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FINAL MA PORTFOLIO

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A Final Portfolio

Submitted to the English Department of
Bowling Green State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts in the field of English

15 November 2016

Professor Lee Nickoson, First Reader

Professor Bill Albertini, Second Reader

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The Role of Feedback and Revision in my Work as a Student and an Educator

In 2012, I realized that my Ohio teaching license for secondary English was going to expire. Although I was no longer teaching high school English, as I had moved into teaching Developmental English at the college level, I decided to earn the continuing education credits required to renew my secondary teaching license. With a little research, I choose to earn my credits from courses in the Master of English curriculum offered at Bowling Green State University. Having earned my Master of Education in 2000, I had always considered going back to school to pursue a Master of English. This seemed like the perfect opportunity for me to determine whether I would eventually pursue the additional degree.

In 2012, I dipped my toe in the program waters by completing three courses. Being a student again was incredibly invigorating. In fact, it made me a more empathetic instructor. After careful consideration, I decided to continue what I started in 2012, and I applied for enrollment into BGSU's Master of English program. In the fall of 2015, as an official BGSU graduate student, I enrolled in courses to complete my journey towards completing my Master of English. Through the program, I have had the opportunity to think about my approach to teaching developmental students as well as English Composition students. The pieces I have selected for my portfolio reflect my own personal growth as a student, but also my growth as an educator. The pieces in this portfolio demonstrate my commitment to providing my students with an instructor who values the student experience, as well as her own continual growth as a life-long learner. In each piece, feedback and revision are a critical component to my success as a student, but also my work as an educator. I took the feedback I received from my professors and developed a new approach to offering feedback to students that is encouraging while also being

constructive. Feedback and revision allow students to grow, but instructors must also be willing to accept feedback and revise the assignments that they ask students to complete.

The first piece featured in my portfolio is titled “I’m Not Being “Short” With You: Providing Effective Feedback Efficiently Using a Computer Program.” This piece was completed in English 6200: Teaching Writing with Dr. Lee Nickoson. In this course, I had the opportunity to explore a topic of my choosing for a research paper. This assignment presented me with an opportunity to explore a topic that I had been thinking about for several years. As an educator, I wanted to know what experts had to say about instructor feedback on written student work. I was interested in reading expert opinions and comparing what the research has to say about feedback to my own teaching practices. While teaching Developmental English and English Composition, I often asked myself what feedback was most effective and useful to my students. I also found myself questioning the tone of my feedback, and how that tone influenced my students’ receptiveness to my feedback. Some of the practices I use in my courses are based on what I felt was important for students to learn or hear, but I had not had an opportunity to research this topic at any great length.

In addition to looking at the issue of effective feedback, this paper also explores the use of efficiency when providing feedback. I learned about a program called Short Keys that acts a storage and retrieval system for comments and feedback. Essentially, an instructor would take the time to type out grading feedback, teaching comments or instructional pieces that they use on a repeat basis when grading student work. Instructors add that comment to the Short Keys program and assign it an abbreviated word or letter to serve as a retrieval mechanism. When grading, if the instructor wanted to use one of the pre-created comments, they would activate the Short Keys program and quickly insert the comment, without having to type it out. Although I

was using Short Keys with great satisfaction, I had not done the research to support my theory that this type of grading practice was both efficient and more importantly, effective. I wrote this paper to help me determine whether my use of Short Keys could be supported with research.

“I’m Not Being “Short” With You: Providing Effective Feedback Efficiently Using a Computer Program” was selected for my portfolio because it reflects the powerful influence that my Master’s course work made on my teaching. In writing and researching my paper, I learned that students greatly benefit from feedback that is carefully delivered in a positive and encouraging tone. The use of Short Keys allows instructors to create teachable comments that are designed to be specific while also being uncritical and unbiased towards a specific student. They are both generic and specific. They are generic in that they can be used for multiple students who need help with the same type of issue, but they are also specific to the exact issue that the student needs help with in his or her paper. Most importantly, when an instructor creates feedback with instructional intention and a focused approach towards being positive and encouraging instead of critical and discouraging, the impact on students can be very powerful.

This paper went through several drafts in order to achieve the final version that is presented in my portfolio. The main area that needed attention was my presentation and analysis of the Short Keys program and its ability to be both efficient and effective. I also found that I needed to do a better job at setting up the issues that instructors face, that lead to a need for more efficiency while creating effective grading feedback. Dr. Nickoson offered several pointed questions to help guide the revisions of my final section on the solution to the problem. I also felt that a few additional resources helped strengthen my presentation of the problem that instructors face. Ultimately, this piece reflects me as an instructor and what I value in my teaching.

The second piece in my portfolio is a project I wrote for Teaching Grammar in the Context of Writing. This piece, titled, “Grammar? In a Narrative,” is identified as the “teaching” piece in my portfolio. Grammar in the Context of Writing was the first course that I enrolled in at Bowling Green. I was very excited to take this course because I was preparing to act as a Subject Matter Expert (SME) for a course I had been teaching called Foundations of English. The current version of the course had a heavy emphasis on grammar; however, the students consistently struggled with grammar rules and concepts. In the course, grammar was taught in isolation and I did not feel that this approach was particularly effective at improving the students’ written communication skills. I felt that enrolling in Teaching Grammar in the Context of Writing would serve the purpose of providing me with a wealth of information on how I might revise our newly renamed Reading and Writing Strategies course. For example, I wanted to remove the grammar lessons that were taught in isolation as rules to be memorized, and instead focus on specific grammar rules through the context of written assignments or discussion forums.

The project that I have included in my portfolio was a final culminating assignment where I applied many of the concepts taught by Dr. Sue Woords to a unit where students learned and applied grammar rules in the context of a personal narrative. The assignment that I created for Teaching Grammar in the Context of Writing influenced the main assignment that I created as a Subject Matter Expert. As a result of this graduate course, I removed all grammar taught in isolation from the Foundations of English course. The resulting course saw student retention and success improve by over 30% from where it had been in the previous version of the course.

Although the project that is included in this portfolio does not totally mirror the course that I wrote as a SME, it is a project that I feel represents my new approach to teaching grammar. The unit begins with an instructor led example, and then asks students to follow the example by

completing the same activity on their own. This same approach is seen throughout the unit. As I began the revision of this project, I realized that I was missing the materials that would need to be created in order to actually turn around and teach this unit. I approached the revision as though I was going to share this unit with a colleague who wanted to teach a unit on the Personal Narrative that also included some grammatical elements. As I went through each day of the unit, I enhanced the script and the examples to be more specific. I also added handouts to go along with each of the unit activities. My goal was to think through the project as though I was preparing to teach it to my current students. I improved some of the examples and enhanced definitions where I felt that they lacked clarity. Finally, I added a section where I discussed how instructors might reflect on the success of the unit. I believe that educators must always be willing to adjust and revise if something is not working. Each term, we see a new batch of students with unique needs, so it is our job to adjust our approach to meet those needs.

My third portfolio piece, “*Departing at Dawn: Re-Birth of Identity*,” underwent several massive revisions. This paper was originally written in 2012 when I took English 6800: Postcolonial Literature and Film. My paper focuses on the main character in Gloria Lisé’s riveting novel *Departing at Dawn*. When I took Graduate Writing in 2015, I selected my *Departing at Dawn* paper for the revision assignment in that course. We were asked to choose a piece we had previously written and revise it from a new perspective or approach. This was a challenging assignment as I had to first re-read the novel and think about how I wanted to re-write my paper. In my original draft, I was focused on the Postcolonial aspect of the novel. However, in my revision, I decided to focus my attention on the role of the main character and her various relationships and the way that those relationships shaped her. I attempted to show the main

character as a person who demonstrates strength despite the very real challenges that she faces during Argentina's Dirty War.

Some of the feedback that I received on my original draft was that I needed to be careful not to rely so heavily on direct quotes from the novel. To address this issue, I removed a large number of quotes and replaced those quotes with my analysis of the texts. I think the additional analysis resulted in a much stronger and more analytical paper. Although I was happy with the new approach that I took with this paper, I was able to revise "Departing at Dawn: Re-Birth of Identity" yet again for the purpose of my portfolio. I looked at the paper at the sentence level and made additional revisions to improve the overall readability and flow of ideas in my paper. Without extensive feedback from my instructors, my revisions would not be what they are today.

My final portfolio piece was the most challenging, but also the most rewarding. This piece is listed as my "Research" piece in my portfolio. It is a paper I wrote for English 6070: Theory and Methods of Literary Criticism with Dr. Erin Labbie. In the paper titled, "Talking Back: A Feminist Examination of How Kate Chopin Uses Edna Pontellier to "Talk Back" to a Male Dominated Literary Tradition," I chose to explore Feminism in Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*. Two weeks before the paper was due, I submitted a draft to Dr. Labbie for feedback. She provided extensive feedback, which I took very seriously. From her feedback, I completely revised my initial paper.

Writing and researching my *Awakening* paper took me back to my days as an English Literature major during my undergraduate years. It was invigorating to write a paper that challenged me. At one point in the revision process, I printed out my entire paper and numbered each of my paragraphs to try to determine the best order for each of the ideas I wanted to present and discuss. I was aware of my use of citations and made every attempt to say something in my

own words rather than relying too heavily on the various outside sources I had read. I tried to be very selective in my use of quotes in order to create an appropriate balance between my own original ideas and those of my sources. At times, this was challenging, as the material was difficult and new. I found that I had to read and re-read to understand the theories that I explored in my research. Dr. Labbie's feedback on my draft challenged me to delve deeper into my subject and explore different areas of the text as it applies to Feminism. In several areas of my paper I needed to completely scrap an entire paragraph, but more often I found myself adding another paragraph or two in order to explore some other nuance to Feminism as I saw it emerge in my reading of my outside sources and Chopin's *The Awakening*. For example, at one point Dr. Labbie wrote, "You may want to read Zora Neal Hurston in your Anthology—her piece on *What White Authors Won't Print* also shows a feminist plight similar to the one you are describing here." This comment in the margin of my paper led me to read an additional source and add an additional paragraph where I made a connection between Hurston's piece and Chopin's work. Dr. Labbie also commented, "OK- how are you going to walk the line here between the "death of the author" and the essentialism of female authorial voice in terms of feminism? Can you think about this a bit here?" This comment challenged me to revise my paragraph to answer this important question. I realized that I left some details out of the paper that must be added in order to fully develop my argument. I took each of Dr. Labbie's comments in stride and pushed myself to produce my best work. My final product is a paper that gives me great pride. As I prepare for graduation, I feel this paper represents the culmination of my growth in the Master of English program.

