coming no closer to full participation—or even outbound—leading toward relinquishing

membership in the community. Instead, the community's receptivity to the pedagogic innovations of a newcomer signaled the value the community placed on the contributions of its membership. This ability to respond to members' suggestions for change mark this community as growth-oriented, with the ability to learn and apply learning to create new practices of participation.

In spite of her initial difficulties in finding support as a newcomer, Kai's trajectory toward full participation describes a newcomer in transition to becoming an old-timer:

I've loved teaching pedagogy...more than I thought I would....When you teach pedagogy, students are so grateful for the learning. I don't think I've ever taught anything that people feel so grateful, because they're scared to teach...and we're really giving them ideas and hope and things from all over. I really love how—I don't think that there's any other thing that I teach, even writing, where I feel it can really make a person's life better, and that you can see that, and you can see them seeing that. So I just really love the pedagogy. I just love helping students go out and find themselves as teachers.

In a single semester, Kai moved from feeling resentful about having to teach creative writing pedagogy to embracing its possibilities and looking forward to teaching it again. Not every peripheral participant finds a trajectory toward full participation, however, as my next example demonstrates.

From Peripheral Participation to Marginality: Lee

Lee has published numerous books with small presses and thus has a more prominent publication profile than any study participant except Hayden. He is also the only study participant to hold a terminal degree that included a traditional dissertation (as opposed to the PhD with creative dissertation held by Robin and Kai). While I would have expected that these reified markers of professionalization would have put Lee on an inbound trajectory toward full participation, this did not appear to be the case. Lee was the only study participant who did not hold a tenure track position. Although he was an experienced teacher with a doctorate and an impressive publication record, Lee expressed more dissatisfaction with his position in his local community of practice than any other participant in the study.

Like Kai, as a newcomer Lee was a teacher interested in moving away from traditional creative writing pedagogies and toward experimentation:

[W]hen I first came here I didn't like workshops or workshop methods. What I did here for the first semester is I didn't do any workshopping.... I set it up totally different... (Lee)

Lee was able to create a space for alternative pedagogies within his own writing classroom, but his decision to abandon the workshop met with resistance from students:

I got a lot of complaints about that. Why? Because other people here are doing workshop! Right? The other people here are doing workshop and ... [the students] have already experienced this workshop thing. (Lee)

According to Wenger, communities of practice build coherence through “the development of a shared repertoire” (82). By refusing to engage in the highly reified practice of writer’s workshop, Lee found himself at odds with the community’s regime of competence. Had he been able to convince other members of the community to engage in alternative practices of teaching, this may have been judged as a sign of competence. In the case of Lee’s community of practice, however, workshop appears to be an entrenched part of the repertoire. When he was unable to introduce new practices into the repertoire, Lee capitulated to conform to the community’s regime of competence:

And I just finally about five years ago I said that’s it, I am not fighting it anymore.... Fine, you want to do a workshop? We will do a workshop. (Lee)

Lee still had many ideas about how creative writing pedagogy could be envisioned, but as an untenured instructor, he feared that putting his ideas into practice might jeopardize his position in the program:

I have many other things I would like to do in creative writing. Many other ways I can envision setting it up. But you know, what I don’t want to do, I suppose I am worried about my teaching evaluations... (Lee)

Although Lee immediately took back the statement that he was worried about his teaching evaluations, insisting that his evaluations were good, his description of his resistance to workshop as a fight gives the impression that Lee sees himself in opposition to the community of practice and views his membership as precarious rather than assured.

Lee experienced marginality when he resisted one of the community's reified practices. Yet in spite of that marginality, Lee was also able to influence the community by convincing the department chair, with whom he had a close personal relationship, to change the creative writing pedagogy course from an upper-level undergraduate course open to undergraduates and graduates to a course exclusively for graduate students:

I went to [the director of creative writing] and...I said you've got to change this course; it has got to be a graduate course. (Lee)

Although Lee was unsuccessful in applying the politics of reification to introduce new conceptions of creative writing pedagogy to the community's repertoire, he was able to use the politics of participation—which Wenger describes as a process in which a member of a community “can seek, cultivate, or avoid specific relationships with specific people” as an avenue for “exercising influence on what becomes of a practice” (91).

In spite of the leverage his friendship with the director afforded him, Lee found himself “progressively alienated from certain kinds of academic goings on.” He confessed that “I am less optimistic than I used to be” about the English Department

coming together as a “happy family” since “everyone wants their little piece of the pie.” He is also clearly disenchanted with teaching creative writing, at least in the form of a craft-based course with 18 students:

At the end of the semester generally speaking I will be perfectly happy...if they came out of here caring just a little bit more about reading and writing. Just caring a little bit more. ...Honestly, that’s how modest my goal is at this point.
(Lee)

While he may at one time have been as enthusiastic about teaching as Kai was after teaching her first creative writing pedagogy course, after more than two decades of teaching Lee appears not only to have remained in the periphery but to be on an outbound trajectory:

Twenty-five years of teaching is enough....I don’t want to be doing this when I’m 70 years old. (Lee)

While other factors such as personality, education, age, and gender undoubtedly influence how creative writing pedagogy teachers experience their teaching, Kai and Lee’s narratives reveal that communities of practice influence creative writing pedagogy teachers’ attitudes and practices in ways that will play out in the creative writing pedagogy classroom and may inhibit their efforts to bring about pedagogic change. In the discussion of pedagogic identity that follows in the next chapter, it is important to

remember that communities of practice can exert a strong influence on teaching conceptions and practice. In other words, categories of pedagogic identity are best considered in the context of communities of practice.

Creative Writing Global Communities of Practice

Particularly because there are so few teachers of creative writing pedagogy, the opportunity to communicate with other creative writing pedagogy teachers is important for teachers aiming to develop competence and expand the repertoire of their local communities. In this section, I will consider three global communities of practice: two professional organizations and a virtual community that provide forums for creative writing and creative writing pedagogy teachers to share ideas and discuss their practice. I will suggest negative and positive ways that global creative writing communities of practice impact conceptions of teaching.

Association of Writers and Writing Programs

The Association of Writing Programs was founded in 1967 by 15 writers representing 13 creative writing programs. Today the Association of Writers and Writing Programs represents “over 500 colleges and universities, 130 conferences and centers, and thousands of individual writers”; 13,000 people attended the AWP annual conference in 2014 (AWP). AWP’s sensational growth is due not only to the soaring numbers of creative writing programs but its revised mission, signaled by its title

change, to represent not only creative writing programs but literary organizations and individual writers.

AWP's membership has expanded to include anyone with an interest in creative writing, a development that has made it difficult to sustain its identity as a professional association for teachers of creative writing and creative writing pedagogy. At AWP conferences, hundreds of writers and fans of writers crowd into ballrooms to hear readings by their favorite celebrity authors and wander through the enormous book fair where publishers, literary journals, writer's organizations, and creative writing programs vie for their attention. A few years ago, AWP quietly phased out its pedagogy forum, although AWP conferences still include numerous panels on creative writing pedagogy (often sparsely attended). AWP's pedagogy papers, once prominently displayed on its website, have now either vanished completely or become impossible to find even with diligent searching. These developments suggest that AWP's original mission to support teaching in creative writing programs has shifted toward support of the larger industry of creative writing. In other words, AWP looks less like a professional organization and more like a marketplace.

Study participants had mixed responses to AWP as a source of information and advocacy and the AWP conference as a place to meet with and exchange ideas with other creative writing pedagogy teachers. Corey had been a chair of the former pedagogy forum and included a discussion of AWP in his pedagogy course. Drew was using the occasion of the 2014 AWP conference to interview applicants for a teaching position and had submitted a creative writing pedagogy article for publication on the AWP website, although she ultimately decided not to place it there. Robin was a frequent presenter

and celebrated the launch of her MFA program at an AWP Conference. Drew and Kai both included papers originally published on the AWP website as required readings for their pedagogy courses.

Kai in particular saw the AWP conference as a valuable opportunity for her pedagogy students to participate in the larger creative writing community:

[T]hey all had to do a presentation in class, and...then they wrote a paper about it, because I wanted for them to panel AWP next year with some of these ideas and results. So...I said, 'If you write a really good paper and you do a very good job, maybe I'll choose you to be one of the people on the AWP panel about this.' So they were all writing with this idea of presenting it publicly, which is nice because their presentation can get workshopped, so they'll have a whole year and a half, and it won't be like an I-wrote-it-on-an-airplane panel, you know? (Kai)

Presenting at AWP is a sought-after privilege, even though Kai's comment about the "I-wrote-it-on-an-airplane panel" attests to the fact that presenters do not always put a great deal of care or effort into their presentations. This lack of preparation for panels in part reflects the recognition that, for many attending AWP, the opportunity to meet celebrity authors or promote one's own book is as or more important than attending sessions on creative writing pedagogy. As Drew remarked, "You go to AWP and it is hard to find all the people who are trying to write and talk and think about their teaching amidst everybody running to the George Saunders reading or whatever."

Drew clearly saw the need for a professional organization for teachers of creative writing, but no longer seemed confident in AWP's capacity to fill that role:

I have often longed for an AWP that was only for people who are literally, the way it used to be, just people teaching creative writing in academia. And it is not that I think we should insulate ourselves, it is just that AWP is so busy trying to make sure they appeal. The AWP [*Writer's*] *Chronicle*, by choosing to look more like *Poets & Writers* than *College English*, is not good for creative writing pedagogy. (Drew)

The fact that the *Writer's Chronicle*, the official publication of the AWP, is a glossy, four-color, general-interest magazine instead of a scholarly, peer-reviewed journal seems at odds with AWP's identity as a professional organization. So, too, are AWP guidelines that "establish the MFA as the appropriate terminal degree for the writer who teaches in higher education" (AWP). AWP's stance on the MFA as the preferred teaching qualification is not in alignment with the professional standards of either the College Composition and Communication Conference or the international community of creative writing teachers. From the perspective of creative writing pedagogy teachers, AWP's refusal to insist on training or certification for teaching creative writing supports the "star system" (Ritter) of creative writing teachers hired on the basis of their literary celebrity rather than interest in or ability to teach:

I proposed this to my [pedagogy] students the other night. I said [what]if AWP said from now on nobody can teach creative writing...until they have taken a creative writing pedagogy class. Imagine what would happen if creative writing basically mimicked what rhet comp did in terms of saying to freshman English [teachers], you must go through a training program. ... Our whole discipline would change because suddenly there would be this need to hire people who could do that so ... all the people currently interested in creative writing pedagogy would probably find there are all these great jobs for them. But then I don't think AWP would do that but that's what it would take for things to change. (Drew)

Subject participants who could remember a smaller, more streamlined version of AWP seemed nostalgic for a time when they could gather at the annual conference and know they would find other, like-minded teachers. According to Wenger, tensions between institutions and practices are inevitable and require continuous negotiation of alignment (245). In the case of AWP, the misalignment between institutional priorities and the practices of those who were once its core members has left creative writing pedagogy teachers feeling adrift. With AWP unlikely to return to its former focus, teachers interested in discussing creative writing pedagogy have begun to create alternative communities of practice. Two of these will be the focus of the next section.

Alternative Communities of Practice

For creative writing pedagogy teachers and creative writing teachers interested in pedagogy, the AWP conference, website, and publications have not provided an

adequate level of support for exchanging ideas and informing practice. Many, like Drew, have turned to the Internet in search of online communities that can support their practice:

I am online a lot and I see people talking about their teaching all the time. I think of the Internet as a big teacher's lounge, that is what my *Facebook* and *Twitter*, especially *Facebook*, is: A lot of people who teach creative writing trying to figure out how to do things, and I think that's really valuable....I think there are many people who are talking about teaching in non-scholarly venues.... It doesn't get us respect, but it...disseminates the research and the thinking we do and actually has--can have—a real impact. Since we don't have a teacher training program built into our discipline, I think the Internet and *Facebook* and being connected with each other and the Creative Writing Pedagogy Group on *Facebook*, that ends up becoming the place where we end up talking about that stuff... (Drew)

The Creative Writing Pedagogy Group Drew mentions is an invitation-only *Facebook* group that currently has over 4300 members including three of my seven study participants. It was established by two teachers of creative writing and creative writing pedagogy to promote discussion related to “issues of teaching creative writing at the college level” (Creative Writing Pedagogy Group). Members share news and resources of interest to creative writing teachers and ask group members for book recommendations and teaching advice. While the membership consists primarily of American creative writing teachers and scholars in higher education, there are also

international members from Anglophone countries as well members who teach creative writing in schools and community settings.

