"Language speaking the subject speaking the arts": New possibilities for interdisciplinarity in Arts/English education − explorations in three-dimensional storytelling

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ABSTRACT: *This paper presents a theorised classroom-based account discussing the author's interdisciplinary approach to engaging first-year teacher-education students in self-critical inquiry using creative writing techniques as an entry point into Arts-based three-dimensional storytelling. Via an interpretation of Lacan's "speaking subject"—combined with theories of the postmodern "self"—the discussion explores the creative potential of autoethnography as a practice of self-reflection, writing, artistic expression and three-dimensional storytelling. Here, particular examples of students' works are provided to exemplify the power of this interdisciplinary Arts/English methodology to facilitate students' opportunities to: a) self-narrate and self-examine personal experience with a view to understanding and visually expressing the personal and public self; and b) utilise creative writing techniques in tandem with Arts-based forms of visual expression to raise questions about how language, dimensionality, and the Arts might intersect to construct and narrate individual subjectivity, and the implications for understanding professional identity.*

KEYWORDS: *Arts, autoethnography, Lacan, language, identity, interdisciplinarity, narrativity, postmodernism, self, three-dimensional storytelling.*

This theorised classroom-based account seeks to contribute to the current gap in scholarship examining interdisciplinary Arts/English approaches to examining the question of identity among intending secondary-school teachers in the tertiary setting. Here, the aim is to explore how an Arts-based approach to creative writing might serve the creative and imaginative potential of self-expression as a practice of creative literacy in the context of autoethnography. The paper takes up the critical consideration of identity's diversity as a catalyst to "enrich student writing, allowing for greater textual play and, finally, imaginative freedom" (Cooley, 2003, p. 101), and deploys creative writing as a vital mode of "'telling' … as both verb and adjective in relation to narrative tales of experience" (Hayler, 2011, p. 1).

This examination engages interdisciplinarity as a pedagogical approach, and as such, the discussion begins by contextualising "discipline" as both academic study and sphere of knowledge. This is important as a preface to the following section summarising the current state of play regarding "creative writing" and "imaginary writing" in National curriculum documents and the relation of these disciplines to teacher education and Arts-based research methodologies. The investigation then proceeds with a theorised classroom-based account, which outlines a) the rationale for utilising autoethnography as critical self inquiry; and b) the pedagogy underpinning the introduction of creating writing skills development into a course on culture and identity.

The cohort for this course comprised a group of first-year secondary teacher-education students using autoethnography as a method for "storytelling the self". This section of the analysis includes critical readings of the students' creative texts, in which a literary work (creative writing story of "self") is progressed into the creation of a material Arts-based artefact (three-dimensional story of "self"). This discussion argues that these textual constructs of "self" are essentially meaningful in that from these endeavours critical outcomes emerged. Integrating cross-disciplinary Arts/English elements as a means of critical self-inquiry combines disciplinary elements from Arts (creative activities utilising forms of visual expression) and English (creative activities utilising forms of written expression) toward a creative end. The examination concludes with a call for more research into Arts/Literary pedagogies to continue the work in transforming interdisciplinary learning within teacher-education.

INTER*DISCIPLIN(E)A*RITY

"Discipline" has been coined since Chaucer's time "to refer to branches of knowledge … the "higher faculty" of the new university" (Shumway & Messer-Davidow, 1991, p. 202). Such a complex problem as the question of identity requires a teaching methodology designed to encourage inquiry, and because the concept of self and the question of identity represents "a topic that is too broad or complex to be dealt with adequately by a single discipline", the classroom approach used here "draws on the disciplines [of Arts and English] with the goal of integrat[ing] their insights into a more comprehensive understanding" (Repko, 2012, p. 16) of "self". "Discipline", therefore, by way of definition can be broadly understood as what art historian and cultural critic Griselda Pollock (1986) has termed "the community of knowledges and expectations that constitute the social practice" (p. 21) of the particular field of study in question.

This examination treats both the Arts (Visual Arts, Media Arts, Dance, Drama, Music), and English (Literature/literary arts) as academic disciplines, that is, as fields of study with specific features, foci and theoretical approaches differentiating the field from other disciplines (Szostak, 2012, p. 4). However, critical debate continues to impact on determining these disciplinary fields. Some question whether it is possible to define English studies as a discipline (Wilcox, 1973; Graff, 1993; Golde & Walker, 2006) or whether it is possible to define creative writing as an academic discipline in its own right (Dawson, 2001; Donnelly, 2012). Others debate whether "the Arts" discipline can be taken as a given (al-Fāruqī, 1989; Jensen, 2001) or be necessarily subject to examination as an "academic discipline" (Bauerlein, 2010).

While some contend that creative writing as a discipline typically sits within "the Arts" as "the literary arts" (R. B., 2002), terms such as "creative writing" or indeed "imaginative writing" have been alternatively positioned as either mutually exclusive or one-and-the-same. Wandor (2012b), for instance, posits that creative writing "offers the potential of augmenting literary history, critical and theoretical learning with a writerly understanding and execution of imaginative writing" (p. 57). Dunlop (2007), however, identifies creative writing as a "specious category", arguing instead "it should simply be called writing" (p. 1265). While for Wandor (2012b) creative writing courses provide students with opportunities to realise and advance forms of

imaginative writing as an engagement in thinking and development (p. 59), Lal (1964), however, argues a clear distinction between imaginative writing and creative writing, claiming the former as more aesthetically spontaneous and the latter "*morally unified*" and characteristic of "the elevating writer" (p. 4).

Yet, of the relatively little work in the field, a number of existent studies do support the utility of creative writing alongside interdisciplinary Arts-based pedagogies in teacher education specifically (Leitch, 2008; Tracey, 2011). Sullivan (2007) argues that mixed methodologies "keep the 'bigger picture' in view" (p. 1188). To that end, I argue that in the act of translating and transforming the creative text into a creative object, if the teacher-education student as creative writer cannot pursue the transformative potential of the written text toward a tangible, objectified, concretely purposeful artefact, then we do them a disservice in limiting their opportunities to experiment with creative forms as "a human practice" (Harper, 2010, xiv). Here, "Creative writing, in other words, is presented as *object* and in its very existence carries the matter of Creative Writing between writer and reader [my italics]" (Harper, 2010, p. 18).