Each of the pieces I selected for my portfolio represents me as both an educator and a student. In both roles, I am disciplined and dedicated to giving my best effort and submitting my

best work. Writing my first portfolio piece, “I’m Not Being “Short” With You: Providing Effective Feedback Efficiently Using a Computer Program” allowed me to explore the importance of positive and carefully constructed feedback on student experience and learning outcomes. It validated what I was already doing in my classroom in terms of the type of grading comments I provided to students during the drafting process. My second portfolio piece, “Grammar? In a Narrative,” motivated me to change the way I approached the teaching of grammar. I no longer teach grammar in isolation. The work of this portfolio piece provided me with the confidence to revamp the way I teach students how to learn and apply grammatical concepts. In my final two portfolio pieces, I took on the role and perspective of the English student, as opposed to the role of the educator, as seen in my first two pieces. As a student who must receive and apply instructor feedback to my writing, I developed empathy for my own students and what they must feel when they receive feedback. Feedback that is designed and delivered with constructive criticism in a positive manner was well received and motivated me to try harder. Specific feedback allowed me to revisit my paper with an eye for improvement. The work of the final two pieces taught me that there is no such thing as a perfect paper. There is always a new way of looking at a paragraph, and there is always room for growth. Entering the world of the student after being a teacher for the last sixteen years has allowed me to reflect on how my students perceive my feedback and my level of care for their growth and progress in my courses. I am appreciative of the level of care and consideration I received from the instructors that worked with me during my coursework at Bowling Green State University. I will take the lessons I learned from my instructors and apply them to my teaching.

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Prof. Nickoson

ENG 6200 501W

21 June 2016

I'm Not Being "Short" With You: Providing Effective Feedback Efficiently Using a Computer Program

Online writing instructors face a number of challenges that influence their ability to provide the best learning experience to their students. In many cases they experience frustrating scenarios that prevent them from teaching in the way that they believe is the most effective. For example, in a given term, my colleagues and I typically teach five sections of 35 students. In her article, "Preserving Sanity by Simplifying Grading," Marilyn Dyrud shares an example of the reality that many online writing instructors face. "ONCE---AND ONLY ONCE—I calculated how many papers I graded during an academic year. With four writing classes averaging 25 students each, the total was a staggering 4,500 papers. And, since all of my writing classes are process-oriented, the real total was at least double that. . . .I was also putting in 10-hour work days, and, on occasion, waking up at 4 a.m. so I could finish grading before classes met. Obviously, things needed to change" (Dyrud, 1). Additionally, some colleges expect faculty to provide individualized feedback to students on all written assignments within five-days of submission. Faculty must frantically read and provide comments that students will find beneficial in a short amount of time. Faculty find themselves struggling to manage expectations while also providing students with the educational and learning experiences that they deserve. As

a result, faculty must find methods for providing feedback on written assignments that is both effective and efficient.

The Problem: Large Classes and Lack of Time

To begin working on a solution, one must first understand the multifaceted problem that online writing instructors face. Beth L. Hewett addresses one of the key factors that impacts quality Online Writing Instruction (OWI): time. “David Reinheimer convincingly argues from a study of one onsite class and three online sections that the online instruction required almost twice as much of the teacher’s time. In a study of ‘literacy load’ (the quantity of text to be read and written), June Griffin and Debbie Minter find that teachers read two to three times as much student writing in laptop-based and fully online courses than in a similar on-site course” (Hewett, p. 198). Faculty members find their courses packed full of students, and yet they are expected to create a learning environment that fosters interaction and community. Additionally, Deans expect faculty to provide unique comments on each student’s work. Deans frown upon “canned” feedback in the faculty review process, which occurs every term. And yet, as noted by Hewett, teaching online requires, “almost twice as much of the teacher’s time.” There is a clear disconnect between what is expected of faculty, and the teaching situation within which they are placed. Hewett demonstrates how this teaching scenario happens, “Stakeholders argue that online writing education is more efficient or effective than its onsite counterpart and uncritically use these arguments to raise course caps” (Hewett, p.198). Working for an administration that does not value the impact of large class sizes in a heavily writing centered course can feel especially frustrating for faculty who are conscientious and desire to be able to provide the feedback that they know will help their students overcome some of the challenges that they face as first year college students.

Unreasonable expectations and available hours in the day are not the only factors at play in effective writing instruction. Chris Anson identifies that instructors must also learn how to address the “struggles of the underprepared student” (217). Beth Hewett pursues this subject in her article, *Fully Online and Hybrid Writing Instruction*, “Although one would hope such students would correctly self-select into their courses, many who choose OWI are ill-prepared for the experience. The OWI’s Committee’s research indicates that student preparedness is critical to ability to succeed; characteristics of preparedness include self-motivation, understanding how an OWI course differs from other online courses, time management skills, and reading and writing skills (CCCC, “State-of-the-Art” 10)” (Hewett, 201). Every English instructor is aware of the many issues Anson and Hewett refer to here. Classes are loaded with students who come with a variety of backgrounds. Few of them have any prior college experience, and many students struggle with the skills needed to successfully pass an introductory college English Composition course. Additionally, their lack of required pre-requisite knowledge to succeed in an English Composition course requires that the instructor spend additional time teaching basic skills required to pass the course. In his article titled, “What the Hell Is Revise?": A Qualitative Study of Student Approaches to Coursework in Developmental English at One Urban-Serving Community College,” Stefan Austin Perun discusses the challenges of working with underprepared students:

Review of selected literature composition scholars have argued that the biggest barrier for students in the developmental classroom is bridging the cultural gap between the way the students think and write and the conventions valued in higher education (Bartholomae, 1985, 1993; Bizzell, 1986; Fox, 1990; Rose,

2005; Shaughnessy, 1977). Furthermore, effective pedagogy is built on understanding this gap as a matter of marginalization rather than incompetence (Bartholomae, 1985; Bizzell, 1986). From this perspective, the professor's role is to both help students translate their thinking and writing into ways valued in higher education (Bizzell, 1986), and "convince students [enrolled in developmental English] that this community [of higher education] is theirs" (Fox, 1990, p. 75)" (Perun, 3).

Perun's discussion illuminates a major factor at play in the online English classroom. Faculty members must work to overcome many of the barriers to success that they recognize in their students. Additionally, when colleges enroll underprepared students into Composition courses rather than Developmental English courses, instructors must address those skills gaps before they can expect to teach the composition curriculum. Without that instruction, their students will fail their course. However, a semester only lasts so many weeks, and there is only so much time available to get everything taught.

Another often-overlooked factor that influences effective teaching deals with what instructors cannot see when they first encounter a new set of students. Student confidence represents a major roadblock in writing instruction. Authors Linda Fernsten and Mary Reda address this important issue in their article "Helping Students Meet the Challenges of Academic Writing." They state:

Many students struggling to become more skillful users of the discourses required in college-level classes have become convinced that they are simply 'bad writers'. Stuck in these negative identities and fearful of failure in academic writing tasks (rather than seeing themselves as learners in the process of acquiring the discourses and skills

required in discipline-specific genres), students may subtly or overtly resist writing assignments by turning them in late, leaving them undone or incomplete, or even plagiarizing in an attempt to approximate school's required discourses (Fernsten and Reda, 1).

The self-deprecating stories that students tell themselves represent a hidden challenge for writing instructors. Our feedback can either refute or support the negative stories that students believe about their ability to write. Maria Treglia asserts that, "The way in which comments are worded is a powerful means to actively involve students in the revision process, or it can have a detrimental effect on their confidence, motivation, and possibly the quality of the revision (Anson, Elbow, Ferris, Goldstein, Probst, Sommers, Straub). Mitigation is a form of politeness intended to buffer and mediate the emotional involvement and possible sense of inadequacy related to receiving critical responses to one's writing (Rubin)" (Treglia, 4). Instructors must carefully choose their words when providing grading comments so that their students will not shut down, but will be inspired and open to the feedback.

The Solution: Using Pre-Generated Feedback to Address Common Issues

Given the many factors that play into and impact writing instructors, one must stop and reflect on how best to provide the most effective and efficient feedback to their students. Instructors may ask themselves what is the most helpful feedback that I can provide to my students? They may also question how they can effectively balance being constructive without coming across as critical. Also, instructors may question how might they word feedback in a way that will allow students to be open to hearing and applying the feedback to their papers, rather than feeling defensive and withdrawn? Instructors must first overcome the notion that they cannot be both effective and efficient simultaneously. For many writing instructors, the idea of

being efficient feels like a foreign concept, since they have never thought of the process as anything related to efficiency. As has been noted, most English instructors spend thousands of hours grading papers. However, with the proper approach, writing instructors can incorporate efficiency into their grading practices. English Composition students are not re-inventing the wheel with the types of mistakes that they make in their writing. Rarely, if ever, does an instructor see a mistake that they have not seen before dozens or hundreds of times, depending on their years of experience.

After five years in the high school English classroom and another nine spent online teaching writing to first year college students, I can honestly admit that I felt burned out. It felt like an inward battle each day. I knew that my students needed more feedback, but I could not find the time to provide the feedback. Doing a poor job was not an option, but my personal life was suffering because of the number of hours spent grading papers. I also noticed that my feedback was less personable and less encouraging. In short, as Treglia shared, I was not mitigating my comments. I was thinking about errors and not thinking about my students as individuals. Like Dyrud, I needed to make a change. I had to find a way to stay true to myself as an educator, while also providing feedback in a more efficient manner. In her article *Responding to Student Writing*, Nancy Sommers points out that this is not always an easy task, “We do not know in any definitive way what constitutes thoughtful commentary or what effect, if any, our comments have on helping our students become more effective writers” (Sommers 2). I intend for my feedback to help students begin to see their mistakes and fix them, or add elaboration or additional detail before they submit their papers to me; however, to achieve that goal, I have to be aware of my audience, and how my audience will receive, hear and apply my feedback. Nugrahenny Zacharias wrote an article titled *Teacher and Student Attitudes Toward Teacher*

Feedback where he conducted research on student perceptions regarding faculty feedback. “For S1 18 [coded student name], teachers gave ‘too much feedback’ if their feedback was more than the students’ writing. In fact, she has experienced this when joining one of her earlier writing classes. This practice made her feel ‘helpless’, ‘disappointed’, ‘sad’, and ‘discouraged’” (Nugrahenny, 46). Instructors must be aware that students read feedback and it can have this unfortunate result. Thinking about how one words a comment or offers a suggestion becomes a critical component in the development of feedback.

