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COALESCING PEDAGOGIES: CREATIVE WRITING AND THE ESL COMPOSITION CLASSROOM

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COALESCING PEDAGOGIES
CREATIVE WRITING AND THE ESL COMPOSITION CLASSROOM

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
English and Writing Studies

by
Kariana Anderson
May 2023

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ABSTRACT

I have proposed an intersectional pedagogy between second language acquisition (SLA), creative writing principles, and translingual composition classroom pedagogy. The purpose of this paper was to demonstrate a need for a comprehensive, creative writing-based composition class by integrating existing research ideas, introducing new activities and assignments, and demonstrating how these pedagogies that were once considered distinct can be bridged together to develop more competent and engaged learners and users of English. In the first section of this thesis, I presented an in-depth review of each theoretical framework: translingual composition pedagogy, creative writing philosophies and educational applications, and Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) principles. From there, I demonstrated how these pedagogies can be combined into a creative writing and fiction-based composition class for English Language Learners (ELL). The final section was a completed example of classroom texts, in-class assignments/tasks, and homework. I have chosen to teach a college freshman ESL class. Unlike most literature or composition classes for ESL students, this class focuses primarily on developing the students' creative writing abilities. More specifically, this class involves a creative in-depth study of different genres and writing tools that will help the students develop their critical thinking and creative skills, as well as their language acquisition in English.

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INTRODUCTION

My college alma mater resides in San Bernardino County, which is home to two million people. Located only 129 miles north of the Mexico border, it is unsurprising that 43.5% of the county speaks a native language other than English. About 35% speak Spanish, followed by 17% who speak Chinese (2022 Census). As a student at a diverse university, I saw the positive impact of students who came from different language backgrounds. It made me more aware of various possibilities in education. My undergraduate studies required I focus on multiple aspects of English, as well as the specific study of creative pursuits; it also included linguistics, literature, and composition classes. Creative writing was once revered as an institutional art form that demonstrated a mastery of the English language (Ramey, 2014), but as time progressed, the division between perceived academia and the fine arts has grown wider. Over the course of my undergraduate and graduate studies, I wondered: why not bring them closer together? The culmination of what I have learned and the questions I began having in my first composition class led to the research I now want to pursue. Why are the fields of linguistics, composition theory, and creative writing separated so divisively when they could so beautifully coalesce? It might seem difficult to imagine an academic study of English that incorporates creative writing and multilingual students. However, that is what I propose in this alternative thesis project. This thesis seeks to demonstrate how theories of multilingualism and creative writing pedagogy can connect and intertwine with the composition classroom pedagogy.

For this paper, I propose an intersectional pedagogy between second language acquisition (SLA), creative writing principles, and translingual composition classroom pedagogy. The first part of this paper will be an in-depth review of current literature and studies of these theories that I will use and build upon for part two. Part two will be a proposed curriculum and outline of classroom exercises, text sets, and at-home assignments that will build language skills and facilitate engaged learners.

I wanted to write this thesis and design a creative writing course for English language learners with a deep desire to help people find ways to express their unique experiences in different ways. I want to help students find, learn, and retain the words and language to authentically interact and use a new language. To do that, I dug into the research behind the meaning and uses of language and creative writing and found ways to apply that to the English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom. The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate a need for a comprehensive, creative writing-based composition class by integrating existing research ideas, introducing new activities and assignments, and demonstrating how these pedagogies that were once considered distinct can be bridged together to develop more competent and engaged learners and users of English. In the first section of this thesis, I will present an in-depth review of each theoretical framework: translingual composition pedagogy, creative writing philosophies and educational applications, and Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) principles. From there, I will demonstrate how these pedagogies can be combined into a creative writing and fiction-based

composition class for English Language Learners (ELL). The final section will be a completed example of a classroom texts, in-class assignments/tasks, and homework. I have chosen to teach a college freshman ESL class. Unlike most literature or composition classes for ESL students, this class will focus primarily on developing the students' creative writing abilities. More specifically, this class will be a creative in-depth study of different genres and writing tools that will help the students develop their critical thinking and creative skills, as well as their language acquisition in English.

CHAPTER ONE: UNPACKING THE BIG THREE

TRANSLINGUAL PEDAGOGY

To understand translingual pedagogy, it is important to start with the foundational principles that led to this new teaching methodology. It starts with multilingualism and builds from there. Multilingualism is a term that defines situations where a person understands, speaks, writes, and reads more than one language—at any degree of comprehension. Valdes (n.d.) explains that “most of the world’s population is bilingual or multilingual. Monolingualism is characteristic of only a minority of the world’s people.” It is important to define what it means to be multilingual and share theoretical ideas of multilingualism because these are different from the common terms of bilingual and bilingualism. There are significant contradictory beliefs in general society from that of the linguistic community. The prevailing belief of bilingualism is that someone speaks at native level in two languages (Cook, 2016). So how does this compare to someone who is considered multilingual? Valdez (n.d.) states that “researchers who study bilingual and multilingual communities around the world have argued for a broad definition that views multilingualism as a common human condition that makes it possible for an individual to function, at some level, in more than one language.” Cook (2016), Valdez (n.d.), and many researchers I found for this project agree that multilingualism should not strictly be defined by the ideal native speaker, which falls under the monolingual approach. The monolingual approach to

language asserts that native speakers and native-language abilities are superior to any other levels of second language use. Traditional bilingualism falls into this monolingual belief by asserting that someone can only be considered bilingual if someone is at the proficiency level of a native speaker in both first and second language. The idea of a speaker being “at some level” of proficiency means that “one admits into the company of bilingual individuals who can, to whatever degree, comprehend or produce written or spoken utterances in more than one language” (Valdez, n.d.). This broader definition invites speakers and writers of any language into the community, creating a more inclusive society.

The critical role of multi-competence in translingualism

Multilingualism heavily relies on the principles of multicompetence. It looks at language from a multi-capacity viewpoint rather than the monolingual, native speaker idealization prevalent in certain parts of the world. Multi-competence is a sociolinguistic principle originally developed to undermine limiting monolingual beliefs that second language learners and writers are less than, not as intelligent, or a deficit compared to their native speaking counterparts (Cook, 2016). Vivian Cook is the researcher most attributed with the foundation and evolution of the theory of multicompetence. It demonstrates that language is not organized in a binary fashion of first versus second language; rather, a multilingual speaker taps into all the knowledge of both languages, demonstrating whole-brain exercise that borrows from native to second language and second language to native. It shifts our understanding of language as static knowledge into a “social definition

of language or a multifaceted view of language and language use” (Cook, 2016, p. 2).

She officially describes multicompetence (MC) as the multilingual “perspective that sees L2 users from the point of view of the person who speaks two or more languages. From this angle, the other languages are part of the L2 user’s total language system, each language potentially differing from that of someone who speaks it as a monolingual. It is beside the point whether the L2 user’s final ability is identical to that of a monolingual native speaker (Cook, 2016, p. 1).” She goes on to explain that it is not a theory but “more a perspective from which to view the acquisition and use of multiple languages...multi-competence is a way of looking at things from another angle rather than of exploring the implications and contradictions within the same perspective” (2016, p. 2). By reframing the way first-year composition teachers view multilingual students, multi-competence encourages students to use what they have as an instrumental foundation and then helps educators build from there. The ever-expanding definitions of multilingualism and multicompetence critically challenge current biases against non-native speakers and make a multilingual composition practice possible.