CREATIVE WRITING AND THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM

Myers (1996) makes a specific connection between creative writing and education in the claim that, "creative writing arose as a 'discipline of education' (p. 6), a discipline that 'stood for teaching' (p. 7) rather than for the professionalization of literary study, a discipline founded on the humanistic argument that literature is not a genre of knowledge but a mode of aesthetic and spiritual cultivation (p. 7)" (as cited in Vandermeulen, 2011, p. x). Yet, creative writing currently occupies a quite liminal—threshold or in-between—space as an educational pursuit that draws attention to the marginality of the genre in debates about education generally and teacher education in particular. As in the United Kingdom, where the term "creative writing" does not occur anywhere in the National Curriculum for English (Cremin & Myhill, 2012, p, 22), the term is obscure and vague in Australian National curriculum guidelines. In fact, that the term creative writing is written out of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority's (ACARA) *The Australian Curriculum: English, History, Mathematics and Science* (2011) problematises the once clear historical connection between education and creative writing identified by Myers (1996).

Gannon (2011), in her chapter, "Creative writing and/in/beyond *The Australian Curriculum*", examined the exemplars included as sample resources within "The Australian Curriculum: English" document and suggested, not only that these samples reflected deficits of both writing teacher and student, but also deficits of writing pedagogies in English (Doecke, Parr & Sawyer, 2011, p. 185-200). It could be argued, by extension, that "The Australian Curriculum: English" document is expressivist in nature; that is, "it validates the experiences of the student and cultivates self-expression, situating the teacher as a guide who creates a productive learning environment but does not 'instruct the student in the principles of

[imaginative/creative] writing'" (Berlin as cited in Halasek, 2013, p. 254).[1] The English Teachers' Association (ETA), NSW "Response to the Australian Curriculum Senior English Courses" (2012) also raised specific concerns in relation to the phrase "imaginative writing", arguing that it implies that fiction is to be studied (to the exclusion of other genres, including non-fiction), and also that "writing" is privileged above other multimodal forms, modes, and texts, as well as non-print forms. This document suggested "that the term 'texts of cultural significance' replace 'imaginative writing in all modes' in the Rationale to enable a study of literature 'broadly defined' as intended in the Shape Paper" (p. 8).

The ambiguity surrounding the use of terms combined with the deficits in the teaching and application of specific processes of literary creativity—"creative writing", "imaginative writing", "imaginative texts", "literary texts"—goes beyond semantics and exemplifies a much greater problem. If such terms were to be implemented as literary terms in their truest sense, the scope and sequence of the "Australian National Curriculum: English" would be completely transformed. "Imaginative writing" offers a particularly informative case in point. Saunders (2010) argues that "imaginary writing" (a sub-set of "fictional creativity" [p. 83]) is a form of metafiction—"fiction about fiction"—"in that to discuss or present writing by a fictional character is indeed to draw attention to both levels of fictionality—the fiction within the fiction, and the fiction that frames it" (p. 75). By extension imaginary writing is particularly distinct as a form of metafiction "since not all metafiction is the product of a fictional character" (p. 75). Taken together, therefore, the precepts of the National Curriculum would look very different indeed if "imaginative" or "imaginary writing" as a sub-set of "fictional creativity" was conceptually positioned in its truest sense.

For the purposes of this theorised classroom-based inquiry, however, creative writing is conceptualised quite specifically, and for specific ends: creative writing as construction. Here, "the creating of forms: forms of identity, forms of perception, forms of experience that begin in the assembly of words" (Doller, 2010, p. 263) ends in motivating new forms of construction. Creative writing is the first step in a sequence of textual and multidimensional processes—from written text to a three-dimensional creative artefact—within the context of autoethnography. By extension, the dimensionality of these texts inspires different types of storytelling practices which hold significance in the students' telling a story of self. Hence, processes of creative writing need to be flexible enough to accommodate the creation of three-dimensional storytelling modes. For instance, three-dimensional artefacts afford telling a story of self either in the round (from a multiple of sides, and perspectives) or as a bas relief, in which some component parts of the work might be positioned in low relief, whereas others might protrude to some extent from the background. By extension, using various literary and Art-based practices as narrative forms in effect blur the concept of linearity in storytelling toward more non-linear (flash-back, stream of consciousness, flash-forward, asynchronous, episodic, etc.) modes. Thus, the interdisciplinary pedagogy discussed here evokes a dynamic narrative process in which students self-critically and self-reflexively perceive their social world and deploy various forms of storytelling and communication in telling a story of self.

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[1] Berlin makes the claim in reference to Adele Bildersee's *Imaginative writing: An illustrated course for students* (1927).

Therefore, this examination argues that creative writing is best defined as the writerly ways in which an author imaginatively applies and combines generic and stylistic concepts of literary form—such as point-of-view, narrative, tone, character and theme—into a one-dimensional written piece in a unified manner. Yet, the Arts-based creative artefact that emerges from the written piece is defined here as the end-result of the intuitive and aesthetic processes used in which an author imaginatively applies and combines visual and literary communicative forms to create a concrete, unified, multidimensional material artefact. This creative piece embodies the challenge "to filter all the imaginative aspects of fiction (narrative, story, plot, character, theme)" (Wandor, 2012a, p. 59) into a three-dimensional story of *self* which "can evoke emotions; broaden audiences; illuminate the complexity of body/self relationships; and include 'researcher,' 'participant' and 'reader' in dialogue" (Sikes & Piper as cited in Van Luyn, 2011, p. 32).

Within the methodology of autoethnography, this merging of Arts and creative writing and self-inquiry is both grounded in research and legitimately self-critical provided that the researcher's storying of the self uses "one's culturally located experiences as something that opens a door onto wider understanding" (Freeman, 2011, p. 213). In fact, the construction of the creative artefact itself requires students to adopt a variety of performative functions, sequestering them to proactively and kinesthetically construct a creative "translation, to (inter)act, and become a performer too, therefore blurring even further the liminal spaces between translation writing, making and reading" (Perteghella, 2013, p. 210), among other actions. For Bolton (2011) "writers enter a liminal state where they move out of habitual known psychological states into unknown unboundaried states of uncertainty" (p. 116). Saunders (2010) argues that creative writing is itself a liminal mode and its literary forms difficult to categorise aesthetically (p. 78).