In her essay, *Living Composition*, Nancy Sommers offers a great reminder that our feedback does more for our students than to simply point out errors. “To write ‘Be Specific’ in the margins of students’ papers is to encourage a habit of mind—an attentiveness to details and particulars, to words and their meanings—a way of being thoughtful, both on the page and in life. And to comment on their drafts ‘Develop this’ or ‘Analyze more’ is to encourage students to add to the world through writing, to make new ideas possible, by contributing their idiosyncratic voices to the ongoing conversation of humankind” (36). I like the suggestion that Sommers makes; however, I think it is important to take it one-step further by encouraging my students, and when needed, provide an example for them to follow. Encouraging feedback helps students to see the big picture. Maria Treglia reiterates this in her study of students’ perceptions of feedback. “The authors concluded that effective comments need to be 1) detailed and, if possible, provide examples, 2) clearly phrased so that students can understand them, 3) factual, avoiding ‘mere’ differences of opinion’ (180) and 4) positive or encouraging rather than sarcastic” (Treglia, 3). Despite burnout, instructors must always remember how valuable their feedback is to their students. Giving feedback on assignments presents a wonderful opportunity for me to encourage my students to focus on development and growth, rather than a grade. We can design

feedback that allows students to see value in the learning process and to continue climbing their academic hills.

Like many of my colleagues, the further into a stack of papers, the more short and to the point my comments become. I find myself giving the same feedback over and over again, with just a slight revision depending on each student's paper. The entire process is time consuming and exhausting. It is hard to stay fresh and positive and remember the individual. At some point, I usually realize that I need to take a break and get some fresh air, so that I can come back and continue grading in a way that shows an awareness of my audience and the feelings that will accompany the reading of my comments. Nancy Sommers worked with a group of teachers on a project to study feedback. Her findings were astonishing. She looked at computer generated grading comments on grammar and usage issues in comparison to teacher comments in the margins of a set of students papers. "The sharp contrast between the teachers' comments and those of the computer highlighted how arbitrary and idiosyncratic most of our teachers' comments are. Besides, the calm, reasonable language of the computer provided quite a contrast to the hostility and mean-spiritedness of most of the teachers' comments" (Sommers 3). These findings demonstrate that comments prepared in advance of ever opening a single student paper could allow me to address objectively the many common issues and errors that I see in my students' papers.

Preparing a list of grading comments is not a totally new concept as some instructors keep a running list of comments that they simply copy and paste into student papers. Others begin with what are called boilerplate comments, where they have a frame for a comment and they fill in the blanks with the specific information that relates to the student's paper. The issue with this method is that it is not very efficient. An instructor must still find, then copy and paste

their grading comment into the student's paper. By the time one searched for the perfect comment, they could have simply typed the same message into the student's paper.

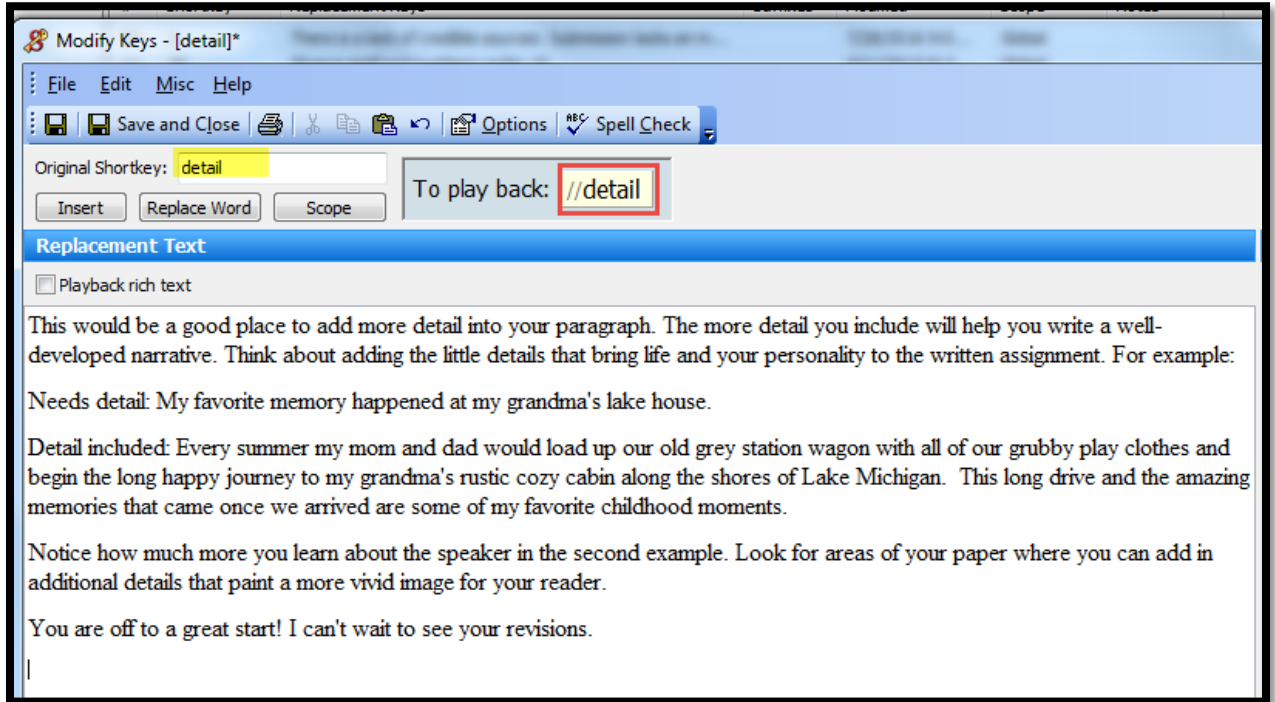
Unfortunately, this method does not fit my desired model of efficiency. I discovered that I could be effective and efficient if I used a program called ShortKeys. Don't let the name of the program fool you—there is nothing short about the comments that you can use. The only thing that is going to be short is the time spent grading each student essay.

In order to avoid the “hostile” comments described by Sommers, one should find a quiet summer afternoon when they are feeling particularly peaceful and kind and begin drafting teaching/feedback comments for all of the various issues that they find in students' papers. Keep Treglia's four suggestions for feedback in mind while drafting comments. “1) detailed and, if possible, provide examples, 2) clearly phrased so that students can understand them, 3) factual, avoiding ‘mere’ differences of opinion’ (180) and 4) positive or encouraging rather than sarcastic” (Treglia, 3). If weak elaboration is an issue, draft a few sentences that discuss how important elaboration is to a paper and a reader's ability to understand the writer's point. Follow that with an example of an unelaborated point and then an example of the same point, only fully elaborate the point so that students can see an example of exactly what you mean when you ask them to elaborate. Follow that with the suggestion that the student look for areas where they can add elaboration to their paper. Continue creating teachable comments without ever looking at a student paper. More than likely, you will come across as a calm and encouraging coach. This approach gets to the heart of the issue that Sommers mentioned in her research. “The first finding from our research on styles of commenting is that *teachers' comments can take students' attention away from their own purposes in writing a particular text and focus that attention on the teachers' purpose in commenting.* The teacher appropriates the text from the student by

confusing the student's purpose in writing the text with her own purpose in commenting” (Sommers 3). Your purpose should be to coach and encourage students to own their own revisions and edits. If instructors create comments that address issues in general, they will not be specifically attacking anything that a student has to say. Instead, they will be purposefully positive and encouraging, while also using sound instruction. The examples provided in the feedback address the type of issue found in the paper, rather than specifically criticizing something the student wrote. With this approach, a student is able to apply the feedback to their writing. The instructor puts the power back into the student’s hands as they revise and look for areas where they can improve. The instructor also avoids owning the revision choices and making the mistakes that Sommers demonstrates most teachers make when she says, “Since the teachers' comments take the students' attention away from their own original purposes, students concentrate more, as I have noted, on what the teachers commanded them to do than on what they are trying to say” (Sommers 5). A carefully pre-constructed comment that speaks to an issue in a student’s paper is going to have a much more effective impact than a comment written in the passion and exhaustion of the moment.

Once I have generated my list of feedback comments, I add them to the program Shortkeys. Shortkeys acts as a storage bank for all of my feedback. I can access any of my comments anytime by simply activating the program and typing the “shortkey” that I have created to identify each of my comments. To begin, I open up the Shortkey program and paste my first comment into the box. I must come up with a short phrase or word that represents the comment. For example, for the following comment I use the phrase “detail” as my Shortkey to activate the comment. Below is an example of how I would type up my comment in Shortkeys. When I am ready to share this comment with a student on his or her paper, I would simply create

a margin comment on his or her paper and type “/ /detail,” and this entire comment will auto populate into the margin comment box:



Below is an example of the Shortkey program in use on a student paper.

Common Core Math

Math

2

Short Key=TS

Common Core math has taken over and replaced the traditional formula once used to teach math in our school systems. Local federal and state officials have fought to make the common core a requirement across the globe for all schools. approach to teaching math is that most students and parents don't understand what is known as standard math and leads to frustration and frustration for students and teachers up. Most teachers will agree that while common core math is a requirement, it is harder to teach and takes unnecessary steps to get the answer for the math problems. State officials think this ridiculous kind of math will make our schools stronger along with strengthening our students' understanding of math, but it along with many others disagree. In today's working society how often do we see the need for common core math vs. standard math in a fast paced working environment is built to be fast paced and 99% of students don't understand the math for them. Over half of today's working population

Short Key=PV

Short Key=remove1st

Rebecca Sims
This was a strong and clear topic sentence. As the reader, I know exactly what to expect from the rest of your paragraph.

Rebecca Sims
Revise to eliminate passive voice: "is taught" is in the passive voice—active voice works best in academic writing: to make it active, revise and avoid helping and linking verbs. For example: Instead of saying, "It is estimated..." Revise to: "Estimates show that in the United States..." Go through your essay and circle all IS WAS, etc and try to revise those sentences to active voice.

Rebecca Sims
Deleted: is taught

Rebecca Sims
Deleted: series of

Rebecca Sims A few seconds ago
Even though I like the way this is written in the first person, I am going to ask you to revise it and change to the 3rd person. Write this as though you are teaching anyone how to complete your process from an objective perspective. Remove all references to I do this and I do that. Instead of saying, "The first thing I do is..." you will write objectively like this: "The first step is to gather..."

Additionally, once my Shortkey comment appears on the paper, I am free to revise it, or even use a more specific example from the student's essay. The Shortkey comment can act as a starting point for additional thoughts or feedback. It allows instructors the opportunity to save time and energy by preventing them from typing the same feedback over and over again as they grade student papers. Sommers' study discussed the issue of instructors providing "rubberstamped" feedback on student's papers. "The students stated that when a teacher writes in the margins or as an end comment, 'choose precise language,' or 'think more about your audience,' revising becomes a guessing game" (7). What Sommers points out here is that students want to know more than that they have simply made an error. Creating a detailed Shortkey comment about what precise language looks like and how to fix a sentence that uses imprecise language addresses and tackles the issue that Sommers' study illuminated. The key to effectively using Shortkeys is thinking about the intended audience for the feedback. Will a student understand the issue and be able to apply the method taught to fix the issue on their own? Will the student be

open to the feedback because it is delivered in a positive and encouraging way? With carefully constructed comments, the answer should be yes.

