

Creative Writing in Literature Study: Using Imaginative Writing Practices to Refine Close-Reading Skills in Secondary English Instruction

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Rooted at the core of successful literary analysis is the ability to identify literary elements and use inference skills to gain deeper insights about an author's message in a work. Accepted English instruction often helps students to arrive at a more sophisticated understanding of a literary work through refining analytical writing. This research uncovers insights about how imaginative writing practices help reinforce students' close-reading abilities and benefit student literary analysis. This work is a descriptive, grade-level analysis that examines the uses and benefits of implementing creative writing instruction to aid literary study, specifically in assessing close-reading skills, at the secondary 10th grade English level. Two sophomore classes produced scored data from three consecutive writing sessions; these sessions prompted both imaginative writing responses and analytical writing responses to reveal how both imaginative writing practices and analytical writing practices were used in a successfully analogous way to assess the close-reading and inference skills used to enhance literary analysis.

Chapter One: Creative Writing as an Asset to Literature Study

Overview

I owe creative writing. I am indebted to it for the inspiration and motivation it has inspired in my own academic life and for the success it has created in my teaching experiences. I owe creative writing for any of the productivity I have had in my own artistic pursuits. I owe it for the inspiration it has embedded in me to further learn about multiple subjects from science to math, from history to education. It has its own momentum which gives freely to academia and pedagogy. I owe the exploration of its benefits my attention and energy for further investigation.

In 2011, I was asked to design and lead a creative writing workshop in my community at a local homeless youth shelter. The hope for the workshop was that the teens residing there, often in the throes of very turbulent lives, might find an outlet for their experience and a way to stay connected to productive expression. The hope was that they survive the transition from teenagers to adulthood and stay engaged enough at the shelter to make it through high school and hopefully into jobs and to community college. The program often solicited volunteers who were active members of the art community and who preferably had some instructional experience. As a volunteer who fit this profile, I agreed. I worked on weekly plans, activities and exercises that centered on individual creative writing and group discussions that honored each participant's experience and expression. What I discovered was an instructional process that would be continually beneficial to my endeavors as a future English teacher.

When I chose to experiment with creative writing workshop techniques at the shelter, it was to supplement another artistic activity for the kids living there. Often, instructors brought in art workshops for painting, sculpting and crafts. We tried to create fun and expressive activities. However, what I quickly observed was how creative writing techniques carried academic assets.

CREATIVE WRITING IN LITERATURE STUDY

From the first session, our creative writing exercises inspired conversations about other works of literature. The groups were drawing parallels to literature they had read in school or books they had encountered at the library. It inspired opinions about writers they may have liked or stories they strongly disliked and why. The connection I made was that these creative writing activities helped to start great discussions about literature and helped students connect literary devices from their own writing to literature they encountered in the world. In our writing practices we experimented with imitation poetry, collage poetry, free verse writing and lyric writing. The value of practicing creative writing was apparent in the students' attention, investment and motivation while learning discussion of different works of literature that arose in our sessions. Once students experimented and practiced the literary devices in their personal expressions, they were more clearly apt at discussing these devices in their observations of other writing; they were practicing writing literature as creative writers and were therefore developing a more seasoned awareness of literary conventions. It seemed to me, as I stood back in admiration of their growth and potential, that they were mostly fascinated by someone's perception of them as writers. My instructional audience validated their imaginative expressions and encouraged lively discussions about writing, literature and language.

From this experience, and others like it, I have gathered three observations. One, creative writing can be extraordinarily engaging for teens. Two, I was implementing techniques in creative writing I discovered in postsecondary curricula. Three, creative writing laid the groundwork for one of the most positive, productive and inclusive classroom environments of which I have ever been a part.

Rationale

Creative writing, when used as an application assignment in a literary lesson, seems to attract students' investment to the academic process. It creates a venue through which students can apply their growing knowledge of literary elements into their own writing. In return, they can apply knowledge they discover in their writing to broader works or movements of literature. This experience helps students to more clearly identify literary devices and techniques when analyzing literature. While creative writing practices are useful in understanding literary conventions and devices, it may also be a beneficial way to create a personal investment in learning. The creation of original work in a classroom setting is relevant to students and their lives. It offers an intimate and open environment that encourages original thinking and expression.

Organization

Research concerning the benefits of creative writing is mostly targeted at postsecondary education. Interestingly, despite university attention to creative writing practices, creative writing is hardly a focus of secondary curriculum research. While high school instruction most often targets analytical prose, rhetorical construction and essay development, research is aimed primarily at the effects of writing across disciplinary studies (Bangert-Drowns, R., Hurley, M., & Wilkinson, B., 2004). It may simply be observed that creative writing has been greatly marginalized due to secondary classroom focus on informational writing and text analysis (Knoeller, 2003).

In lack of empirical evidence concerning the specific effects of creative writing on high school classrooms, most accurately literature study in secondary classrooms, it is important to draw upon other relevant sources to learn more how the use of creative writing might or might

not benefit literature study. We can draw upon postsecondary curriculum's use of creative writing and any research that relates to this while keeping in mind it is common to look toward the framework of college practices in expectation of secondary targets and goals (Common Core State Standard Initiative, 2012). Whether it is for the purposes of college readiness, the promotion of original higher thinking, or both, looking at college instructional strategies and related research might be valuable to understanding the benefits of creative writing practices in secondary classrooms.

It is useful to evaluate some principle insights about how teens engage with and pay attention to tasks. A simple understanding of teenage attention to tasks might shed some light on creative writing's usefulness in the classroom. In addition to this, reports about how the inclusion of creative writing might affect classroom culture helps us to understand when and how to work with creative writing in instruction.

Following the literature review, I will employ creative writing techniques in the classroom to more clearly understand and assess how creative writing can be useful to literature study at the secondary level.

Definition of Terms

The object of this research is to understand the significance of using imaginative writing for exploring literary content alongside informational writing. Exploring literary content, specifically employing close-reading and passage inference skills, can be done through engaging in both imaginative writing practices and informational writing practices when those practices are designed to meet close-reading criteria.

It will be important to clearly define these terms which I hope to explore throughout the literature synthesis and instructional process. One major term that will need further clarification

is “creative writing.” Generally, we know use of creative writing as writing that exhibits the unique creation of imaginative drama, fiction or poetry. Certain theorists have called creative writing **imaginative writing**; imaginative writing is considered more ambiguous, intuitive or metaphorical (Bangert-Drowns & Hurley & Wilkinson, 2004). Imaginative writing is more accurately what I will be describing in this research because it can be viewed as a smaller component of creative writing. It serves to accomplish two aspects; it expresses an imaginative experience in literary form and it originates from the inspiration or reaction of the student writer. Imaginative writing is a writing practice; it does not need to be a completed work in the creative writing genres. It is simply a writing experience in an imaginative literary setting.

Alongside imaginative writing, there is companion practice which emphasizes writing in the style of a particular author or genre. **Like-genre writing** first attempts to understand an author’s style or technique and then practices writing in elaboration or imitation of that observed style or genre. This practice reinforces the notion of reading like a writer and the “natural symbiosis” that occurs in processes where reading informs writing as writing informs reading (Knoeller, 2003).

In contrast to imaginative writing, we might define **informational writing**, which is writing that serves to formally report, offer criticism, analyze or summarize ideas or texts. Informational writing can be described as writing used to write critically or analyze information. (Bangert-Drowns & Hurley & Wilkinson, 2004). The term informational writing is appropriate because it adheres to manipulating informational ideas about literature. It differs from imaginative writing in the way that imaginative writing originates from the student writer’s original conception. The difference between these task-related types of writing is significant because the practice of informational forms of writing, like essay and analysis, serves to meet the

specific criteria of that type of informational writing. Informational writing, as a practice unto itself, may not always correlate with criteria met in imaginative writing assignments.

An important practice and idea to define, in relation to writing and learning, is **meta-cognitive writing**. This is writing that serves to explore reflection on the thinking process. Personal writing or reflective journal writing that aims to help a student better understand his or her own thinking is meta-cognitive writing. Studies show that meta-cognitive writing practices that relate a student's personal learning process to educational content further enhances comprehension (Bangert-Drowns & Hurley & Wilkinson, 2004). Various types of writing and content study can be greatly aided through meta-cognitive writing. However, it is important to define how meta-cognitive writing is different from imaginative writing. "What do you think..." questions that ask a student to reflect upon a hypothetical situation and projection are ways of reasoning, but they are ways of reasoning in an imaginative form. These are questions that may be specifically tailored toward the imaginative writing process and should be directly distinguished from meta-cognitive practice that asks a student to reflect on how he or she has best learned. Meta-cognitive writing will and should be used to gather information about the student's learning, but it will not be interchangeable with imaginative writing.

Branching between informational writing and the self-awareness in writing is the **reader-response** theory of writing practice. This is a form of writing that serves to analyze a text through the framework of a reader's personal response to a work (Dobie, 2002). Reader-Response has devolved into a common practice for literature analysis. It is important to note that this differs greatly from meta-cognitive writing. Reader-response is an approach to literature analysis while meta-cognitive writing is a practice to help a student's learning.

Classroom culture refers to the classroom environment and how the students collectively interact with the classroom as a community of individuals. Because classroom culture is directly affected by the individuals within it and the thoughts, ideas and experiences they bring to the class, a classroom's culture is created from the interaction of the students with each other, the instructor(s) and the content within the class.

In light of these terms, I will attempt to understand more about the usefulness of imaginative writing practices in a secondary classroom through the framework of students' close-reading and inference skills, and how these skills can be successfully supported through employing both imaginative and analysis writing practices.