Research into multi-competence and multilingualism paved the way for translingual pedagogy by demonstrating that multilingual students are capable and intelligent and offer more to the classroom than they currently are because of their expansive language and cultural knowledge. When these definitions are brought into the composition classroom, a new pedagogy arises. Translingualism

specifically relates to the composition classroom and the methodology behind how we teach writing to students. It takes multilingualism and examines how it can be incorporated and merged into the classroom to the betterment of students and educators alike. Translingualism is a pedagogical approach to teaching that intentionally views multilingual students from the framework of a wealth narrative rather than a deficit narrative (Lu & Horner 2013). Horner et al. (2011), Cook (2016), Valdes (n.d.), and other researchers I found for this project agree that multilingualism should not strictly be defined by the ideal native speaker, which falls under the monolingual approach.

Translingual pedagogy asks educators to view students who speak and write English at any level with a more favorable view. American society needs to shift the focus of monolingual pride to understanding the possibilities and beauty that lie in the multi-competence of multi-language speakers. Lu and Horner (2013) further the study of multilingual benefits. They express how their work in classroom case studies “aims to counter dominant culture’s denigration of differences in language: most obviously...language and language varieties distinct from Standard Written English (SWE) and Standard American English” (p 583). If we use these educational frameworks in first-year writing classrooms, teachers can better support second language writing (SLW). Educators can embrace their students’ multi-language abilities as positive skills and appreciate the language level students are at when they first walk into the classroom, while aiming to develop their skills over the course of the semester instead of penalizing students who are not at the “standard level.”

It is important to note that many researchers share this theoretical belief that multilingualism applies to users of any level of English, but it still has academics who disagree. Valdez (n.d.) explains that “some researchers have favored a narrow definition of bilingualism and argued that only those individuals who are very close to two monolinguals should be considered bilingual.” More recent research demands a broader definition, but this debate also lends to the belief in general society that continuously perpetuates the monolingual/native speaker view. Educators who take this belief into the classroom and interact with second language students may view the students as less than and not be willing or able to offer the support necessary. They may hold these students up to standards that they cannot achieve rather than build their skills from where the student is currently at. Believing that only native-speaking abilities qualify someone as multilingual sets educators up to have strict course requirements and expectations that multilingual students may not be able to achieve.

TEACHING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE/SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Engagement, investment, and the real world

Second-language educators are frequently divided into either fluency-based teaching or accuracy-based teaching positions (Lazaraton, 2014). In recent years, they have also proposed appropriacy as part of the desired outcome of language classes. My curriculum will tackle both with students because we are working on both writing and speaking skills in their target language (TL) of English; however, as stated earlier, my ultimate goal is for students to develop real-world applicable language rather than speaking in purely accurate and academic ways. That being said, I will primarily focus on fluency because the goal of language use is to communicate effectively, not necessarily to communicate perfectly. As long as students are intelligible to other speakers, I consider their language acquisition and use successful. Perfect spelling, grammar, syntax, and pronunciation are not my highest priorities.

We have all seen it in the classroom, whether we were the educator or the student: glassed-over eyes and students who cannot and/or will not be able to grasp new material. When students lose interest in the material, it is like the brain shuts down and they cannot absorb anything. The lesson is basically over before it began. This is particularly tricky in language classes because:

“Of necessity, much of what such students produce, both orally as well as in writing in the target language, consists of memorized words and formulae. In the beginning there can be a certain novelty in being able to

access, utter and write a few words and phrases in a new language. This eventually wears thin, however, and classroom activities can easily become routine and dull.” (Stokes, 2007, p. 543).

So what does that mean for language classrooms? In a study by Omaggio (1982), the author “suggests that instructors who personalize their instruction are consistently judged to be most effective by both students and supervisors” (Stokes, 2007, p. 543). This can apply to both oral and written activities.

Principles of engagement, investment, and motivation led the way for me to design a creative writing course. This is how I personalize my instruction to appeal to language learners who want to learn and/or improve their language use to express themselves in new ways. If the ultimate goal of language is to communicate, I assert that creative writing is the ultimate form of language use. I argue that students will stay engaged with the material and seek to improve their skills, even outside of the classroom, out of a deep desire to better express and communicate their thoughts and feelings. If students want to interact with the material, they are “more likely to find the motivation to practice the language and continue in their quest toward acquisition” (Stokes, 2007, p. 543). We need motivation and investment to help students retain the knowledge we seek to give them--the only real chance for acquisition.

Main practices of classroom learning: Task-Based Language

Teaching

At first glance, Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) seems like it should be simple and possibly even an obvious educational tool. However, diving

into the literature on TBLT, it became clear to me that this style of teaching is not always applied, despite ample evidence supporting its benefits. Nunan (2014) describes Task-based language teaching (TBLT) as having “its origin in a number of philosophical positions and empirical traditions in education, applied linguistics, and psychology. These include experiential learning and humanistic education, learner-centered instruction, and process-oriented and analytical approaches to syllabus design” (pp. 456-457). The research should be enough to demonstrate that TBLT should be part of all classrooms. As mentioned in my introduction, there is a distinct difference between language learners and language users.

While researching for this thesis, I wondered: what is the purpose of the classroom if not to prepare for real life? Traditional views on language instruction saw language learning as “a set of static products to be memorized” (Nunan, 2014, p. 458). However, research in multiple fields “rests on a view of language as a tool for communication rather than as a body of content to be mastered” (Nunan, 2014, p. 458) This framing of language profoundly influenced my choice to focus primarily on fluency as a goal for my proposed classroom curriculum. TBLT has five distinct characteristics, which center around communication as the pedagogical goal: 1) Meaning is primary; 2) Learners are not given other people’s meanings to simply repeat; 3) There is some sort of relationship to comparable real-world activities; 4) Task completion has some priority; and 5) the assessment of the task is in terms of outcome. (Nunan, 2014, p. 459) The first two features directly contrast previous teaching goals where students are

expected to just parrot of ideas and phrases and only memorize vocabulary. These educational tools do not actually promote learning, so for language acquisition, it is imperative that students truly understand the pieces of language in their own ways.

There are two types of TBLT interpretations. Following the pursuit of fluency and communication over accuracy, the strong interpretation follows that “communication engagement in tasks provides the necessary and sufficient for second language acquisition” (Nunan, 2014, p. 460). Contrarily, the weak interpretation “argues that a systematic focus on language systems is also healthy for language acquisition” (p. 460). I believe both are necessary; however, there are plenty of programs that use strong tasks only, like the mobile applications Duolingo and Babbel. As far as classroom applications, Nunan theorizes that there are two types of tasks that rely on the inclusion or exclusion of grammar structure and form and its relationship to language acquisition. Nunan (2014) states, “unfocused tasks are not designed with a particular grammatical form in mind, and learners are free to use whatever linguistic resources they have at their disposal to complete the task” (p. 461). On the other hand, focused task home in on linguistic features. The selected feature remains up to the educator to decide; however, it must be a focused effort to help learners process and grasp the concept resulting directly from performing the task.