CREATIVE WRITING & ARTS-BASED RESEARCH

Arts-based research applies creative writing practices as a valid means of critical reflection, self analysis, and conscious examination, and has been integrated into such diverse research foci as clinical improvisation in music (Arnason & Seabrook, 2010), river management (Bailey, Selman, Lawrence, Carter, & Morgan, 2008), geography (Brace & Johns-Putra, 2010), medical education (Gull, Flynn, & Hunter, 2002), management education (Nissley, 2010), reconciliation (The National Peace Council, 2014), music therapy (Arnason & Seabrook, 2010; Vaillancourt, 2011), sex related research (Piper & Sikes, 2010), social inclusion (Stern & Seifert, 2010), and oral history (Van Luyn, 2011), among many other fields. As a means of deploying and also experimenting with language, creative writing can be approached as not only a literary, but an Arts form given it involves "some kind of play, design, experimentation, exploration, provocation, metaphor, expression or representation, communication and the artistic or aesthetic shaping of the body or other media" (Ewing, 2010, p. 7).

Literary/Arts-based learning sessions were organised using a two-phase, but interrelated approach: invention (generative phase) and revision (exploratory phase) (Waitman & Plucker, 2009). Initial writing sessions were primarily generative in

purpose; "knowledge retrieval, idea association, synthesis, transformation, and analogical transfer" (Lubart, 2009, p. 157). "There is the generative workshop, the purpose of which is to catalyse and create new writing, sometimes by creative writing exercises" (Morley, 2007, p. 118). By extension, the Arts-based sessions were primarily responsive, or exploratory, in which Arts-based forms engage students toward a new plane in critical understanding; "subsequent exploratory processing to develop that potential into something that could be recognized as a *creative product* [my italics]" (Ward & Lawson, 2009, p. 197).

Retrieving, recounting and reconfiguring represent three stylistic characteristics shared by both creative writing and creative Arts when considering self-narrative inquiry. In the process of retrieving, recounting and reconfiguring student-writers merge Lyotardian "*les petites histories*"—or "little" narratives or local histories—that deliberately play with the idea of metanarrative by setting "little" stories (of personal self) alongside grand myths and folklore (of cultural or constructed self) while simultaneously serving "to underwrite and legitimize other ideological beliefs" (du Toit, 2011, p. 88). This literary and creative aesthetic mimics modern and postmodernist aims to "represent consciousness, perception, emotion, meaning and the individual's relation to society through interior monologue, stream of consciousness, tunneling, defamiliarisation, rhythm, irresolution" (Childs, 2000, p. 3).

Thus, the creative writing techniques included here encourage a distinctly postmodern aesthetic. While Coles and Hall (2001) caution that "postmodernism and its meaning is a contested terrain", they assert that one undeniable characteristic of postmodernism is "its rejection of unity, homogeneity, totality and closure" (p. 114). Instructional sessions engage students in self-reflexivity, where they are encouraged in their writing to experiment with the generic rules behind various genres (poem, story, allegory, fairy-tale, etc.). Students use creative writing to explore the postmodern idea of the "de-centred self" (Constas, 1998, p. 38). In examining a construct of self that is mutable and unfixed, student-writers must adopt various narrative positions and agencies. Skills development thus engages student creative writing that is politically and socially centred on de-centring; that is, examining the notion of the de-centred self (Constas, 1998, p. 38). Finally, students' writing characterise multiliterary modes featuring narrative discontinuity—interdeterminacy, fragmentation, self-consciousness, performance, and interactivity (Sipe & Pantaleo, 2008, p. 5).

Additionally, the intending secondary teachers in the course of identity and culture were a) entirely new to the tertiary classroom setting; b) indicated no previous experience in creative writing (at least since primary school); and c) expressed a genuine anxiety about writing generally. Therefore, that students required preparedness sessions, that is, preparatory and basically remedial or corrective skills development, sits within that Donnelly (2012) might loosely term a "workshop trajectory", with the aim that students process the necessary proficiency for "the advancement of writing (and reading) for its own sake (creative writing's early pedagogical goal)" (p. 18). These "workshops" focused on learning (or re-learning) the qualities and characteristics of a selected genre—predominately poetic genres: cinquain, haiku, and narrative poetry. Here, genre was generative by virtue of its "transgressible nature; stable enough to hold together as its function and fluid enough to allow for its transformation" (Haake, 2013, p. 182). Learning experiences also included intuitive "free-play" experiences with Arts materials—paints, modelling

clay, digital/electronic media—to encourage students' intuitive responses to arts mediums. Therefore, to encourage students to express, through writing, their sense of identity, their classroom learning experiences necessarily adopted a range of approaches to genre and narrativity incorporating both written and visual modes. Journet (2012) argues that, "'Narrative' is a powerful word and concept in compositions studies" and suggests that:

> As a discipline, we generally use narrative as both a mode of student writing (e.g., literary narrative or personal narrative) in which students construct stories of events or actions that are important to them, and as a research genre (e.g., case study or ethnography) in which the researcher represents her findings by telling a story. (p. 13)

THEORISED CLASSROOM-BASED ACCOUNT

The primary assessment objective underpinning the interdisciplinary Arts/literary pedagogy activities was the students' submission of a specific mode of narrative text about the self: auto-ethnography. Learning experiences therefore encouraged intertextuality as a process of text-making, from written narratives reconceptualised as concrete translations, as Arts-piece. This Arts-piece was a concrete autoethnographic text.

> The best way to define autoethnography is through the three words that make it up— that is, auto, ethno, graphy. *Auto*: The research is conducted and represented from the point of view of the self, whether studying one's own experiences or those of one's community. *Ethno*: The objective of the research and writing is to bring out how culture shapes and is shaped by the personal. *Graphy*: Writing is not only the main means of generating, analyzing, and recording data; there is an emphasis on the creative resources of writing, especially narrative, for accomplishing the social and scholarly objectives of the research. (Canagarajah, 2012, p. 113)

As "an autobiographical genre of writing and research", autoethnography "displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural" (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 739). Chang (2008) argues that autoethnography "transcends mere narration of self to engage in cultural analysis and interpretation" (p. 43). It is precisely this transcendence that distinguishes autoethnography from other genres. Autoethnography "combines cultural analysis and interpretation with narrative details," and the methodology "follows the anthropological and social scientific inquiry approach rather than descriptive or performative storytelling" (p. 46).

> Back and forth ethnographers gaze, first through an ethnographic wide-angle lens, focusing outward on social and cultural aspects of their personal experience; then, they look inward, exposing a vulnerable self that is moved by and may move through, refract, and resist cultural interpretations (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 739).

