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An alternative academic creative writing pedagogy? The research and development of theorised teaching principles and processes for a BA honours degree in creative writing and an MA degree in the teaching of creative writing

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An Alternative Academic Creative Writing Pedagogy?

The Research and Development of Theorised Teaching Principles and Processes for a BA Honours Degree in Creative Writing and an MA Degree in the Teaching of Creative Writing

Abstract

This study examines the available literature on creative writing as a discipline in higher education institutions and analyses a range of aspects relevant to its teaching, including its international and local origins; its development as a high-demand product of the higher education industry; its resultant position, form and role as an academic discipline; whether it can be taught and how it is influenced by its institutional location. This study then identifies and examines certain neglected components of the teaching and learning of creative writing, including the conceptions and expectations of student writers, the significance of creativity in teaching students to write creatively, and the role of the reader as textual participant. Having identified a paucity of formally developed creative writing principles and processes, this study undertakes to establish a theorised pedagogic platform by means of the research and analysis of pertinent aspects of creative writing and its teaching, including a broad selection of creative writing handbooks as a representation of formal, recorded creative writing pedagogy; creative writing theories and findings relevant to the pursuance of creativity in writing and relevant to its teaching environment; the significance of the reader and her textual criteria as co-creator and ultimate judge of textual quality; and the written responses of undergraduate students to the principles, methods, exercises and assignments experienced during their participation in a research based, four-year, creative writing workshop programme. The findings of the theoretical and experiential evaluations are merged, analysed and consolidated in the study's conclusions. These conclusions form a theorised, alternative academic pedagogic creative writing platform consisting of the teaching of creative writing as an experiential process, aimed at students as writers, focusing on creativity, the reader and on writing as a process and a craft, in an Arts-based, authoritatively neutral and creativity conducive environment. Derived from this alternative pedagogic platform, the study develops the framework of the syllabi of a BA Honours Degree in Creative Writing and an MA Degree in the Teaching of Creative Writing.