In a classroom environment, focused tasks are important because the educator is available to guide the students in a certain direction. Contrarily, when

students are working on homework, a mix of both focused and unfocused tasks will foster learning.

Noticing

A valuable tool that can be used in the classroom in conjunction with TBLT activities is the theory of noticing. I will use this practice in most of my classroom and at-home assignments to help foster discussion and natural language growth throughout the course. Shinichi (1999) explains that “noticing is claimed to be an important psychological process by which second language (L2) learners convert input into intake for second language acquisition (SLA). Since Schmidt and Frota’s (1986) seminal paper in which the noticing hypothesis was first proposed, many empirical and theoretical papers have been published, all based on the assumption that noticing plays a central role in driving L2 development forward” (Shinichi, 1999, p. 26) Noticing theory exists in five parts when students notice: 1) “a form(-meaning-function) relationship” (p. 26); 2) the gap between the first language, the way they currently use the target language, and the correct use of the target language; 3) holes in the way they currently use the language; 4) the gap in their own language ability; and 5) “in relation to overall SLA processes and influencing factors” (Shinichi, 1999, p. 29). The practice of students naturally noticing the above phenomena and the educator guiding them through the process facilitates student learning by increasing metalinguistics—the awareness of one’s own use and thought processes about language. By increasing their own awareness, students can either make connections and fill in gaps on their own or seek help to fill the gaps in their language knowledge.

WRITING PRINCIPLES AND PEDAGOGY

Background

Since I plan to incorporate creative writing principles and pedagogy into my ESL composition curriculum, I want to explain the current methods of creative writing education, as well as the general importance of non-academic writing for students. Instead of creative writing and perceived academic writing being “examined for their commonalities, they are being separated for their differences. How, then, can the techniques of writing be used to inform the traditional work of composition?” (Drew & Yost, 2009, p. 25). In my work to bring these different pedagogies together, I will introduce creative writing and general writing principles that will inform my classroom. To that end, I will explain the writing process, the purpose of the written word, the role of fiction, and the author’s unique voice and identity expression. Understanding these concepts in conjunction with common teaching practices for creative writing courses will establish a foundation for the creative writing course I plan to develop for this paper.

Genre-based writing teaching

There are many theories on teaching writing to students. One more recent approach is called the genre-based approach, which “provides students with ample opportunities to become aware of the different purposes of written communication and the different ways information is organized in written texts” (Richards & Renandya, 2002, p. 304) In the academic and creative context, seeing multiple genres helps students, especially ESL students, observe and

learn about different ways language can be used and how diction, syntax, and grammar play together to create written works. This will help the students develop reading and comprehension skills, as well as develop their writing skills by absorbing. Richards and Renandya (2002) explain that students need to be exposed to many genres; otherwise, “their written products will leave much to be desired” (p. 304). The writing instructor’s goal is to help develop students’ skills as much as they can, so they need to explore as many forms as possible within the time constraints of the class. A study conducted by Reppen (2010) demonstrated that students who are taught using principles based on genre-based and the process approaches to teaching writing, “react positively to this instructional procedure, with most of them becoming more aware of the different conventions used in different genres” (p. 304).

Prewriting and the writing process

Depending on whom you ask, the writing process will look different. However, there are basic formulas for creative and academic writing projects that offer students a starting point. From this foundation, they can learn to manipulate the specific ins and outs of the process to best fit their unique styles and needs. Traditional classrooms separate creative and academic work. I argue that these are not mutually exclusive and when used together in unique ways, can benefit the other. The writing process can most simply be described as “the process point where the ‘writing idea’ is ready for the words and the page: everything before that we call, ‘Pre-Writing,’ everything after ‘Writing’ and ‘Pre-Writing’” (Rohman, 1965, p. 106). Some people skip the pre-writing phase and jump right

into writing. However, I will start by introducing and encouraging the pre-writing process and then letting students decide from there if it suits them or not. Bayat (2014) explains that “four different approaches have been proposed for writing: the Schmidt model, the Van Galen model, the Hayes and Flower model, and the Hayes model (Gunes, 2007)” (p. 1134). Flower and Hayes (1981) focus on the mechanics of improving written product and updated their definition to include the writer’s motivation; however, in simple terms, they view the writing approach as two units: “the topic and the text” (Flower & Hayes, 1981, p. 1134). Later processes divide these into separate stages: “prewriting, drafting, editing, revising, and publishing” (Flower & Hayes, 1981, p. 1134). Typically, prewriting and drafting cause students the most amount of anxiety which can be “attributed to the complex nature of writing,” but it is “a kind of language anxiety as well” (Flower & Hayes, 1981, p. 1135). The goal of learning multiple forms of the writing process is to ease writing anxiety and support their writing endeavors, especially in the form of pre-writing.

Pre-writing is described as “the stage of discovery in the writing process” (Rohman, 1965, p. 106). It is “something which shows continuous change in time like growth in organic nature. Different things happen at different stages in the process of putting thoughts into words and words into paper” (Rohman, 1965, p. 106). It is important to focus the writing process around the principle of discovery because it allows students to approach writing as an exploration rather than a strict process. The prewriting process that is best suited for this proposed course includes “brainstorming, planning, drafting, editing, and proofreading” as used in

a study by Bayat (2014, p. 1136). The study demonstrates that “the writing process approach affected writing success in a positive and statistically significant way [and] improved participants’ success in written expression” (p. 1138). He gave students a checklist that broke each phase down. I will combine the different suggested writing processes by Bayat, Seow, Rohman, Richards, and Renandya to create my own version and definitions of this process and checklist to give my students. By encouraging students to tackle their writing projects in phases, they are more likely to succeed and complete projects in a timely manner and without increasing stress levels. The important part is that students learn a formula that they can modify and apply to all types of writing tasks: academic or creative. The goal is to support students by giving them an invaluable tool for future written endeavors.

Why “putting it to paper” matters—voice and identity

Writing is a pivotal aspect of language communication. It hardly needs arguing that “the ability to express and support one’s ideas in a well-organized and comprehensible manner is an important professional and academic skill. The clear implication is that (compulsory) curriculum time should be devoted to activities directly relevant to archetypal ‘real-world’ work- or study-related usage” (Smith, 2013, P. 12). The central idea of my creative writing composition class is to help students find the words to express their unique voices and identities. To do this, they will need to actively engage with the material and find the language they lack to better express themselves in school, the professional workplace, and in real-world experiences. As opposed to typical writing mediums, creative non-

fiction and fiction writing are uniquely positioned to help students explore emotional language that is not often taught in academia. Because students are not just participating in the classroom but are also actively learning and using new language, “the active exploration of emotions in L2 is well-suited to fiction and poetry writing... Finding an emotional voice in the second language appears to be part of mastering that language” (Smith, 2013, p. 15). The goal of the ESL classroom is to help students master the English language in all its forms; however, the emotional side is often neglected, which leaves ELL’s at a disadvantage in social spaces. Smith (2013) goes on to state that “Creative writing [is] a suitable classroom task” (p. 17). However, through this course proposal, I have taken his examples and pushed the boundaries further.