While this group has provided creative writing teachers with a means for connecting with other practitioners and sharing resources, it has not tended to foster deeper discussions about the nature and purpose of creative writing education. Tim Mayers records his response to the Creative Writing Pedagogy Group's *Facebook* page in "(Re)Figuring the Future: Lore, Creative Writing Studies, and Institutional Histories", a chapter in the forthcoming book, *Can Creative Writing Really Be Taught: Tenth Anniversary Edition* edited by Stephanie Vanderslice and myself. Discussing the predominance of lore in discussions of creative writing pedagogy, Mayers says of the Creative Writing Pedagogy *Facebook* Group:

A significant number of the discussion thread-starters there take one of two forms. The first is what might be called a "seeking models" question.... A second such subgenre might be called the "problem student/problem situation" question.... Rarely is this kind of question posed in such a way that assumes perhaps the problem situation is a manifestation of the ways in which the teacher has (perhaps unwittingly) framed the enterprise of creative writing narrowly or contradictorily. My point here is not that these are "bad" sorts of questions, but rather that they are limiting sorts of questions—questions that implicitly define creative writing pedagogy within a quite narrow framework, as a bag of tricks or collection of techniques that can be deployed on an ad hoc basis,

often without considering any context larger than fixing a day-to-day problem (n. pag.).

While Mayers emphasizes “The Creative Writing Pedagogy Group on *Facebook* is a wonderful and productive online space” that has “immeasurably enhanced” his own thinking about creative writing pedagogy and “brings together a wide variety of voices for discussions that could not happen otherwise,” he contends that the two common types of discussion that frequently appear on the site fail to “extend and complicate the idea of what pedagogy is.”

In terms of communities of practice, the Creative Writing Pedagogy Group is a virtual space where “newcomers” can seek advice from “old-timers.” It may serve to reify existing practices, but doesn’t seem to have encouraged deep discussions about creative writing pedagogy. This may be, in part, because “participation” in this community of practice is peripheral at best for the majority of members. While several members maintain an active presence on the site by posting articles of interest, participating in discussion threads, or “liking” comments or posts made by others, the majority of members are either “lurkers” (they read posts but don’t comment) or do not check the site with any regularity. While the Creative Writing Pedagogy Group helps creative writing teachers communicate with one another, it is not a replacement for a professional organization.

A community of practice that has formed as an alternative to AWP is the Creative Writing Studies Organization (CWSO). Founded in 2016, the CWSO is “dedicated to helping creative writing studies establish itself through increasing the visibility of

scholarship that pertains to creative writing and being an inclusive, diverse space that fosters open conversation about topics pertaining to the field.” The CWSO established the on-line *Journal of Creative Writing Studies* as the first peer-reviewed journal for creative writing scholarship in the United States. The premiere issue featured a series of “manifestoes” by creative writing teachers and scholars. The organization will hold its first conference in September of 2016. As a conference dedicated only to the teaching of creative writing in colleges and universities, the Creative Writing Studies Conference may become the community for creative writing teachers that Drew longed for and that the AWP has moved away from being. Members of the CWSO are likely to be members of AWP, as well. Since Wenger suggests that multimembership is one way for communities of practice to connect and influence one another, the CWSO has an opportunity to influence AWP through their shared memberships.

Conclusion

It appears that, at both the local and global levels, creative writing pedagogy teachers can be supported or challenged in their efforts to become full participants in creative writing communities of practice according to whether the community is open to learning and incorporates new conceptions and practices introduced by its members. Since communities only grow and change as their members do, individual setbacks will impact the ability of the entire community to function effectively and will limit its capacity to learn and grow in response to a changing environment. When newcomers have no old-timers to mentor them, and when communities resist rather than support

innovative practices, the development of both individuals and the community is impeded.

The creative writing pedagogy course may be one way for creative writing communities of practice to prepare newcomers for full participation and create a space where new approaches to pedagogy are valued and shared. Hayden sees the growing number of creative writing pedagogy courses as evidence that the reified practice of writer's workshop is losing some of its authority:

One of the reasons these courses are beginning to exist is because there's been a shift in creative writing pedagogy, and there's been a lot of questioning—the workshop and what do we really get from that.... We weren't necessarily talking about that 15 years ago. (Hayden)

For creative writing teachers and scholars interested in reforming creative writing pedagogy, the growing number of creative writing pedagogy courses is a hopeful sign.

This chapter has shown that even creative writing pedagogy teachers who are invested in reform face significant institutional challenges in implementing pedagogic change. Without communities of practice that support innovation, creative writing pedagogy teachers are unlikely to bring about change. Even when individual creative writing pedagogy teachers are successful in changing conceptions and practices within their local communities of practice, these innovations may have little or no influence on global creative writing communities of practice. Understanding creative writing classrooms, programs, and professional organizations as a network of communities of

practice substantiates the intricate context in which teaching conceptions and practices are performed and develop and suggests the complexity of conceptual change.

Chapter VI

Conceptions of Pedagogic Identity

Introduction

In this chapter I present a set of categories of pedagogic identity that describe the variation in conceptions of creative writing teaching that I discovered through a phenomenographic analysis of the data. Throughout this study I have used the term *pedagogic identity*, borrowed from the work of Zukas and Malcolm, to describe teachers' conceptions of creative writing pedagogy, including their conceptions of themselves and others as creative writing and creative writing pedagogy teachers. I have defined *conceptions* as beliefs, understandings, attitudes, and values that guide behavior. I have used Zukas and Malcolm's definition of *pedagogy*: "a critical understanding of the social, policy and institutional context, as well as a critical approach to the content and process of the educational/training transaction" (Zukas and Malcolm, 215). Because creative writing pedagogy courses are communities of practice in which pedagogic identities are formed, it is important to understand the various enactments of pedagogic identity to which creative writing pedagogy students are introduced.

Typically in a phenomenographic study, categories of description represent a hierarchy of more and less comprehensive views of a phenomenon. However, I found that the relationship between the categories I identified did not represent progressively

more comprehensive conceptions of creative writing pedagogy. In recognition of the expectation of a hierarchical outcome, I have adopted Ziegenfuss's strategy of first presenting the categories of description as a nonhierarchical set. Then, using aspects suggested by Kember and Trigwell et al, I map the pedagogic identities onto a matrix composed of teaching strategies and teaching intentions to form a hierarchical outcome space.

The set of categories of description which is the primary outcome of this study, like the outcomes of all phenomenographic studies, is not intended to be generalizable. Nevertheless, this set of categories provides creative writing pedagogy teachers and other Creative Writing professionals with a diagnostic and reflective tool that can also serve as a starting point for future research.

In the following section, I present a set of categories of description that describe five distinct pedagogic identities, including one with three subtypes.

Categories of Pedagogic Identity

The five pedagogic identities that emerged from the data are Expert Practitioner, Change Agent, Facilitator, Co-Constructor of Knowledge, and Vocational Trainer. I identified three subtypes within the category of Expert Practitioner: Master Craftsperson, Famous Writer, and Teacher/Artist. In Table 6.1 I present each category along with a primary goal of instruction and a primary value as a quick means of defining the categories and understanding how they differ from one another. More detailed descriptions of each category will be provided in the next section.

While I use quotes from the transcripts to show that these pedagogic identities arise from the data, it is important to stress that these categories do not represent individual teachers but variations in conception. All of the study participants made statements that represent more than one pedagogic identity; some participants made statements in support of several. This is to be expected, in part because teaching is a complex activity and in part because identities are not static. Many of the study participants acknowledged that their teaching conceptions and practices had changed over time. Some pedagogic identities (such as Famous Author) were not represented by any of the subject participants, but were referred to in class discussions as a type of creative writing teacher often found in creative writing programs.

Pedagogic Identity	Goal of Instruction	Values
Expert Practitioner Subtype1: Master Craftsperson Subtype 2: Famous Author Subtype 3: Teacher/Artist	Developing Art/Craft	Talent/Skill
Change Agent	Changing Conceptions	Understanding
Facilitator	Presenting an Array of Options	Choice
Co-Constructor of Knowledge	Expanding the Field of Knowledge	Discovery
Vocational Trainer	Preparing Students for the Job Market	Marketability

Table 6.1: Categories of Creative Writing Pedagogic Identity

It should also be clear that these pedagogic identities do not represent an exhaustive catalog of teaching conceptions in Creative Writing. Rather, they represent five dominant conceptions found in the data that identify variations in pedagogic

identity of seven creative writing pedagogy teachers. I fully expect that with additional time and research, these categories will require revision. Tenuous as it may be, the set of categories presented here provides a useful tool for understanding variation in teaching conceptions of creative writing pedagogy teachers and suggests possible guidelines for the creative writing pedagogy course, a topic that will be taken up in Chapter Seven.

In the next section I present a detailed profile of each pedagogic identity, supported by statements excerpted from the interview transcripts.

Profiles of Pedagogic Identities

I. Expert Practitioners

In creative writing pedagogy classrooms, Expert Practitioners serve as skilled and experienced writers and writing teachers who model teaching practice for the learner-apprentice:

[A]ll the time I'm teaching this class and I'm telling this to them, and I hope they're remembering as I am telling them this—everything I do in this class I'm modeling for them, because you are going to go and teach. Think about the fact that everything I do I have thought about as a way to model for you the things you might do. (Robin)

Robin explicitly invites pedagogy students to consider her as a model for how they might do their own teaching. As indicated in Table 6.2, the Expert Practitioner views the relationship between teacher and students as that of a master and apprentices. As such,

the Expert Practitioner values skill development through the process of observing and approximating the practices of experienced old timers. As core members of creative writing communities of practice, Expert Practitioners draw on their own expertise in the classroom and provide students with models to emulate.

Expert Practitioners rely on personal experience to guide their teaching which can take the form of offering tips or sharing stories:

[B]ecause I have taught for a long time, I can perhaps help them through some of those anxieties and give them tips and explain my own frustrations... (Lee)

Expert Practitioners privilege wisdom born of experience rather than theoretical knowledge. The “tips” handed down by Expert Practitioners become part of the teaching lore that comprises the foundation for the traditional writer’s workshop (Ritter and Vanderslice). The stories Expert Practitioners share with newcomers become part of the house of lore (North) that newcomers will pass down to their own students once they become core members of creative writing communities of practice.

Expert Practitioners may also direct students to draw on their own positive and negative experiences of former creative writing teachers to guide them in developing their own teaching practice:

...that kind of discussion of...what kind of teacher do we want to be? Is there a teacher that we had before that is a model, either as a positive or negative

influence? What would we take from this teacher? What would we take from this [other] teacher? (Hayden)

As noted in Chapter One, none of the participants in this study had taken a creative writing pedagogy course themselves. While some engaged with creative writing pedagogy scholarship as part of their preparation to teach creative writing pedagogy, Expert Practitioners draw primarily on their own experiences as students of creative writing to shape their teaching practice and encourage creative writing pedagogy students to do the same.

Expert Practitioners believe that students learn by doing and by observing experts at work. Giving students the opportunity to practice and demonstrate their skills as authentically as possible is more important than theories of writing and/or teaching, historical and current developments in the field, keeping up with or contributing to creative writing pedagogy scholarship, or the sociopolitical context in which teaching and writing takes place:

I didn't like not having a teaching component, so—and I was teaching Intro to Fiction that semester, so I had all of my [pedagogy] students come in and present a unit in my class... (Kai)

The undergraduates have to observe a creative writing teacher for two classes. They have to interview that teacher about that practice, and then they have to write all this up. (Robin)

[T]he discussion that they're going to have amongst themselves about whether the workshop works seems to me to be more lively than an article about whether the workshop works. (Hayden)

Kai, Drew, and Hayden went to great lengths to give students opportunities to practice teach if only for a single lesson. Robin, Drew, and Kai also required students to observe and interview experienced teachers in order to learn about teaching directly from Expert Practitioners. In explaining her decision not to use creative writing pedagogy texts, Hayden acknowledged that she places greater value on discussion among practitioners rather than the authority of a text. These practices are in keeping with the value Expert Practitioners place on wisdom gained from hands-on experience.