Chapter 2: Literature Review: Using Imaginative Writing to Explore Literary Content

Imaginative Writing Practices As Academic Tools

The extent to which educational research has explored the effects of creative writing methods on student academic performance is somewhat limited. Indeed, major research has sought to measure the usefulness of writing, as a general meta-cognitive or analytical tool, to be used in the retention of cross disciplinary content knowledge primarily in science, mathematics and social studies (Bangert-Drowns, Hurley, Wilkinson, 2010). Often, the search for how imaginative writing affects academic performance resides in the personal and professional experiences and testimonies of teachers and writers who have been willing to approach subjects in experimental ways. Most commonly, this practice has occurred organically and has simply been overlooked in a variety of teaching methods that were intended to capture facets of academic performance through unrelated instructional processes. Imaginative writing is very often used but is rarely singled out as an instructional practice used to aid academic exploration of material in empirical studies. Perhaps this is due to the common stigma or a traditional misconception that creative writing is mostly useful in the play of writing; it is seen as a finale for entertaining reflection after the more formal forms of critical thinking have occurred. When it comes to proper literature study, academic culture relies almost absolutely on essay prose and argumentative writing as an acceptable or valid reflection of thinking (Knoeller, 2003). The Common Core State Standards reinforce this sentiment in their obsession with college readiness where the majority of writing skills are geared toward informational writing like rhetorical analysis and argumentative essay construction. While these are useful focuses in English, they are only a portion of the subject study in literature.

Imaginative thought processes and questions are used frequently in education across disciplines. Educators ask questions and hold discussions concerning a variety of points of view. They ask, “What do you suppose would happen if” Perhaps, the imaginative writing is largely missing in instruction research and methodology because it is nebulous in definition. Imaginative writing, largely referred to as creative writing, hovers around specific genre study. Even within these definitions, it does seem that imaginative writing is often overlooked as a useful student practice to literature study as it relates to the reasoning processes inherent to analysis. It has been classified as an extracurricular practice. While imaginative writing is entertaining and engaging, it is also practically useful. When used as writing practice that explores literary content, imaginative writing creates the opportunity to produce higher level thinking. There are a plethora of skills alive and at work in writing and thinking in terms of fiction, poetry, story-telling, plays and prose writing. These are all organic extensions of genre study. Imaginative writing used to expand upon or imitate literature capitalizes on hypothetical reasoning, close-reading, compare and contrast, classification and organizational skills. It provides opportunities to predict and synthesize. In literature and language arts studies, it can be and should be used to explore literary devices and traditional criticism techniques. Imaginative writing techniques are simply an extension of the reasoning thought processes used to comprehend a subject and explore material in a hypothetical way. Imaginative writing can be the medium through which we comprehend the arguments, point of view and critiques of subject matters held by the writers we study.

Literature as Conversation

Point of view is a literary device that portrays how a story or narration is being told. Understanding point of view is essential to analyzing most literature and successfully understanding a narrator or character. Often, it is the key to unraveling important information

about the story, its characters and the author's choices. However, point of view can extend beyond its use by the author of a fictional work. Point of view may be found in essentially any type of writing. A writer chooses point of view because, in storytelling and many other writings, it is a natural extension of creating a conversation. In a conversation, be it an argument or persuasion, there is usually a point of view that coincides with the author's opinion; understanding it helps us to understand the thinking behind it.

Criticism is no stranger to point of view. There is a strong call to action from postsecondary curricula for students to think "in character" as a literary critic while studying literature. This call asks students to consider both the power of a reader's perspective and active involvement in literature study (Dobie, 2002). Different schools of literature inherently contain a point of view, which, like a lens, serves to focus a written analysis on specific aspects of a literature body with a specific angle in mind. The major schools of literary study include criticisms ranging from Culturalism and New Historicism, Feminist Criticism, Deconstructionism, Psychological Criticism and Reader-Response to Post-modernism and Marxism schools of thought (Dobie, 2002). There are many more schools of criticism; all are important to analyzing a body of work through a particular focus or point of view. As a writer is asked to develop an analysis of works through these criticisms, she is being asked to explore a point of view. These are the ways in which we ask students to elaborate on their knowledge of a work and more deeply discuss literature (Dobie, 2002). It may be reasonable then to understand literary criticism as a conversation between a school of thought and a person attempting to understand that school of thought. The development of that conversation requires understanding point of view, the argument itself and, most important, the experience out of which a point of view develops.

A Literature Critic Mindset

Imaginative writing can make use of this conversation between reader, criticism study, and literary work. In imaginative writing, a writer might seek to explore a hypothetical conversation between one person who sees a writing one way and another person who sees that writing another way. Here, imaginative writing serves to explore both point of view and a school of thought within a type of criticism. The conversation about literature is not a simple one, but is fraught with conflicts and disagreement (Dobie, 2002). Imaginative writing, through different techniques, can create a platform to explore this conversation. The capacity for a student to imaginatively develop this conversation demonstrates higher level thinking and displays both content knowledge of literary devices like personification and voice along with the understanding of the literary criticism. It also provides a platform to sharpen compare and contrasting skills, reflective thinking and reasoning about the subject material. A student can act upon the more abstract concepts of criticism through an imaginative writing practice and further explore functions of rhetoric and supporting main arguments (Dobie, 2002).

Point of View: Storytelling and Dialogue

Point of view is an essential part of conversation. The expression of that point of view exists in relation to experience. The communication of experience is often found in storytelling. Teachers have found exploring point of view through storytelling especially beneficial to literary study and other disciplines. It is, at times, an organic occurrence throughout any instruction. One vibrant example of this is illustrated through an instructor's impulsive storytelling which arose during the testing of a Socratic instructional method (Garlikov, 2010). The method was to ask questions in place of explaining math content to elementary students. The instructor's goal was to employ guided questioning to scaffold students' understanding of binary math. The method

was successful; within twenty-five minutes, elementary students were grasping binary math concepts. However, the real magic happened during the Socratic session when the teacher asked the kids to answer thinking hypothetically. They were to relate the math concepts to counting with only two fingers through the illustration or storyline of alien math. In this story moment, the aliens would have learned to count differently because their preschool had to teach them to count with only two fingers. This storyline continued throughout the instruction at pivotal moments of understanding. Interestingly, it was the use of imaginative storytelling (with a sci-fi touch) that greatly aided the method and students to successfully grasp the material. Asking students to think in the first person point of view of an imaginative character presented a viewpoint that helped them understand the material.

Very often connecting point of view to experience comes in the form of storytelling as explored through dialogue (King, 2007). Teachers and students communicate through exchanging ideas, experience and information through dialogue. This transference of ideas and experience through storytelling and dialogue is a natural part of classroom discussion and idea sharing; it is essentially that these dialogues keep classroom discussions and education afloat with relevance for the learner. Imaginative writing practices that build on dialogue writing can explore a work's theme, the point of view of a character or of a prediction of the author's point of view (King, 2007). Point of view explorations in imaginative writing that seek to combine experience with literary devices like imagery, flashback, and diction are valuable to literature analysis. Students explore conversation conventions because storytelling and dialoguing are natural occurrences in their lives socially and academically (King, 2007). Exploring points of view through imaginative writing practices that include conversations can stimulate higher level

thinking about a work. Simultaneously, storytelling and dialogue helps us to relate ideas to our own lives and make sense of the information about which we are reading.

Storytelling, in its provision of background and formation, also provides context. The process of hearing and telling about background information scaffolds a connection between the point of view and its meaning and also between teller and the listener (King, 2007). It also provides a context for the language being used. A conscious and competent participant in a conversation can use the language of his or her audience to best communicate a point of view (Dobie, 2002). In language and situational context, storytelling and dialogue serve to create reciprocity between one point of view and another, both in writing and discussion. Imaginative writing can provide a context for that conversation to take place often encouraging a deeper understanding of the ideas involved.

Like-Genre Writing For Close Readings

One of the most valuable assets of imaginative writing is that it provides students with the opportunity to interact with the text. Essay and analytical prose are most often used as a way for students to write *about* literature, but teachers have found that when students write like-genre while studying a work this experience adds a deeper level of engagement with the text (Knoeller, 2003). The supplemental practices of writing in the style and voice of an author or imaginatively creating an extension of the text such as a epilogues, prologues, additional chapters, alternate endings or interjecting internal character monologues, creates the opportunity for students to imaginatively interact with the text. As logical an asset to literature study as it seems, like-genre writing is often used in only in creative writing courses, and is used less in traditional literature study courses. Excluding like-genre writing can exempt opportunities for close-reading, reasoning, and in-depth exploration of point of view (Knoeller, 2003). The practice of mimicking

an author's decisions requires thorough consideration of the cause and effects in the author's communication, meaning and literary design. It is another way for a student to enter into a hypothetical learning environment and be a part of the story's conversation.

Like-genre writing is an imaginative way to practice a skill or technique based on external modeling. Educational research suggests learning can be heavily impacted through modeling and imitation; the act of providing a model and scaffolding the process into chunks so that students might attempt an imitation is a useful and successful exploratory way to hone new skills (John-Steiner, Mahn, 1996). Literature may be no different in this regard. Imaginatively writing one's way into a text is an exploratory way for a student to act upon the material that he or she is learning.

Journalist Mindset toward Informational Writing

Informational essay writing can be greatly aided by imaginative writing exercises during pre-essay preparation (Cooper, McDonald, 2000). During the course of planning and drafting an essay, it is essential that a writer understand the reader, the writing situation and the points of view involved so that a proper execution of criticism or argument can be logically implemented. To sharpen these organizational and classification skills, imaginative writing provides a way to translate abstract ideas and situations into relatable pieces of information for prioritizing (Cooper, McDonald, 2000). Imaginative writing methods can vary from placing the writer into hypothetical careers to writing letters to imaginary audiences, all which help to clarify the opinions and experiences under analysis in the essay. This practice is similar to thinking like a critic or like-genre writing, but differs in that the student assumes more of the mindset of a contemporary journalist. This practice works specifically well when writing argumentative essays on nonfiction text, political or cultural issues, and articles. As Core Standards focus more

on critical thinking in texts including non-fiction and commentary writing in high school English goals, this mindset is increasingly more important. Imaginative writing can provide a space in the reasoning, between the text and the thesis of an argument, where students can act upon the ideas they are exploring to further understand ideas and meaning (Cooper, McDonald, 2000).