I assert that creative writing and literary work should not just be a task in a language focus classroom; rather, centering a classroom around the study and practice of creative works to further develop language acquisition in a richer and more meaningful way than purely academic study. Cameron (1998) states that:

“Writing is a way not only to metabolize life but to alchemize it as well. It is a way to transform what happens to us into our own experience. It is a way to move from passive to active. We may still be the victims of circumstance, but by our own understand those circumstances we place events within the ongoing context of our own life, that is, the life we ‘own’ (p. 94).

The basic goal of this course is to help students walk away from my class with a deeper understanding of themselves, as well as be able to take the skills they

learned and continue to apply them throughout their lives. By diving into writing in a new language, they will find new vocabulary to express their experiences and share those with others. Even if they choose not to share what they write, the most important part is helping students realize that “writing connects the self to the Self” (Cameron, 1998, p. 95). Brown (2021) quotes the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstien: “the limits of my language mean the limits of my world” (p. xxi). This is the most important aspect of language classes, and it is often overlooked. As educators, we want to help students explore the world, no matter what medium we use to show them. Language is how my students will expand their world.

Even if students do not write in the TL after my class, the goal is to teach them a valuable life skill that can serve them for the rest of their lives, whether it is in their native language or not. Cameron (1998) states it best when she says “if we will use writing to connect with ourselves, I believe we can connect across time and space and distance. I believe in the global village we are making, and I believe that in order to make that village truly habitable, we will need to return to the page” (p. 96). Education is meant to prepare students for the real world, and I believe education should seek to foster better global citizens. Writing is one way I propose we make the world a better place for all of us. At the end of the day, people seem to be “desperate to feel more connected to their own lives and to one another, but no one [is] looking in the right places. No one [is] thinking about how it all works together. Everyone [seems] disembodied from their own inner world and disconnected from other people. Too many lonely and secret lives.”

(Brown, 2021, p. xvii). Educators are meant to point students to new ways of looking at themselves and the world. We are supposed to act as guides for students as they explore. Using creative writing and creative non-fiction, I will guide my students to find a connection with themselves and others.

CHAPTER TWO:

WHEN THE “BIG THREE” COLLIDE—PROPOSED COURSE CURRICULUM

BACKGROUND

In the following sections, I will introduce the in-class tasks and at-home assignments, as well as their purpose and how they relate to the aforementioned pedagogies. I want the theme of my text set for the class to pose two questions to students: why do we read and write fiction? And what does it teach us/reveal to us about the real world and ourselves? With these questions in mind, I will give the students a focus for the semester that will also guide them as they work through smaller writing assignments, which will support them in completing the final writing assignment at the end of the semester. It is equally important to me that the text set features authors and characters of color, and/or characters who fall in the LGBT+ communities. The typical canon for educational literature favors white, long-dead, and male authors. I want the change to broaden students' reading pool and demonstrate that their unique experiences and backgrounds can be part of their creative endeavors. The texts represent a coherent set because they all feature characters, topics, and worlds that surround the abstract concept of magic and fantasy.

The texts fall into multiple genres and media, which include written texts such as poems, novels, and graphic novels. However, I have also included a film and traditional scholarly articles. Three of the texts will need to be purchased from a bookstore, while I will provide the article from an online journal. We will

watch the film as a class, so I can direct and focus the students while watching. Because we are watching as a class, I will be able to help them engage more with this type of text than just acting as passive observers. I chose to include a scholarly article to demonstrate that academic writing is not restricted to what the students might consider “boring topics.” Students have the freedom to write and learn about anything that interests them. As an instructor, I will use this foundation to keep students engaged with the material. If they see that they can pursue what interests them, they will stick with the topics. These are five texts for the class. These texts include novels, a graphic novel, a film, and a scholarly article.

- Novels:
 - A Darker Shade of Magic by VE Schwab
 - The Gilded Ones by Namina Forna.
- Graphic Novel:
 - Teen Titans: Raven by Kami Garcia.
- Film:
 - Disney’s Encanto.

This is the order I will present the material over the course of the semester: scholarly article, full-length novel, film, shorter novel, and graphic novel. While we explore these texts, the students will also complete a vocabulary and grammar task, as well as a pre-writing task, before finishing the semester off with the main writing assignment. In an effort to create a class that is accessible to differently abled students, students are welcome to purchase and use printed text,

audiobook, or digital copies of the materials, whichever is easiest to use and will help them absorb and/or engage with the material best.

A unique aspect of my proposed course is that my text set includes speculative fiction, film, and alternate forms of creative works besides just academic or canon, long-dead authors (like Hemingway, Steinbeck, etc.). The goal is to encourage students to read a variety of fiction in different forms, so they can find what best appeals to them. The hope is they will enjoy the text and possibly find a type of text that appeals to them enough for them to read for pleasure and not just required class texts. There is significant quantified data demonstrating that reading for pleasure in the L2 correlates to stronger writing proficiency in the L2 (Janopoulos, 1986). When students spend time reading in the L2, they unintentionally learn better ways to write, even if that is not the original intention of the activity of reading itself. Since this connection exists, it is imperative that reading enjoyable works for the students be incorporated into the classroom. It is critical for students to engage with the material for effective and long-term learning to occur. By actively engaging with the assigned reading and reading for pleasure outside of the class, the students will inevitably write better.

It is important to keep in mind that this is a semester-long course. As such, the activities I propose could be expanded on, altered, or omitted based on student needs and language skill levels, as well as the length of time the students will be in the class. If the class is a short or accelerated course, some tasks may need to be removed. If the course is longer, perhaps spanning an entire academic year, then tasks could be expanded upon for further

development. In later sections when I describe a classroom task, I may also include brief ideas to add to the tasks to further develop learning for potentially longer class sections.

IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES AND TASKS

In the following sections, I propose activities for the class to do together. Each activity serves a specific purpose. I will describe the activity, and then draw from previous sections to explain the purpose relating to language acquisition and practice and writing development. In-class assignments are based on the principles introduced in earlier sections referred to as Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) techniques. They will explore methods of unfocused and focused instruction to help aid student learning outcomes.

Student learning needs assessment

On the first day of class, an introductory assignment would be conducted to help the teacher assess students' current language and writing levels. This was inspired by Stokes (2007) This will also serve as a baseline to compare to the final project to evaluate student progress and growth over the course of the semester. The teacher would ask the students to answer a single question by telling a story and instruct the students to answer the question using specific vocabulary words. This in-class assignment would be open online access, so students could look up definitions for the words they may not know or might have forgotten. They would have ten minutes to write. Students would be informed that the assignment is only graded based on completion rather than content. This assignment helps the teacher to see how the students use the L2 to convey meaning and tell stories. The focus of this assignment is content and connection-making, which is why the students are allowed to look up the vocabulary words. It is meant to help the teacher see how the students use language rather than just

testing their vocabulary knowledge. It helps to assess the general level of student language use, which might require assignments to be adjusted to meet the needs of the students. An example of this could be asking students to write a story based on this prompt: Your character has just crash-landed in the jungle. Using five of the words listed below, write what happens next. And then, the educator would select ten to twenty words with varying difficulty that the students need to use in the piece.