Thinking about feedback with this approach addresses an important aspect of Sommer's report. "For the most part, teachers do not respond to student writing with the kind of thoughtful commentary which will help students to engage with the issues they are writing about or which will help them think about their purposes and goals in writing a specific text" (8). If instructors construct commentary in a manner that counteracts these issues, students will benefit. "Our comments need to offer students revision tasks of a different order of complexity and sophistication from the ones that they themselves identify, by forcing students back into the chaos, back to the point where they are shaping and restructuring their meaning" (Sommers 8). Instructors that utilize Shortkeys create scenarios where students own their own drafts, and as a result, they see stronger final drafts. Each paper has individualized feedback, and specific areas for students to begin working towards a stronger final draft. Imagine how quickly an instructor can provide feedback on a student's paper when they have created Shortkeys that are positive, encouraging, and instructive comments. The following comment from a former student illustrates the student response to feedback largely constructed using Shortkeys:

I just want to let you know it's been awesome being a student in your class. You've been an amazing teacher. You explain things thoroughly and thoughtfully. I honestly was dreading this class and you've really changed my opinion about English class and how to really apply myself for the better. Most importantly, you are honest and you obviously care about each and every one of your students. You're a great teacher. Thank you for everything. I wish you the best in everything you wish to pursue in your life and may you and your family have a great rest of the year!

This student did not know that her instructor was using a program to provide feedback. What she knew was that the feedback was useful and detailed enough that she felt cared for while she learned how improve her writing and ultimately gained tremendous confidence in the process. Using a tool like Shortkeys allows for effective and efficient feedback that ultimately saves faculty from burning out and enhances the overall learning environment.

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Rebecca Sims

Professor Sue Wood

ENG 6220 - Teaching Grammar in the Context of Writing

29 July 2012

Grammar? In a Narrative

Adults enroll in my Reading and Writing Strategies course with very little confidence and even less experience with grammar and writing. This teaching unit is designed to help students overcome some of their initial fears, while also helping them to develop confidence as writers. I will achieve this goal through carefully developed assignments that progressively become more difficult. They will first brainstorm and write about a self-selected topic that is personal, and therefore easily accessible.

Students can easily come up with a list of memories from the past, and then describe one of those memories. I do not mention the use of proper spelling or grammar; instead, I focus the first days on drafting, outlining and using descriptive words. Approaching grammar in the context of writing suggests avoiding explicit grammar instruction. Modeling allows me to demonstrate the methods that I desire students to adopt in their writing. I am a fan of modeling, so I was thrilled to see this practice supported multiple times in the materials for the course Teaching Grammar in the Context of Writing. Weaver supports the notion that students learn best when the instructor writes alongside them. "It is important that teachers become writers right along with their students" (Weaver, 67). By focusing on the use of descriptive writing, I am putting into practice one of Weaver's theories that, "Students grasp the importance of specific details within one or two class periods and with guidance can quickly produce complete poems

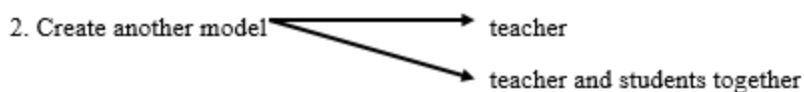
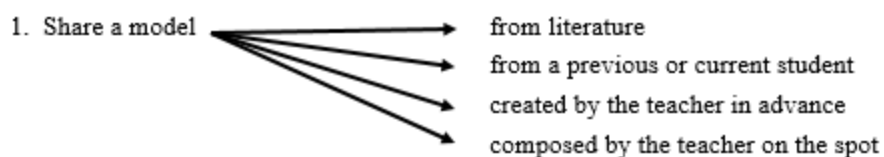
that enable them to feel like successful writers” (p. 74). Although I am not asking students to write poems, the idea presented here also applies to the narrative essay.

Experiencing early success with writing is very important in my course. Students who engage with the material are more likely to continue coming to class. Throughout my unit, I use my original examples along with examples from literature, taken from Weaver’s textbook, to model examples of the various techniques that I want students to practice using in their writing. My goal in this unit is for students to draft a narrative freely and then repeatedly return to their sentences and specifically look at ways that they can enhance what they have written using the following descriptive techniques: free modifiers, appositives, “out-of-order” adjectives, present participles, and absolutes. I also focus on adding transitions and identifying and revising passive voice verbs into active voice verbs. As part of the revision process, I teach each of these grammatical elements in the context of the students’ writing. Weaver made a statement in her text, *Grammar to Enrich and Enhance Writing* that greatly influenced my approach to teaching grammatical concepts. “But instead of correcting error-ridden sentences on the overhead, I can show students powerful examples from their writing, my writing, and literature. It makes sense to stare at and discuss effective writing. That way kids are learning about writing at many layers simultaneously -- meaning, beauty, and the effect” (Weaver, 133). She goes on to say, “Real editing is all about meaning and patterns, not errors” (Weaver, 136). For many years, I believed editing and revision simply involved correcting errors, but now, I want the revision process to allow students to think about their content. I can see how using grammatical concepts to enhance students’ writing will allow students to master these techniques instead of feeling confused by them when taught in isolation. I want students to learn how to use content enhancing approaches for their revision. To achieve this important goal, I will use modeling techniques and then ask

students to examine these techniques in action and apply them to their writing. Using Weaver's approach, "the emphasis is on writing, not grammar" (Weaver, 66).

When choosing a teaching method for working with grammar in the context of writing, I selected the plan found on page 23 of Weaver's *The Grammar Plan Book*. Below, I have included an outline of the plan, as presented by Weaver.

Weaver's plan:



3. Compose (or do a related activity) in small groups or pairs; sharing clarify as needed

4. Compose a sentence or sentences individually; share. Teacher can check the work if desired and possible.

5. Ask students to apply concept -- that is, to use the grammatical element or writing skill-- in their own writing.

6. Consider giving students a checklist that includes the item, to use in their final revision or editing phase.

7. Provide for feedback from peers and /or provide teacher feedback.

8. Teach a new minilesson and/or hold revising or editing conferences to reteach a concept as needed, showing students how to apply(or correctly apply) the concept in their own writing.

9. If needed, go through the process again with a different piece of writing. At the very least, continue helping students apply this concept as they revise and/or edit other pieces of writing. (Weaver, 23).

Regardless of experience and skill, students learn best when provided with solid models and the opportunity to practice newly acquired skills. At the end of my unit, after students have spent ten days writing and revising their narratives, they will have the opportunity to share their narratives with their peers. Sharing with peers allows students the opportunity to display their work and hear others' reactions. During this phase of the process, the audience writes down favorite lines, images or words from the narratives, and then they each share their reactions with the author at the conclusion of the reading. This final step in the process allows students to see the impact of their revisions on an audience.

As instructors, we will also have a period of reflection in order to determine whether or not this approach is effective at achieving the desired outcomes. Instructors should review final project submissions to determine if their students have effectively used the grammar concepts effectively in their writing. Instructors should take the time to look back at student work from the early days of the course and compare that work with the work submitted at the end of the term. Additionally, when students complete new assignments, instructors should look for mastery of the grammar skills as an indicator that students have mastered those key concepts. If the students are unable to demonstrate mastery, instructors may have to re-teach the concepts, or even revise the approach, if it appears that students are not able to apply the concepts to future writing. The goal of this project is to allow students to learn how to use grammatical elements in their writing in a way that makes sense and is applicable to all writing, and not simply a term learned in isolation. I am less concerned with students understanding the names of the grammatical terms and their definitions, and more concerned with their ability to improve their writing through the use of key grammar concepts.

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Title of Lesson: Personal Narrative

Learning Outcomes:

The student will be able to:

1. Develop a personal narrative.
2. Create an outline for an essay.
3. Expand a paragraph into an essay
4. Incorporate various descriptive techniques to enhance their written content.
 - a. Free modifiers
 - b. Appositives
 - c. “Out-of-Order” adjectival
 - d. Present Participial
 - e. Absolutes
5. Revise passive sentences into active sentences.
6. Effectively use transitions

Materials:

- Overheads with Notes
- Outline Examples
- Paragraph examples
- Selected readings for revision
- Handouts for student work

Day One	Day One: Introduce the Personal Narrative
Lecture	Introduction: A personal narrative is a story that allows a writer to share in-depth details about one event from his or her life. This event can be happy, sad, life changing or memorable. When you think back on your life, what events stand out for you? Was it the day that you hit a home run in your t-ball game? Was it the day you met your future spouse? Was it your favorite family vacation?
Handout	Day One Handout: The Personal Narrative
Activity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Brainstorm a list of 10 memories or events from your life that have had a significant impact on you. Try to use five words or less for each event. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Examples: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Birth of first child-Charlie ii. Showing and winning grand-champion steer iii. Wolf tracking in Minnesota iv. Studying abroad in England v. Moving to Cincinnati