Journal Prompts Personalizing Literary Devices

Other instructional methods encourage students to find pleasure in writing about fiction through identifying the pleasure in reading it (Meyers, 2000). The goal is to approach writing as an intellectual and emotional opportunity rather than merely making sentences (Meyers, 2000). This approach encourages students to “experience or feel” their way into a work, much aligned with reader-response criticism. Often this occurs in imaginative journal writing. To expand on this reaction, students are encouraged to engage in imaginative writing responses to further explore and understand the text (Meyers, 2000). Students can be encouraged to respond to a moment of imagery in a story or a physical picture that aligns with that imagery and write a description or character narrative to elaborate on the mood or atmosphere of a story. This helps students to interact with the psychology or mood of a story to better understand an author’s description or setting choices (Meyers, 2000)

Character Sketches: Exploring A Poem’s Speaker

One of the key skills in poetic analysis is identification. It is the skill of identifying the speaker, the situation or state of mind, persons or personas addressed in the poem and identifying meaning and patterns in the form. To a less experienced reader, the confusion of identifying these elements can be particularly tricky, especially in light of the many devices, movements and poetic forms poetry has to offer. It is particularly difficult to respond, discuss or intelligibly elaborate upon the meaning of poetry without identifying and classifying these elements.

Imaginative writing can greatly aid the identification and classification skills that help poetic analysis. One valuable method is to personify the speaker of a poem and create a character sketch of the speaker (Meyers, 2000). This helps to identify the persona of the speaker and that speaker's point of view and make it accessible or relatable to the student. This method might be particularly helpful to younger students or students new to poetic analysis. Imaginatively interacting with the speaker of a poem through an interview, biography or conversation with other characters can help students make use of key lines in the poem, understand word choice or difficult language and organize the elements of the poem that create its meaning (Meyers, 2000).

Imaginative Writing: Guided Learning, Specificity, and Meta-cognition

Incorporating imaginative writing techniques in traditional literature study may be seen as problematic for instructors for a variety of reasons. Imaginative writing, often viewed as inferior to informational writing (Knoeller, 2003), is seen as sometimes inaccessible or derailing from learning targets. A discrepancy may lie in the fear that imaginative writing can too easily stray off topic or be simply inaccessible to “non-creative” students. Unfortunately, educators, seeing themselves as not creative, worry about developing an imaginative project and being incapable of guiding or containing imaginative processes (King, 2007). Part of overcoming the resistance met when incorporating imaginative writing by teachers and students who see themselves as not-creative is recognizing that imaginative writing is simply an extension of reasoning; like other instructional processes, imaginative writing can and should be broken down to skills that aid the learning targets of the class (Marzano, 2010). Imaginative writing best serves a curriculum when it is used within the design of a cohesive framework for a unit, semester or year (Marzano, 2010). In light of these controversies, it would benefit an instructor

to be clear about learning targets, scoring criteria, and backward planning that employs imaginative writing.

The advantages of imaginative writing techniques are that many imaginative writing practices can be broken down into skill-building exercises and used in varying order. “There’s no rational order or sequence in which those elements must be learned...they’re constantly being relearned and reconsidered” (Stern, 1991, 14). Each passage may belong to itself as in a description, vignette or prose or it may belong to a larger body. Imaginative writing is easily accessible to students when they need to interact with a text’s setting, character or a pivotal moment in a story. It is not necessary then to commit to a full story or an elaborate project or genre in imaginative writing for students to write passages, a memory, a short conversation or character sketch. Having students explore an image or a memory of their own through imaginative writing helps to teach literary techniques and create awareness around word choice (Stern, 1991). Creating a passage where two characters speak only through script helps to teach students the technique of “showing instead of telling.” Understanding this technique helps students identify narrator point of view and character development (Stern, 1991). Practicing writing how a character is led through a space or situation gives students the experience of exploring the hierarchy of knowledge, dramatic tension and an appeal to the senses (Stern, 1991). These devices are the tools of major works of literature. These are the elements students are required to deconstruct, discuss and analyze according to departments and state standards. However, rarely are students asked to attempt these devices in serious exploration (Knoeller, 2003). Exploring and practicing these techniques helps students to identify and reason about them. Identifying, classifying, organizing and reasoning about literary information is a

paramount part of studying it; these skills access a pathway toward analytically writing about literature and intelligibly discussing it (Ackerman, 1993).

Imaginative Writing: Meta-Cognitive Reflection

Research reiterates that meta-cognitive writing helps to organize and reinforce understanding of both content knowledge and produces higher level thinking. Assignments that incorporate meta-cognitive reflection on the learning processes help to scaffold aspects of self-regulation. (Bangert-Drowns, Hurley, Wilkinson, 2010). Meta-cognitive writing after imaginative writing can be a particularly useful method for students to connect how this exploration of literary ideas has enhanced their understanding of literary content. Students profit by reflecting on what they have learned in the process, exploring their insights (Knoeller, 2003). Writing, by nature, offers repetition in thought process; the reinforcing and cyclical nature of the cognitive process in writing is a powerful mode for learning (Emig, 1977). To write about a text from different points of view or through imaginatively expanding upon its subject matter allows a student further repeat and practice analysis of the text's ideas. Imaginative writing practices, followed by consistent class journaling or reflective prompt responses, can help students make the connections between their imaginative writing and learning goals. Meta-cognitive writing, in this sense, can help to guide imaginative writing toward useful and productive learning targets. Post unit meta-cognitive writing has revealed that students both learn from imaginative writing practices while greatly enjoying it (Knoeller, 2003). This process can be as elaborate as a reflective essay or as simple as a three sentence reflection on an assignment.

Task Attention and Motivation in Teen Adolescents

One influential factor that can most affect adolescent attention is emotional investment (Wolfe, 2012). Learning is led by attention and attention is led by emotion (Wolfe, 2012). The

cognitive processes that allow the mind to differentiate between frivolous and essential information relies heavily on emotions, meaning flight or fight responses, and can greatly determine the way the mind distributes attention (Wolfe, 2012). Adolescents in the 12-19 year old developmental stages are particularly affected by this. It takes more stimuli to activate the reward center of a teenage mind than it does in younger children or adults (Bronson, Merryman, 2009). Because motivation is a complex structure affected by multiple factors like self-regulation, self-efficacy and attention (Bandura, 2007), it is important to anticipate what challenges a teenage mind might encounter during cognitive tasks such as close-reading and passage inference. Emotionally engaging tasks, in moderation, help to retain attention (Wolfe, 2012). Imaginative writing is largely interactive with students' emotional responses because it offers the opportunity to draw upon their own lives and experiences (King, 2007). The experiential assets of imaginative writing can engage and motivate students to stay on task during the study of a long or difficult works (Knoeller, 2003).

The Motivation of Expressing Original Thought

There is much to be said for the motivation and engagement, traditionally speaking, accompanied by original thinking. When students are asked to think originally and not reproduce ideas, their motivation and attention towards a writing task increases (DeSena, 2007).

Imaginative writing can provide opportunities for free writing, the “fertile ground of original thinking” (pg. 71). In free writing, students may be free from form, and often this space allows students to take risks and experiment with inference (DeSena, 2007). The space and freedom found in free writing and other imaginative writing can help create motivation for original thinking. It helps to prevent students from repressing original reasoning, and it enhances the

skills that lead to better literary analysis and reasoning in essay writing through first dismantling formal writing's parameters (DeSena, 2007).

Imaginative Writing in Response to Literature: Students Choosing Imaginative Writing

Reader-Response became a popular method for exploring literature in the 1920s and 30s. The movement incorporated the variability in attitudes and interpretations readers might experience in response to a text. Reader-response criticism became a way to honor the personal reaction of the reader (Dobie, 2001). This being said, a reader's response can be highly indicative of how well a reader understands a text. It is easy to have a personal response, but more complicated to discuss that response through textual evidence and the author's choices that led a reader to feel that way. This criticism, when exercised correctly, puts a large amount of responsibility on the reader to accurately support one's reasoning for a response. It displays evidence of deep reasoning and synthesis (Dobie, 2000).

Imaginative writing has been used as a successful tool in the elaboration of reader-response practices. Educators have found that when students have the opportunity to respond to literature through writing original works of poetry or other imaginative writing prompts, they increasingly choose to do so (Knoeller, 2003). In addition to having the opportunity to validate their own response, students also appreciate the opportunity to create an original work with their response (Knoeller, 2003). Techniques in imaginative writing responses include writing a character narrative in place of plot summary, writing poetry for the exploration of a character's inner life, or fashioning a collage poem that serves as a montage or synthesis of a work's most pivotal moments and lines. Be it an original work or an imaginative collection of important words within a work, these types of techniques provide opportunities to sharpen close reading

skills and organize important elements within a text (Knoeller, 2003). Inherent within these writing activities is the opportunity for students to respond to a text and defend an interpretation.

Imaginative Writing and Classroom Culture

Conversations and the exploration of different points of view also help to cultivate a healthy classroom culture. Creating an environment which promotes the exploration of different ideas greatly aids instruction and learning process (John-Steiner, Mahn, 1996). It promotes awareness and expression in the light of Vygotskian theory that these several different insights between students' help an individual build upon his or her prior knowledge. Very often, a dialectal notion in the synthesis of ideas, thought of as "verbal thought," serves to connect ideas and meaning from one individual to the next (John-Steiner, Mahn, 1996). Another way of looking at the exchange of ideas and point of view is that it helps students scaffold ideas for each other. Storytelling, dialoguing and examining a point of view all help to create a classroom culture in which the explorations of individual experiences are valued and encouraged. Imaginative writing, through its exploration and expression of point of view, creates an opportunity for students to develop their writing voice. The individual experience, expressed through imaginative writing, provides a classroom environment celebrating the close analysis of experiences and points of view.