Chang (2008) stresses the self-transformative benefits of autoethnography and argues that the social impact of this methodology is only really possible without an over-excessive, self-indulgent, focus on self, acknowledging the fallibility of personal recollection, and by extension, avoiding an overstated focus on narration. Here, the concept of audience is also important. While Beaty and Sullivan (2010) argue, "an imagined audience is a necessary one in the production of culture" (p. 18), editor

William D. Howells' observed that Mark Twain "mused his words to an imagined audience" (Twain, 1910, p. 11). Both claims tell us something very important about the relationship between writing and audience, writers and audiences, creative writing and imaginative audiences. Thus, progressing the written work into a concrete Arts-based artefact—as storytelling about the self, and by extension, for an imagined audience—was essential, as "[the] concern for the becoming of persons characterizes composition more than creative writing" (Vandermeulen, 2011 p. x).

TECHNIQUES IN ACTION

In order to engage students in the generative phase of their creative writing, sequencing first took into account preparatory activities in writing techniques which focused on learning or re-learning creative writing forms. The writing techniques given below (Table 1) served twin purposes: as forms of writing with applications for the students' autoethnographic assessment task; and, as catalysts to unlocking students' accounts of their past(s) to better inform and understand current insights into self. "I think the newer pieces of [my] writing are better because they tell more about me and are more personal….Now I think I am still making the links but they are more integrated with the rest of the situation and some identities run side-by-side" (Written by T. P., a 47-year-old female).

Creative Writing Technique	Creative Writing Focus	Explanation/definition
Generative-Phase→ Explorative Phase (Week 1)	Thinking about Class	**FOR SAMPLE LESSON PLAN SEE "Lesson Summary" immediately following this table.**
Genre-play (Week 2 - 5)	Memories	Genre, according to Abrams & Harpham (2012), "denotes types or classes of *literature*" (p. 148) and can include writing such as poetry, drama, tragedy, comedy, fiction, non-fiction, essays, reports, novels, biographies, autoethnographies, etc. Genre-play is an outcomes-driven focus on "form". Students develop a literary "skill-set" over time through exposure to various literary genres. FOCUS: Writing tasks require students to use the form of a specific genre to write about a particular memory or experience. This might include recounting an event using a fairy tale, recalling an experience as a fable, an allegory, a haiku, a limerick, or any number of other styles.
Narrative-play (Week 4 - 6)	Past Selves	New perspectives of self are possible by adopting different "voices" to characterise a particular experience. Narrative play is also an outcomes-driven focus on "forms" of narrative. Students develop a literary "skill-set" over time through exposure to various narrative styles. FOCUS: Writing tasks require students to recall an important memory (featuring gender, class, cultural difference, religion, etc.,) and then writing three accounts of the experience from three different perspectives of the "self": a) as a young child; b) the "self" as an adolescent; and c) the "self" as a more mature individual. **FOR SAMPLE LESSON PLAN SEE APPENDIX—**

		TABLE 2
Hybrid-play (Week 7 - 9)	**Retrospection**	This method combines two (or more) genres to create a third, "new" kind of writing characterised as "hybrid". Hybrid-play is a three-fold, outcomes-driven focus: on "forms" of genre, on forms of writing, on forms of narrativity. Students refine their literary "skill-set" by "playing" with their developing knowledge of genre and narrative styles. FOCUS: Writing tasks include writers using two different genres to write an account of a past memory, and then combining parts of each sample into the third "hybrid" form. The aim is to deploy various genres (fairy tale, fable, allegory, poetry, etc.) to write a critical response to the role played by gender, class, cultural difference, religion, etc., in identity formation. **FOR SAMPLE LESSON PLAN SEE APPENDIX— TABLE 3**

Table 1. Overview of three creative-writing techniques

Lesson summary

Phase 1: Generative phase

"Freeform" writing: Students take 5 minutes to write whatever enters their minds—a kind of "stream-of-conscious" writing intended to induce the creative impulses to write.

Thematic freeform writing: Students take another 5 minutes to write whatever enters their minds about "**class**"—the emphasis is on writing whatever students want to about "class" as a theme.

Application: Forming groups of between 4 and 6 individuals, each team collects their activity materials. All groups receive the same activity materials consisting of a manila folder containing a sample of genre writing—in this case, a section from Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960), pages 142–148). Groups then complete the following instructions.

1. Identify the kind of text included in your group's folder (it's *genre*) and read it carefully. ("Genre", according to Abrams [2012, p. 115] "denotes types or classes of *literature*", and can include writing such as poetry, drama, tragedy, comedy, fiction, non-fiction, essays, novels, biographies, and even autoethnography.)

2. Complete 10 to 12 dot-points the section makes about "**class**". You may choose to note these points in a creative form (e.g., poem … see cinquain example below).

3. Brainstorm ideas about how you might use the genre (narrative prose) in relation to your autoethnographies (is it possible, for instance, to construct a 3-dimensional version of this, e.g., a model, a board game, a picture book, an interview, a mobile, something else?)

4. Nominate one person in your group to be "the focus". The idea is that each group member "gets to know" that person by asking them questions in order to

build a picture of "who they are". Use the theme of **class** to organise your questioning. Then, each member of the group uses the sample genre to generate a creative writing piece about that person's "class" (for instance, if your sample genre is a poem, then use the form of the poem as a basis for your creative writing).

5. Once you have completed your poem, give it to the focus person for them to keep.

6. Repeat this process until everyone in your group has between 4-6 different texts (it is important in autoethnography to include an inter-subjective quality, where multiple voices characterise the "self" being observed—see "The Blue Dress" narratives, **TABLE 2** in the appendix).

Student sample A (Point 2: Dot-points about "class")
Creative form*: Cinquain:*

   Alexandra
   Maycomb folk
   Streaks: Drinking Gambling
   Mean Funny Incestuous streaks?
   Not Aunty
   Finch

Student sample B (Point :– Dot-points about "class")
Creative form: *Cinquain***:**
   Pub
   Saturday Night,
   The Treasury Hotel
   Gang: guys and gals
   Passionate kiss
   Bet

Phase 2: Exploratory phase

Application: Choose one of the written samples acquired from the Phase 1: Generative activities. You might choose a piece written by a follow classmate in the group activities, or you may choose a piece you have written yourself about your "self". The purpose is to use the preparatory poem as a basis to generate another distinct piece of creative writing to contribute to your story of self. Your poem might include flash-back, stream of consciousness, flash-forward, asynchronous, episodic, modes, and might include a particular kind of poetic form—cinquain, limerick, narrative poem, and so on.