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> vi. Leaving CA for IN for college vii. Captain of League champs-soccer viii. Camping with Dad in Kernville ix. Yosemite with Marshall and the kids x. 1st year of teaching <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Go through your list and choose your favorite three memories or life events 3. Write five sentences describing each of the three events that you selected. In your sentences, tell us about the memory. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Modeling: Example: Wolf tracking in MN <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. During my sophomore year at DePauw University, I selected the Wolf tracking experience as my January Term class. I grew up in California, so I was unprepared for life in MN, in January, and had to do quite a bit of shopping to get ready. After my long flight to MN, I discovered that the airline had lost my luggage. Lost luggage was nothing compared to being sent out into the woods every day to look for signs of wolves. The real hi-light of the adventure was meeting the people who also chose to track wolves. 4. Re-read your five sentences. Do you have a favorite sentence? Select your favorite sentence from your list of five. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Example: After my long flight to MN, I discovered that the airline had lost my luggage. 5. Collect example sentences from students and add them to the dry erase board or overhead projector. 6. Begin a discussion about what we like about the sentences. If possible, draw attention to descriptions that jump out at you. Start to talk about words that we could add to make the sentences even more interesting. Below is one sentence that we will take through several revision steps, working to add interesting adjectival and adverbials. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Example: After my long flight to MN, I discovered that the airline had lost my luggage. b. Start asking questions to elicit responses: How would you describe the flight? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Exhaustingly long c. Example: After my exhaustingly long flight to MN, I discovered that the airline had lost my luggage. d. Where were you flying from and how would you describe that place? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. California-sunny and warm, beautiful ii. That is starting to sound like a Cover Girl commercial...how could we use that? iii. Example: After my exhaustingly long flight from sunny, breezy, beautiful Cover Girl, I mean California
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">iv. That creates a great effect for the reader—people can hear the jingle and imagine a beautiful girl and then make the association to beautiful California, which you are about to contrast with MN.e. So, you described CA in detail, how are you going to describe MN?<ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Example: mind-numbingly cold and frozen tundraii. These words create an image in the reader’s mind, and we can picture this descriptioniii. Example: After my exhaustingly long flight from sunny, breezy, beautiful Cover Girl, I mean California, to the mind-numbingly cold and frozen tundra that is MNf. Before we move away from this scene of you traveling from CA to MN, should we address how you felt as you set off on this new adventure?<ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Becky, excited and yet apprehensive....ii. Describing the narrator early in the sentence provides a terrific example of adjectives out of order. They help us understand our speaker and his/her state of mind. To bring more attention to the noun, writers have the option to split up their adjectives, so one comes before the noun, and two other adjectives follow the word you described. Writers should avoid using three adjectives in a row, as it will detract from the word that they are attempting to describe.g. We are ready to find out what happened AFTER your long flight from CA to MN. You introduced us to the idea that something happened when you started your sentence with that great dependent clause marker word, AFTER. So what happened? So far you said, “I discovered.” Discovered is a great verb, but can you describe how you discovered?<ul style="list-style-type: none">i. I discovered with great dismay that the airline had lost my luggage.ii. I discovered with immense frustration that the airline had lost my luggage.iii. I made the alarming discovery that the airline had lost my luggage.iv. I calmly discovered with great dismay that the airline had lost my luggage.v. There are many ways to describe how you discovered this news—work on adding just the right information to add and enhance the development of your character and your story.
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	<p>h. Do you also have any ideas about how you would describe this airline that has just lost your luggage? Does it remind you of anything? Can you think of any comparisons?</p> <p>i. Possible Response: A child? A child that you trusted only to find out that they were irresponsible. Perfect, let's add that image to our sentence.</p> <p>i. First DRAFT: After my long flight to MN, I discovered that the airline had lost my luggage.</p> <p>j. Revised DRAFT: Excited and yet apprehensive and insecure after my exhaustingly long flight from sunny, breezy, beautiful Cover Girl, I mean California, to the mind-numbingly cold and frozen tundra that is MN, I discovered that the airline, the irresponsible child, lost my luggage.</p> <p>k. Here we have taken one sentence through some questions that allowed us to think about how we can use language and images to enhance the overall meaning of our writing. We learned about our narrator, and we also learned about two places. We have created an image in our reader's mind.</p>
Apply	7. Now it is your turn. Take the sentence that you selected and ask yourself a series of questions to help you add descriptive imagery and create pictures in the reader's mind as they read your sentences.
Homework	8. Take your remaining sentences through this same narrative. Enhance each sentence with words and phrases that will help your reader to see the scene that you are describing. Think about your five senses as you write. Using sensory language will help you create more vivid images in your writing. What did you: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. See b. Hear c. Feel d. Taste e. Smell

Day	Day Two: Review the Narrative Paragraph
Lecture	1. Everyone completed narrative paragraph revisions for homework. Take them out and read them to a partner. Ask your partner to share the sentence that they like the most and the least. After hearing feedback, decide which two sentences are your favorite and least favorite and write the two sentences on a sheet of paper. Turn in your sentences to your instructor.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. The instructor will collect all of the sentences and randomly distribute them to the class. You will receive someone else's paper to review. 3. Let's take time to look at some examples of how authors use adjectives in their writing. We often see adjectives right before the noun that they modify or describe. For example, we might see a pretty girl, with the word pretty describing or modifying the noun girl. However, writers can have fun and create great effects by detaching the adjective from the noun that it is modifying. When this happens, these "modifiers are called <i>free modifiers</i>." (Weaver, 75). In the following sentences from Weaver's book, we see examples of <i>free modifiers</i>. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Lara's eyes were riveted on the water, <u>sparkling with pinpoints of light that danced invitingly</u>. b. <u>Sparkling with pinpoints of light that danced invitingly</u>, the water caught Laura's eye. c. <u>Sparkling</u>, the water caught Laura's eye as pinpoints of light danced invitingly. d. The water, <u>sparkling</u>, caught Laura's attention with its pinpoints of light that danced invitingly. e. <u>Screaming loudly</u>, and infant finally got on Bill's nerves. f. An infant, <u>screaming loudly</u>, finally got on Bill's nerves. 4. As we examine each of the examples on the overhead projector, we can see how the free modifiers work to create interesting and dynamic sentences. By moving the modifier around, we create new meaning and interesting images. Notice in these examples how the modifiers are often part of a group of words called a phrase. We can move that entire phrase around in our sentence. Notice how the comma is used to set the phrase apart from the part of the sentence that it is describing.
Handout(s)	Free Modifiers, Review the Narrative Paragraph, Activity with Modifiers
Activity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When writing with adjectives remember the following information from Weaver on page 97: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. "Adjectives modifying the subject of the sentence (or clause) may occur before it, after it, or at the end of the sentence." b. "Wherever these extra-detail, free modifying adjectives occur, they are separated from the rest of the sentence by a comma (by two commas if they occur right after the subject). Such adjectives don't always modify the grammatical subject, but often they do." c. "Sometimes the out of order adjectives or adjectives can be moved to another position in the sentence and still sound good -- or even better." d. We will now look at some examples that Weaver shares via Dia Calhoun's <i>Firegold</i> (1999). Pay attention to the underlined

	<p>modifiers. See where they are placed. Let's take a minute and connect each modifier to the word that it is describing so that we can see how this author uses words to describe nouns or pronouns.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. <u>Taut, arched</u>, the bow shimmered, free from its linen covering; someone had strung it.”(p131). ii. He saw himself shackled to a post, <u>wild-haired, slaving</u>” (p.41). iii. <u>Tall and rangy</u>, she was among the best runners in their Bristol and hoped to be a Master Hunter someday. (p.256). iv. <u>Keen-eyed, long-limbed</u>, they wore leather and carried gleaming bows. (p. 202). v. Someone, something, called Jonathan's name. He looked at his father, then at Uncle Wilford, who were both staring at him, <u>bewildered</u>.” (p. 74). vi. <u>Unconvinced</u>, Jonathan dug his heel in the snow. (p. 79). vii. <u>Dazzled</u>, Jonathan squinted: he was half-blinded, but unable to look away. (p. 196). viii. The nice shadow reared up, <u>huge, grotesque</u>, cast on the house behind him. (p. 145). ix. Rosamund looked, <u>unperturbed</u>, at the brown stains. (p. 98).
Apply	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Take the two sentences that you were given and try using free modifiers to re-write the sentences. 2. Return your version to the original author. Share the changes that you made.
Homework	Take your five sentences and implement free modifiers in each sentence.

Day	Day Three: Narrative Paragraph outlined into Essay
Introduction/ Review	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students have completed paragraphs with free modifiers that they added to each sentence to enhance the overall descriptive quality of their work. Today, we are going to look at how each of the five sentences in the narrative could be broken into a more detailed paragraph. Through revising the sentences, we have all seen the need to say more about what was happening at that exact point in our narrative.
Handout	Narrative Outline, Narrative Outline Example

Lecture	<p>2. If we go back to the original instructor example of the trip from CA to MN, we can see how this paragraph could be broken into five detailed body paragraphs. Let's use an outline to pull apart our original five sentences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. During my sophomore year at DePauw University, I selected the Wolf tracking experience as my January Term class. I grew up in California, so I was unprepared for life in MN in January and had to do quite a bit of shopping to get ready. After my long flight to MN, I discovered that the airline had lost my luggage. Lost luggage was nothing compared to being sent out into the woods every day to look for signs of wolves. The real hi-light of the adventure was meeting the people who also chose to track wolves. <p>3. Outlining an Essay: Share a blank outline and talk through how each part of your story represents part of an essay. When we tell stories or narrate events, we have a beginning, middle and an end. The most interesting stories have vivid details and imagery that almost make the reader feel like they are there as part of the story.</p> <p>I. Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Get the reader's attention by using a "hook." B. Give some background information if necessary. C. Thesis or focus statement. <p>II. First paragraph of your narrative--describe the beginning of your narrative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Topic sentence explaining the beginning of your narrative B. Elaborate with details and description C. Additional elaboration D. Transition to the middle of the narrative <p>III. Second paragraph of your narrative--describe the middle of your narrative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Topic sentence explaining the middle of your narrative B. Elaborate with details and description C. Additional elaboration D. Transition to the end of the narrative <p>IV. Third paragraph of your narrative--describe how your narrative ends</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Topic sentence explaining the end of your narrative B. Elaborate with details and description C. Additional elaboration D. Transition to your conclusion <p>Conclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Summary of the narrative B. Personal comment and concluding statement
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4. Now, let's take our example and figure out how to place our body paragraphs into the outline:

Outline for a Narrative Essay—Cali Girl Goes to the North Woods

I. Introduction

- A. Get the reader's attention by using a "hook."

During my sophomore year at DePauw University, I selected the Wolf tracking experience as my January Term class.

II. First paragraph of your narrative

I grew up in California, so I was unprepared for life in MN in January and had to do quite a bit of shopping to get ready.

III. Second paragraph of your narrative: After my long flight to MN, I discovered that the airline had lost my luggage.

IV. Third paragraph of your narrative: Lost luggage was nothing compared to being sent out into the woods every day to look for signs of wolves.

V. Fourth paragraph of your narrative: The real hi-light of the adventure was meeting the people who also chose to track wolves.

Conclusion

5. Once we have each of our main ideas figured out for each of our body paragraphs, we return to our outline and add the supporting details that we will discuss in each paragraph. The supporting details will relate directly back to the main idea of that paragraph.

Outline for a Narrative Essay—Cali girl Goes to the North Woods

I. Introduction

- A. Get the reader's attention by using a "hook." During my sophomore year at DePauw University, I selected the Wolf tracking experience as my January Term class.

B. Give some background information if necessary.

C. Thesis or focus statement.

II. First paragraph of your narrative—describe the beginning of your narrative

A. Topic sentence explaining the beginning of your narrative I grew up in California, so I was unprepared for life in MN in January and had to do quite a bit of shopping to get ready.