Deconstructing language through imaginative writing can be extremely successful in classroom cultures embracing sociocultural awareness. In one such impressive case, an educator used the deconstruction of African-American English Vernacular in *The Color Purple* and translated passages into Standard English through the use of fictional letters, textual elaborations in passages, and character conversations (Jordan, 1985). This imaginative writing provided students a close reading of the text as well as a thorough walk through the multicultural criticism

of the text's language and style. The discovery was a rich understanding of an American dialect and poetic appreciation for authors composing literature in Black Vernacular English, which influences a large amount of great American writing (Jordan, 1985). Furthermore, the instruction created a classroom culture of exploratory and celebratory attitudes toward cultural uses of language in literature. It also uncovered some hard-hitting prejudices in American culture as it manifests in language. The result was an innovative instructional process that used imaginative writing to study language and literature while creating a culturally inclusive environment (Jordan, 1985).

English instruction has capitalized on this opportunity for social and cultural interconnectivity, literature study and imaginative writing. Pedagogical methods that distinctly focused on multicultural criticism, feminist criticism, and imaginative writing provided students an opportunity to engage with literature study in a way that changed students' lives (Hynds, Appleman, 1997). Revealed in the cultural exploration of literature was the individual experience of the students and how they related to the classroom environment. Through engagement with each other, the teacher, and imaginative writing practices, students began to develop an identity in their English class. They began to negotiate the daily realities of their school lives in an environment that celebrated individual experience upheld by a multicultural conversation and imaginative writing (Hynds, Appleman, 1997).

In a general sense, research suggests that schooling and culture can strongly impact domain-specific creative thinking (Hong, Milgram, 2010). Imaginative writing is both an opportunity to express individual identity and to problem solve in a creative way. Imaginative writing offers a literary experience which leads to invention and synthesis; the ability to think originally and divergently. These are the components of creativity (Hong, Milgram, 2010).

Classrooms that recognize student innovation and creativity are environments that both nurture the students as well as the society they enter. “It is the most important effort schools need to make to educate children so they can contribute to a society that requires creative thinking more in this era than ever before [and] creative talent is evidenced in the production of original, unique and valuable products or performances in a particular domain” (Hong, Milgram, 2010, 286).

Applied Instructional Practice: Focus

In order to synthesize these findings into one focused instructional practice, a targeted outcome must be in place. The goal of his instructional practice is to engage students in exploring literary content while demonstrating their knowledge of literary devices and understanding of the author’s purpose. The imaginative practice that best combines literary exploration and personal expression in service to the research setting is like-genre writing as it specifically focuses learning targets through character internal monologues. This creative writing practice, used as an instructional method to assist literary study, applies to application and checking for understanding; it both asks students to apply what they know during writing sessions and it requires the instructor to measure those inferences in a way that determines how they are analogous to analysis. Internal monologue through like-genre writing offers an engaging opportunity to see patterns in students’ close-reading and passage inference skills. In addition, it hopefully creates a classroom culture embracing experience and expression as well as it serves as an efficient literature study tool.

Working within the sophomore American literature program at the cooperating placement, I hope to scaffold understanding of the literature content in coordination with the class’s lesson plans and learning targets. The internal monologue writing should

1. Be implemented alongside analysis writing

CREATIVE WRITING IN LITERATURE STUDY

2. Relate to and interact with the text material and subject
3. Help produce a close-reading of text
4. Be guided toward a literary interpretation, learning goals and related skills
5. Be available and revisited if possible
6. Be followed with meta-cognitive writing reflection
7. Be measurable alongside literary analysis to meet rubric criteria

Chapter Three: Instructional Process “Show or Tell”

School Placement Context

The placement which hosted the implementation of this instructional process pertaining to research in imaginative writing was a Colorado Springs public high school with is an International Baccalaureate program that offers a Middle Years Program in preparation for the junior and senior Diploma Program. Two tenth-grade MYP (Middle Years Program) classes were selected in second semester 2014 to participate in this small descriptive study. At the location, all sophomore classes were divided into separate block sets occurring every other day in ninety-minute class sessions. This instructional process contained two classes that were held on alternating days and will be described as Class 1 and Class 2 pertaining to the block sections they belonged to. The MYP tracked curriculum, it should be noted, had been applied to all students at sophomore level English regardless of Diploma Program participation; this was a decision made on the part of the school to untrack students in English and promote the inclusion of all students into the education curriculum offered by diploma preparation program. The school placement also involved an AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) program to assist in college readiness through organization and accountability during high school years. Also, the school placement involved an RTI (Response To Intervention) program to help students with failing grades or compliance issues.

The school placement’s socioeconomic background consists of less than 30% on free or reduced lunch. The individual student information on class 1 and 2 who were on free and reduced lunch is protected information; however, these classes represent a typical sample of the school’s overall socioeconomic population.

Class 1 relevant to this research contained 21 students total. Of these 21 students, 9 were male and 12 were female. Eighteen students were in tenth-grade, 2 were eleventh-grade and 1 was twelfth-grade. Three students were repeating the semester course in an attempt to make up the class credit from previous failed semesters. Special accommodations were not needed for this class as only one student was on an IEP (Individualized Education Plan) for students with disabilities. Due to her learning disability, this student was allotted extra time for reading comprehension if necessary; however, this student did not feel the need to take extra time for class assignments and assessments when it was offered, and maintained pacing with the rest of the class, very often, ahead of her classmates. One student out of 21 suffered an academic related injury and was flagged for needing extra time due to missed classes prior to the semester of the research study. This student was in full recovery from the concussion injury during the time of the study. Of the 21 students in Class 2, one student had an RTI file; two students were tagged for having received extra help in English Language Arts.

Academically, the class contained traditionally tracked, AVID and IB tracked students. Four out of 21 students were enrolled in the school's AVID program, 12 out of 21 were enrolled in IB for the following junior year, and 1 of the 21 students in the class was involved in an RTI program. This class contained no ELL (English Language Learners) or students on 504 plans.

The second class relevant to this descriptive study contained 26 students; eleven of the 26 students were female and 15 of the 26 were male. Twenty-four students were in tenth- grade and 2 were in eleventh-grade. Two students were repeating the class semester course in an attempt to make up the class credit from previously failed semesters. Three students were accommodated for IEPs through extra time on summative assessments; these students are low in reading comprehension and literacy. These students were offered extra time for in class assignments and

assessments. Again, these same students rarely used extra time accommodations and reported feeling at a comfortable pace with the class. One student had a record of an academic related medical injury of a concussion and another was classified as ADHD as noted in the medical history. Of the 26 students in Class 2, two students had an RTI file, and 1 student was tagged as receiving extra help in English Language Arts. Two students were classified as ELL. Of these two ELL students, only one was entered as actively needing accommodations. This student often received accommodations to class assignments to tailor instruction to her English level needs. Three students in the class had 504 plans relating to health situations for which they had received accommodations in the past.

Class 2 contained traditionally tracked, AVID and IB students as well. Six of the students were enrolled in the AVID program, 10 of the 26 were enrolled in the IB program, and 2 of the 26 students were involved in an RTI program.

Instructional Process Design

These two classes were chosen as placement classes in which to implement the instructional process because of how their academic variety captured how imaginative writing might work in settings where students have blended academic backgrounds. The instructional process itself was systematically designed with preliminary imaginative writing practices in place alongside informational analysis writing practices throughout the year. Over the course of the first semester, imaginative writing was explored in class assignments pertaining to poetry and fiction units. The eventual goal was to scaffold students' knowledge of imaginative writing toward its usefulness in close-reading and passage analysis. Imaginative writing practices were used regularly as classroom exercises and writing warm-ups to enhance close-reading, to improve inference skills, and to formatively assess students' identification of literary devices as

they used them in their own writing. The preliminary steps of including imaginative writing were in place to help support students' growing knowledge of imaginative writing and its relevancy toward analysis skill building. The instructional process's eventual goal was to capture three writing assignments completed over the course of a six-week novel unit toward the middle of the second semester. All three of these final writing assignments, used as collected data, were created to assess students' close-reading and inference skills in passage analysis during the unit's novel study *The Great Gatsby*; these assignments were to consist of one analysis, one imaginative writing assignment and the last, the student's choice of either imaginative writing or analysis, to see how student scores related to each other through growth, decline or fluctuation. The research's guiding question is as follows: how does imaginative writing practice, specifically internal monologue, help reveal students' close-reading skills? Further information can be excavated through continuing in questioning along these lines; how does imaginative writing practice measure students' close-reading and inferences skills compared to analysis practice? What preferences do students have between creative writing and analysis writing? The research aim in collecting this data was to see how imaginative writing might assist a teacher's ability to assess students' inference and close-reading skills in relation to analysis writing. The final writing collection was followed by a survey to gather data on students' preference between imaginative writing and analysis. All three writing assignments were graded in accordance to one rubric targeting close-reading and inference skills through four main criteria: knowledge of author's purpose, displayed or discussed literary devices, details revealing close reading, and originality in arrangement. All three writing prompts remained as congruent as possible with these criteria to target congruent close-reading skills.