Because they give highest priority to the learning of practical skills through observation and practice, Expert Practitioners may focus on the “nuts and bolts” of writing syllabi and developing lesson plans:

We would come in and say, like, what was useful here? What would be useful in this book, and how might you use this book in the classroom? (Hayden)

Expert Practitioners derive their authority from their creative writing, not their scholarship. Therefore, they may feel uncomfortable talking about theories of pedagogy:

I am ambivalent about the degree to which I am a pedagogy scholar....I don't have the time to really engage as a pedagogy scholar because even I am unwilling to let go of this novel I am working on and my hopes and dreams for it. So I feel often times like I am a pedagogy impostor. (Drew)

They may harbor beliefs about writing talent as “unteachable” or creative writing as a talent that cannot be taught:

I very much feel like—I cannot make you a good writer if you're not a good writer. I cannot do that. Nevertheless, you signed up for this class and paid your money, because you think I can do that. The only thing I can really do is try to teach you some technical things so you have indeed learned something when you walk out of my classroom. (Hayden)

As the quotes above suggest, the Expert Practitioner's approach to teaching pedagogy is pragmatic rather than theoretical. However, there may be considerable variance in the teaching approaches of Expert Practitioners as indicated by the following three subtypes identified in the data.

Subtype 1: The Master Craftsperson

The Master Craftsperson is a sub-type of the Expert Practitioner who views the master/apprentice relationship as an apt metaphor for the relationship between teacher and students in the creative writing classroom:

I think that's the whole basis of having it as a workshop, as really a master/apprentice kind of relationship. It's almost like a craft guild that they're in. I think that's the model, and I truly believe it. (Terry)

The classroom is viewed as a workshop where the master determines “what works” in student drafts and helps to “fix” what “doesn't work”:

...this idea that a text can be improved with the workshop model—where the wise, experienced instructor hands down advice and certain kinds of edits, and the text is the focus of the workshop. ... [S]o we covered some of the basic ideas of the traditional model. ...The idea of the master craftsman. And then all the ideas that stem from that metaphor of the master craftsman, the idea that the master craftsman gives the writers tools, that the master craftsman fixes what is wrong with a text, and that's the function of the workshop is to find what's wrong and fix it under this metaphor of the master craftsman. (Corey)

In the Expert Practitioner's creative writing pedagogy classroom, teaching demonstrations may be “workshopped” in the same way that student writing is workshopped in creative writing classrooms; demonstration lessons are critiqued for “what works” and “fixes” are suggested for “what doesn't work”:

We're going to workshop their syllabi. We're going to talk about what's working, what's not working. (Kai)

The Master Craftsperson supports the metaphor of the creative writing classroom as a workshop and the practical pedagogical approach that follows from this metaphor.

Subtype 2: The Famous Writer

Hayden describes the Famous Writer as “somebody who’s known or was known at some point”; in other words, a writer who has achieved substantial recognition for his or her literary achievements. Hayden acknowledges that the Famous Writer is “a kind of...teacher that you get a lot in creative writing.” Since they are hired because of their literary reputations and not for their interest or skill in teaching, Hayden characterizes the Famous Writer’s approach to teaching as “learning a little bit by osmosis by being in their presence, and maybe they’ll take everybody out drinking afterwards.” The character of Grady Tripp in Michael Chabon’s *Wonder Boys*, based in part on one of Chabon’s undergraduate teachers, is an example of this pedagogic identity. Like Grady Tripp, the Famous Writer has little interest in teaching, viewing it as a means to support their real work—creative writing.

Most graduates of U.S. creative writing programs have encountered at least one Famous Writer (Ritter, “Ethos Interrupted”). While the Famous Writer shares many traits with another subtype of the Expert Practitioner, the Master Craftsperson, Famous Writers may rely on the appeal of their celebrity and “teach by osmosis” rather than invest in their teaching.

Subtype 3: The Teacher/Artist

Like the subtype of the Famous Author, the Teacher/Artist subtype was discussed but not represented in my study population. Both Kai and Lee strongly identified with conceptions of teaching based on the metaphor of the Teacher/Artist working in an artistic discipline other than writing. A central activity in Kai's class was for pedagogy students to observe and interview teachers in other arts disciplines and imagine how the practices of the art, music, or dance studio might be brought to bear in the creative writing class. During our interview, Kai envisioned a common practice in the art studio that she suggests could revolutionize the creative writing class, but would never be allowed to happen:

For example, you would never give a writing assignment in a creative writing class. Say, like, here's a prompt, and we'll start writing the prompt. And I go over your shoulder, and I say, 'You know, that metaphor is a little flat. Let me cross out your words, and I'm going to put new words into that metaphor. See how that makes a change? Like, see how that is the same idea, but it's better?' That's what every other art does, and the writers would never do that. (Kai)

Like the art teacher who goes “over the shoulder” to add a dash of color or correct a line on a student's canvas, the Teacher/Artist improves students' poems and stories by writing directly on student manuscripts.

The primary distinction between Teacher/Artists and other subtypes of the Expert Practitioner is their commitment to the practice and teaching of writing as an art.

Teacher/Artists make a clear distinction between writing as art and other forms of writing and direct their teaching toward the goal of making art. While like other subtypes of the Expert Practitioner they focus on skill development, Teacher/Artists share the perspective of teachers in other arts disciplines that, through the practice of art and direct instruction by experienced writers, even students who do not seem to possess natural aptitude can learn to become writers.

Lee, too, made comparisons between creative writing teachers and teachers from other arts based on his own experience of taking guitar lessons from an experienced studio musician:

[H]e will take my finger on the guitar, literally grab my fingers and say put your finger over here more. ... I have a lesson, I go home and practice the lesson for half an hour, an hour a day...and then I see him in a week and we go through and see how well I did.... That's how I learn how to play guitar, right? Now let's just suspend disbelief for a moment and say learning how to play guitar like that has something to do with the teaching of writing. And ask yourself a question: How is it possible to teach 18 people at a time in a creative writing classroom? ... What they really need is somebody to work with them half an hour a day and then they need to go home and practice and read and write half an hour to an hour a day...
(Lee)

While Kai envisions the Teacher/Artist in a studio classroom, Lee's conception of the Teacher/Artist is based on a one-on-one tutoring session followed by solo practice. In

both cases, the Teacher/Artist teaches by either correcting the student mid-process or by directly demonstrating how he or she would handle the same material.

To summarize, Expert Practitioners embrace the traditional metaphor of the teacher as master and students as apprentices. As such, they see themselves as skilled role models for students to observe and emulate. They focus on learning by doing over theory in delivering instruction; their teaching is guided by their experiences as skilled writers and by their own apprenticeships with Expert Practitioners as former students.

The Master Craftsperson focuses on the teaching of craft and the process of peer review in the writer's workshop. Famous Authors are similar to Master Craftspersons but may use the charisma of their celebrity to "teach by osmosis" rather than focus on teaching. Teacher/Artists guide students to become writers through a process of learning by doing and direct instruction instead of focusing on peer review.

II. Change Agent

Change Agents seek to reexamine Creative Writing pedagogical practices and in particular the conceptions that underlie them:

We have got to bust these myths, which is really ironic because—I'm even still dealing at the same time with graduate students who are telling me, "There's no myths," at the same time they're clinging to these myths and not being very self-knowledgeable about that. (Robin)

Change Agents are interested in transforming conceptions about creative writers and creative writing teaching and learning. More than a particular set of practices, they advocate a certain conceptual stance. Change Agents recognize that certain beliefs about writers and writing widely held by the general public may be shared, consciously or unconsciously, by writers and writing teachers:

Here's a colleague of mine who makes these assumptions about creative writing, and I actually have a lot of colleagues who do that, and it's really a problem....I think it's something Creative Writing really needs to work on...we're really trying to get people to understand...here's what we really do for our students. Because we just don't want these myths to persist. It's not right. (Robin)

Change Agents may feel a moral or ethical obligation to challenge what they consider to be myths or misguided beliefs about writing and teaching. They are interested not only in skill development, but in changing conceptions.

Change Agents value knowledge of disciplinary history and scholarship as well as sociopolitical forces that shape teaching and learning in creative writing communities of practice. By helping students develop an awareness of the history and context within which creative writing communities of practice are situated, Change Agents encourage students to critically reflect on their own conceptions and advocate for pedagogic reform:

I tend to start with a sense of how to frame the course in terms of what institutional history is at stake in teaching...and to try and pull out of each student, and myself really, what our convictions might be, our assumptions might be as to what the purpose of an education...is... [T]o be educated in one sense is to be educated by education because you have to understand how you have been taught and so I start there. (Lee)

I actually want this class to help them understand creative writing as a discipline and to make them better advocates for their own education....I really want them to understand the background of their field. And it hopefully will make them want to study it more, to carry the baton, and some of them do that. (Robin)

Having students engage with disciplinary history and current issues is one way Change Agents help pedagogy students confront unexamined assumptions about pedagogy and begin the process of conceptual change. Change Agents challenge students to question their assumptions about how creative writing should be taught and examine alternative models. Change Agents prioritize shifting pedagogy students' conceptions of what is possible in the creative writing classroom to encompass possibilities beyond the traditional workshop.

Change Agents may have knowledge of or interest in critical pedagogy and/or cultural theory. They may be concerned about discriminatory practices within writing workshop or creative writing programs in general:

We had two classes on race and class and gender diversities in writing programs....One of my separate concerns as a person is the low number of minorities that end up in writing programs. (Kai)

Change Agents may feel ambivalent about teaching creative writing pedagogy at a time when academic jobs are scarce and qualifications for teaching creative writing are based on literary rather than teaching excellence. In such cases, they may employ “tactics” (De Certeau) that broaden the objectives of the pedagogy course to include teaching outside of the university:

I am asking my students to think really long and hard about whether a career in academia is really what they want. I don't necessarily assume that it is. ... [T]here is [sic] not enough jobs in creative writing to be funneling people towards them. I feel ethically I shouldn't do that. (Drew)

In broadening their sense of what should be included in a creative writing pedagogy course, Change Agents seek to draw attention to particular problems in the field by structuring their courses so that socioeconomic issues can be confronted and addressed. Rather than focus on skill development, Change Agents seek to change students' conceptions of creative writing pedagogy by alerting them to problems and needs beyond the classroom that impact their students and the discipline and encourage them to seek solutions.

The Change Agent's primary goal is to challenge what they see as myths and misconceptions about writers and writing and to make students aware of the social, political, and economic arenas in which they operate. The principal outcome Change Agents desire is conceptual change. Change Agents challenge traditional conceptions and practices and direct students toward their own preferred conceptions and teaching practices.

III. The Facilitator

In the creative writing pedagogy classroom, the Facilitator avoids being prescriptive by providing students with an array of pedagogical options to choose from without advocating any particular approach:

I didn't want to come in and say, here's a prescription for teaching creative writing. So what I tried to do was encourage them to think about what pedagogical approach suited them. (Hayden)

Facilitators may acknowledge their own beliefs, attitudes and preferences, but emphasize that students ultimately must decide for themselves how they will approach teaching:

"I don't want them to tow my line at all." (Lee)

“I don’t insist that they ascribe to my views at all. I just want them to know what they are.” (Robin)

Choice is a high priority in the Facilitator’s classroom. Students may have the opportunity to choose some of their own readings or be given options regarding assignments. Students may be presented with a variety of pedagogical models or they may be asked to examine the advantages and disadvantages of the traditional workshop and come to their own conclusions:

As a teacher just in general, I’m very much about choice....That comes from some research I’ve done about how choice...within a spectrum is a really good teaching practice. ... I give them these three books with articles...and I have them each choose one that they will lead the discussion on. (Robin)

So Unit 1 we did, what is the traditional model. Unit 2 we did questions of the traditional model. Unit 3 we get into solutions....how can we...use some of...the valuable things from the traditional workshop, but also make it a safe place where people don’t get silenced or feel discarded or left out? ... Patrick Bizzaro...talks about this idea of... the instructor being a guide who represents different aesthetics, but without judging, saying one is better than the other. (Corey)

By using texts that contain a variety of views on creative writing pedagogy, Change Agents encourage students to be aware of disciplinary conversations about creative

writing pedagogy and how views of pedagogy vary over time and in different locations. While Facilitators offer students choice, they do not advocate an “anything goes” approach. Since they recognize a range of valid pedagogic choices, Facilitators assume that instructors using different approaches have sound reasons for their preferences. Facilitators thus encourage conceptual development without insisting on conceptual change. Facilitators see their role as helping students find a teaching style that suits their personalities:

If they're a certain kind of charismatic person, they're not pragmatically minded, it might be that just getting the students excited is the best thing they're going to be able to do. And there are some people for whom facilitating discussion amongst students but kind of hanging back suits their personality best. And there are some people for whom very much directing the conversation... It's working out what suits who they are as a person and a teacher and what rules they're trying to achieve. (Hayden)

Facilitators invite students try out different teacher roles to find the pedagogic method that suits their personalities and their individual sense of what is important to teach.