B. Elaborate with details and description buying WINTER gear

	<p>C. Additional elaboration training for cross country skiing and snowshoeing</p> <p>D. Transition to the middle of the narrative</p> <p>III. Second paragraph of your narrative--describe the middle of your narrative</p> <p>A. Topic sentence explaining the middle of your narrative After my long flight to MN, I discovered that the airline had lost my luggage.</p> <p>B. Elaborate with details and description arriving in MN with only the clothes on my back—left balmy 70-degree weather for -20-degree weather</p> <p>C. Additional elaboration wearing the same underwear for five days and borrowing clothes from strangers</p> <p>D. Transition to the next part of the narrative</p> <p>IV. Third paragraph of your narrative—continue describing your narrative</p> <p>A. Topic sentence explaining this part of your narrative Lost luggage was nothing compared to being sent out into the woods every day to look for signs of wolves.</p> <p>B. Elaborate with details and description here is a trail map and compass—see you in 8 hrs</p> <p>C. Additional elaboration “training:” kill sites, scat, and signs of wolves</p> <p>D. Transition to your conclusion</p> <p>V. Fourth paragraph of your narrative—describe how your narrative ends</p> <p>A. Topic sentence explaining the end of your narrative The real highlight of the adventure was meeting the people who also chose to track wolves.</p> <p>B. Elaborate with details and description: I am sharing cabin space with a guy that thinks he is a wolf—creepy</p> <p>C. Additional elaboration: allergic to everything and bonding at a deep level</p> <p>D. Transition to your conclusion</p> <p>Conclusion</p> <p>A. Summary of the narrative</p> <p>B. Personal comment and concluding statement</p>
Activity	Begin brainstorming the main ideas for your essay.
Apply	Begin creating an outline.

Homework	Complete an outline for your Narrative Essay. You may need to revise your initial five sentences to make sure that they clearly develop your narrative into a chronological sequence of events.
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Day	Day Four: Outline into Essay
Lecture	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Today we are going to focus on writing our topic sentence and introductory paragraph. Your opening paragraph should capture the reader's attention and lead them into the story. Let's talk about three strategies for opening a narrative. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. One technique is to start telling the story immediately. With this technique, you would simply start discussing the events of your narrative. For example, "My mom and I went shopping at our local REI store with a long list of winter clothes to buy for my adventure in Minnesota." b. Another technique is to set the stage for the story by introducing the scene. For example, you might say, "It was a cold fall day when I called my parents and told them I was planning to go wolf tracking for January term." c. A final technique would be to start your paragraph with an interesting thought. For example, "I should have known that there might be some very bizarre people interested in tracking wolves in the middle of winter!"
Handout(s)	Transitions, Narrative One, Narrative Two, and Narrative Three
Activity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Let's take 10 minutes and work on writing our opening sentences for our introductory paragraph. We will share our first sentence with the class when we finish writing. 3. Take turns coming up to the board and writing your initial sentence for everyone to see. 4. For the next 20 minutes, we are going to spend time talking about each one of the sentences on the board. We will go through each one and discuss what we like and what we would like to see improved. Your job, while we are talking about your sentence, is to take notes and ask questions of your classmates about your sentence. Your classmates will also ask you questions about your sentence, to offer you better feedback.
Apply	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. After we discuss each sentence, we will spend the next 20 minutes of class working silently and individually on writing additional sentences to begin our narrative. These sentences should introduce the reader to the scene, any background information that is needed to understand the narrative, as well as introduce the characters in the narrative.

	<p>2. Once you have finished your introductory paragraph, you will begin working on your first body paragraph.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. As you write, your body paragraphs keep in mind that your narrative should follow a timeline. b. Make sure you include details from your five senses, as well as any explanations and some dialogue to build up the excitement in your story. c. In each of your paragraphs, ask yourself who or what is the focus of this paragraph? When and where is this part of my story taking place? What is it that I'm trying to share? d. As you develop your story, make sure that it has a point. Before you even begin writing you should be well aware of what the main point of your story is going to be. What is the purpose of this narrative? You don't want to end up telling a story that rambles on and on and on and never gets to the point. e. You may even want to consider the 5Ws and 1H. These are: Who? What? When? Where? Why? And How? Your story should embed answers to each of these questions as you share the details of your narrative. f. Use vivid imagery and descriptive details as you develop your story. If you use specific images to tell your story, your reader will be able to relate to what you are describing and will also feel like they are a part of your story. g. Always keep in mind how you are organizing your story. Most narratives follow a specific chronological order. If you do not use chronological order, make sure you understand why you have chosen to do that. h. Each of your body paragraphs should have clear topic sentences and contain specific supporting detail sentences that further clarify or describe the topic of that paragraph. Make sure that each of the sentences in the body paragraphs supports the topic of that paragraph
Homework	For your homework tonight, you will draft the remaining paragraphs of your narrative.

Day	Day Four: Revising the Essay-Transitions
Lecture	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Today we are going to focus on the revision process! Revision is less about fixing errors and more about making writing stronger! 2. Transitions enhance the readability and flow of an entire paragraph and paper. Think about using transitions from the lists to help enhance the flow of your narrative.

	<p>3. HANDOUT: Information on Transitions is copied from <i>The St. Martin's Handbook</i> (2003, pp. 126-127) as cited in Weaver's <i>Grammar to Enrich and Enhance Writing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Transitions to signal sequence: again, also, and, and then, besides, finally, first... second... third, furthermore, last, moreover, next, still, to b. Transitions to signal time: after a few days, after a while, afterward, as long as, as soon as, at last, at that time, before, earlier, immediately, in the meantime, in the past, lately, later, meanwhile, now, presently, simultaneously, since, so far, soon, then, thereafter, until, when c. Transitions to signal comparison: again, also, in the same way, likewise, once more, similarly d. Transitions to signal contrast: although, but, despite, even though, however, in contrast, in spite of, instead, nevertheless, nonetheless, on the contrary, on the one hand... on the other hand, regardless, still, though, yet e. Transitions to signal examples: after all, even, for example, for instance, indeed, in fact, of course, specifically, such as, the following example, to illustrate f. Transitions to signal cause-and-effect: accordingly, as a result, because, consequently, for this purpose, hence, so, then, therefore, thus, to this end g. Transitions to signal place: above, and Jason two, below, beyond, closer to, elsewhere, far, far there on, here, near, nearby, opposite to, there, to the left, to the right h. Transitions to signal concession: although it is true that, granted that, I admit that, it may appear that, naturally, of course i. Transitions to signal summary, repetition, or conclusion: as a result, as has been noted, as I have said, as mentioned earlier, as we have seen, in any event, in conclusion, in other words, in short, on the whole, therefore, to summarize
Activity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We are going to examine a few narratives—one is written by a published author, one is by a student, like you, and still another is written by a member of a community. Although these examples are longer than your narratives, they will allow you the opportunity to see how authors effectively use transitions. 2. Take a marker or highlighter and circle each of the transitions that you find throughout each of the following narratives.

	<p>3. Also, note where you think the author could have effectively added a transition or used an alternate transition from your list to enhance their story.</p>
Homework	<p>1. Collect a list of transitions from the three stories you will read for homework tonight. Using the list provided, as well as the transitions you found in the stories you read for homework, work on adding transitions to your narrative. If you have already added transitions, work on revising them within each of your sentences. Possibly swap out one ineffective transition for a better choice.</p>
Narrative HANDOUTS	<p>Narrative One:</p> <p>Not a Funny Story</p> <p>By Emily Franklin</p> <p><i>A note to readers: I planned on making this essay funny. I thought I'd write a sarcastic, amusing letter to a former bully or the girl who made me feel crappy in eighth grade. I am funny. Really. My novels are filled with wry humor and wit. And yet, when I sat down to write about this particular incident, funny isn't what came out.</i></p> <p>Say it's sixth or seventh grade and say you're one of those girls who is not quite in one group and not quite in another. You can't be categorized. You don't know this at the time, but some girls find this a problem. People like to have you fit neatly into one social heading: alpha girls, bookish girls, poor girls. You—h happily—float from one group to the next.</p> <p>This means that while you are welcome in all the groups, you are integral to none of them. No one waits for you to go to lunch. No one feels their party is incomplete without you. On the other hand, you always have a place to sit and can chat equally well with B about her new hair cut and crush on A or S about her parents' divorce or C about writing stories, which you both love to do.</p> <p>When X announces her sleepover, you can't wait to attend. There will be laughter way late at night, food tucked into bathrobes, dares and truths about boys, private jokes to reference the following Monday.</p>

But then you can't make it. Not because you don't want to—nothing sounds better than sitting with your knees tucked to your chin while X braids your hair or asks who you like. But you've got a high fever, a serious infection—again—and wind up missing not only the sleepover but the whole following week of school.

When you enter the classroom on Monday morning, hang up your red book bag on its metal hook, you see W and wave, looking forward to hearing every detail of the sleepover jokes and conversations you missed. But W turns away from you. So do K and B. In fact, no one will make eye contact with you, and when you decide it's not just your imagination, you approach E and B and say, "Hey, what's going on?" they turn away.

You experience the same feelings as watching the scary movies everyone else loves but you hate: chills, rapid heartbeat, dry mouth, fear, that sickening pull in your gut. You try again, just to talk to someone. Anyone. But even the people who have no one to talk to—the girl who doesn't wash her hair, the boy who still picks his nose—they won't speak to you.

Finally, S with her sad eyes, divorced parents, and tiny voice, says, "Just so you know, I didn't sign it."

You ask what she means.

"The petition. The one W wrote."

This is what happened when you were away. You missed the sleepover and W moved in for the kill. You never realized she was jockeying for some social position, or how it's always a game, even if you chose not to play it. So W writes a document, forms a club called the I Hate [Your Name Here] club. Like all clubs, it has focus, a sole goal: hating you. She works on it the whole week and convinces some kids easily. They are eager to please W and sign without question. Others take work—W has to persuade them, make them long to be part of the majority of haters, woo them with campaign promises. She is the president of the club.

But there are those who will not be so easily conned or swayed. For them, W offers them the chance to just be in the band. It's like a lesser form of hating. You just sing the club's theme song. But still, you can't speak to the subject.

S is the only person in the entire grade who joins neither the band nor the club.

I could tell you how this is all real, how hellish it was, how alone I felt, or how I rallied. I called W's second-in-command and when she hung up on me, I went right to her mother. Once I involved the parents, the club crumbled, but the damages were never addressed, just absorbed into everyday life.

We should have talked about it. We should have all spoken with teachers and parents. I never did.

I tell this story to my own children so that they will tell me, so they will speak.

But mainly, I tell my children so that they will be like S and stand up—though standing up is difficult and sometimes dangerous. I tell my children this because it is easy to pass it off as a funny incident that happened a long time ago. I tell them now because as a parent I am amazed at how quick people are to say “Well, girls are mean at that age” or “Everyone does stuff like that at one point or another” or “I wouldn't go back to that age if you paid me a million dollars.” Where do you draw the line between not being nice and being cruel? At what point is it unacceptable? How threatened can you feel going to school each day?