These three consecutive collections of writing were taken over a three-week period and in varying order between the two classes. This instructional process, eventually named “Show or Tell” after the language of its prompts, aimed to help students more closely analyze passages in a literary work through both showing what they read closely in a literary work and telling about what they read closely in a literary work. Each passage prompt was designed to have students perform skills-based writing responses targeting close-reading and inference skills. The prompts either solicited a two paragraph passage analysis or a two paragraph internal monologue (imaginative writing practice) where both would display students’ close-reading and inference skills. Each prompt varied in accordance to the novel’s chapters and characters, but were virtually identical in task; they prompted students to provide information about imagery, to explain what this imagery symbolized and to infer what the author’s purpose was in including the passage. Each prompt, whether imaginative writing or analysis, targeted these inference skills. One prompt was given per writing assignment over the three week period. The variations of the writing assignments between the two classes were as follows:

<u>Week 1</u>	<u>Week 2</u>	<u>Week 3</u>	
C1-----	Analysis -----	Imaginative Writing -----	Student’s Choice/ Survey
C2-----	Imaginative Writing -----	Analysis-----	Student’s Choice/Survey

The rubric used to assess each piece of writing accounted for four criteria targeting evidenced skills that students could infer information about a text and the author’s purpose, and to what degree. The assessment rubric’s criteria for creative writing were analogous to the same skills targeted in analysis. The rubric combined content criteria language and targets from the MYP writing rubric to align research goals with goals important to that of the placement and to show how this instructional process aligns harmoniously with MYP learning goals.

This rubric was especially important because it had to measure specific skills in the writing practices and helped clarify specific writing and learning targets in the student writing. It was divided into four major criteria: insight into the author's message, inclusion or use of details revealing close reading, student's use of literary devices, and originality of arrangement. This allowed the data to be separated into specific categories to understand targeted correlations between imaginative and analytical writing. Understanding each criterion separately helped to highlight isolated skills imaginative writing honed in relation to analytical writing. Without a skill-specific rubric, data showing how imaginative writing works in comparison to analytical writing might have been obscured. See Appendix A for rubric.

A secondary concern to the study project was to understand if offering the imaginative writing option helped students, specifically which students, to engage in classwork when students were provided a choice between analysis and imaginative writing. The last writing session, students were given a choice between imaginative writing and analysis writing. This session was followed by a student survey designed to collect information about student writing preferences. See Appendix B for survey.

Details of The Instructional Process's Prompt Contents

The specific writing prompts, in relation to *The Great Gatsby*, were essentially concerned with characterization and character inference as evidenced in a novel passage. The class writing prompts served to target the following rubric criteria:

A two paragraph writing assignment containing two to three demonstrations of close reading:

- Discernment of a character's inner thoughts and/or feelings based on textual evidence

CREATIVE WRITING IN LITERATURE STUDY

- Flow of argument/action or inner dialogue in a logical and deliberate structure
- Vivid and/or imaginative descriptive details in either the original passage or in analysis support
- Choice of character's thoughts or words that reflects a critical understanding of passage's meaning

The writing prompts, in relation to the assigned chapters, were aimed to help students achieve a deeper understanding of the author's style and purpose. The following is an example of the writing prompts for chapter 3 of *The Great Gatsby* during the collection of data. Both prompts serve to target inference of the passage's meaning, one through analysis and one through imaginative writing. The first prompt was as follows:

Chapter 3 (page 49)

Owl Eyes will play a subtle but reoccurring important role in the story. Actually, you have already "symbolically" met him. See page 27, Chapter 2

Tell

Character Analysis – Discusses how Fitzgerald uses Nick to draw our attention to old Owl Eyes and what message that creates.

Your 2 paragraph analysis can explain:

-How are Owl Eyes, the books, and his reaction to them described? (Imagery) **Author's**

Method

-What do these descriptions imply about the Gatsby mystery? (Symbolism) **Author's**

Method

- Why is Owl Eyes so fixated on Gatsby's library construction? What could Fitzgerald have meant by including this moment? **Author's Message**

Show

Character Monologue- Owl Eyes is having a drunken conversation with himself before Nick and Jordan walk in. (He mentions he was there for an hour.) We know he has been examining books closely and has discovered something really important. Despite that he is tipsy his discovery might hold some fascinating insights to Gatsby's identity. What would Owl Eyes say if you could hear his thoughts in the library that night?

Write a 2 paragraph internal monologue that describes:

- The internal reaction Owl Eyes has to the library/books (Imagery)
- What Owl Eyes sees in these discoveries about Gatsby (Symbolism)
- What these discoveries mean about Gatsby as a self-made Tycoon

Please see Appendix C for remaining four prompts.

The prompts above serve to describe the same information about the passage, both about the characterization in the story and about the author's purpose (message) and method (literary devices). The first serves to do so through an analysis (telling) and the second through imaginative writing (showing). As students complete the task through both styles of writing over three sessions, they will be assessed according to the rubric and these scores will be collected as data to see more clearly how imaginative writing can be used in literature study.

Over the four week period of in-class writing sessions, the students worked diligently and used the prompts to dig in to the chapters. Often, the in-class writing sessions lead to productive discussions and activities that revealed students questions and curiosities about the novel and the author's decisions. Perhaps, the most influential aspects of the instructional process was how it allowed instruction to model close-reading and reinforced the close-reading process; the more students practiced writing monologues and searching for meaning in densely constructed

CREATIVE WRITING IN LITERATURE STUDY

passages through the in-class writes, the more skillful they were at applying this close-reading to other parts of the novel. They were learning that when they slowed down and looked carefully into the text, they could uncover an amazing amount of rich literary detail and deeper insights to the author's message.

Chapter 4: Results of Implementing Instructional Practice

Student Interest in Writing

Even after explaining and modeling the imaginative writing process and expectations, students were nervous about originating totally new content, especially in the face of writing like a celebrated author. There were questions, doubts and hesitations within the first ten minutes of the in-class writing sessions. Many students asked if it was okay to include certain kinds of content like feelings or physical descriptions of characters. These notions were encouraged and again it was reinforced that these details were good indicators of reading closely. After several minutes of brainstorming students were quietly and diligently working on internal monologues. Several students reported being intrigued at the process and found it was a stretch to try to get into the heads of the characters. They reported that the imaginative writing process was more challenging than the analytical writing because of originating an experience in character and having to find the language to express it. Students were getting into the text of the passage to construct meaning, find a way to write like Fitzgerald, and “talk” like his characters. Students often inserted inferred information between dialogue quotations and made decisions about how the characters reacted in the novel based on what evidence Fitzgerald provided. They admitted to having to keep in mind what came next and what the author’s purpose was for the novel overall and that these were sometimes tricky parameters to work within. Like a puzzle, students began to embrace the writing and also include personal relation from their lives to the characters to create internal monologues.

Personal Expression in Action

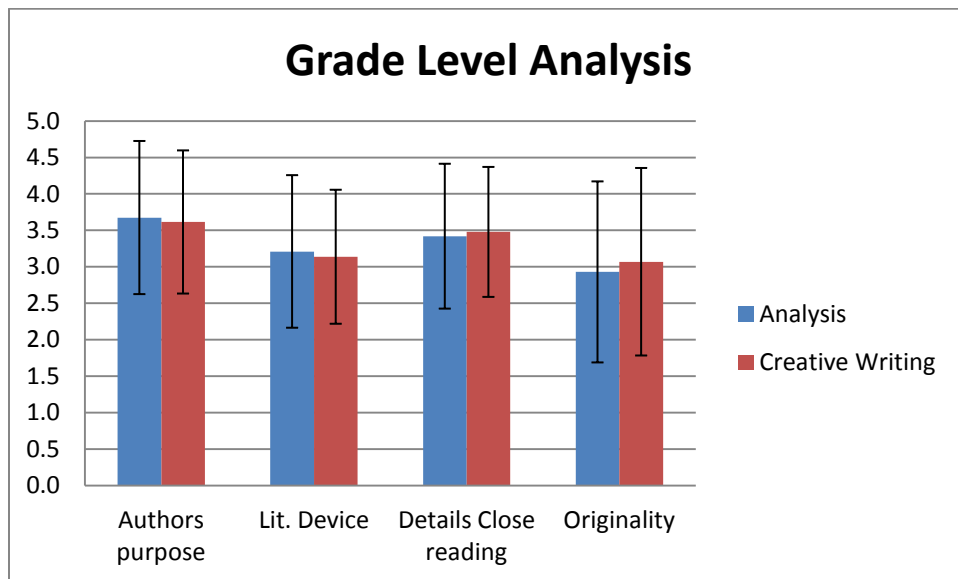
Details about the passage, the author's purpose and knowledge of literary devices emerged in students' imaginative writing. It became very apparent who read and how closely they understood the passages by reading the internal monologues. Knowledge of literary devices was shown in how many literary devices were used in imaginative writing. On average, students wrote as many original metaphors, similes, personifications and archetypes as they discussed in their analysis writing. They also were able to show what they knew about Fitzgerald's purpose as well as they were able to tell about it in the analysis through writing the characters' thoughts and reactions. A successful student writing sample that displays several examples of original literary devices strongly managed to communicate the author's purpose and predict what would happen in the story. The student scored 5's on author's meaning and literary devices:

Internal Monologue-

During lunch with Nick I had a very awkward moment with Mr. Tom Buchanan. (Nick had spotted Daisy) but Tom walked up to me and shook my hand. I immediately became mournful of the past. Thoughts of Daisy and I's past love affair swept through my mind like a warm summer wind. But I also felt a warm sensation of hate towards Tom. Tom is the man keeping me away from my true love, Daisy. Unfortunately I let my embarrassment and hatred get the best of me. As I shook Tom's hand I felt overbearing by the flock of my emotions that nested in my heart. I felt exposed as I blushed and to my astonishment my feet had started to pick themselves up and retreat away cowardly. Now I became angry because this is not how I wanted to handle Mr. Buchanan at all. He was my competition and I was letting him win.