Facilitators may see themselves as resource providers. They make books, articles, websites, syllabi, and lesson plans available, allowing students to select those they want to incorporate in their future teaching:

So partly what I was trying to do was just give them resources. (Hayden)

I wrote to a whole bunch of publishers that I really admired, and I decided that we needed to have a crafts creative writing textbook library at our school so that people could come in to look at a whole bunch of different options and really make informed choices if they're going to teach it. (Kai)

Facilitators may also present students with a range of pedagogic options in the form of other teachers' syllabi:

I would give them examples of my own syllabi and also of my colleagues in fiction and poetry, what they've done. And they've – they're very radically – and that's part of the point, that there's no one format that should be used. I guess I would urge people to very much go on their own instincts and, you know, just not follow any kind of preset pattern. (Terry)

Facilitators maintain a neutral stance toward pedagogic conceptions and practices. They introduce students to an array of alternatives, but do not push students toward any particular conception or practice. As such, the primary focus for Facilitators is conceptual development.

IV. Co-Constructors of Knowledge

Co-Constructors of Knowledge are interested in innovative teaching practices. They themselves may teach and think about teaching “outside the norm.” In this sense,

they are similar to Change Agents, but unlike Change Agents, they are not as interested in reforming misconceptions as in promoting an open-ended inquiry in which they are co-participants rather than leaders:

What if creative writing class was six hours, and you wrote something—you wrote a piece in that class? And people were...correcting you as you go, and it was OK because it was just, like, the work of the class for that day? (Kai)

More than transformation from one conception to another, Co-Constructors playfully engage their students in imagining as-yet undiscovered teaching conceptions and practices. Learning is meant to be a pleasurable adventure with the teacher as a member of the crew rather than the captain of the ship. Co-Constructors are interested in surprise, investigating possible (and even impossible) ideas in order to foster innovative and creative approaches to teaching and learning. In the creative writing pedagogy classroom, Co-Constructors encourage students to use the creativity and imagination they normally expend on their writing to imagine the “dream” creative writing classroom—and then find ways to incorporate aspects of that ideal classroom into a workable course:

They had to have...an impossible syllabus, a dream syllabus, like a class that you could hardly ever do. It could even be teaching a class on Mars, but it had to be really specific, like—so one of the guys had a class where they would walk across the United States. They all had these very different kinds of possibilities, and then

they had a real [syllabus] that had to be influenced by their other one....So I was just really hinting that they should make the most creative and useful syllabus that they could....It was fun to hear them....We all talked about everyone's imaginary class. They had to defend why it would be good. (Kai)

Co-Constructors are student-focused. They encourage playfulness and diverse ideas and are open to students' discoveries, even when they are not in agreement with students' conclusions:

A lot of them came in thinking that the most important part of being a writer was reading, and they didn't leave that way. It was half and half when they left....That was from reading different articles, starting with the Dawson. Saying that maybe the student can get in their reading in other places. But that, to become a good writer, having to read two short stories in a workshop is not essential. I'm having a hard time even thinking of the argument for this, because I don't really agree with it....I think that they wanted to spend more time...having students write in class and spend time doing active, in-class learning... (Kai)

Co-Constructors encourage conceptual change without the expectation that students will adopt a particular conception. This approach to teaching may foster more egalitarian relationships with students:

So honestly what I talk to them about is, we're going to make this class—from like the third or fourth week, we're going to make this together, and it's going to be about what you're concerned about for when you become a teacher. And that's what we do. So really from that point of the semester on, every class is different... (Robin)

Co-Constructors recognize that they cannot change students' conceptions for them, but they encourage students to reflect on their conceptions and investigate new possibilities for teaching and learning that bring about conceptual change.

V. Vocational Trainer

Vocational Trainers see providing students with the tools and knowledge they need to get and keep jobs as a primary responsibility for the creative writing pedagogy teacher. The ability to create a viable syllabus and teaching statement are recognized as necessary requirements for the job market:

I think it's important to write a teacher's statement...because it's one of the first things you need when you go on to the job market... (Kai)

Creating and presenting lesson plans are effective practice, not only for the classroom, but for the job talk:

This was really useful, the teaching demonstration. And again, that's good job market training, because you're often required to do that when you go for a campus interview. (Hayden)

Vocational Trainers value the practical and useful over the fanciful. They use their own experience of being on the job market to guide students to create artifacts and practice routines that will demonstrate their fitness for teaching as defined by the standards of a creative writing community's regime of competence. Vocational Teachers rely on their authority as successfully employed creative writing teachers to groom students for the job market.

Vocational Trainers may try to acquaint students with the politics of English Departments in an effort to help them make themselves appealing to search committee members who are not creative writers and who may regard creative writers as uninterested in teaching or the functioning of the department:

[I]f you want to get a job in this market you have to understand, you have to be able to reassure hiring committees that are comprised of people not just in creative writing but people all over English studies that you are somebody that thinks deeply about your teaching....We work alongside people who take pedagogy very seriously and I think practically if we want to be hired and we want to be part of a department we have to do that work as well....[T]he better job we can do to teach them now about how to articulate to yourself and to others why

you do the things you do in the classroom, the better we are at preparing them for the job market and the realities of being an academic... (Drew)

Vocational Trainers believe that knowledge of creative writing pedagogy is not enough; applicants for academic jobs must also meet the standards of the regime of competence for all faculty members of the English Department if the creative writing program is located within such a department.

In programs that do not provide opportunities for graduate students to teach creative writing, Vocational Trainers may see the pedagogy course as a substitute for experience:

I always felt [the creative writing pedagogy course is] sort of like a substitute. Since we can't give our students experience teaching, we'll at least give them the theory behind it so they can at least have that for the job market. (Corey)

On the other hand, Vocational Trainers may use the pedagogy course as an opportunity to persuade students to consider teaching outside of the university or dissuade them from confusing a career as a creative writing teacher with a career as a creative writer:

I would say my goal is not to have them all teaching creative writing in academic situations, but to be resourceful about other ways they could be implementing these [teaching skills]....I actually don't want my students to feel their identity is

based on whether or not they are employed by a university because I think it is that way of thinking that has created the adjunct crisis in our discipline... (Drew)

The Vocational Trainer's primary goal is to assist students in creating artifacts and gaining skills useful for the academic job market. A secondary goal may be to convince students to seek meaningful employment elsewhere given the paucity of available creative writing teaching positions.

Pedagogic Identities Mapped Onto a Hierarchical Outcome Space

In Chapter Two I described several phenomenographic studies of teaching and learning. With the exception of Ziegenfuss, the outcomes of these studies were presented as a hierarchical set of categories of description. I have resisted a hierarchical category design, preferring to think of each pedagogic identity as a puzzle piece that, joined with the others, forms a more comprehensive conception of creative writing pedagogy. The five objectives for creative writing pedagogy courses presented in Chapter Seven are based on the combined goals and values of the pedagogic identities I have described above. To form a hierarchical outcome space, I have been guided by the orientations to teaching suggested by Kember and Trigwell et al and mentioned in Chapter Two. In his review of 13 studies of academics' conceptions of teaching (including Trigwell, Prosser, and Taylor), Kember asserted that each of these independent studies suggested that academics' conceptions range from teacher-oriented/content-oriented to student-centered/learning-oriented. Later, Trigwell, Prosser and their associates based their Approaches to Teaching Inventory on two

similar orientations: conceptual change/student-focused (CCSF) and information transmission/teacher-focused (ITTF). I will map the pedagogic identities in my study using two similar components: a teacher-focused or student-focused structural aspect and a referential aspect with three orientations: skill development, conceptual development, or conceptual change.

In Table 6.8, I have categorized all sub-types of the Expert Practitioner, the Vocational Trainer, and the Change Agent as teacher-focused. By this I mean that these pedagogic identities' conceptions of teaching view the teacher as an expert or authority whose skill and experience make them models for students to emulate. In contrast, the Facilitator and Co-Constructor of Knowledge share student-centered orientations. Their conceptions of teaching view the teacher as "the guide on the side" who helps students develop through support and encouragement. Because student-focused orientations are associated with a deep approach to learning among students (Trigwell, Prosser, and Waterhouse), a student-focused teaching orientation is preferred. In phenomenographic terms, a student-focused teaching orientation includes aspects of a teacher-focused orientation, but the reverse is not true. Therefore, a student-focused teaching orientation is seen as a more comprehensive conception of teaching.

In Table 6.9, I have categorized the Master Craftsperson, the Famous Author, and the Vocational Trainer as focused on Skill Development. The pedagogic identities are interested in developing students' skill in writing or job hunting rather than developing or changing their conceptions of learning to write. I consider Facilitators, who present an array of different conceptions of learning to write with no requirement for students to change, as focused on Conceptual Development. Teacher-Artists, Change Agents, and

Co-Constructors of Knowledge challenge traditional conceptions of learning to write through demonstration, persuasion, or a process of discovery and encourage students to change conceptions. Because conceptual change is a form of deep learning, the Conceptual Change orientation is seen as more comprehensive.

In Table 6.10, I have combined structural and referential aspects of teaching to form a matrix. Master Craftspersons, Famous Authors, and Vocational Trainers are seen as sharing a Teacher-Focused/Skill Development Orientation. The Teacher-Artist and Change Agent share a Teacher-Focused/Conceptual Change Orientation. The Facilitator represents a Student-Focused/Conceptual Development Orientation. Finally, the Co-Constructor of Knowledge reflects a Student-Focused/Conceptual Change orientation. As such, the Co-Constructor of Knowledge would be considered the pedagogic identity with the most comprehensive conception of teaching.

I will once again emphasize that pedagogic identities do not represent individual study participants. All of the creative writing pedagogy teachers in this study held conceptions associated with two or more pedagogic identities, since conceptions do not “reside within individuals” (Prosser, Trigwell and Taylor, 219). Lindblom-Ylänne et al also point out that the research is unclear as to whether teaching conceptions are stable or if they change depending on context. To associate an individual with a single pedagogic identity is thus doubly misleading.

Conclusion

This chapter introduced five categories of pedagogic identity—one with three subtypes—that I developed from an analysis of the interview transcripts and syllabi of

my study participants. In Tables 6.2-6.6, I provide concise descriptions of each category and include sample excerpts from the transcripts that I used to develop them. These tables, as well as Table 6.1, are intended to summarize the characteristics of and distinctions between Pedagogic Identities that have been discussed in this chapter.

As is evident from the selected quotes, all of my study participants held conceptions that correlate with more than one pedagogic identity. Some study participants showed a strong affinity for a particular pedagogic identity—for instance, Kai’s transcript was critical to developing the category of Co-Constructor of Knowledge. Other participants had conceptions that matched several categories of description—Robin, for instance, had some characteristics in common with every pedagogic identity.

The Pedagogic Identities discussed in this chapter were developed from the data of seven interview transcripts. As such, they do not represent all possible creative writing pedagogic identities. They do, however, establish that the familiar metaphor of the creative writing teacher as Master Craftsperson is only one of many possible pedagogic identities available to creative writing teachers. The range of pedagogic identities challenges conceptions of creative writing education as monolithic. The expanded range of pedagogic possibilities in creative writing supports discipline-specific training in pedagogy. Given the range of teaching conceptions and approaches identified in this small sample, it is clear that the familiar metaphor of the creative writing teacher as Master Craftsperson is not the only possibility available to creative writing teachers.