I tell this story now because it should have been told then. Because out of a class of sixty people, only one of was by my side. Only one said no.

*Emily Franklin is the author of over a dozen books for teens, including two critically-acclaimed series, *The Principles of Love* and *The Other Half of Me*. Emily's other young adult titles include the novels in the *Chalet Girls* series, and the forthcoming *Half-Life of Planets*. She has also written two novels for adults, *Liner Notes* and *The Girls' Almanac*. She also edited the anthologies *It's a Wonderful Lie: 26 Truths about Life in Your Twenties* and *How to Spell Chanukah: 18 Writers on 8 Nights of Lights*. Check out her website at www.emilyfranklin.com.*

Reference:

Franklin, Emily. (2012, March 19). *Not a Funny Story*. Retrieved May 20, 2012, from <http://dearbully.com/Not a Funny Story>

Narrative Two:

Predator Call

By Jed Portman

[Rene Anderson, a 55-year-old Idaho woman, was bowhunting last September when she was charged by a wolf. She tells the story:](#)

"I WAS HUNTING ALONE outside my hometown of Headquarters on a cloudy fall afternoon. I prefer to be in the woods alone. Besides, my husband, Denny, has had some health problems and isn't hunting much these days. I planned to hunt for elk, but I had a wolf tag with me.

Denny had dropped me off on top of a ridge and intended to pick me up at the bottom. I hiked in about three-quarters of a mile, cow calling occasionally. Suddenly, I heard a crunch in the trees to my right. I looked over and made out a gray wolf about 120 yards away. I could tell he saw me at the same time that I saw him -- he made eye contact, stiffened, and began running directly toward me.

I didn't have a lot of time to think. My mind and heart were racing. The wind was at my back, and I thought, He must be able to smell me. He knew that I was human and he was coming at me anyway. I couldn't find the air in my lungs to yell. Should I shoot him? The wolf kept coming. Bow or pistol? I dropped my bow and drew my .44 Magnum Smith & Wesson. The wolf leapt onto a pile of logs about 10 feet away, then started moving in my direction. I could see that it was going to be him or me.

My first shot hit the wolf on the left side of the head. It stopped him, but it took three more rounds to put him down for good. I called my husband on my two-way radio and said, "Get me out of here!"

We needed a third person to help carry out the wolf's 90-pound carcass later that night. Lucky for me, I had that wolf tag. I hadn't planned to use it until later in the year in another area.

I know that wolves aren't usually so aggressive, but this experience is fresh in my mind when I see wolf tracks where I hunt. I'll always carry that pistol, just in case.

Reference

Portman, J. (2012). Predator Call. *Field & Stream*, 117(1), 11.

Narrative Three:

Anonymous Author

It was 32 years ago; I was a young lad of about 10 years old. My dad worked for 3M in New Ulm Minnesota. Every summer 3M had a fishing tournament. My dad asked me to go with him. Friday night before the tournament Dad told me to go go through all my tackle, to get ready for the tournament Saturday morning. I did for what seemed like an eternity for a 10 year old, it was actually 10 minutes. After I did my eternity of preparing for the upcoming day, I went to play star light moon light with friends. Morning came, and dad woke me at 5:30. We had breakfast consisting of eggs over easy, toast, bacon, and for me milk, dad was coffee. At 6:00 we headed for Lake Washington. It was a very uneventful trip. When arriving at the lake I noticed two things I will never forget. The first is the cool breeze the lake gives off in the early morning; the second is the feeling of warmth that I felt as the sun hit my face. Dad and I put our little boat in the water. It was a small 14 foot boat with a 6 horse power motor. It wasn't much but it got us around the lake. As the motor screamed we motored out to our fist spot to fish. We still fished for an hour or so. Dad drank his coffee, and I my coke, the sun felt good on my face as I dreamed about the big one that would not get away. Nothing bit, dad decided to try trolling. Trolling for fish was a new experience for me as most of the fishing I did was sitting on the river edge and letting the current do the work. Not knowing what I was doing for sure, dad did his best to help me. (Remember the lack of preparation) Dad let out line for me, the worst thing that could happen did. A knot in my line, not a small one, it was huge. It looked like something out of the movie "*Arachnophobia*". Dad was not just mad he was irate. He gave me his poll and said fish. I did no questions asked. I tried not to listen to him, but some of the words out of mouth would make a sailor blush. Dad got the mess figured out and gave me my poll. This time I let out my own line. Dad mumbled "you want to ruin my day, here, do it yourself. We will see." I don't know how much line I let out, but it was a lot. Not much time went by, when I felt a lite tug. I set the hook, Dad said "YOU GOT IT" I reeled in a bit and said no, that I was going to reel in and check anyway. As I worked my line in there was a lite tug now and then, the end of the line came closer and closer with every turn of the crank. Dad looked in the direction of my line, then again, and then with his blue eyes as big as pizzas one more time. Dad had no emotion, acted very unexcited, and very quietly asked me for my fishing poll. I handed it to him, and looked at him with confusion in my eyes. "Dad what is it" I asked. His response was "a fish, a big one and we have no net." As he said that I looked at the water and saw the back of the biggest fish I had saw in my life. Dad looked around for a moment then yelled to another boat "Do you have a net! The people in the other boat yelled back with a response. I didn't hear what they said, and neither did dad. Dad looked at me and said "I don't know what they said but we need a net." We motored over to the other boat, got the net, netted my fish, and started small talk. I don't remember what was said, I just remember it was big. The fish was weighed in at 10 and ½ pounds. I won

	first place in the tournament for biggest fish caught and the heaviest amount of Northern pike caught. I did have it mounted. After 30 years the poor thing was in such I had to toss it, but I still have the memory.
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Day	Day Five: Revising the Essay-Active Voice vs. Passive Voice
Lecture	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Today we are going to focus on active voice vs. passive voice. 2. What is ACTIVE voice? What is PASSIVE voice? <p>Change Passive Voice to Active Voice</p> <p>“In most cases, writing sentences in passive voice is discouraged because it can obscure the subject of the sentence, and confuse the reader. It also usually creates a wordy and awkward sentence construction” (Retrieved from http://grammar.yourdictionary.com/style-and-usage/change-passive-voice-to-active-voice.html on September 20, 2016).</p> <p>Below, I have re-written these passive voice sentences in the active voice. Notice the difference in how the verbs are written, and the impact that it has on the sentences.</p> <p>Authors have the option of using either active voice or passive voice in their writing. In most cases, English teachers discourage writing sentences in the passive voice because it can obscure the subject of the sentence, and confuse the reader. It also usually creates a wordy and awkward sentence construction.</p> <p>The following information was retrieved from http://grammar.yourdictionary.com/style-and-usage/change-passive-voice-to-active-voice.html on September 20, 2016.</p> <p>Defining Passive Voice</p> <p>Every sentence contains, at minimum, a subject and an action. The subject is the person or thing the sentence is about, and the action is what the subject is doing. When a sentence is in active voice, the subject doing the action comes before the action. For example:</p>

- I swim. *I* is the subject. *Swim* is the action. The subject doing the action comes before the action, so it is immediately clear to the reader who is doing what.

When a sentence is in passive voice, the subject comes after the action. For example:

- Swimming is something I do. Here, the action is swimming. The subject is I. The sentence is in passive voice, since the person doing the action (I) is not mentioned until after the action

Some sentences also contain [objects](#)- the thing being acted upon. This can make it more difficult to determine whether the sentence is in passive voice. For example, here is a sentence in active voice:

- Anna hits the ball. Anna is the subject. Hits is the action. The ball is the object.

That same sentence in passive voice reads:

- The ball is hit by Anna.
- The ball is the object- not the subject of the sentence. The ball is not doing an action. Therefore, it should be after the subject (Anna)

Tips to Recognize the Passive Voice

Sometimes a sentence in passive voice does not necessarily sound "wrong" or wordy. However, it is still [best](#) to write in active voice when possible.

In [order](#) to recognize that a sentence is in passive voice, watch out for these keywords:

- Be
- Is
- Are
- A
- Was
- Were
- Has been
- Have been
- Will be
- Being

	<p><i>Change Passive Voice to Active Voice.</i> (n.d.). Retrieved September 19, 2016, from http://grammar.yourdictionary.com/style-and-usage/change-passive-voice-to-active-voice.html</p>
Handout(s)	What is Active, Activity
Activity	<p>1. Let's take a look at a sample from a student and see if we can identify instances of passive voice. Then, we will try to revise a few of those sentences to make them active and decide if we like the impact that active voice has on the narrative. Go through this narrative as a group and find examples of passive voice. It is okay if we do not identify all of them, but we should certainly mark all of the IS and WAS examples.</p> <p><i>One memory, I can recall is the day I went deer hunting with my father, Kevin, for the first time. I was eager to go out hunting with my father leading up to this day. I passed my hunters safety class weeks in advance; my dad had bought me blaze orange clothing, I even had butterflies in my stomach because I was so excited about the big day. It was the morning of deer hunting season. My father woke me up before the sun had a chance to rise. My father and I ate a big breakfast since we knew we were not coming back into the house until lunchtime. Before I got dressed, I went outside to see what the weather was like. Outside was cool with a light breeze in the air. The sky was still pitch black and the birds had not even begun to sing. I thought to myself, "What have I gotten myself into this time?" I got myself dressed in my hunting attire, from my orange hat to my big black boots. To me, I looked like a huge pumpkin. What a sight to see. We finally arrived at the hunting spot. The sun was just starting to rise over the horizon. We had to walk through the woods, over dead branches that had fallen off trees, through the muddy marsh, and around sawn off tree trunks. We had to make as little noise as possible, so we did not scare away the deer. It was a long, tiring walk. My legs got their work out that day. My dad sat me down by an old hollow log. There were dead branches everywhere. The woods are quite a scary place. I was happy when I heard the birds chirping; saw the squirrels playing in the leaves, and a mouse running on the dead branches nearby. I am</i></p>

*afraid of mice, but since there **was** only one, it did not bother me. I actually enjoyed watching the little gray mouse; so much that I forgot to pay attention for deer. Finally, when I looked up there **were** three deer coming right towards me. I thought the deer **were** going to run me over. I started to panic and I forgot everything I **was** taught. I pulled back my gun, forgot to aim, and shot. Well, of course, I missed. I went to pump the gun to put another bullet into the chamber and nothing happened. My nerves got the best of me because then I remembered my dad let me use a single shot gun which only had one bullet in the chamber. I was shaking so much that I had to sit down and relax. By the time my father approached me he **was** laughing. He had seen some of what had happened. I explained to him what went on and he started to laugh even harder. After that day, I never went deer hunting again. I guess you could say, “The deer scared me right out of the woods.”*