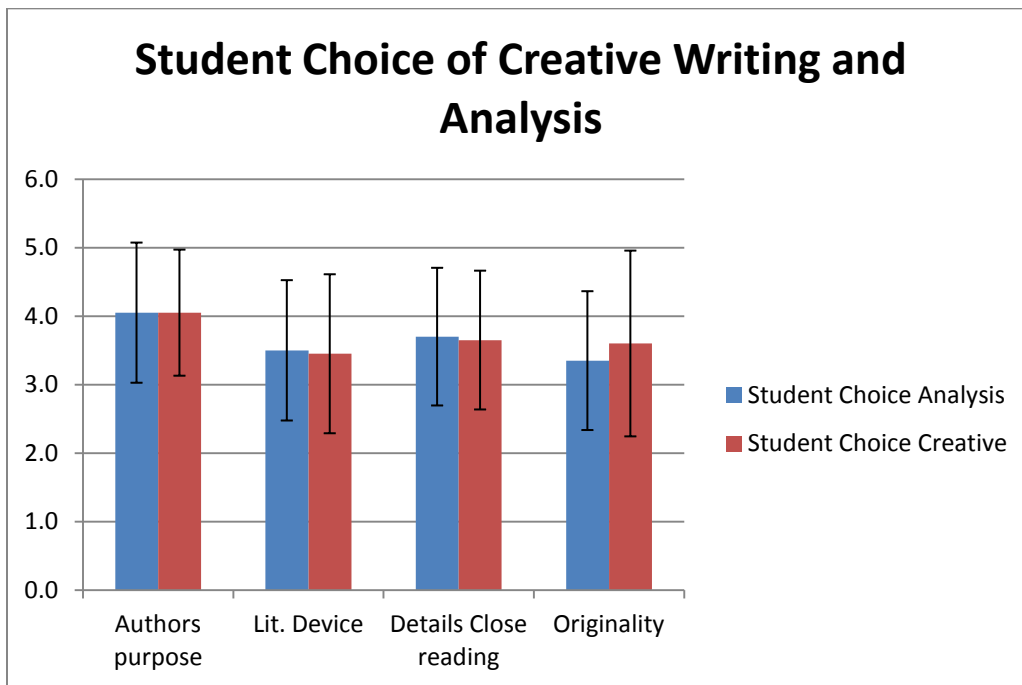
The student exhibits at least four solid interpretable moments of inference and insight to the author’s purpose and three motifs (the past, character duality and seasons) along with one original simile and two original personifications. The student also employs like-diction to the voice of the character. The references to the characters past reveal close-reading to the details of previous chapters. This is one example of how a student can demonstrate targeted skills through creative writing. It is also important to note that this student was particularly was resistant to the imaginative writing process and preferred analysis at the beginning of the writing exercise. With exposure and space to explore, the imaginative writing proved to be a successful demonstration of the student’s literary knowledge. The student was surprised to understand how her literary analysis skills translated to imaginative writing and was proud of her work. Many examples can be given of successful imaginative writing practices according to the targeted skills in the rubric. See Appendix D for examples of student imaginative writing alongside analysis writing.

Instructional Practice Score Results



Regardless of the prompt given, results between internal monologue and analysis remain fairly analogous. This trend shows that imaginative writing, when designed toward a specific

skill outcome works as well, if not better in some instances, than analysis. This parallelism in scores helps to support that when creative writing is used in an appropriate and directed way, it serves as a valid way for students to display close-reading skills in passage analysis. Because passage analysis and close reading are the foundational skills upon which literary analysis is built, it is useful for an instructor to understand how imaginative writing can be used to hone close-reading skills. The key importance for instructors with this classroom practice is the intentionality of backwards design in the questioning prompts and a clear idea of the targeted close-reading outcomes. For students who enjoy imaginative writing, it can serve as both a useful and accurately skill-targeted alternative to analysis.

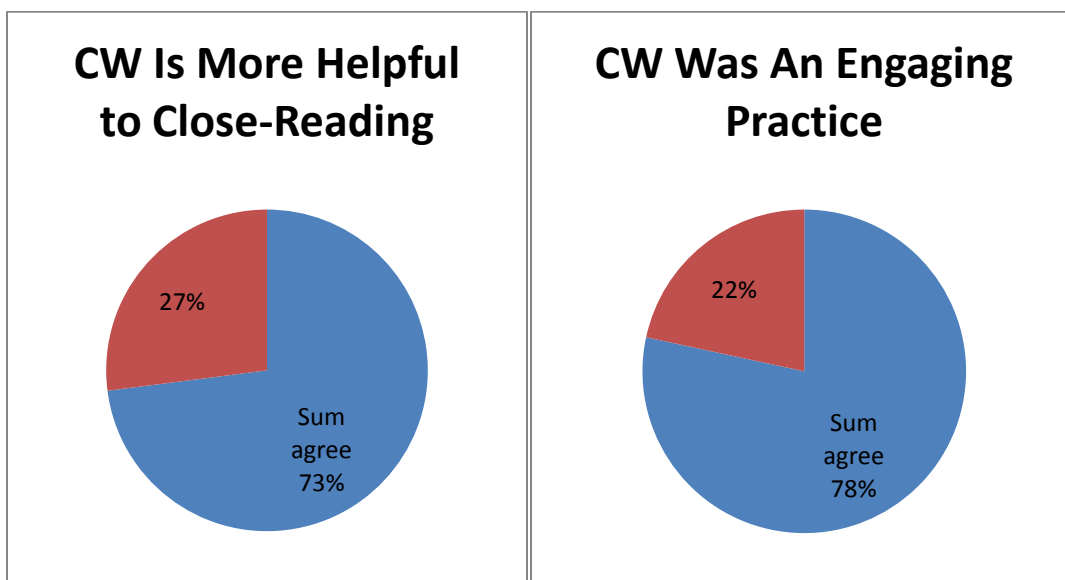


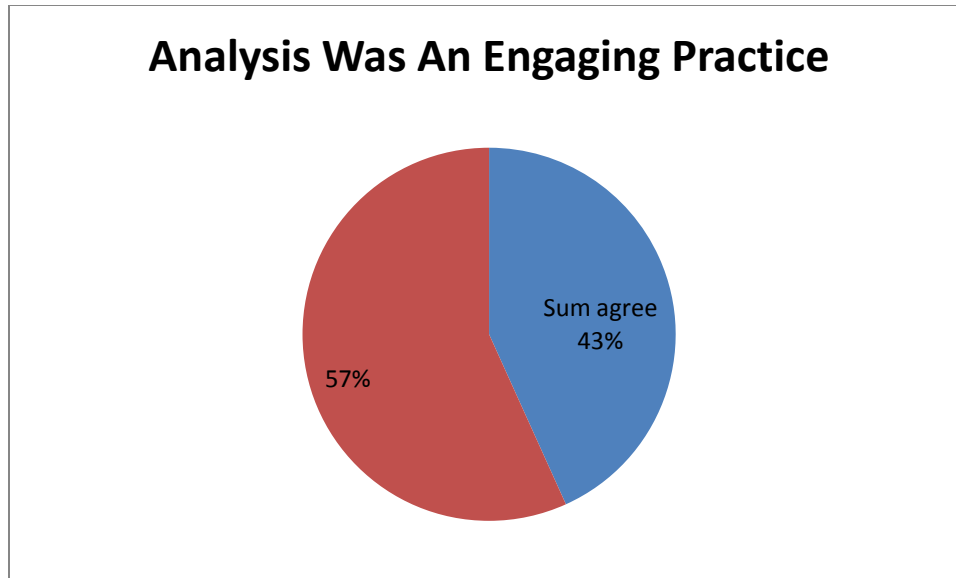
Interestingly, when given a choice between imaginative writing and analysis, student scores remain fairly analogous. Despite the differentiation that a choice might create in the scores due to preference, results remain similar. This similarity between analysis and imaginative writing indicates that the prompts and tasks remain similar in light of the targeted skill assessment outcomes; this helps to understand how truly similar and useful the imaginative

writing practices are when designed appropriately to target close-reading. Again, for students who enjoy imaginative writing, it can serve as both a useful and accurately skill-targeted alternative to analysis, especially when students are offered the choice to participate in imaginative writing practice because an instructor is secure with this option.

Furthermore, the furthest separation in data between analysis and imaginative writing shows in originality where students actually scored higher in original arrangement. This is interesting because it displays a trend of more original arrangement in student expression when practicing imaginative writing. This practice of originality has a solid chance of becoming a standard skill if practiced regularly in the classroom. Later, when students apply this practiced originality in close-reading to literary analysis, this originality can be transferred as well. According to MYP standards, originality in analysis is not only valued, but intentionally targeted by the majority of instructional practices. The simple hope here is that through the inclusion of imaginative writing in close-reading practices, students will practice and display more originality in literary analysis as well.

Student Survey Shows Preference in Writing Practices





In a survey regarding students' interest in imaginative writing, results show that imaginative writing is a popular choice of writing practice when closely reading and responding to a text passage; 73% of students designated imaginative writing to be more helpful to their close-reading skills than analysis and 78% designated imaginative writing as an engaging practice. Furthermore, analysis represented a less preferred writing practice with only 43% agreeing that analysis was engaging. Interestingly, 50% of students chose analysis when given a choice. This perhaps, could be due to the normality of the practice in the classroom MYP program and a higher expected rate of success with a more familiar practice.

The purpose of disclosing these results is not to undermine analysis; analysis is a crucial skill, practice and genre of writing inherently necessary to ELA study. The purpose is to promote that, to better build strong literary analysis skills, instruction must carefully scaffold closely-reading skills and identification of literary elements toward analysis. This close-reading ability can be practiced equally and with great originality through creative writing. In some cases, it can and should be offered as a differentiation practice for students who struggle with analysis while working toward analysis.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

In light of the data outcome, it is important to understand that imaginative writing is a useful and engaging practice when it is designed to meet learning targets. The reason for the accuracy in scores between analysis and imaginative writing in this process heavily results in that it was intentional about a writing response outcome and targeted specific skills. Instructors should use imaginative writing with a clear idea of what the students should be able to do or know at the end of the task. The skills inherent to imaginative writing are most successfully honed when a clear idea of outcome is in focus. What will internal monologue tell the instructor? How will the instructor understand students' have demonstrated this skill? How will the instructor measure these variables consistently? It was mentioned in the literary review portion of this research that instructors hesitate to use imaginative writing because the process *seems* to be nebulous in comparison to literary analysis. Often, the connections to analysis or having ways to measure imaginative writing are not as well defined as they are in expository or informational writing practices. What this research has served to demonstrate is that imaginative writing practices can be as clearly used, through backward design, as any writing practice; it simply needs to be articulated in the mind of the instructor as to how it will be useful and how it will be measured. The hope is that imaginative writing practices will not become further marginalized in classrooms due to this ambiguous perception, especially with increased focus on expository writing, but rather it will be employed for the originality, skill specificity and engagement it inherently offers.