Student sample (from Generative Phase, Student Sample "B")

   Saturday Night, The Treasury Hotel
   A night of events and tales to tell
   There weren't many punks, as the night was cold
   I could not believe what was to unfold

> Some guys and gals came in from the night
> Compared to the rest, they looked a good sight
> They stood out in the pub, like a pink high gloss sheen
> They didn't belong, if you know what I mean
>
> A girl from the group came to my side
> Followed by her gang in dresses and ties
> She paused for a moment and whispered to her friend
> Then embraced my lips to the passionate end
>
> The locals in the bar just stood in awe
> In a matter of seconds she was pulled out the door
> I called her 3 times, I soon learnt to forget
> Looks like I was the task, in her drunken bet
> (Written by S. S. 27-year-old male of Australian/German descent)

This narrative poem appears at first sight quite linear in terms of sequence. However, the work is not strictly one of simple disclosure, but comprises a rather fractured narrative incorporating twin narrative strands. The poem is retrospective but also multi-perspective in the sense that it problematises the "I" within this poem, and by extension problematises the work as a "narrative poem" in its strictest (genre) sense:

> The role of personal meditation poses the greatest problem since it is a technique characteristic of the lyric, of the poem that presents perspective of the "I," rather than focusing on other characters as some critics insist narrative poetry must do. When does a poem move so far from story to meditation that it is no longer narrative? If poets return to narrative in part to "spring open the jail of the self"… to what extent can the narrative poem operate from the speaker's point of view? (Walpert, 2012, p. 492)

Lacanian theory of the subject holds that to be a subject, the subject must necessarily surrender to language—must accept identification by a proper noun/pronoun, and thus assume one's place within the symbolic order. In accepting such a place, one also assumes a position within an order beyond one's own control, or choice. For Lacan:

> …it is this taking up of one's preinscribed position within the "Other" of language that constitutes an original division or "split" in subjectivity between the subject "*in*" language (the ego, in psychoanalytic parlance) and the subject "*of*" language (the *subject*). This alienation or *lack* that constitutes the subject is the result of the impossible necessity of the subject's coming into being through submitting to representation in the "foreign" structure of language. (Barnard, 2000, p. 73)

Lacanian "shifters"—particularly personal pronouns, for instance, "you", "I", "me"—are "the particle indicating who speaks in what is said; the particle which indicates who the subject of enunciation is in a particular statement" (Eidelzstein, 2009, p. 249).

Shifters, then, to a large degree, involve the problem of one's own existence—of "Being" in the Lacanian sense. And while the complexities of the Lacanian "Being" and "Non-Being" cannot be fully explicated here, suffice to say that for the purposes of this discussion, the core concern is the interplay between self-narration (what "*I*"

say, for instance, "my story"), between message (what *I* am "saying" and how I am saying it), and between means, that is, the interplay between language and image. The ambiguity of "shifters" is perhaps best explained using Freud's concept of "switch-words" (Freud, 1901, p. 274): "the general meaning (significance) of a shifter can not be defined without referring to the message" (Jespersen, 1922, p. 123). Shifters are always dependently contextual, that is, they are "deictic". A referent such as "I" is "not assigned in a relatively stable fashion but shifts according to the evolving conversational context, depending on who adopts the speaker role at a given time. This ordinary conception of the pronoun "I" is at odds with the transcendental notion, which seems firmly attached to an individual subject" (Stawarska, 2009, p. 26).

What follows is an example of a student's work illustrating how an Arts-based approach to creating a tangible object from the written text took the representation of the "self" to a whole new dimension. Here, the approach leading to this work had as its aim not only to teach creative writing techniques among intending secondary-teachers, but to encourage the potential for transforming such work into three-dimensional creative objects that not only inform understandings of self and develop a practical repertoire of creative literacies, but enhance language outcomes and familiarise student teachers with techniques to encourage young writers to realise cross-disciplinary creative potentials. The example illustrates how the process of looking-back (self-reflection)—the mode Kraus (2013) terms as "*intentional self-positioning*"—becomes a particularly crucial concept in the implementation of interdisciplinary Arts/Literary pedagogy, given that; "To accomplish this task ["*intentional self-positioning*"] the teller has a least three possibilities":

> claiming its agency,
> returning to his[her] individual perspective,
> referring to biographical events in his[her] life (Kraus, 2013, p. 72).

What follows is an example of a student's work illustrating how creative writing within autoethnographic methodology can become a catalyst to transform the written text into a tangible object, thus taking the representation of the "self" to yet another dimension as visual art.[2]

Figure 1, pictured below is an example of a student's final project at the conclusion of sequential learning in which creative writing as literary and visual arts pedagogy was implemented within the context of autoethnography. This student, a mature-aged Australian female in her late 30s, chose texts thematically related to the beach for her autoethnographic assignment. In creating her installation, she chose photography and digital imagery transfer as her Arts-based narrative choices. Via these techniques, the student used both existing and newly taken photographic images of herself and her family and printed these on two tangible objects: a large blue-printed terry-toweling beach towel as well as a plain white t-shirt. The tape recorder contained a cassette she had assembled of her favourite songs as a young woman, and the inclusion of the cassette-player itself retained currency as symbolic of a technological as well as personal/historical past. The student also included a written piece of creative writing which incorporated both prose and verse. The "Reef" coconut oil added an olfactory

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[2] This example and analysis, Image 1, initially appeared in Anae, N. (2014). "Creative writing as freedom, education as exploration": Creative writing as literary and visual arts pedagogy in the first year teacher-education experience. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education, 39*(8), 133-134.

dimension to the work, which the student felt was especially important—a view shared by scholars in the field (Borthwick, 2006; Coronado, 2011; Mingé & Zimmerman, 2013). The aroma of the oil not only induced particular memories, but located those memories within specific temporal and sensory realms. The installation as both a literary and visual arts work is fundamentally intertextual and highlights the fluidity of constructions of self.
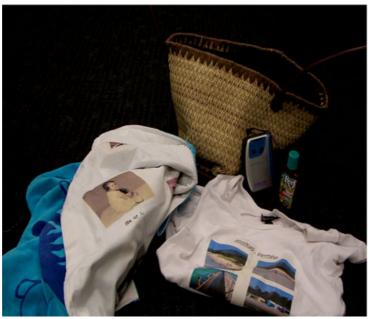

Figure 1.