The added benefit of this assignment is that it can be replicated at the end of the term with different vocabulary to assess student growth and determine what improvements have been made, as well as see if the students succeeded in specific learning outcomes of the university.

Intertwining spoken language development

Because this is an ESL classroom, it is important that students have a chance to apply the language they are learning outside of written work. This will require students to participate in groups where they discuss their work, as well as in-class reading work where students will take turns reading assigned pieces allowed. The goal of this is to encourage students to practice speaking and listening in the target language in hopes of improving verbal skills, as well as writing skills. When students are encouraged to speak with each other and the professor, it helps improve confidence in their language abilities. By building confidence in both speaking and writing abilities, students may be more willing to discuss what material is causing them difficulty and may be able to express themselves more freely.

All of this results in greater learning of the target language, and better writing skills support better speaking skills and vice versa. Stokes (2007) asserts that “writing... probably should be a support skill for practice of language forms, including in the speaking mode” (p. 544). Because we have established that language use and learning require the whole mind as a system, any method of new language use that is intentionally practiced will develop all aspects of language acquisition and comprehension (Cook, 2016). Traditional ESL classrooms take the opposite approach, “viewing writing as a support activity for other skills” Stokes, 2007, p. 544). My classroom follows the thought process of scholars who argue that “students who are taught to write from the start become better foreign-[language] learners” (Scott, 1992, p. 544). By intertwining spoken and written activities, students engage in whole learning for the language and inevitably gain a more rounded education because “the more goals that can be addressed in a writing assignment, then the richer and more beneficial the assignment should be for the student” (Stokes, 2007, p. 544). Following this theory, all proposed in-class tasks will have speaking and writing components. It is imperative to me that this course supports engagement and acquisition of the human language in all its richness.

Pre-writing assignment: Writer’s block, as myth and legend

During either the first or second week of class, I want to have the students read an article by Krashen (2023). In the short two-page article, Krashen discusses a small piece of the writing process and what writer’s block is, and how it affects all writers. He discusses that a method for preventing blocks is to take a

break after starting and getting fresh air by taking a walk or finding a means of taking ten minutes away before going back to the work. Every student will take a turn reading a couple of sentences aloud from the piece. Once we have finished reading it, we will discuss it as a class. I will ask the students to provide a summary of what the article means and what they thought of it. This activity serves multiple purposes. First, it helps the students with their verbal and listening skills because they will each take turns reading. It also supports the students in their future writing endeavors by offering a tool for overcoming writing block. At the end of the article, the author states, "In writing this paper I experienced 37 Writers Blocks" (Krashen, 2023, p. 2). I want students to understand that everyone who writes experiences blocks and struggles at times. This is critical for them, especially since they are practicing writing in a language that is not their native tongue. It demonstrates that a published author, writing in his native language, still struggled thirty-seven times to write a two-page article. I want the students to see that what they are attempting to do is difficult for everyone and that they should practice patience with themselves throughout the semester. This assignment will act as a pre-cursor to our exploration of the Writing Process.

We will do several pre-writing exercises in class to gear students up for future writing assignments and to introduce the writing process, which will serve them creatively and academically in the future. I will introduce them to the idea of prompts, which will develop the writing idea. From there, we will discuss outlining techniques.

Re-write: lessons in “show vs. tell”

This assignment supports the endeavors of composition and creative classes by teaching students what it means to present an idea as a statement versus demonstrating what is happening and what it means. The creative application of this assignment is to show how language can convey meaning rather than simply stating facts (see Appendix A). This is also helpful because it will be framed in two ways: “ask why” and “what’s the evidence?” In academic writing and life, we have to prove what we are stating by backing it up with facts. Exercises in “show vs. tell” will help develop students’ ability to create a convincing argument and a compelling story. For this activity, students will work in groups to come up with ways to describe the given sentences in the handout by showing rather than telling. The students will have twenty minutes to work together. Once time is up, we will go through the groups’ answers and discuss. I will ask students to notice what the main difference is between shown vs told language, as well as what they notice about the language used in each different form. I will ask them if different language evokes different emotions.

Reading Support

I have designed this task around the novel *The Gilded Ones* by Namina Forna (see Appendix D). This is a pre-reading activity that has two parts. The first part includes an open class discussion where students will make predictions about the text. The students will examine the image on the cover and guess what they think the book will be about based on that image alone. After we wrap up, we will read the book blurb as a class. From there, we will have another guided

discussion where we reflect on what we know and compare to our guesses for the previous discussion. In the second part, the students will do small pieces of formal research, which includes the author's book bio, as well as learning about the author's ethnic background as an immigrant to the US from Sierra Leone. From there, students will work independently to research the country and write down a few facts that they did not know before. Finally, I ask the students to reflect on how being an immigrant and how the culture of her birth-country might influence her writing.

The goal of the task is to understand the context from which the author writes, as well as to provide them a background context when they begin reading on their own. It will help them practice with noticing by referencing both the image and text, and then comparing what they know versus what they do not know. The other aspect of pre-reading activities that are important is that knowing the author's background also helps give the reader a "why" that helps them stay engaged. Learning about the author could help them care more about her work. This is key to keeping the students engaged with the text because we know that "motivation plays a central role in the development of positive reading habits and attitudes" (Anderson, 2017, p. 178). If the students do not care about what they are reading or the person who wrote it, they will have a hard time trying to stay motivated to read and engage.

Film scene review and critique

For this class activity, students will receive a printed screenplay scene from the Disney film *Encanto* (see Appendix C for the handout and the scene

pages). They will read the scene on their own and take notes about any questions they have or vocabulary they are unfamiliar with. Once they finish, we will discuss to answer any questions they might have. As a class, we will watch the entire film, so the students have the context of the scene they read earlier. When the scene they read arrives, the educator will announce it, so students know to pay extra attention and take notes on anything they notice in the scene that surprised them or gaps they might have realized they have compared to how they envisioned the scene prior to watching. We will discuss the scene and the students' responses and questions as a class prior to finishing the film. This activity helps develop language in multiple ways. It can help students notice gaps in their L2 either through their understanding of pronunciation or context. It will help develop real-life speaking by seeing how language is used in context.

There are additional opportunities for this activity, which could include students writing scenes of their own based on the world-building in *Encanto* or using characters from the film.

Vocabulary Task

This task will be a pre-reading task for a scholarly text chosen by the professor. When the teacher passes out the material, it will have 15 highlighted words. According to Zimmerman (2014), the first part of this task falls under the category of learning called incidental because the students are being introduced to new vocabulary while engaging with the reading. The second portion of the task is called intentional, or explicit, learning because we are explicitly focusing on the vocabulary definitions. This is also what Nunan (2014) referred to as a

focused task because it brings students' attention to specific word use and definitions.