Recommendations for Clearer Prompt Formats

Future recommendations for implementing this instructional process would be to simplify the prompt formats for greater clarification to students. The prompts for this process were

designed in effort to be clear with connecting guiding questions analogous between imaginative writing and analysis; however, the prompts could be improved upon by remaining more visually simply and less wordy. Often, students would be distracted or confused by the prompt formats when “author-method purpose” verbiage was included. As long as the instructor understands the process’s connections, the prompts are better left as a series of simple questions. The suggestion could be made that if the “author-method-purpose” connections are to be given to students, they should be given as a graphic organizer separate from the prompt questions. The questions for the writing prompts are best put forth clearly without distracting explanation.

Refining Differences between Imaginative Writing and Reader-Response

Further detailed instruction on the differences between imaginative writing practices, like internal monologue, and reader-response writing may need to be revisited throughout the instructional process. Often, students fell into a reader-response writing voice when writing imaginatively discussing personal views about the story. Although these differences were initially explained, students were tempted to begin writing about what they felt or thought about the characters using “I” statements throughout the writing. This response often hindered their scores in the “arrangement of details” criteria portion of the rubric. Revisiting the difference between internal monologue and reader-response approaches may need to reoccur often throughout the practice to avoid these minimal but affecting occurrences.

Offering Extended Writes

Seeing that the process was quite useful in demonstrating close-reading ability, this instructional process could be enhanced by extending writes or offering students the option to do an extended imaginative writing assignment at the end of the unit. This process could be used throughout the book study and scaffold to a larger writing assignment like an additional opening,

middle or ending chapter. Students expressed a strong desire to continue writing in the voice of a character or the desire to write from a point of view of one of the characters not addressed in the three in-class writes. It would be recommended to use the imaginative writing process to expand the beyond a passage inference skill to more comprehensive, full-book close-reading search for author's purpose.

Including Other Imaginative Writing Practices beyond Internal Monologue

Practices in other creative writing methods such as flashback, dialogue, stream of consciousness, and alternative choices in narrative or point-of-view might also greatly enhance a close-reading exercise. Experimentation in these practices would alter the perspective in story, highlighting new insights, understandings, or questions about the author's choices. These imaginative approaches would force students to think about the author's choices as each evokes a keen perception of looking into the psychology of the characters and how they serve to function to creating meaning in the story. The parameters of these practices may be challenging; however, they might push students to further comprehend the time, place and situations in the story and challenge them to examine plot details in an original light.

Cross Disciplinary Potentials

Uses for imaginative writing practice can extend beyond literature or ELA study. Because it is a process that serves to target specific skills, it may easily be used to more closely examine other types of texts. For instance, in history or social studies, students may write internal monologues for important figures which serve to explore the inner decision making and critical thought processes of influential leaders or peoples of other cultures. In order for students to understand a cultural perspective, internal monologue, or other creative writing practices,

might help students to understand very distant mind sets or experiences from other times or places.

Because of the endless nature of fiction, creative writing can harbor a wealth of exploration through different disciplines. Science fiction settings might offer perspective of future effects of human technology on the environment, describe prediction of unknown areas based on chemical make-up, or narrate the journey of a cellular change in photo synthesis. Likewise, mathematical concepts can be transferred into physical concepts through narrative or personification. Imagine the capacity for a middle-school student to memorize Newton's laws through writing a story about his discovery of them or describing gravity as a personified figure of great authority, oppressive over his subservient subject, the earth. Learning new languages may be aided through writing songs or deconstructing a paragraph to create a collage poem revealing a summary of main points. Different processes or progressions of cause and effect in any discipline can be illustrated through creating plots in imaginary places or storyboards which describe change. The truth seems to be that instructors teach content through analogy, characters and story-telling all the time; utilizing these imaginative writing practices in other content areas beyond English is simply a matter of refining these notions into organized and targeted classroom practices.

Future Research

Suggestion for future research in this area might be to study the effects of imaginative writing practices' on analysis through a causal study. Here the object of the research may be to analyze how creative writing practices increase, decrease, or have no relation to the score outcomes of literary analysis over a lengthened period of time and interventions. Rather than describing how imaginative writing is used in assessing close-reading skills in comparison to

analysis writing, future research might expand on upon these findings to explore how imaginative writing will aid that the ability write analysis, not just aid the skills that uphold it. This study would have to be done in a placement with far more long-term control over groups, participants and ability to collect data; however, it would be extremely interesting to understand how writers, who write creatively, do or not have an advantage to writing stronger literary analysis.

Final Thoughts

Leading into this research, I wrote that I hoped to honor the creative writing process through articulating and better understanding the role that it has had in my writing and academic work. The most successful part of this project was sharing the imaginative process with students in my placement classroom. The literature was brought to life through participating in a wonderfully imaginative world. Furthermore, my personal instruction has been monumentally enhanced through this research; it has taught help me to understand the importance and have the ability to measure an instructional practice which was initially an act of instinct. Teaching is both an art and science; it is a fine dance between instinct, inspiration and measurable reflection. When these are in harmony, I learned I have the opportunity to grow in my practice through better supporting my students. Once again, the creative process has honed an academic asset and judging on how it has done so, I am sure it will continue to do so in the future.

Appendix A: Rubric

Inference Task (Weighted)	1 Very Limited	2 Limited	3 Sufficient	4 Substantial	5 Sophisticated
Insight into author's message (6) Includes strong prediction	-displays no reflection of author's purpose	-displays limited or confused awareness of author's purpose	-displays sufficient understand of the author's purpose	-displays a good understanding of the author's purpose	-displays perceptive sensitivity to the author's purpose
Insight into author's choices/students use of literary features (literary devices) (5)	-rarely employs/discusses literary features -literary features are used inaccurately	-attempts to employ/discuss literary features -literary features are sometimes used inaccurately	-generally employs/discusses literary features -literary features are accurate	-strongly employs/discusses literary features -literary features are substantial and effective	-employs illustrative literary features -literary features are used in an accurate and illustrative way
Evidence of close reading through supportive details (either identifies or creates detail) (6)	-provides little or no details -details are irrelevant or do not reflect close reading	-provides limited details -details are somewhat relevant to close reading, but are lacking in specificity	-provides sufficient details -details are relevant to close reading	-provides strong detail -details reflect solid and substantial close reading	-Includes multiple insightful details - details reflect sophisticated close reading
Imagination in applying details (provides original arrangement of details) (3)	-arrangement of details is detached from insight - the use of detail does not aid arrangement is not aligned to prompt style	-arrangement of details are slightly off topic -use of detail is lacking direction or are limited in length	- arrangement of details are substantial and adequate	-arrangement of details is strong and shows some originality	- arrangement of details is highly original and displays sophistication
			Total:		Final Score: /15

Appendix B: Student Survey

In-class Writing Exercises Survey

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I felt that the analysis writing exercise helped my close-reading of the passage more than the creative writing exercises.				
2. I felt that the creative writing exercise helped my close-reading of the passage more than the analysis writing exercises.				
3. I felt that both the analysis writing and the creative writing exercises helped my close-reading of the passages.				
4. I found that the creative writing was more engaging.				
5. I found that analysis was more engaging.				

Appendix C: Show and Tell Writing Prompts

Prompt #1

Chapter 3 pg.49

Owl Eyes will play a subtle but reoccurring important role in the story. Actually, you have already “symbolically” met him. Wink.

Tell

Character Passage Analysis – Discusses how Fitzgerald uses Nick to draw our attention to old Owl Eyes and what message that creates.

Your 2 paragraph analysis can explain:

- How are Owl Eyes, the books, and his reaction to them described? (Imagery/Author’s Method)
- What do these descriptions imply about the Gatsby mystery? (Symbolism/Author’s Method)
- Why is Owl Eyes so fixated on Gatsby’s library construction? What could Fitzgerald have meant by including this moment? (Author’s Message)

Chapter 3 pg.49

Owl Eyes will play a subtle but reoccurring important role in the story. Actually, you have already “symbolically” met him. Wink.

Show

Character Internal Monologue- Owl Eyes is having a drunken conversation with himself before Nick and Jordan walk in. (He mentions he was there for an hour.) We know he has been examining books closely and has discovered something really important, but he is also very tipsy. This discovery might hold some fascinating insights to Gatsby’s self-made power. What would Owl Eyes say if you could hear his thoughts?

Write a 2 paragraph internal monologue that explains:

- Owl Eyes’s internal reaction to the books and unseen reaction after Nick and Jordan leave (Imagery)
- What Owl Eyes feels these discoveries reveal about Gatsby (Symbolism)
- What these discoveries mean about Gatsby as a self-made Tycoon (Reflecting knowledge of author’s message)

Prompt #2

Chapter 4 pg. 78-79 (pg. 75 pending on the publication)

In the middle of chapter 4, there is a horribly awkward moment where Nick introduces Gatsby to Tom Buchannan. It is only upon the chapter's ending, when Jordan explains Gatsby and Daisy's past that we, like Nick, understand Gatsby's insecure reaction.

Tell

Character Passage Analysis- Discuss how Fitzgerald uses Nick's perspective of Gatsby in this scene to communicate a message about Gatsby's character.