Tellingly, the photograph of the student as a young girl, given in the left of the image, is entitled "Me *or* I [my italics]", which both plays with the notion of "shifters" as necessarily deictic while somehow attempting to affix meaning to a memorialised, and therefore apparently "truthful", concept of self. The "or" between these two Lacanian shifters ("me" and "I") appears on the one hand to imply mutability, a kind of one-and-the-same-ness, while on the other also implying mutuality, a sense of affinity between two quite obscure concepts of self. The student grapples with the tensions between the symbolic and the semiotic aspects of language. The symbolic nature of language maintains the illusion of the "me" as fixed and cohesive, but the "… or I" contrasts the semiotic aspect of language as a disruptive and oppositional force. Thus, the piece reflects a characteristically postmodern aesthetic while showcasing a deliberate yet intuitive approach to autoethnography as a methodology in which modes of creative fiction and non-fiction can be applied.

Figure 2 is an example of a final Arts/Literary-based autoethnographic piece in the form of a three-dimensional storytelling artefact. This student, a nineteen-year-old Australian-born female, entitled her autoethnographic piece "Always in my head". She constructed a bust of herself using Papiér Maché, and then prepared small scrolls of written text, which could be drawn out of "her head" and then replaced once read (as the top of the figure's head was removable). She included eight separate scrolls, each dealing with different dimensions of her identity (class, religion, gender, education, and so on). Each included creative writing, incorporating prose, genre-play, past-self narratives, and verse. The story of self is told in the round (from a multiple of sides, and perspectives). The piece is a particularly sophisticated example

of the student's taking into account the specific structures of each genre (known as "outer form"), and the purpose of each type (known as "inner form"). The bust itself is a personification, if you will, of abstract structures of genre made visible. This is a truly "imaginative" work in a literary sense if we take Saunders (2010) definition of "imaginary writing" as a form of metafiction. In this sense, the autoethnographic piece explores "the fiction within the fiction, and the fiction that frames it" (p. 75). This returns to my earlier point that the outcomes for "imaginative writing" within the National curriculum would look very different indeed if "imaginative writing" was defined in its truest sense. By extension, this example of autoethnography gives new meaning to outer and inner form as literary elements, and, outer and inner form as a postmodern aesthetic. The student transforms a conceptual understanding of self—"Always in my head"—into an Arts-based creative object which both unites and challenges the discursive practices continually circulating around that sense of self.

Figure 2

The "embody-ness" of this piece is particularly telling. The externality of the bust, its embodying of a "self", cannot be separated from the dis-embodying of internal processes of thought and cognition that point elsewhere—epitomises by the eight (8) "scrolls" which both embody and disembody what is "Always in my head". In this, the student grapples with the relationships between the "symbolic and the material, between representations of the body and embodiment as experience or social practice in concrete social, cultural and historical contexts" (Davis, 1997, p. 15). Thus, the intertextuality and multimodality of the piece also demonstrates multiliteracies in action: a collision of image, visuality, text, inter-text, and inner-dialogue made visible as an interactive experience of signification and three-dimensional storytelling.

From a Lacanian perspective, this student's use of "shifters"—particularly "my"—indicates "who speaks and what is said" but the eight scrolls "Always in My Head" complicate narrative in terms of storytelling speaker. Put another way, the particle

"my" in each of the eight scrolls indicates the subject of the enunciations to be plural-selves, rather than a single-self. These shifters, then, to a large degree, articulate the problem of the student's own existence: of "Being" in the Lacanian sense, particularly in the interplay between self-narration (what "*I*" say, for instance, "Always in *My* Head" [my italics]); between message (what is meant by "My"); and between means, that is, the interplay between language (the scrolls) and creative artefact (three dimensional storytelling mode). Similarly, we see how shifters are always dependently contextual—they are "deictic" given that the referent "My" is "not assigned in a relatively stable fashion but shifts according to the evolving conversational context, depending on who adopts the speaker role at a given time" (Stawarska, 2009, p. 26).

CONCLUSION

Engaging teacher-education students in creative writing techniques encourages them to raise questions about how language might work to construct individual subjectivity, and the implications for understanding professional teacher identity as a result—what Tateo (2012) views as "an autonomous theoretical construct". Literary/Arts-based approaches to creative writing have specific implications for teacher-education in particular. This methodology can give voice to common confusions about personal and public identity, and the binary oppositions between the personal and public self embedded in ideological presumptions about teachers' work:

> … teachers' private lives, and the social backgrounds from which they are drawn are also taken as matters of some interest in the variety of discussions of teacher professionalism, stressing that teachers require a range of personal attributes and self awareness—characteristic of a particular social and cultural style of self-inspection, conscious self-regulation and ongoing self-improvement. Official policy, in other words, has made teachers' backgrounds and private lives a matter of public concern. (Vick, 2004, p. 99)

Thus, opportunities to engage beginning-teachers in three-dimensional storytelling of the personal and private past become significant in view of what Connelly and Clandinin (1988) call "personal practical knowledge", or "the knowing of a classroom":

> Where is personal practical knowledge? It is in the person's past experience, in the person's present mind and body, and in the person's future plans and actions. Knowledge is not found only "in the mind." It is "in the body." And it is seen and found "in our practices" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988, p. 25).

The constantly shifting contexts in which intending teachers decipher meaning is an important consideration "since the socio-linguistic background against which we decode a text constantly changes through time, marks on paper and recorded sound give only an illusion of total stability" (Fowler, 1995, p. 247). While the attention shifts more and more toward articulating the place and significance of self in a world, it can be a difficult process for intending teachers lacking the skills and motivation to refine more sophisticated modes and techniques for creative personal expression.