As a class, students will take turns reading a few sentences until we have read the entire first page (out of four pages). If there are words the students pronounce incorrectly or are unsure how to say, I will support them along the way. From there, the students will work on their own for ten minutes. On a piece of paper, they will write down what they think the highlighted words mean, even if it's just a guess. Once they have finished, I will read the real definitions aloud from the Longman Online Dictionary. Students will self-grade. The student with the greatest number of correct definitions will receive a prize! They will then turn in their vocab guesses, so I can review them to see what level the students are at. This will inform me whether I need to make the words more or less difficult in the future.

They will read the rest of the article as homework. I will ask them to highlight 15 or more words they either do not know or want to understand in better detail. They will write these words down in their notebooks (or type on the computer) and use the Longman Online dictionary to define the words. They will turn this in at the next class. I would like to repeat this task in some way to introduce each of the printed texts, which would fall under the pre-reading and during-reading categories.

WRITING PROJECTS AND HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS

This course will feature three writing assignments that will require students to analyze, think critically, and use what they learn in class and through the readings to develop well-thought-out written projects.

Writing Journal

This assignment has an at-home and in-class activity. Throughout the course, students will be expected to maintain two writing journals. They will have one for in-class writing exercises and one for free writing at home. The at-home journal's purpose is based loosely on multiple arguments that free writing exercises and regular journaling practice boosts creativity and help writers work through writer's block (Cameron 1992). Hadley (1993) asserts "various kinds of creative writing activities, such as journal writing... in beginning courses...encourage students to express their own meaning within the limits of their developing competence" (p. 292). Journaling has the added benefit of helping students practice noticing without even realizing it. By journaling in the target language (TL), students create opportunities to observe the lack in their own skills that will lead them to finding and developing the right language on their own.

Students will be required to write anywhere from three to five pages per week outside of class. These pages are not restricted to any type of prompt. They can write about their day, write a creative piece or poem, or even write a to-do list for the day. They just have to put words to paper. As a class, they will spend ten minutes free writing based on a prompt I will put on the board. While

they write, I'll quickly review their journal entries for the week to check for completion. I will not read these entries to encourage students to be forthcoming with their writing and maintain a sense of privacy. When they have finished the ten-minute free-write time, I'll pass their at-home journals back. The at-home journals are not meant to be shared with the educator (outside of checking for completion) or other students, so they can put those notebooks away once I hand them back.

Students will break off into small groups and share what they wrote for the in-class prompt. After everyone reads their piece, we can come back as a class, I will ask students to volunteer to share with the entire class. Even if students do not want to share what they wrote, I will ask them to discuss what they liked about what they wrote, if or how they would like to change it, and if they might want to write additional parts to the piece they started.

Write what you (don't) know—midterm research project

To fulfill the research requirements for the standard composition class, students will engage in a unique research assignment. The normal adage is that creative writers should stick to writing what they know and understand. However, this assignment will push students' language and intellectual capacity by requiring them to write a creative piece centered around a topic they are unfamiliar with. As a class, we will brainstorm topics, so the students have an idea of what they could write about—however, they will not be restricted to writing from the topics we discuss in class. This is an example of utilizing the prewriting techniques described earlier in this paper. It helps support students by

helping them come up with the idea and perform the necessary research they need prior to writing. Once they have chosen their topic, we will spend a class section doing research, so I can help guide them. They will take this research and apply it to a creative piece. The handout will offer examples of stories they could write to incorporate their topic as we discussed in class and others that were not mentioned. However, they will not be restricted to writing about a specific creative topic. They will be writing a short story, which will be no more than 2,000 words—about seven pages maximum or 4 pages minimum.

The nuts and bolts of the assignment have the formatting requirements as well as the word count and/or page range requirements. Because this is a research assignment, the last part of the assignment will have a work cited page with a minimum requirement of at least 3 academic articles. We will spend time in class prior to the assignment's due date to go over how to cite within the text and how to create a work cited page if the students are not familiar. Please see Appendix E for the complete handout. This assignment fulfills requirements for first-year composition because students are expected to engage with academic research and apply what they learn to a topic and argument. The only difference between this class and a traditional composition class is that these students will use their research to develop a storyline and character arch for a topic they previously did not know about. Many students struggle with research papers. Writing an unknown topic in a creative way helps maintain student engagement and investment in the project, which will increase language acquisition and the

techniques we go over for research and the writing process. Students can take these skills and apply them to future classes.

Creative Writing Sample Project—final assignment

For this assignment, I will have the students engage with the reading by taking the characters and settings from the novels we read in class and jumbling them up (see Appendix F). This project has two parts. The first is the creative writing assignment, where students will take any character from one text and put them in a different setting from another text. The character they select can be a main character, a supporting character, or a villain. There are no restrictions regarding the character. The only restriction is that the setting has to match that of the novel.

Because I am a student who struggles with perfectionism and procrastination—especially in academic and creative work—I know the stress students might feel about the project. As discussed in previous sections, we will also have time in class to do some prewriting exercises including brainstorming as a class. To aid them in time management, I will have a draft of both parts due about a month prior to the final due date. I will offer feedback if the students want some help; otherwise, the assignment is purely to help them get something written. The students will also have a chance to give each other feedback in small groups a couple of weeks before the due date. Not only does this help the papers improve for later revisions, but it also gives students a chance to see what other students are doing--and evaluate what is effective and what's not for

themselves. The students will have two weeks to make revisions, and then the paper will be due during finals week.

Again, the nuts and bolts of the assignment have the formatting requirements as well as the word count range requirements. For the creative piece, I included questions that the students can refer to if they are having problems or get stuck in their creative process. For the reflection portion, I asked a list of questions that the students are required to answer in their reflection. These questions will help guide the students and make writing both portions of the assignment easier, and I believe more enjoyable. I have also asked the students to let me know how they felt about the assignment in their reflection, so I can use their feedback to improve.

CONCLUSION

An intersectional pedagogy between creative writing principles and translingual composition classroom pedagogy can create a highly motivating course for ESL students. This thesis demonstrated the need for a creative-based composition class for English language learners by utilizing existing research ideas to introduce new activities and assignments. This class is an opportunity for educators to make composition exciting and help students engage with the material. I presented an in-depth review of each theoretical framework: translingual composition pedagogy, creative writing philosophies and educational applications, and Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) principles. Unlike most literature or composition classes for ESL students, this class focuses primarily on developing the students' creative writing abilities. More specifically, this class involves a creative in-depth study of different genres and writing tools that will help the students develop their critical thinking and creative skills, as well as their language acquisition in English.

There are ample future research possibilities for this thesis that would deeply benefit this proposed curriculum. This can come from the form of additional academic research, of course. Most importantly, this proposal can be applied in a case study with actual students where measurement tests are used throughout the semester to quantify student success and improvement with writing ability, speaking, vocabulary growth, and language fluency and accuracy.

APPENDIX A:

RE-WRITE: LESSONS IN “SHOW VS. TELL” HANDOUT

RE-WRITE: LESSONS IN “SHOW VS. TELL” HANDOUT

Look at the following sentences. With your group, re-write the sentences using language that “shows” the person’s emotions or actions rather than just telling the reader. If you have questions about the words in the sentence, please ask for help.