- How is Gatsby's reaction to Tom described? (Imagery/Author's Method)
- What does this disappearance imply about Gatsby's character? (Symbolism/Author's method)
- Why is Gatsby, in all of his wealth and opulence, seemingly "scared" of Tom? What could Fitzgerald have meant by including this moment? (Author's message)

Chapter 4 pg. 78-79 (pg. 75 pending on the publication)

In the middle of chapter 4, there is a horribly awkward moment where Nick introduces Gatsby to Tom Buchannan. It is only upon the chapter's ending, when Jordan explains Gatsby and Daisy's past that we, like Nick, understand Gatsby's insecure reaction.

Show

Character Internal Monologue- We learn at the end of the chapter that Gatsby and Daisy had a great love affair in their younger years and that Gatsby has gone to incredible lengths impress to Daisy. When he meets Tom face to face he has a rather insecure reaction. What would Gatsby say if we could hear his thoughts immediately after meeting Tom? Where does he go when he disappears?

Write a 2-3 paragraph internal monologue that explains:

- Gatsby's internal reaction and unseen moments after the introduction to Tom (Imagery)
- Gatsby's own explanation of why he disappeared (Symbolism/Reflection knowledge of the author's message)

Prompt#3

Please choose one of the prompts, either analysis or creative writing. Then please answer the survey on the back.

Chapter 6 pg. 111, 113

In two specific moments placed in chapter 6, Fitzgerald plants a scene with a cinema actress and a film director who are in the garden as Daisy, Tom, Nick and Gatsby tour the party. The two “strangers” seem to be engrossed in a romantic moment together.

Tell

Character Passage Analysis

Gatsby seems eager to both show Daisy the couple and to point out that they are famous. In a short (2-3 paragraphs) analysis, discuss:

- How the actress and the director are described (Imagery as Author’s method)
- What does this scene symbolize? Are there any connections you can make about these two people and the “roles” they are playing as actress and director? How are these two people (actress and director) symbolic of the story as a whole? (Symbolism as Author’s method)
- Why does Fitzgerald include this moment? What message might Fitzgerald be trying to communicate through “staging” this couple at the party and having Daisy reflect upon what she is seeing? (Author’s message)

Chapter 6 pg. 111, 113

In two specific moments placed in chapter 6, Fitzgerald plants a scene with a cinema actress and a film director who are in the garden as Daisy, Tom, Nick and Gatsby tour the party. The two “strangers” seem to be engrossed in a romantic moment together.

Show

Character Internal Monologue

Both times Daisy watched the director and the actress together (pg. 111, 113), she remarks that they are “lovely.” What do you suppose she thinks, feels, or experiences when she watches them? Why do you think she remarks that she “likes” the actress?

Write a 2-3 paragraph internal monologue that explains:

- The interaction between the director and actress as seen through Daisy’s eyes as she admires them (Imagery)
- What she feels and thinks about them in relation to her own experience with love (symbolism as author’s purpose)

Appendix D: Students Writing Samples

Student Imaginative Response Prompt #3

In-Class Write #3

We kept walking among the people... so many people, and so much noise! How can Jay stand it all! He doesn't even know most of them and yet here they are, all dancing and drinking and walking around all high and mighty. Once again, Jay was pointing out one of his guests. But she was different. Oh, she was lovely, in her white dress, looking up at the man beside her. I think he was her director, wasn't he? I can't remember, I kept thinking about her even as we walked away. Why, she reminded me of myself! I remember when I was young I was just like her. Boys would simply come flocking. Until Jay. Jay made me feel different than anyone else. He would woo me, just like the starlet's director did to that lady, so gentle and sweet. He never rushed and it was just us. And then he left and I married a big brute of a man.

Tom fits in perfectly with his surroundings and arrogant, just like everyone else at this place. He is a cruel man. He thinks I don't know about his girl but I do. I wasn't enough for him. I never was. But I was enough for Jay. He's always loved me. We walked by the starlet again, with her director. They were close, very close, with the moonlight outlining their silhouettes. I remembered that one moonlit night with Jay. We walked for hours, just talking, and then he kissed me. It was magical, so sweet and loving. But then there was an

awful clang of cymbals coming from the band and the memory was jarred from my mind. The noise just kept on going.

Student Analysis Response Prompt #3

Chapter 6 Analysis

Fitzgerald describes the actress as an "orchid of a woman", meaning one who has an amazing beauty like a flower. He places her under a white-plum tree, which gives her a symbolic representation of being extravagant, yet innocent and pure. The director is seemed to be a shadow over his star. He is described in detail just mentioned as an illustrious face.

The director and the actress's love sence is the described. "Their faces were touching except for a pale, thin ray of moonlight between. It occured to me that he had been very slowly bending towards her all evening to attain this proximity," (pg 106). This passage is included because it relates to Gatsby and Daisy. Daisy is longing to be that actress, beautiful and innocent. Gatsby is the director, trying to just get close enough to her to win her back. They are all caught up watching them because Daisy and Gatsby are longing for this to happen to them, Gatsby lost love he is trying to regain, and Daisy's wishing for true love to love her back.

excellent

Creative Write Response Prompt #1

Character Internal Monologue - Owl Eyes

Thus far, Owl Eyes seems to be an unimportant extra in the story The Great Gatsby. He is introduced and forgotten in a matter of a page. His reaction to the books in Gatsby's library, bizarrely intriguing. He probably had new thoughts even after Nick and Jordan leave.

"They never suspected a thing. I thought my excuse was true and could be seen through easily." Owl Eyes whispered to himself as the doors clanged shut at the far end of the library, signaling Nick and Jordan's exit.

"Some people are even beginning to question Mr. Eastby's validity. However, whether he knows it or not, he leaves subtle clues to his past. Take one of these books for instance. It is impossible to know what their story is by looking at their cover. For all I know, it could be gibberish within, and could be false. But, if you do not take time to read said book, you will never fully know what story its contents relate. Gatsby is much the same. People who have not gotten to know the enigmatic man are beginning to speculate. Some even think he is a fake. I cannot say that I know him well, but I believe he has a most magnificent story hiding deep within him. Even with what little I know about Gatsby, I know one thing for sure about the strange tycoon; his story, if told, would change our view of him in some of the most remarkable or frightening ways. Even scanning these bookshelves for the hundredth time, I feel a sensation of being amidst a plethora of knowledge. None are false, and no matter how dusty or weathered the covers may be, all contain an unique story," Owl Eyes relate his mind.

He strolled over to one of the bookshelves and picked a rather small book. Its cover was royal blue, and as he turned through the pages, he noticed that the print was incredibly small.

Analysis Response Prompt #1

While Owl Eyes is only a minor character so far in the book, he has already added an important and interesting dimension to the story. When we first truly meet Owl Eyes he is described as "A stout, middle aged man..." who is astonished that the books in Gatsby's library are "absolutely real" (Fitzgerald, 45). This is an interesting moment as Owl Eyes, who is drunk at the time, is curious and trying to learn more about Gatsby. This desire for even a drunk man to determine who Gatsby really is shows how everyone is fascinated by the aura of power and money of Gatsby and wants to truly see who he is. Remarkably, Gatsby passes through this investigation of who he is with flying colors. As Owl Eyes says in shock, "What thoroughness! What realism!" (Fitzgerald, 46). Owl Eyes has shown Gatsby truly is everything he preser himself to be.

While Owl Eyes makes only a brief appearance in this chapter, however we can tell a lot about him from some of his seemingly unimportant actions. To begin he has "been drunk for about a week now" (Fitzgerald 46). This indicates he has lots of money as he is at Gatsby's party, does not need to be doing anything to make money for a week, and has money for that much alcohol. Continually, he is most likely very smart seeing that despite the fact he is wealthy, he is sad enough he feels he

CREATIVE WRITING IN LITERATURE STUDY

need to be drunk for days on end. This means he thinks deeply about the big picture and is depressed by the problems. Also he is called Owl Eyes and has "enormous owl-eyed spectacles" (Rit = Gerald, 45). This symbolizes he is always watching much the same way as Dr. T.J. Eckleburg. If you combine the conclusions that he is smart, wealthy, and sad about the big picture and is always watching, it is a very possible conclusion Owl Eyes symbolizes God. It will be interesting to see the development of Owl-Eyes through the rest of the novel.

along with the fact he was the only one truly investigating Gatsby,

Creative Writing Response Prompt #2

During lunch with Nick I had a very awkward moment with Mr. Tom Buchanan. (Nick had spotted Daisy) but Tom walked up to me and shook my hand. I immediately became mournful of the past. Thoughts of Daisy and I's past love affair swept through my mind like a warm summer wind. But I also felt a warm sensation of hate towards Tom. Tom is the man keeping me away from my true love, Daisy.

Unfortunately I let my embarrassment and hatred get the best of me. As I shook Tom's hand I felt overborne by the flock of my emotions that nested in my heart. I felt exposed as I blushed and to my astonishment my feet had started to pick themselves up and retreat away cowardly. Now I became angry because this is not how I wanted to handle Mr. Buchanan at all. He was my competition and I was letting him win.

Analysis Response Prompt #2

In chapter 4 of The Great Gatsby, Fitzgerald uses Nick's perspective of Gatsby to communicate a message about Gatsby's character through imagery. In previous chapters, Nick constantly views and describes Gatsby as an almost majestic being, yet in the presence of Tom, he is anything but. "... unfamiliar look of embarrassment came over Gatsby's face;" (Fitzgerald 71). Rather than his usual poised nature, Gatsby acted quite shy and nervous around Tom. Because Tom happens to be married to Daisy, the love of Gatsby's life, this encounter must have been not only awkward, but painful. Rather than lingering in this horrendous moment, Gatsby exited abruptly. "I turned toward Mr. Gatsby, but he was no longer there;" (74). This image of Gatsby being here one moment, and gone the next instills a sense of hostility upon the moment, and Gatsby's entire personality. Perhaps he wishes to be a ghost to Tom? Never meeting Tom would allow Gatsby to continue to envision a life with himself and Daisy.

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