The examples of student's work presented here show that the relationship between the student and the Arts-work, between the creative-writer and the visual artist, and by extension between the text and the image, is both unstable and challenging while also a site for truly "imaginative" writing and creating. The individual voices that creative writing techniques inspire also emphasise the potential for expanding the language available to beginning-teachers toward more creative possibilities, from preparatory to generative and responsive. Through these texts, students narrate the linguistic illusion of the self as fixed and cohesive, while the semiotic aspects of their material creations disrupt and indeed challenge the "self" as permanent and unified. It is possible to enrich the descriptive qualities of "imaginative" narrativity if more researchers and teacher-educators embrace the potential of a Literary/Arts-based approach to teaching creative writing techniques to transform themselves, and students, into creative agents:

> An artist, writer, or film director views and interacts with the world with a certain creative focus which is informed by specific goals—the creation of a painting, a book, or a film. An effective learning system can inspire this type of creativity by making learners into creators. (Walker, 2004)

The quality of beginning-teacher training does influence future competency as educators (Mifsud, 1996) and teachers that feel competent as writers do share with students and colleagues the art of teaching writing (Elbaz-Luwisch & Pritzker, 2002). Reflective writing does inform teaching practice (Pedro, 2005), just as writing enhances professional development (Spilkova, 2001) and critical thinking (Munday & Cartwright, 1990). Additionally, writing does present a powerful tool to encourage professionalism (Cautreels, 2003) and expand the development of a writing pedagogy (Gilbert, 1989).

An interdisciplinary Arts/English approach provides for intending teachers a variety of creative spaces for imaging and re-imagining subjective positions. This multiplicity invites not only re-reading memory, identity and subjectivity (see Appendix, Table 2 "Application" for an example), but possibilities to create a material object—a creative translation—of such re/readings. While Lamote and Engels (2010) proclaim the inseparability of the personal/professional teacher-identity (p. 3), opportunities to explore the multiple contradictions and complexities of self can motivate teacher education students to generate vividly informative texts. Their efforts resonate with Davies' (1991) argument that, "If one's body has learned to interact with the world in certain ways, then these ways may need more than access to a new discursive practice to change them" (p.14). An interdisciplinary Arts/English approach to teacher identity studies incorporating creative writing and three-dimensional storytelling within autoethnographic work makes possible articulating and exploring multi-dimensional personal narratives of self from the vital ashes of students' private pasts.

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APPENDIX

Table 2.   Lesson plan for "Narrative-Play"

Technique	Theme	Lesson Plan
Narrative-Play	**Past-self**	**Warm Up**
	Gender	Students work in small groups to consider a variety of images of people (women, men, and children) and respond to the following statement: *"The prevalence of gendered identities and the ubiquity of sex references in everyday life makes us aware of how important gender differences are in the maintenance of a particular social organisation. Understanding how social order can be deconstructed allows us to see the long-term implications of certain everyday habits."* Finkelstein & Goodwin, 2005, p. 104). Assigned questions for each group included: 1. What ideologies of gender do bodies display? 2. How does age affect and effect bodily displays of gender? 3. Does your group's image make it obvious that gender is learned? If so, what are the "stock actions" of gender internalised by the figure? 4. What societal ideologies of gender does your image challenge/oppose/sustain/ "naturalise"? Students take turns to present their group's examinations to the whole class.
Skills Development		a) Students take a couple of minutes to write down a well-known adage such as: • A rolling stone gathers no moss • Too many cooks spoil the broth • Many hands make light work • A stitch in time saves nine • Something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue b) Students examine the adage carefully and consider if it is "gendered"—that is, if it is ideologically suggestive in terms of women's/men's roles. c) Students write down some of their ideas in relation to their thinking. For example: **Too many cooks spoil the broth** - Is "cook" ideologically "laden"? - What might this say about domestic work? d) Students re-organise the semantics of their adage to form reworded variations: • *Too many cooks spoil the broth→* • The *broth too many cooks spoil→* • Spoil *the cooks many too broth→*

e) Students choose one reworded variation and re-write adding prefixes, suffixes or both:

- *The broth too many cooks spoil→The broth spoil**ing** too many cook**s***

f) Students choose one revised variation and add punctuation, words, etc., to form a complete sentence:

Many cooks lamented the spoil*ing* broth, which now *sat uneaten and unremarkable*.

Application
30 - 40 minutes

Teacher reads: Chapter One *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee.

Today we take up the notion that in autoethnography, it is important to include an intersubjective quality, where multiple voices characterise the "self" being observed. What we are going to work on is developing our own **multiplicity** of voice. To do this, you need to:

1. Think of something important that happened to you in relation to **gender**
2. Recall how old you were and as much detail about the experience as possible—think of the rich detail in Harper Lee's writing
3. Spend 10 minutes writing down the details—be specific:
   - Who was involved?
   - How old were you?
   - Where did the incident take place?
   - What were the consequences of the incident?
   - How did you feel?
   - What were the sights, smells, etc., that you can remember?
4. Now reconsider the event from the perspective of how old you were at the time—try to write a few sentences that reflect your age (write like a child, etc.).
5. Finally, reconsider the event one last time, but at another age—your aim here is to consider the event from three points of view. This might include adopting the following (or variations thereof):
   - Perspective 1 (e.g., as you are now—present)
   - Perspective 2 (e.g., as you were at the time—past)
   - Perspective 3 (e.g., as you will be—future).

Student Example

THE BLUE DRESS (Perspective 1: Aged 7)
Hello, I'm P and I am 7 years old. Don't you like my dolly? Her name is Tina. Doesn't she look nice in her new blue dress? Shhh. Don't tell daddy about my new dress, it's a secret between mummy and me. Daddy would be *very* mad if he knew all about my blue dress.

Do you want to know the secret? You have to promise not to tell anyone about it.
Do you promise?

Okay. It was a warm Saturday afternoon and me and Mummy were out shopping. Mummy didn't take me shopping often, she never had any money in her purse, looking after the money is Daddy's job. That day was special because there was some money in her purse.

Do you like that? I sound very grown up don't I. You have to be grown up about secrets. Daddy always says I am very clever.

We walked up to the shops on Grasmeyer Road, I was pushing my Tina in the pram I got for Christmas. It's a lovely pram, exactly the same as the one my cousins got. Mine has a tan hood and rain cover and it arrived with Tina dressed in a mauve hand knitted outfit of leggings, jacket and hat. It was just like the clothes made for my new baby brother, Jon. When my pram had arrived from Father Christmas he had only bought one baby doll but, Lee, June and Wanda were lucky enough to get twins! I don't mind. I love my doll.

We walked along pushing our prams. I'm going to grow up to be a good mummy one day just like my mummy. I know the right way to hold a baby in the bath, how to change its clothes and how to rock it to sleep. See?

We both parked our prams outside on the footpath because that was always the best place to leave them. I looked around while mummy talked to the lady.

Then I saw it. It was a beautiful blue doll's dress in the glass counter near the back of the shop. You know the one I mean?