- 1. Bobby hates talking to Chris.**
- 2. Samantha is sad because her dog died.**
- 3. Ana is so excited because she got an A on her test.**
- 4. The student thinks teacher talks too much.**
- 5. Patty loves visiting her aunt’s house because she loves her aunt’s dog named Penny.**
- 6. Carson got so angry with his brother. He wishes he was an only child.**

As a group, come up with examples of sentences that tell a character’s emotions and how you would change them to demonstrate how characters are feeling.

STUDENT NOTES:

We will discuss these as a class. Write down any notes on how your group did with “showing vs. telling.” If you have any questions, write them down in the space below and ask the professor in class or privately.

APPENDIX B:
ENCANTO FILM HANDOUT

ENCANTO FILM HANDOUT

Before we watch:

Read the following scene pages on your own. Please take notes on this page and in the scene handout. The dialogue is under a character's name and centered in the page. Everything else describes the scene. When you read, only pay attention to the dialogue---not the descriptions.

Consider the following questions before you read and take notes as you read:

- Do you notice anything particular about the dialogue?
- Are there any words that stick out to you?
- Do you understand what's being said?
- Do you have any thoughts about pronunciation?
- What do you notice about the character's emotions based on the dialogue
 - Are they being serious? Are they happy? Are they scared? Angry?
 - Write down your notes.
- Write down anything else that sticks out to you.

After we watch:

- Were your guesses about the characters' emotions correct?
- If not, what was different?
- If so, how did you know that the characters were feeling a certain way?
- Did you understand the language or were there phrases that were confusing?
- How did watching the scene make you feel compared to reading?

APPENDIX C:

ENCANTO SCENE

WRITTEN BY CHARISE CASTRO SMITH & JARED BUSH

LUISA

Don't know. But I heard the grown ups once: before Tio Bruno left, he had like some terrible vision about it.

MIRABEL

Tio Bruno? What was in his vision?

LUISA

No one knows, they never found it. But if something's wrong with the magic, start with Bruno's tower, find that vision.

Luisa heads off, carrying more donkeys.

MIRABEL

(calling after)
Wait, how do you "find" a vision?!
What am I even looking for?

LUISA

If you find it, you'll know. But be careful... that place is off limits for a reason.

Mirabel turns back to the House... to Bruno's tower.

INT. CASA MADRIGAL - COURTYARD - A LITTLE LATER

On her way to Bruno's door, she sneaks past Isabela and Abuela Alma.

ABUELA ALMA

Such a perfect match.

ISABELA

So perfect.

ABUELA ALMA

And so good for the Encanto.

Mirabel sneaks past the two and reaches Bruno's door. No one's been in there for years.

INT. BRUNO'S TOWER - MOMENTS LATER

Mirabel shoves open Bruno's door, revealing a dusty, dark ante room. In front of her, sand spills in from above, creating a curtain of sand, beyond which she can't see.

MIRABEL

Casita, can you turn off the sand?

Nothing happens. Mirabel looks back where she can see the floor tiles at the doorjamb say "the house cannot help beyond this point." The gravity of this hits Mirabel.

MIRABEL (CONT'D)

You can't help in here?

The House responds "no... and I'm worried about you," after all, Mirabel has never been "without the House."

MIRABEL (CONT'D)

I'll be fine. I need to do this,
for you, for Abuela... maybe a
little for me.

(looks to sand)

Find the vision, save the mir-ack!

As Mirabel steps through the "sandfall" she...falls!

INT. BRUNO'S TOWER - CONTINUOUS

Mirabel falls face first and slides down a giant sand dune. She looks up to see... she's in towering room.

MIRABEL

Whoa...

Widen to reveal a SIGN reading "Your Future Awaits," which points to the TOP of the cavern. HUNDREDS OF STAIRS lead all the way up. As Mirabel looks up - FLIT-FLIT-FLIT... Antonio's TOUCAN flaps down next to her. It smiles and squawks "hello."

MIRABEL (CONT'D)

Oh, hello. (THEN) Lotta stairs, but
at least I'll have a friend-- (the
toucan flies away) no, you flew
away immediately.

Mirabel watches it fly to the top. She's on her own. Mirabel grits her teeth and starts climbing.

MIRABEL (CONT'D)

Alright.

As she goes, we pop forward in time, and with each little pop, she gets more tired and is soon wheezing and struggling.

MIRABEL (CONT'D)

(talk-singing)
Welcome to the Family Madrigal...
(MORE)

MIRABEL (CONT'D)

(NEXT POP)...there's so many stairs
in the Casa Madrigal... (NEXT POP)
you would think there'd be another
way to get so high cause we're
magic, but no -- magical, how many
stairs fit in here! Bruno, your
room is the worst!!

Later, Mirabel finally gets to the top of the stairs, only to
find there is a gap in the path. She groans, exhausted.

MIRABEL (CONT'D)

Come on...

As Mirabel takes a breath... then removes a rope railing on
and throws it over a boulder above as an anchor.

MIRABEL (CONT'D)

Okay, I can do this. (looking at
the gap) Ooo...

Mirabel goes to swing across, slips, loses her balance,
but... somehow makes it across. Stunned she succeeded,
Mirabel pumps her fists --

MIRABEL (CONT'D)

Wooooo!

But as Mirabel stomps her foot to celebrate, the ledge below
her cracks and plummets to the ground, nearly taking her with
it. She looks to the toucan, who looks at her, judgmental.
Deciding celebration time is over, Mirabel turns to the
entrance of Bruno's "temple."

INT. BRUNO'S TEMPLE - MOMENTS LATER

The corridors feel like a forgotten tomb. The TOUCAN trails
her, nervous. Mirabel looks around, focussing on a triptych
of images depicting how Bruno's visions come to pass. As
Mirabel investigates it - SCREEE!!! She accidentally knocks a
POT full of... RATS. They startle Mirabel and scurry into a
RELIEF SCULPTURE OF BRUNO. On closer inspection... Bruno's
eyes have been scratched out. Disturbing.

Mirabel hears a creak, which draws her eyes to... Bruno's
"INNER SANCTUM." It sure looks like the epicenter. The TOUCAN
looks at Mirabel... turns around and flies away.

MIRABEL (O.S.)

Quitter.

INT. BRUNO'S INNER SANCTUM - MOMENTS LATER

Mirabel enters the dark room... there's an unusual circle of SAND in the middle, but there is no sign of anything else. It's a dead end. Confused... she steps out onto the SAND...

MIRABEL

Empty....

The wind moving through the cavern sucks the door shut, plunging Mirabel into DARKNESS. Mirabel panics, stuck in the darkness... but then... a light. Something glowing green... she's standing on it... the sand itself seems to be glowing... Mirabel digs into the sand and finds... A GLOWING SHARD - LIKE A PIECE OF AN EMERALD RELIEF SCULPTURE.

MIRABEL (CONT'D)

(whispered, to herself)
What's hurting the magic?

INT. CASA MADRIGAL - FOYER - SAME TIME

Abuela sweeps the House, trying to clean up Isabela's copious flower petals. But the room seems to rumble. Concerned, Abuela looks up and sees... the CANDLE flicker just a bit.