One way to clarify distinctions between pedagogic identities is to correlate pedagogic identities with creative writing pedagogy assignments. Table 6.7 offers some possible correlations. Vocational Trainers, not surprisingly, may assign readings about

the academic job market or ask students to create portfolios containing documents such as teaching statements and sample syllabi that are often included in the requirements for academic job applications. Expert Practitioners value the experience of successful writers more than theory or scholarship. Since Expert Practitioners view students as apprentices who develop skills by observing, imitating, and practicing, they are likely to assign students to develop lesson plans and teach them. Change Agents are likely to consider the sociopolitical forces shaping the teaching and learning creative writing and to assign readings that challenge reified conceptions of creative writing pedagogy. The variation in assignments listed in Tables 4.2 and 4.4 can thus be understood as influenced by varying pedagogic identities.

Another way to distinguish between different pedagogic identities is to view them in terms of teachers' strategies and intentions. As Tables 6.8-6.10 demonstrate, when mapped onto a matrix of teacher strategies (teacher-focused or student-focused) and teacher intentions (skill development, conceptual development, and conceptual change), the pedagogic identities represented in this study can be presented as an array of teaching conceptions ranging from Teacher-Focused/Skill Development to Student-Focused/Conceptual Change. Phenomenographic studies of teaching and learning that correlate teaching orientations focused on students and conceptual change with deep learning (Trigwell, Prosser, and Waterhouse) suggest that a Student-Focused/Conceptual Change orientation is preferred. This suggests that, of the pedagogic identities described in this study, the Co-Constructor of Knowledge represents the most comprehensive conception of creative writing pedagogy.

Although phenomenographic studies consider teaching and learning conceptions and practices in context, the categories of identity decontextualize conceptions so that they can be applied to other, similar contexts. Because the creative writing pedagogy classroom has seldom been a focus of creative writing pedagogy scholarship, I found it important to supplement a phenomenographic study of conceptions of creative writing pedagogy with rich descriptions of creative writing pedagogy instruction based on the interviews and syllabi of my study participants, as seen in Chapter Four. Another important context that influence teaching conceptions is creative writing pedagogy teachers' membership in local and global creative writing communities of practice which was the subject of Chapter Five. In the next chapter, I turn to a consideration of how this preliminary study of the teaching conceptions of seven creative writing pedagogy teachers can serve as a guide for creative writing pedagogy course development and future research.

<p>I. Expert Practitioner</p> <p>Description: The teacher is a skilled practitioner who serves as a role model and trains students in the craft. Students are apprentices who develop skills by observing, imitating, and practicing. The teacher advises, corrects, and evaluates using wisdom and judgment gained through experience. The Expert Practitioner teaches students the 'nuts and bolts' of craft, models good practice learned through experience, and provides students with opportunities to learn by doing and critiques their efforts in order to improve them.</p>
<p>Subtypes: Subtype 1: Master Craftsperson Subtype 2: Famous Author Subtype 3:Teacher/Artist</p>
<p>Values: Skill Subtype 1: Skill as technical proficiency Subtypes 2&3: Skill as artistry</p>
<p>Avoids: Theory, scholarship</p>
<p>Strengths:</p> <p>Subtype 1: Master Craftspersons focus on teaching technique and craft and improving student work through critique and peer review. Their teaching is based on their experience as experienced and successful writers and teachers.</p> <p>Subtype 2: Famous Authors are often charismatic and engaging. They serve as role models for students who aspire to literary celebrity and distinguished careers as creative writing professors. Since Famous Authors command respect in the larger literary world, students may seek them out as mentors in order to help launch their own literary and academic careers.</p> <p>Subtype 3: Teacher/Artists are committed to the practice and teaching of writing as an art. They are drawn to hands-on models of teaching practice exemplified in the teaching of other art forms such as visual art and music.</p>
<p>Weaknesses: May lack a theoretical foundation for teaching practices and conceptions. May believe or transmit (consciously or unconsciously) myths about creativity as inherited rather than developed. May insist that students emulate their own practice. May rely on "teaching by osmosis" or fall back on traditional practices rather than explore alternatives. May be unaware of (or uninterested in) disciplinary history, scholarship, and international developments or social, political, and economic contexts of teaching and learning. May feel like "pedagogy impostors" or conflicted about their roles as teachers. May be bluntly critical.</p>
<p>Quotes from interview transcripts that suggest an Expert Practitioner pedagogic identity:</p> <p>Subtype 1: Master Craftsperson We covered...the idea of the master craftspersonThe wise, experienced instructor hands down advice and certain kinds of edits.... And then all the ideas that stem from that metaphor of the master craftsperson, the idea that the master craftsperson gives the writers tools, that the master craftsman fixes what is wrong with a text, and that's the function of the workshop is to find what's wrong and fix it under this metaphor of the master craftsperson. COREY</p> <p>Subtype 2: Famous Author The kind of personality of teacher that you get a lot in creative writing..., where there's this—somebody who's known or was known at some point, and there's this sense that you're learning a little bit by osmosis by being in their presence, and maybe they'll take everybody out drinking afterwards. HAYDEN</p> <p>Subtype 3: Teacher/Artist Supposedly the models for creative writing are these works of literary art, you know what I mean? So the pull of that activity isn't simply about writing for a blog or writing for a recipe, the pull of that is pulled over to the fine arts people or at least what's going on in visual culture, it is painting, music, all of these other art forms. So you have art for me which is always art with a small 'a.' You have art with a small 'a' hovering over the top of this kind of a course [the creative writing class] too. LEE</p>

Table 6.2: Categories of Description Profile: Expert Practitioner

II. Change Agent
Description: The role of the pedagogy teacher is to rid students of misconceptions regarding writing and creativity. Students are asked to consider and question the political, economic, and cultural context within which they teach, learn, and write.
Values: Understanding
Avoids: Mythologies of creative genius, elitist assumptions that writing can't be taught
Strengths: Knowledgeable about disciplinary history and scholarship as well as sociopolitical forces shaping the teaching and learning of creative writing. Challenges students to question assumptions based on misconceptions and lore. Encourages students to think of teaching approaches in different ways. Addresses issues of cultural difference that are important for developing culturally sensitive pedagogy. Favors pedagogical approaches designed to teach students with a range of ability rather than the talented few.
Weaknesses: Pedagogic approach may favor the theoretical over the practical. Approach to teaching and learning may clash with students' expectations and perceived needs. May be more interested in persuading students to their way of thinking than making room for a variety of approaches. Focus on history, theory, and sociopolitical context may mean less time spent on developing practical skills that students may value more.
Quotes from interview transcripts that suggest a Change Agent pedagogic identity: We have got to bust these myths. ROBIN A lot of my syllabus now is trying to make them aware of issues within the discipline and within academia. DREW One of my separate concerns as a person is the low number of minorities that end up in writing programs. I think it's like slowly changing, but I really think that it has to be a conscious effort on the part of the teachers, and especially white students understanding the difficulties. KAI I was trying to convince them that they could use more than one kind of textbook, you know? KAI To be educated in one sense is to be educated by education...you have to understand how you have been taught and so I start there. LEE

Table 6.3: Categories of Description Profile: Change Agent

<p>III. Facilitator</p> <p>Description: The role of the pedagogy teacher is to help students find a teaching style that suits their personality or aesthetic. The teacher provides resources and options, allowing students to choose between them.</p>
<p>Values: Choice</p>
<p>Avoids: Being prescriptive</p>
<p>Strengths: Encourages students to consider an array of options and make their own decisions. Able to appreciate the strengths of pedagogical styles other than their own.</p>
<p>Weaknesses: Students may be encouraged to make pedagogic decisions based on feelings, beliefs or personal biases rather than on sound pedagogic theory and practice. If the teacher's knowledge of resources is limited, the students' resource knowledge will be limited, also.</p>
<p>Quotes from interview transcripts that suggest a Facilitator pedagogic identity</p> <p>I didn't want to come in and say, here's a prescription for teaching creative writing. So what I tried to do was encourage them to think about what pedagogical approach suited them. ...Rather than feeling – proceeding from an imitative, like I guess this is how I'm supposed to do this, you've come to what works for you and what suits the kind of teacher that you are.... It's working out what suits who they are as a person and a teacher and what rules they're trying to achieve. HAYDEN</p> <p>There's no one format that should be used. I guess I would urge people to very much go on their own instincts and, you know, just not follow any kind of preset pattern...I think the best way is to admit that...you have your own opinions but not try to force them on people. TERRY</p> <p>[T]here's one article...[that] talks about this idea of...the instructor being a guide who presents the different aesthetics, but without judging, saying one is better than the other. COREY</p> <p>I don't want them to tow my line at all, that is not the issue. The issue is for them to find their own sea legs if you will, but I am there trying to guide that process as well as I can....I don't want to see my creative writing students walk into a classroom...enforcing a certain kind of aesthetic on people, that would be wrong. LEE</p> <p>I don't insist that they ascribe to my views at all. I just want them to know what they are....I'm just really big on choice. That comes from research I've done about how choice really—choice within a spectrum is a really good teaching practice. ROBIN</p> <p>I'm going to get in my head and know how different people do things, and I'll make my own analysis, my own version of what is the best... How we learn is by comparing and putting them together. KAI</p>

Table 6.4: Profile of Pedagogic Identity: Facilitator

<p>IV. Co-Constructor of Knowledge</p> <p>Description: The pedagogy teacher is an inspired and inspiring individual who encourages students to “think outside of the box.” She is interested in investigating all possible (and even impossible!) ideas in order to foster innovative and creative approaches to teaching and learning. She encourages research and discovery and is open to surprise. She enjoys learning with and from her students. Divergent viewpoints are welcomed long as students can support their views with solid arguments.</p>
<p>Values: Discovery</p>
<p>Avoids: Conventional Approaches</p>
<p>Strengths: Interactive, discovery-based teaching style encourages students to play an active role in their own learning and to contribute to the learning of the whole class. Teacher learns along with the class. Assignments that take students out of the classroom, invite them to engage their imaginations, and allow them to share authority with the teacher fosters curiosity, innovation, and excitement. Reflection on learning leads to occasionally dramatic conceptual change.</p>
<p>Weaknesses: Innovation given precedence over classroom-tested practice; there may not yet be enough theory or evidence to support new ideas. Requires teachers to be skilled in frontloading and confident enough to allow students a major role. Students may feel that the workload is too heavy and the teacher depends too much on the students to facilitate classroom learning. Students run the risk of abandoning one unexamined practice for another that, though it may sound more appealing, may be no more effective. Untested ideas may appear impractical or fail to find acceptance in a more traditional environment.</p>
<p>Quotes from interview transcripts that suggest a Co-Constructor of Knowledge pedagogic identity</p> <p>So honestly what I talk to them about is, we’re going to make this class—from like the third or fourth week, we’re going to make this together, and it’s going to be about what you’re concerned about for when you become a teacher. And that’s what we do. So really from that point of the semester on, every class is different, because it depends on whose articles are being discussed that week. ROBIN</p> <p>Observing the artist teaching really blew my students’ conceptions about what it means to be a teacher of an art. ...It was really revolutionary to them...By the end of the class, nobody was a fan of that workshop anymore. Every single person. I didn’t know that would happen. ... We all came to these same conclusions together, because it was new. I didn’t know what we would find when I was thinking about this. I just knew we would find something. ... [It’s really fun to have not me, the person who’s always taking authority in the classroom—it really gives them a lot more control. Sometimes I think they think I’m a lazy teacher, because I have a lot of presenting in my classes, but they get so smart and so—they learn so much. But I just sit back and let them drive the class. ... I spend, of course, like three months just being tortured about writing the syllabus, but then the class can kind of go forward on its own, and I don’t have to be there because I was there making the structure, right? KAI</p>