It was the perfect size for my baby doll. It was so special, deep royal blue with a piece of white broderie anglaise down the front and a little pleat. It was the most beautiful dress I had ever seen and it was *only* 7/6d. Mummy had some money that day so I asked her if I could buy the dress.

Mummy said that the dress was way more expensive than she could afford but she must have seen how important it was to me. She really wanted me to have it too. I knew that because her eyes were all shiny just like when she's been crying. She paid the shop assistant who carefully put the dress into a paper bag and gave it to me. Both me and mummy were smiling.

Shsh. I told you it was a secret.

When we got outside the shop mummy said, "When you get it home, don't show your dad. If he does see it tell him that it only cost a shilling from the market. If you don't he'll bloody kill me." (That must be the rules for dress shopping.)

Isn't it a lovely dress. So blue …

ANOTHER BLUE DRESS (Perspective 2: Aged 11)
Hi, I'm P and I'm 11 years old. Do you like my blue dress. It came from America. Isn't it the most beautiful dress you've had ever seen? Look it's dusty blue with white polka dots and white trim on the bodice. It reminds

me of another dress that I remember, a secret dress that only me and mum know about…

Can I tell you a story about this blue dress?

Anyway I remember when I first got it this dress it was long, too long, but I knew that I would grow into it. I could just hang it in the wardrobe until I was ready to wear it. Don't they have special things in America? I am so lucky to have real American cousins; they are my cousins and not one's to be shared with Lee and June and Wanda. Their mum had makes all my other dresses - so we all look just the same. This one is different.

Did you know that I spent a summer season singing on a show at the Bucklins Metropole Hotel where my gan gan took photos of the guests and my Nana [grandmother] sold them the next day? I'd been singing for the guests during summer holidays as long as I could remember but this was my first time on the stage. I really wanted to wear my new

American blue dress for the show. It would be perfect….

YET ANOTHER BLUE DRESS (Perspective 3: Aged 16)
G'day, I'm P. I'm 16. Do you like my blue dress?

This blue dress is special because it was the first one I chose for myself. I know it's too short.
I remember buying this dress at Cribb and Foote in Brisbane. We always paid with funny money—the stuff you can only spend in Cribb and Foot.

My dad is the head of our household. It's he who has control of the incomes. It's him who decides when we shop, where we shop and what we'll buy. He's chosen all of my clothes since we left England and Auntie Cheryl, his sister, isn't around to make them anymore. He chose all my clothes until I was around fifteen years old. They were always modest and feminine.

This blue dress was chosen by me on one of the very rare occasions that I was allowed to choose my own dress. Of course around that time all my friends were dressed in jeans and T-shirts and jeans were definitely out for me.

"Only tarts wear jeans," he used to say.

When I did get my first pair of jeans at fourteen years of age, they were white with a matching white denim jacket.

(Written by T. P., a 47-year-old white female of English descent)

Table 3.   Lesson plan for "Hybrid-Play"

Technique	Theme	Lesson Plan
Hybrid-Play	**Retrospection**	**Warm Up**
	Religiosity	Representation is a key concept when exploring the construction of religiosity. Importantly, "representation" has three meanings which influence how belief systems are communicated. These are:
		1. To look like or to resemble
		2. To stand in for something or someone
		3. To present a second time—to re-present
		The use of binary oppositions ("binary": from the Greek meaning "bio", meaning "two"), generalisations and stereotypes are common to many discourses that communicate religious diversity. Common binary oppositions in the media construction of religious "difference" include:
		East versus West
		Primitive versus Civilised
		Individual versus Community
		Freedom versus Domination
		Natural versus Cultural
		Masculine versus Feminine
		Innocent versus Corrupt
		Ancient versus Modern
		Heathen versus Scientific
		Disorder versus Law & Order. (Adapted from Kites, 1969)
	Activity	
		Group Think
		How can you relate the experience of deconstructing images of religiosity to your autoethnographies?

Skills Development		
		1. "Celebration" Word play
		Students take 10 minutes to list some key words they associate with a particular celebration (religious, National, secular, etc.). Ask students to organise their words into four lists and name each list: e.g.: celebration, place, people, colours, food, etc.
		An example might look something like this:

Celebration	People	Place	Food
My birthday→	My family→	My house→	Cake
Christmas→	Santa Claus→	chimney→	Pudding
Mother's Day→	Mother→	restaurant→	chocolates
ANZAC Day→	Grandfather→	Cenotaph→	biscuits

2. Festive Texts
Students take 10 minutes to list some of their favourite festive songs, poetry, or verse that they associate with their particular religious belief. Encourage students to list between 2 and 6 examples.

Application
30 - 40 minutes

Students work individually for this session because expressing religious belief, or religiosity, can be a deeply personal experience. It is important that students feel comfortable, and it is crucial, therefore, that educators do everything they can to ensure a classroom environment in which students feel safe.

Complete the following:

1. Students take 10 minutes to complete their list of favourite festive songs, poetry, or verse that they associate with their particular religious belief.

2. Ask student to choose 2 (two) examples from their list.

3. Students take 15–20 minutes to develop the context for each example.

For instance, if it is a song, ask students to associate it with a particular religion, and encourage students to consider the historical struggles of that religion.

4. Ask students to reflect on what they believe society "thinks" about that religion. Invite them to consider this question in terms of acceptance or suspicion, or another affective quality.

5. Student response using two different genres.

Student Example

Genre Writing - Cinquain

Holocaust (1 word)
Fearfully Slowly (2 words)
Marching Crying Waiting (3 words)
Ignoring the hunger pains (4 words)
Genocide (1 word)

Genre Writing - Combining genres

Walk through the cold, it is raining
Enter the museum and pay the fee
Walk through the exhibits with the tourists
Read the names on the list
Find great-grandparents, neighbours, friends
Siblings, cousins, teachers
Sad faces, empty stomachs, tear-stained cheeks
Silence
Camps full of children, no toys
Old people, no chairs
Grey-striped pyjamas with caps to match
No grass on the ground
Leave the exhibit, collect coat
Walk through the rain, I shiver. (Written by L. T.., a 19 year old white female of Jewish descent)[3]

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[3] This example initially appeared in Anae, N. (2014). "Creative Writing as Freedom, Education as Exploration": Creative writing as literary and visual arts pedagogy in the first year teacher-education experience. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education, 39*(8), 131-124.