INT. BRUNO'S INNER SANCTUM - SAME TIME

As Mirabel pulls more glowing emerald pieces from the sand, she realizes they form some kind of image. She realizes this is Bruno's vision... smashed to pieces! Mirabel nervously connects the pieces to reveal... HER OWN WORRIED FACE.

MIRABEL

Me...?

RUMBLE! The entire cavern begins to shake, falling apart. Sand begins pouring in, covering the remaining shards under the sand. Panicking, Mirabel tries to dig out the remaining shards and shove them into her MOCHILA bag as the cavern quakes and CRACKS snake around the room.

As pieces of stone and sand threaten to block the entrance... Mirabel races to collect one last piece, but as she dives to the door, it's locked! Mirabel bangs at it desperately and then... jiggles the handle. Whoosh! A tidal wave of sand pushes her out to safety, almost sending her over the cliff. Mirabel looks down at the shards... what does it mean?

APPENDIX D:
READING SUPPORT TASK

PRE-READING WARM-UP DISCUSSION

Students should all have a copy of *The Gilded Ones* by Namina Forna. As a class, we will discuss the following:

- Look at the image of the novel. What do you think the novel will be about based only on the cover image?
- Is there anything about this girl that intrigues or strikes you as interesting?
- What about her clothes stand out to you?

Let's read the book blurb together to get an idea about the main character and the story we are about to read. Then, we will discuss the following questions.

- Why do you think the author chose gold blood to represent impurity?
- What do you think is the threat to the empire of her world?
- Does the book blurb change how you see the cover image?
- Now what strikes you about the cover?
- Do you see any connections between the cover and the blurb?

LEARN ABOUT THE AUTHOR

We will read the Author bio as a class. Read the following author bio, taken from her website and book <https://naminaforna.com/bio>

Namina Forna is a young adult novelist based in Los Angeles, and the author of the New York Times bestselling epic fantasy YA novel *The Gilded Ones*. She has an MFA in film and TV production from the USC School of Cinematic Arts and a BA from Spelman College. Originally from Sierra Leone, West Africa, she moved to the US when she was nine and has been traveling back and forth ever since. Namina loves telling stories with fierce female leads and works as a screenwriter in LA.

REFLECTION

On your own, reflect on what we read about Forna and what information we have about the book. Answer the following questions in your notebook: How do you think her education helped her with her writing? What do you know about Sierra Leone?

BACKGROUND

Open a search database in your browser. Research facts about the county of Sierra Leone, West Africa. In your notebook, list three things you discovered that you didn't know before about this country.

Now that you know a little bit about where Forna is from, consider these questions and write the answers in your notebook. After ten minutes, we will discussion your answers as a class.

- How do you think her time spent in West Africa impacted her writing?
- Do you think immigrating to the US affected her writing? If so, how?
- How might an author's background and their experiences affect their writing?

APPENDIX E:
WRITE WHAT YOU (DON'T) KNOW:
MIDTERM CREATIVE RESEARCH PROJECT

WRITE WHAT YOU (DON'T) KNOW—MIDTERM CREATIVE RESEARCH PROJECT

This assignment will have two parts. Part one is a research project based on a topic of your choosing. We will discuss possible topics in class to give you ideas, but you can also choose one from the list below or make your own. In the second part, you will use the research you have collected to write a creative piece about your chosen topic.

To make sure you're making progress before the midterm due date, you will turn in drafts to me, so I can track your progress during the semester. We will do a peer workshop as a class two weeks before the midterm project is due.

Example topics →creative pieces:

Here are a few examples of research topics and how you could potentially apply them to your creative story. You are not limited to the options below. These are suggestions to guide you.

- Beekeeping and life of bees→Creative piece about a character who is a beekeeper
- Flying and fixing a plane→Piece about a pilot whose plane crashes
- Pregnancy→Story about a woman who is having a baby
- Mars and space travel→Piece about humans who land on Mars and meet aliens

PART ONE: Research Component

After you have selected your topic, you will write a research paper telling the reader about your topic. It will need articles and information from scholarly websites.

Research Piece Requirements:

- Minimum **three pages** plus works cited
- Works cited page with at least **four sources**
- The work is original and written by the student
- Times New Roman font, size 12, double-spaced, 1-in margins

PART TWO: Creative Assignment

In part two, you will use your research to create a short story or novel chapter. You don't need to cite your work in this section, as long as you don't use direct quotes. The goal is to use your research to create a realistic world and character. Use your imagination! If you want to create a fantasy world, sci-fi, or fiction, anything is possible. Just be accurate when talking about your topic.

Creative Piece Requirements:

- Minimum **four pages**
- **Must** center around your research topic
- The work is original and written by the student
- Times New Roman font, size 12, double-spaced, 1-in margins

APPENDIX F:
FINAL WRITING ASSIGNMENT

FINAL WRITING ASSIGNMENT

This assignment will have two main parts. Part one is a creative piece, and the second is an analysis and reflection of your writing. You will turn in drafts to me, so I can track your progress during the semester. We will do a peer workshop as a class two weeks before the final project is due.

Important Dates:

Creative First Draft 04/04/2023 (minimum 500 words)

Analysis First Draft 04/11/2023 (minimum 250 words)

Class Workshop 04/25/2023

Final Due Date: 5/17/2023 by midnight

PART ONE: Creative Assignment

Pick any book we have read this semester as your main story and setting, including the magic system and its rules within the story. Rewrite the ending of the story to completely change the outcome. Questions to consider:

Take one character from a book we have read and put them in the world of a different text we have read. This can be any character from the books—not just the main character. *For example*, what would happen if Britta from *The Gilded Ones* was suddenly in the world of Red London from *A Darker Shade of Magic*?

Use the following questions as guides while you plan your short story or novel chapter. You do not need to answer all of them—these are suggestions to help you start writing.

- What is the magic system in the novel setting?
- How does the character they handle this new world?
- What new abilities do they have?
- What challenges do your characters face?
- How does having different magical abilities change the character?
- Are they the good guy or the bad guy in this world?
- Is this character like the main character or are they a side character?
- Do they have powers in this new world?

Creative Piece Requirements:

- Between 1000-1500 words
- Is either a complete short story OR a chapter of a novel
- Clearly follows one of the above prompts and shows consideration and thorough planning
- The work is original and written by the student
- Times New Roman font, size 12, double-spaced, 1-in margins

PART TWO: Analysis and Reflection of Creative Assignment

In the second part, you will use texts from our syllabus and your class discussion notes to answer the following questions:

- Why did you choose the character and world you did?
- What did you learn about the writing process?
- Was creative writing difficult or easy for you? Why?
- What did you enjoy or dislike about the assignment?
- What are you most proud of?
- What drew them to that particular world?

Analysis and Reflection Requirements:

- Between 600-750 words
- Clearly answers the above questions
- Reflect on the class readings and their impact on your writing
- Full sentences (no bullet points)
- The work is original and written by the student
- Times New Roman font, size 12, double-spaced, 1-in margins

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