Table 6.5: Categories of Description Profile: Co-Constructor of Knowledge

<p>V. Vocational Trainer</p> <p>Description: The teacher helps students gain experience and develop skills, understanding, and artifacts useful for the academic job market. The teacher provides information about alternative vocations and shares tips on how to get and keep a job.</p>
<p>Values: Marketability</p>
<p>Avoids: Romantic or unrealistic images of “starving artists” or easy success</p>
<p>Strengths: Feels an ethical responsibility to ensure that students who have taken on significant tuition debt will have ability to sustain themselves financially after graduation.</p>
<p>Weaknesses: May consciously or unconsciously promise more than they can deliver. Career preparation may fall far short of what potential employers may expect—a line on a resume rather than extensive training.</p>
<p>Quotes from interview transcripts that suggest a Vocational Trainer pedagogic identity:</p> <p>I am asking my students to think really long and hard about whether a career in academia is really what they want. I don't necessarily assume that it is. ...There is not enough jobs in creative writing to be funneling people towards them. I feel ethically I shouldn't do that. ...So about a third of the course is how you would teach creative writing in an academic setting. But another third of it is teaching and talking about the opportunities to teach outside of academia such as in prisons, in community centers... If they are teaching I feel I can help prepare somebody to if their writing is strong enough, if their publications are strong enough, I feel I can help prepare somebody to really [be] the best teacher possible, to get a job, to keep that job, and to be a very effective creative writing teacher generally. But I don't necessarily want to only, I want to actively in a sense dissuade some of my students from taking that route.... DREW</p> <p>I try to make it very clear that I value a variety of directions....because I honestly feel that's part of why we have the problem we do, is that our students, they value what we have given them as teachers, and I can say this is true of me, part of the reason I became an academic is the professors I had, my creative writing professors were so important to me to honor what they had given me was to become just like them. And I was able to do that because I came of age when there were jobs for me to do that but that situation is not, doesn't exist right now. So I find that is part of what is problematic about teaching this class at all is that I believe in it, but also part of my approach at the end of the semester, in week 14-15 it says academic and non-academic jobs for writers. I actively put into the syllabus ways to think about your career in or out of academia. DREW</p> <p>Since we can't give our students experience teaching, we'll at least give them the theory behind it so they can at least have that for the job market. COREY</p> <p>They had to do their teaching philosophy, and one reason I had them do that was because, when they go on the job market, they have to do that. ... This was really useful, the teaching demonstration. And again, that's good job market training, because you're often required to do that when you go for a campus interview. HAYDEN</p> <p>[Teaching] is a long term proposition, right, if you want to make a life out of it....You have to survive it. You have to find a way to get through that and not be burned out, not die yourself. LEE</p> <p>So I say, always make sure you talk this class up in your application and talk about that you've gotten instruction in this. And a lot of my students have gone on to do that at other graduate programs. ROBIN</p> <p>I think it's important to write a teacher's statement, not only because it's one of the first things you need when you go on the job market, but also just before you start teaching, you should be able to articulate what it is that you believe about teaching... KAI</p>

Table 6.6: Categories of Description Profile: Vocational Trainer

Creative Writing Pedagogy Assignments	Pedagogic Identity Correlates
Observe an experienced creative writing teacher and report to the class	Expert Practitioner, Co-Constructor of Knowledge
Observe teacher in another arts discipline and report to the class	Expert Practitioner, Co-Constructor of Knowledge, Change Agent
Develop a lesson plan and teach it	Expert Practitioner, Vocational Coach
Create portfolios and/or artifacts such as syllabi and teaching statements	Vocational Coach, Expert Practitioner
Read a variety of readings and become acquainted with several classroom resources	Facilitator, Change Agent
Select a reading (and/or resource) to present to the class.	Co-Constructor of Knowledge, Facilitator
Construct a "dream" syllabus for an ideal writing course, then create a "real" syllabus that incorporates elements of the "dream" syllabus	Co-Constructor of Knowledge, Change Agent
Read and discuss creative writing pedagogy history and current contexts	Change Agent
Read articles critical of workshop pedagogy and/or the "writer as anointed" mythology	Change Agent

Table 6.7: Assignments and Pedagogic Identity Correlates

<p>Teacher Focused</p> <p>Expert Practitioner (all subtypes) Vocational Trainer Change Agent</p>
<p>Student Focused</p> <p>Facilitator Co-Constructor of Knowledge</p>

Table 6.8 Pedagogic Identities: Structural Aspects

<p>Skill Development</p> <p>Expert Practitioner: Master Craftsperson Expert Practitioner: Famous Writer Vocational Trainer</p>
<p>Conceptual Development</p> <p>Facilitator</p>
<p>Conceptual Change</p> <p>Expert Practitioner: Teacher/Artist Change Agent Co-Constructor of Knowledge</p>

Table 6.9 Pedagogic Identities: Referential Aspects

<p>Teacher-Focused Skill Development</p> <p>Expert Practitioner: Master Craftsperson</p> <p>Expert Practitioner: Famous Author</p> <p>Vocational Trainer</p>	<p>Teacher-Focused Conceptual Development</p>	<p>Teacher-Focused Conceptual Change</p> <p>Expert Practitioner: Teacher/Artist</p> <p>Change Agent</p>
<p>Student-Focused Skill Development</p>	<p>Student-Focused Conceptual Development</p> <p>Facilitator</p>	<p>Student-Focused Conceptual Change</p> <p>Co-Constructor of Knowledge</p>

Table 6.10 Pedagogic Identities: Referential and Structural Aspects

CHAPTER VII:
The Future of Creative Writing Pedagogy

“It seems logical to assume that the best teachers of writing are those who can play various roles in the classroom, who are capable of adopting numerous personas, and who are willing to experiment with authority....”

--Patrick Bizzaro, “Reading the Creative Writing Course: The Teacher’s Many Selves” (242)

Introduction

One of my principal motivations for conducting this study of the conceptions of creative writing pedagogy teachers was to discover whether creative writing pedagogy courses reinforce traditional beliefs and practices of creative writing instruction or whether they critically examine these pedagogic traditions in ways that have the potential to transform the teaching and learning of creative writing.

What I discovered by interviewing seven creative writing pedagogy teachers and examining their course syllabi is that there is significant variation in creative writing pedagogy teachers’ conceptions and practices of teaching which I have described in terms of categories of pedagogic identity. In this chapter, I will summarize my findings and the implications for the future of creative writing pedagogy. I will then suggest five

teaching and learning goals for the creative writing pedagogy course drawn from my study data that can serve as guidelines for future teachers of creative writing pedagogy. I will conclude with a review of the limitations of this study and suggestions for further research.

Summary of Findings

In this section I summarize the findings discussed at length in the previous three chapters. While these findings are only preliminary, the degree of variation found even among seven teachers of creative writing pedagogy recommends further research. From the evidence of the interview transcripts and syllabi of my study participants, I found:

1. *There was very little consistency in how creative writing pedagogy courses in this study were integrated into and supported by creative writing programs.*

Table 4.1 in Chapter Four demonstrates the variability of the course parameters in the six graduate programs represented in my study. Programs varied in how often the creative writing pedagogy course was offered, who was eligible to enroll, whether (and for whom) the course was required, and whether or not the program provided creative writing pedagogy students with opportunities to teach. My data show significant variation across programs in all of these categories as well as puzzling inconsistencies within programs. For instance, at Hayden and Terry's university, doctoral students in creative writing are guaranteed an opportunity to teach an introductory course in creative writing but are not required to take the creative writing pedagogy course; at the

same time, graduate education majors are required to take the course but are not given the opportunity to teach creative writing. In Corey's program, all MFA students must enroll in an online creative writing pedagogy course, but none are afforded the opportunity to teach. This variation makes cross-program comparisons difficult. It also suggests that creative writing pedagogy students may vary significantly in their preparedness to teach depending, in part, on the course parameters of their graduate program. It also suggests that a comparison of creative writing pedagogy courses must take into account the programs in which they are integrated.

In Chapter Five I examined the ways local communities of practice—programs, departments, and universities—influence the experiences of creative writing pedagogy teachers. Using two of my subject participants as examples, I described different trajectories of participation within the community of practice of the creative writing program. These examples were intended to illustrate how the complex interactions between members of a community of practice and between different but related communities of practice—in this case, the creative writing pedagogy course and the creative writing program in which it is located—can either promote or inhibit learning by the individual as well as the group. In Kai's case, as a Co-Constructor of Knowledge she empowered students to discover alternative instructional approaches that radically altered their conceptions of teachers and teaching. Kai's interactive approach to teaching and learning was approved by old-timers and reified into the creative writing program's repertoire of practice with the result that both the community and individual members learned and benefited from Kai's participation in the community. In Lee's case, as a Change Agent he challenged reified practices of the creative writing program

against the expectations of newcomers and old-timers. Lee's teaching style was at odds with this community's regime of competence and his innovations were not introduced into the community's repertoire of practices. By marginalizing Lee and restricting him to peripheral participation, the community did not learn or benefit from Lee's innovations.

As these examples suggest, creative writing pedagogy courses should be considered in the context of creative writing programs to understand how and why creative writing pedagogy teachers make instructional choices within communities of practice and what impact these choices may have on creative writing communities. Given support, creative writing pedagogy teachers may introduce perspectives and methods that could potentially alter conceptions and practice within creative writing communities of practice. Without such support, the most innovative teachers of creative writing pedagogy may find themselves marginalized, constrained by reified repertoires of practice and regimes of competence at odds with their conceptions of teaching and learning.

Neither individuals nor communities of practice are static, so a study such as this one can offer only an approximation of the dynamic interplay between creative writing pedagogy teachers and the various creative writing communities of practice of which they are a part. To be useful as tools for comparison and analysis, the set of categories of pedagogic identity and the hierarchical outcome space onto which they were mapped are necessarily constrained descriptions of complex and mutable conceptions of teachers and teaching. To prevent these categories from being reductive, it is important to keep in mind that they are not intended to be labels for individuals. Instead, they identify distinct but not exclusive conceptions that inform teaching practices situated in

overlapping communities of practice. By liberally quoting from the rich data that a phenomenographic study affords, I have intended to suggest the intricate and fluid contexts that need to be taken into account in an examination of pedagogic identities.

2. There was significant variation in how the creative writing pedagogy teachers represented in this study designed and taught creative writing pedagogy courses.

Tables 4.2 and 4.4 in Chapter Four present the required readings and activities assigned by the creative writing pedagogy teachers in my study. The tables demonstrate significant variation in both. As Table 4.3 shows, there was also very little overlap in the authors represented on the reading lists. The absence of any standard text in creative writing pedagogy is attributable in part to the division between creative writing pedagogy scholarship and teaching which I discuss below, although it is also likely a sign of Creative Writing's uncertain disciplinary status. Also implicated are variations in both pedagogic identities and communities of practice. In Table 6.7 in Chapter Six, I suggested correlations between pedagogic identities and assigned readings and activities that help explain variation in creative writing pedagogy courses.

While there was more consistency in assigned activities than assigned readings, there were also surprising gaps. Only one activity—written reflections—was assigned in all seven courses. Six of the seven teachers assigned formal papers; reports or reviews on books or resources; and the creation of a lesson plan, activity, or exercise for a creative writing class. Two teachers did not include the creation of a syllabus or teaching

statement in their list of assignments, documents that are essential for job hunters as well as practicing teachers. Four teachers did not include teaching practice, teacher observation, student-led discussions, or the creation of portfolios in their course design. Only one teacher included all ten types of assignments surveyed in her course.

Some of these inconsistencies can be attributed to differences between creative writing programs. My subject participants mentioned several factors on the program level that influenced their teaching choices. For instance, in Corey's distance learning program, teacher observations are not required since it would be impracticable for many MFA students (including many on active duty in the armed forces) to find teachers to observe. At the other programs represented in my study, teachers were given considerable latitude in planning and teaching the course. For instance, Kai was able to teach creative writing pedagogy and composition pedagogy separately and used her own undergraduate fiction class as a laboratory for pedagogy students to practice teaching. Although they taught at the same university, Hayden's and Terry's syllabi bore very little resemblance to one another. Ironically in an academic discipline that has reified the writer's workshop as its signature pedagogy, the creative writing pedagogy courses represented in this study displayed more differences than similarities.

The variety of readings and assignments in creative writing pedagogy courses suggests a lack of consistency in the goals and content of such courses. While I am not advocating that such courses should be standardized, this variation means that students of creative writing pedagogy in different programs will experience widely variant preparation for teaching creative writing. An examination of this variance—and

particularly gaps in coverage—is useful in considering which aspects of creative writing pedagogy have been prioritized and which have received less attention.

3. *There was uneven representation of current creative writing pedagogy scholarship in required course readings of the courses represented in this study.*

Another surprising finding was the infrequency with which current creative writing pedagogy scholarship was incorporated into the seven creative writing pedagogy courses represented in this study. Table 4.2 in Chapter Four shows that only four of the seven study participants assigned creative writing pedagogy books published since 2005, while only three assigned articles from peer-reviewed journals. One teacher assigned *Teaching Creative Writing Pedagogy to Undergraduates*, the only textbook designed for use in a creative writing pedagogy course. One teacher did not incorporate any creative writing pedagogy scholarship into her course, relying instead on books of craft criticism.

The uneven use of scholarship suggests that even creative writing faculty members who choose to teach creative writing pedagogy (and thus presumably have an interest in pedagogy) are not always aware of the full range of scholarship available. This is not entirely surprising, since many of the books on creative writing pedagogy published in the past 15 years originated abroad and are difficult to find unless one is already aware that they exist. As Change Agents, Robin, Kai, and Drew located and assigned these texts because they value understanding and want to encourage students to be familiar with the history and current issues of the discipline.

The paucity of current creative writing pedagogy scholarship on many reading lists also suggests the limitations of global creative writing communities of practice such as AWP. Since creative writing pedagogy scholarship is minimally represented in the AWP Book Fair and seldom reviewed or discussed in the AWP *Writer's Chronicle*, the professional organization of creative writing programs and teachers has done little to promote such scholarship or even recognize its existence.

4. *The creative writing pedagogy teachers represented in this study had varied conceptions of teaching that influenced their teaching choices and goals.*

The principal finding of this study, elaborated in Chapter Six, is that creative writing pedagogy teachers have different conceptions of teaching creative writing that influence how they teach creative writing pedagogy. I categorize these conceptions as five pedagogic identities, a term I define as *teachers' beliefs and understandings of creative writing pedagogy, including their conceptions of themselves as creative writing and creative writing pedagogy teachers*. As shown in Table 6.1, the pedagogic identities I discovered in the data are Expert Practitioner, Facilitator, Change Agent, Co-Constructor of Knowledge, and Vocational Trainer. I identified three sub-types within the category of Expert Practitioner: Master Craftsperson, Famous Author, and Teacher/Artist. These categories were then analyzed according to teacher strategy and teacher intention to create a hierarchical outcome space that suggested that the pedagogic identity of the Co-Constructor of Knowledge represented the most comprehensive conception of creative writing pedagogy as represented in Table 6.10.

The categories and outcome space were developed through a process of phenomenographic analysis described in Chapter Three.

Some of the pedagogic identities I discovered in the data can also be found in the creative writing pedagogy scholarship I reviewed in Chapter Two. Variances and commonalities between these two sets of pedagogic identities can be seen in Table 7.1. Not surprisingly, the pedagogic identity of the Master Craftsperson was common to both the literature and my study as it is the most common metaphor used to describe the creative writing teacher. Also in common was the category of Famous Author, although this type was spoken of rather than represented in my study. Both of these categories suggest the stereotypes of the creative writing teacher described in the beginning of Chapter One.

Pedagogic Identities in the Literature	Pedagogic Identities in the Study Data
Master Craftsperson*	Expert Practitioner Subtypes: 1) Master Craftsperson* , 2) Famous Author* , 3) Teacher/Artist
Famous Author*	Facilitator
Mentor	Change Agent
Eccentric	Co-Constructor of Knowledge
Literary Intellectual	Vocational Trainer

7.1 Comparison of Pedagogic Identities in the Literature and in the Study Data. *Identities in Common are in Bold.

Pedagogic Identities present in the literature but missing from the study data were the Eccentric and the Literary Intellectual. The image of the creative writing teacher as a rowdy iconoclast is a relic of an earlier era when, at least according to testimony of the early decades of the Iowa Writers' Workshop, alcohol abuse was so rampant that a teaching arriving drunk to class or not arriving at all was not considered unusual (Engle, Dana). With the exception of Hayden's reference to Famous Authors

who might take their students out drinking after class, the teachers in my study consistently characterized creative writing teachers' behavior as professional. As mentioned in Chapter Two, the figure of the creative writing teacher as Literary Intellectual was introduced in Paul Dawson's *Creative Writing and the New Humanities*, a history of creative writing pedagogy told from an Australian perspective. Although several articles in the journal, *TEXT* have popularized this pedagogic identity in Australia, the Literary Intellectual is rarely cited in American creative writing pedagogy scholarship.

The Mentor as identified by Moody did not reveal itself as a distinct pedagogic identity in my study. Instead, various references to mentors and mentoring were mentioned by nearly all of the subject participants regardless of their pedagogic preferences. In other words, a Master Craftsperson could be a mentor, but so could a Change Agent. Ultimately, the characteristics of a Mentor seemed too diffuse to be the basis for a pedagogic identity, although a follow-up study of mentorship of and by creative writing and creative writing pedagogy teachers might reveal characteristics that point to a distinctive type.

My study revealed four pedagogic identities and one subtype—the Facilitator, the Change Agent, the Co-Constructor of Knowledge, the Vocational Trainer, and the Teacher/Artist—that were not well represented in the literature. A more focused reading of the literature might reveal scattered representations of these types in the literature, but more significant from my perspective is how different these identities are from the Master Craftsperson, by far the most common depiction of the creative writing teacher in both the literature and my study. Each of these types suggests a relationship far

different from the master/apprentice model so familiar to the creative writing students in Friend and Dawes' pedagogy class. The Co-Constructor of Knowledge in particular presents an interesting contrast to the Master Craftsperson. Where the Master Craftsperson is the authority who hands down knowledge to apprentices, the Co-Constructor shares both authority and responsibility with students for constructing new knowledge. The Master Craftsperson upholds tradition; the Co-Constructor of Knowledge is poised for discovery.

The fact that the creative writing pedagogy teachers in this study model and discuss different incarnations of pedagogic identity is important. By becoming aware of the various pedagogic identities discussed, enacted, and developed within creative writing pedagogy courses, future creative writing teachers have the opportunity to challenge the image of the Master Craftsperson and with it, the workshop approach to teaching that the Craftsperson represents. While further research is needed, it is possible that the different pedagogic identities that creative writing pedagogy students are exposed to or see modeled can influence the development of their own pedagogic identities in ways that encourage pedagogical innovation.

5. Creative writing pedagogy courses can challenge or reinforce traditional conceptions and practices of creative writing instruction.

As I mentioned above, one of my principal motivations for this study was to discover whether the creative writing pedagogy course is a site where conceptions and practices of teaching creative writing can change and develop. Do creative writing pedagogy courses encourage the development of new conceptions and practices or

reinforce existing pedagogy? The answer, I will argue, depends on the pedagogic identity of the teacher.

Two subtypes of the Expert Practitioner, the Master Craftsperson and the Famous Author, clearly reinforce traditional approaches to creative writing pedagogy. The pedagogic identity of the Master Craftsperson stems from the master/apprentice metaphor that popularized the traditional writer's workshop. Famous Authors similarly view their relationship to students according to the pattern of a successful writer teaching apprentice writers. Vocational Trainers also tend to reinforce the status quo since their primary objective is to prepare students for the job market rather than revolutionize pedagogy. These pedagogic identities retain an authoritative stance toward students and are focused on skill development rather than conceptual development.

While Facilitators present students with options that may encourage pedagogic innovation, they prefer to allow students to make their own choices regarding the kind of teaching they will practice. Rather than following the familiar master/apprentice model, Facilitators are student-focused; instead of asserting their authority to encourage conceptual change, they leave the choice—and responsibility—for conceptual development to students.

Ultimately, then, only three types of pedagogic identity challenge the status quo and encourage students to look at other options. Like the Master Craftsperson, The Teacher/Artist is teacher-focused. The difference is that class time is focused on producing rather than critiquing student work, a difference that requires students to make a shift in how they conceive of how creative writing is taught and learned. Change Agents retain their identity as authorities in order to persuade students to change their

conceptions and engage in practices they might not have considered on their own.

Finally, the Co-Constructor of Knowledge shares authority with students in order to discover with them new practices and conceptions. Even more egalitarian than the Facilitator, the Co-Constructor of Knowledge positions herself as a co-learner eager to explore new understandings, providing opportunities for students to learn together about alternative approaches to teaching.

In summary, including creative writing pedagogy courses in graduate creative writing programs may provide an opportunity for conceptual change, but the simple presence of a creative writing pedagogy class on a program's course list is no guarantee that students will learn to be effective teachers or develop more complex ideas about creative writing pedagogy. This preliminary study suggests that creative writing pedagogy teachers' pedagogic identities, considered in the context of the creative writing communities of practice in which they teach, can help explain variance in conceptions and practices of creative writing pedagogy. By sharing the experiences and conceptions of seven creative writing pedagogy teachers at six universities, I hope to foster a greater understanding of the challenges and aspirations of creative writing pedagogy teachers and encourage further research of creative writing pedagogy courses in graduate programs.

In the next section, I offer a summary of five objectives suggested by my study participants as a potential guide for the design of future creative writing pedagogy courses.

Teaching and Learning Objectives for the Creative Writing Pedagogy Course

Through the process of comparing syllabi and developing profiles of pedagogic identity, I identified five broad teaching and learning objectives shared by the seven creative writing pedagogy teachers in this study. Most of the participants did not include all five objectives in their courses, but all included at least one. These objectives are listed in Table 7.2. In the remainder of this final chapter, I will describe these objectives and suggest some of the possible benefits of including these objectives in a creative writing pedagogy course.

Teaching and Learning Objectives for the Creative Writing Pedagogy Course

As the result of taking a creative writing pedagogy course, students should:

1. Understand the history of creative writing pedagogy and develop an awareness of Creative Writing as a global academic discipline.
2. Understand the wider context of creative writing and creative writing education, including current issues and controversies, scholarly discourse, and socioeconomic factors influencing creative writing and creative writing education.
3. Develop a philosophy of teaching creative writing based on research, theory, and a critical examination of multiple conceptions of creative writing and creative writing pedagogy.
4. Develop skills and understandings for teaching creative writing in a variety of settings and for a variety of audiences and purposes through a process that includes observations of experienced teachers, experiences of teaching, and reflection on these observations and experiences.
5. Develop skills, understandings, and artifacts in support of students' active participation in creative writing communities of practice as writers, teachers, and scholars.

Table 7.2: Teaching and Learning Objectives for the Creative Writing Pedagogy Course

1. Understand the history of creative writing pedagogy and develop an awareness of Creative Writing as a global academic discipline.

For Change Agents and Co-Constructors of Knowledge, it is important to teach pedagogy in ways suggested by Zukas and Malcolm's definition of the term: as "a critical understanding of the social, policy and institutional context, as well as a critical approach to the content and process of the educational/training transaction" ("Bridging Pedagogic Gaps, 40). As Robin's comment, "We have got to bust these myths" suggests, teachers who share these pedagogic identities seek to challenge romantic conceptions of writers and writing and a view of education in creative writing as the development of the talented. Without the sense of possibility that knowledge of Creative Writing's history and an understanding of the field provides, Change Agents and Co-Constructors believe that new creative writing teachers are likely to replicate the practices they experienced as students and view the workshop as the only viable approach to teaching creative writing.

A sense of history and knowledge of creative writing communities of practice beyond the local reminds the student of creative writing pedagogy that neither the writer's workshop nor the creative writing program are naturally occurring phenomena. Creative writing communities of practice develop at specific times in specific places through the actions and relations of participants and reify certain conceptions of writing and certain goals for programs, teachers and students. Comparison between creative writing in higher education in America and, for instance, Australia demonstrates that Creative Writing as an academic discipline could develop differently—and has, in other

times and places. A sense of history and current context gives creative writing pedagogy students a sense of themselves as participants in a truly global community of practice.

2. Understand the wider context of creative writing and creative writing education, including current issues and controversies, scholarly discourse, and socioeconomic factors influencing creative writing and creative writing education.

For Change Agents and Vocational Trainers, understanding the socioeconomic context in which creative writing communities of practice are situated is a primary goal of the creative writing pedagogy course. For instance, the combination of a tradition of hiring literary “stars” to teach in MFA programs, universities’ increasing reliance on adjunct labor for graduate and undergraduate teaching, and the thousands of creative writing graduates looking for teaching positions means that job prospects for even well-published writers with teaching experience are slim. Drew, as a Vocational Trainer, makes this unpleasant reality a persistent theme in her pedagogy course. Students read current articles about the current job market; investigate alternative teaching prospects including teaching in schools, prisons, and in online programs; and are asked to separate their identities and ambitions as writers from their aspirations to teach creative writing at the college level. As a Change Agent, Kai wants her students to gain an understanding of the persistence of institutional and internalized racism and the pain it inflicts outside and within the creative writing classroom. By insisting that the practice of teaching creative writing must be understood as situated in a socioeconomic context,

Vocational Trainers and Change Agents expand students' awareness of how communities of practice connect with the rest of the world (Wenger, 117).

3. Develop a philosophy of teaching creative writing based on research, theory, and a critical examination of multiple conceptions of creative writing, creative writers, and creative writing pedagogy.

All but one of the study participants required pedagogy students to prepare a statement of their teaching philosophy. In educational communities of practice, the teaching statement is a reified document and the ability to construct one part of the regime of competence. As such, it is of primary importance for Expert Practitioners who understand it as a marker of competence and for Vocational Trainers preparing creative writing pedagogy students for the job hunt. For Facilitators, Change Agents, and Co-Constructors of Knowledge, the teaching statement is evidence that the producer of this document has selected carefully from an array of options and can support that choice with evidence. Writing a statement of teaching philosophy thus becomes a vital step in helping students develop their own pedagogic identities and take their places as full members in creative writing communities of practice.

4. Develop skills and understandings for teaching creative writing in a variety of settings and for a variety of audiences and purposes through a process that includes observations of experienced teachers, experiences of teaching, and reflections on these observations and experiences.

For Facilitators, choice and flexibility are important values. Familiarizing creative writing pedagogy students with an array of pedagogic options provides them with recognition of their choices for participation as members of creative writing communities of practice. Calling attention to communities beyond the boundaries of the creative writing program provides even more opportunities for participation, a widening of options that Vocational Trainers also support. While a theoretical understanding of the field is important in shaping pedagogical conceptions, Expert Practitioners recognize that skillful teaching also requires opportunities for authentic practice as well as observation of the practices of experienced old timers. Reflection was the single activity represented in all seven of my subject participants' syllabi, indicating that, regardless of pedagogic identity, the creative writing pedagogy teachers represented in this study valued critical understanding of pedagogic choices along with practical skill.

5. Develop skills, understandings, and artifacts in support of students' active participation in the creative writing community as writers, teachers, and scholars.

This objective speaks to the goals of all five pedagogic identities. Vocational Trainers and Expert Practitioners Students who can demonstrate the requisite skills and understandings that comprise a community of practice's regime of competence are prepared for the job hunt and for full participation as core members of creative writing communities of practice, which meets the goals of Vocational Trainers and Expert Practitioners. This objective also addresses the desire of Change Agents and Co-Constructors of Knowledge who want students to become scholars and pedagogic

innovators in their own right. It also gives Facilitators the opportunity to present students with an array of pedagogic tools to choose from.

Summary of Common Objectives

Taken together, the five teaching and learning objectives for the creative writing pedagogy course presented above represent the combined priorities of the five pedagogic identities represented in this study. There is no one-to-one correspondence between these objectives and the pedagogic identities I identify in Chapter Six. Rather, as I have demonstrated above, there is significant overlap between the pedagogic values of these identities.

All five objectives find support in the pedagogic practice of at least two (and usually more) of the study participants. Rather than privileging the values of one pedagogic identity over another, they represent a harmonization of these values. Together, these five objectives can lead to the development of thoughtful, effective, self-aware practitioners who view the teaching of creative writing as both possible and important. My hope is that these objectives, and the examples of creative writing pedagogy teaching contained in this study, can serve as a standard for the development of future courses and provide continuity across creative writing communities of practice.

Study Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

The most obvious limitation of this study was the small sample size, although the six programs included in this study represent nearly one-fifth of the U.S. graduate programs that offer courses in creative writing pedagogy. I fell short of my goal to

include a minimum of ten participants for the simple reason that I failed to find ten creative writing pedagogy teachers who would agree to be interviewed for this study. My inability to find ten willing participants is, in part, due to the fact that, like most academics, teachers of creative writing pedagogy have busy lives. Yet another reason is that teachers of creative writing are generally unaccustomed to the constraints and formality of empirical research. On more than one occasion, a creative writing pedagogy teacher agreed to participate in the study and sent me a course syllabus, but did not respond after I sent a consent form and a request to record the interview. Reservations about participating in a research project headed by an unknown doctoral student are understandable, but the unfamiliarity with research procedures may have made the prospect of participation particularly uncomfortable.

I would have liked to have supplemented my interviews and analysis of the course syllabi with observations of one or more pedagogy classes. Because none of the participants teach within 150 miles of where I live, observation would have required additional time and expense that I could ill afford at the time I was conducting this research.

The phenomenographic interview is designed to be conversational in style in order to make participants feel at ease and to encourage candid responses. Nevertheless, any interview is dependent on participants' capacity for honest self-revelation and can be limited by the natural inclination to put one's best foot forward. I embarked on this research with the recognition of this methodological limitation, yet particularly in the longer interviews I was struck by the participants' willingness to be candid even when it exposed their vulnerabilities as teachers. I regret that two of the shorter interviews,

conducted amid the distractions of the 2014 AWP conference, may not have given participants adequate opportunity to present a full picture of their teaching practice.

Finally, the circle of creative writing pedagogy teachers interested enough to participate in a study of creative writing pedagogy unsurprisingly overlaps with another specialized circle—that of scholars of creative writing pedagogy. As a peripheral member of that circle, I have been privileged to develop professional friendships with established creative writing scholars. While I was extremely fortunate to find six study participants with whom I had had no previous contact, one participant in this study has been, at various times, a mentor and colleague. It was unthinkable for me to exclude her from a study of creative writing pedagogy when her scholarship has significantly impacted the field, and yet I acknowledge that I found it more difficult to assume an objective stance in regard to her teaching than I might have in the case of a relative stranger. In an effort to be impartial, I may have used her teaching as an example less often than I would have had we not been acquainted.

Clearly there is a great need for continued research into how creative writing pedagogy is taught in graduate creative writing programs. This preliminary study would be greatly enhanced by studies that represent more teachers, including teachers of color, and more programs, including Canadian and British programs. Future studies that incorporate observation of creative writing pedagogy courses, interviews with creative writing pedagogy students, and interviews with creative writing teachers who have taken a course in creative writing pedagogy would be particularly valuable. Research using different methodologies and approaches, including surveys, case studies, Q studies, and analyses of additional course documents (including student assignments, teaching logs,

course blogs, and handouts) would also help to present a more complete and nuanced picture of conceptions of and approaches to teaching creative writing pedagogy.

Like the Co-Constructor of Knowledge, I began this study in the spirit of discovery. Because the creative writing pedagogy course is virtually uncharted territory, I had no clear expectations of what I might find. What this study has shown me is that the Master Craftsperson held up as the epitome of the creative writing teacher is only one pedagogic identity being modeled and explored in creative writing pedagogy courses. Within the limitations of the local and global communities of practice in which they are members, creative writing pedagogy teachers create spaces in which future teachers of creative writing can develop pedagogic identities and imagine possibilities for creative writing education that extend well beyond the Master Craftsperson and the writer's workshop. If, in spite of its flaws and limitations, this study can encourage teachers of creative writing pedagogy to critically examine their conceptions of teachers and teaching; to engage with other practitioners in imagining alternative possibilities for creative writing teaching and learning; and encourage their students to do the same, I will consider my efforts well rewarded.

Appendix A: Email Sent to Creative Writing Program with Creative Writing Pedagogy Courses Seeking Study Participants

Dear _____

I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Michigan interested in creative writing pedagogy in higher education. The focus of my research is creative writing pedagogy courses in graduate creative writing programs. I understand that the graduate creative writing program at _____ offers such a course, and I would be very interested in receiving a syllabus of the course as well as being put in touch with faculty who teach or have recently taught it. As the upcoming AWP Conference offers an opportunity for face-to-face interviews, I am especially interested in finding out if any creative writing pedagogy teachers at _____ plan to attend. I would be very appreciative if you could put me in touch with the appropriate people.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Manery

Appendix B: Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Creative Writing Pedagogy Instruction in Graduate Creative Writing Programs

Rebecca Manery, Principal Investigator, University of Michigan

You are invited to participate in a research study of creative writing pedagogy instruction in graduate creative writing programs. If you agree to be part of this study, you will be asked to talk about your experiences teaching creative writing pedagogy and creative writing. Your responses and those of other research participants will help the researcher understand how creative writing pedagogy is taught across a variety of graduate creative writing programs and the factors that influence instructors' pedagogical choices.

Participating in this study is completely voluntary. Even if you decide to participate now, you may change your mind at any time. You may choose not to answer any question, or to discontinue the interview for any reason.

This interview will be audio or video recorded and transcribed. The recording will be seen and/or heard only by the researcher and possibly a professional transcriptionist. You may request that the video be recorded without images if you prefer. The recording and transcript will be kept confidential, and a pseudonym will be used to identify you on the transcript. Any material used from the transcript will either be used anonymously or a pseudonym will be used to identify you as a participant.

I do not anticipate any risks or discomforts to participating in this interview; in fact, reflecting on your experiences of teaching may be of some benefit.

If you have any questions about this research study, you may contact Rebecca Manery at rmanery@umich.edu or my faculty adviser, Anne Ruggles Gere at agr@umich.edu.

The University of Michigan Institutional Review Board Health Sciences and Behavioral Sciences has determined that this study is exempt from IRB oversight.

To indicate your consent, please type your name and the date below, then save and return this document.

I agree to participate in this study.

Name:

Date:

Appendix C: Interview Protocol

Preamble

Thank you for agreeing to talk with me today. What I'd like to do is get a very clear understanding of what you do when you teach creative writing pedagogy and why you do what you do. So I'm going to ask for lots of details on what you do in class, what you ask students to do in class, the kinds of assignments you give, how you provide feedback and assess student work, etc. First, though, I'd like to get a sense of your history as a teacher creative writing and creative writing pedagogy.

Background Information

1. What is your current (or, was your most recent) teaching assignment?
2. How long have you taught creative writing and creative writing pedagogy? (Where?)
3. Have you ever received instruction or professional development in creative writing pedagogy?
(If yes: Describe it. What was useful/not useful? Why?)
4. Would you say your classroom practice has changed over time? (If yes: How/Why?)

Teaching Creative Writing Pedagogy

Now I'd like to learn about the creative writing pedagogy course you teach.

1. So, it's the first day of your creative writing pedagogy class. Where do you start? What do you ask the students to do and why? (Probing for course objectives, in-class activities)
2. Okay, what do you do next? What do the next few weeks of class look like? (Probes: What are *you* doing in class? What are the *students* doing in class? Out of class?)
3. What does the middle of the course look like? (Probes: What are the students doing? What are you doing? What assignments are you giving? How do you provide feedback on assignments? How do you assess students' work?)
4. What do the final weeks of the course look like? (Probes: What are students doing in and out of class? How do you make your final evaluations? How do you wrap things up?)

Okay, now that I have a clear picture of what you and your students are doing, I'd like to ask you:

5. What do you think are the most important elements/aspects/components of teaching creative writing pedagogy? I
6. If in ten years you were to walk into one of your former creative writing pedagogy students' creative writing classes, what would you want to see?

Summing Up

Is there anything I haven't asked about that you'd like to address? Anything you'd like to add to what you've already said?

General Probes

- Why do you do/think that?
- Why did you do it that way?
- Why is that important?
- What were you hoping to achieve?

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