2. Take a look at the very first sentence of this narrative. We will revise this sentence together. Share some ideas of how you could re-write this sentence in active voice.
 - a. *One memory, I can recall **is** the day I went deer hunting with my father, Kevin, for the first time.*
 - b. *Revised: I will never forget the first day my father, Kevin, took me deer hunting.*
 - c. *Revised: My father, Kevin, took me deer hunting--once, and I will never forget it!*
3. If we look at the two revisions, we can quickly see that this sentence is less wordy and more interesting if we make it active.
4. As a class, we will take a look at another three sentences:
 - a. *The woods **are** quite a scary place.*
 - b. *Scary best describes these woods.*
 - c. *It **was** the morning of deer hunting season.*
 - d. *Deer hunting season dawned on a cold fall morning in the middle of October.*
 - e. *I **was** eager to go out hunting with my father leading up to this day.*
 - f. *Eager best describes the emotion I felt leading up to this day of hunting with my father.*

Example Revisions

	<p>Original</p> <p>One memory, I can recall is the day I went deer hunting with my father, Kevin, for the first time. I was eager to go out hunting with my father leading up to this day. I passed my hunter's safety class weeks in advance; my dad had bought me blaze orange clothing, I even had butterflies in my stomach because I was so excited about the big day.</p> <p>Revised</p> <p>I cherish my memories of the day I went deer hunting with my father, Kevin, for the first time. I eagerly anticipated hunting with my father leading up to this day. I passed my hunter's safety class weeks in advance; my dad bought me blaze orange clothing, I even had butterflies in my stomach because of the intense excitement I felt about the big day.</p>
Homework	Now that we have revised several passive voice verbs together as a class, work on revising the rest of these sentences so that you can practice working with revising passive voice. Apply this same practice to your narrative.

Day	Day Six: Revising the Essay-Appositives
Lecture	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Today we will be applying the techniques that we practiced yesterday with revising the passive voice verbs in your writing for active voice verbs. You do not need to remove all of the passive verbs—sometimes they can be effective; however, I would like to see you limit each paragraph to less than four passive verbs. 2. Another important aspect of the revision process is to work on re-writing content to make it stronger. Revising should not just be about fixing errors, but also about making writing better. One way to do this is to add modifying words and phrases called “adjectivals.” 3. At the start of this unit, we worked on adding free modifiers to our sentences. Over the next few days, we are going to work on adding: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Appositives b. “Out-of-Order” adjectives c. Present Participial

	<p>d. Absolutes</p> <p>4. Today we will focus on Appositives</p> <p>a. Definition from Weaver for Student Notes: “An appositive is a noun—or a nominal with a primary (“head”) noun or pronoun—that most commonly comes right after another noun that it describes. The appositive may serve as a near-synonym for the noun, renaming it in a different way....In every case, the appositive is set off by a comma or commas from the rest of the sentence (or occasionally by dashes or a colon)” (39-40).</p> <p>b. We will examine a couple of examples and then practice doing a few of our own.</p> <p>c. Overhead: “The metal -- and -- enamel image of Yalina, goddess of water, dropped from the shelf on which it sat. (p42).</p> <p>i. Notice how the Appositive “goddess of water” renames Yalina in a descriptive way. It acts as an adjective to describe as it re-names.</p> <p>d. “Tris grumpily thrust the thread at Sandry, an adept weaver of cloth. (Sandry).</p> <p>“An adept weaver of cloth” provides us with another image of Sandry, while also renaming her and giving her another identity.</p>
Handout	Revising the Essay Appositives
Activity	<p>a. Let’s take a look at my example from the first lesson:</p> <p>b. During my sophomore year at DePauw University, I selected the Wolf tracking experience as my January Term class.</p> <p>c. How can we add an appositive to this sentence? Where are possible areas where we could add and appositive that would enhance our writing? Notice where the nouns and pronouns are located in the sentence.</p> <p>d. During my sophomore year at DePauw University, I selected the Wolf tracking experience as my January Term class.</p> <p>e. Adding seven appositives to one sentence might be overkill, but one or even two might be very effective.</p> <p>f. Students will share their ideas, and we will write them on the board or overhead and decide which ones we like the most.</p> <p>i. Example: During my sophomore year at DePauw University, giver of knowledge, I, the fearless adventurer, selected the Wolf tracking experience as my January Term class.</p>

Homework	Continue revising each of your paragraphs by replacing passive voice for active voice. Also, add appositives to your paragraphs where it would enhance meaning.
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Day	Day Seven: Revising the Essay—"Out-of-Order" Adjectivals
Lecture	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Last night you had fun adding Appositives to your writing. Today we will look at using "Out-of-Order" adjectival. 2. Definition for your notes: "Harry Noden, in <i>Image Grammar</i> (1999), has characterized as 'adjectives out of order' those adjectives that occur at the beginning of the sentence; right after the noun they modify; or at the end of the sentence (even if they modify the subject). Such adjectives -- singly, in pairs, or in threes -- are set off from the rest of the sentence by a comma or commas" (Weaver, p. 40).
Handout	Revising the Essay—Out of Order Adjectivals
Activity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. As we look at the following examples from Weaver's book, <i>The Grammar Plan Book</i>, notice where the adjectival is placed in the sentence. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Bare, it looked like a child's top with much too long to stem. (p.94). b. Bare describes "it," but we would normally see this sentence as, "It looked bare like a child's top..." By leading with Bare, the sentence stands out and the description immediately grabs the reader's attention. c. "Nervous and eager, Sandry obeyed." (p.96) vs. Sandry, nervous and eager obeyed. d. "She stared up at him, terrified." (p.131) In this example, by ending with the adjectival, the reader is left with the final impression of how she felt. It adds an extra punch to the sentence.
Homework	Spend some time in your narrative, working on adding "out-of-order" adjectivals. Make a note in the margin of why you added adjectivals in this manner. Share what impact it had on your paper.

Day	Day Eight: Revising the Essay—Present Participial
Lecture	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Notes for Students: "A present participle is what the -ing form of a verb is called when it functions adjectivally to modify a noun." (42) These descriptive words can bring action and life to the nouns that they are modifying. Sometimes we see present participial as phrases.

Handout	Revising the Essay: Present Participial
Activity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We will take a look at several examples from Weaver’s book, <i>The Grammar Plan Book</i>, paying attention to the impact that the present participial has on the sentence. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. “Whistling, Briar took it and walked right into a shaft of light that nearly blinded him.” (p.90) b. “Blinking, he shielded his eyes to find its source.” (p. 90) c. “Darting over to the rail, she turned up her face just as a tall wave slapped the ship.” (p. 34) 2. Now, we will spend some time generating our present participials. Write a sentence about going out to each at your favorite restaurant using a present participial as a single word or a phrase. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Starving, she raced to the front door, hoping to beat the rest of the people parking. b. Climbing into the booth, she grabbed the menu and quickly scanned for her favorite dish. c. Driving over the speed limit, she could taste the cold refreshing margarita that awaited her upon arrival at El Picante!
Homework	Revise your paragraphs in your narrative essay by adding present participials throughout each paragraph. Comment in the margins wherever you have added a participial. Describe why you added one and the impact that you feel it has on your sentences and overall content.

Day	Day Nine: Revising the Essay—Absolutes
Lecture	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Notes for Students: “An absolute is almost a sentence, but not quite. Typically it is lacking only <i>was</i> or <i>were</i> to be a complete sentence. In other words, most absolutes could be restored to a full sentence by adding <i>was</i> or <i>were</i>. Sometimes the absolute refers back, grammatically, to something in the main clause” (Weaver, 42) 2. We will look at several examples of Absolutes in action from Weaver on page 42. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. “Daja watched him go, her hand tightening on her staff until her knuckles were white.” (p.185) b. The Trader was glaring at everyone, her chin up, the dark skin of her cheeks burning red.” (p.38) c. Little Bear, his belly round with the meal of scraps he had gulped, sprawled on the floor and slept, paws twitching as he dreamed. (p.201) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. In this sentence, we can see how the absolutes work to enhance the sentence.

	<p>ii. Look at the sentence without the absolute: Little Bear sprawled on the floor and slept.</p> <p>iii. By adding the wonderful descriptive detail of his belly round with the meal of scraps he had gulped, and paws twitching as he dreamed, we are able to create vivid images in the reader's mind about Little Bear</p>
Handout	Revising the Essay--Absolutes
Activity	<p>Now we are going to practice adding appositives to the following sentences.</p> <p>1.Charlie reached for his little sister Maggie. 2.The house stood at the end of a dark street. 3.The soldier walked into the battle.</p>
Homework	<p>1. For your homework, tonight, take one last look at your narrative and add absolutes to each paragraph. In the margin, comment on how you feel the absolute improves your sentences. You may add as many absolutes as you wish, but please add at least five.</p>

Day	Day Ten: Sharing	
Activity	<p>1. On our final day of this project, you will read your narrative to the class. While you listen to each narrative, you will take notes on your favorite lines or words from the narrative. If a particular image sticks out in your mind, write it down. After each student shares their narrative, we will go around the room and share our favorite impression with the author. After you finish reading to the class, you will submit your final paper, along with each of your drafts.</p>	
Handout	Grading Rubric	
Grading Rubric	Grading Rubric	Narrative Essay
	Criteria:	Points:
	<p>Development of Plot</p> <p>-characters are developed</p>	/25

	-the story follows a clear chronological sequence	
	<p>Setting</p> <p>-The location of the narrative is clear.</p> <p>-The time of the narrative is clear.</p>	/5
	<p>Use of Modifiers</p> <p>-Uses at least five of each of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Free modifiers b. Appositives c. “Out-of-Order” adjectival d. Present Participials e. Absolutes 	/25
	<p>All Components are Present</p> <p>Rough draft paragraph</p> <p>Outline for essay</p> <p>Rough draft of essay</p> <p>Final draft of Essay</p> <p>Workshop homework assignments</p>	/25
	<p>Transitions</p> <p>-Revision draft and final draft show evidence of transitions between paragraphs and within paragraphs</p>	/10

	Active Voice -Revision drafts and final draft show evidence of active voice in each of the paragraphs	/10
	Overall Score	/100

Reference Page

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Day One Handout: The Personal Narrative

Step One: Brainstorm a list of 10 memories or events from your life that have had a significant impact on you. Try to use five words or less for each event.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

Step Two: Go through your list and choose your favorite three memories or life events

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Step Three: Write five sentences about each of the three events that you selected. In your sentences, tell us about the memory.

Event One:

Event Two:

Event Three:

HOMEWORK:

Step Four: Now it is your turn. Take the sentence that you selected and ask yourself a series of questions to help you add descriptive imagery and pictures in the reader's mind as they read your sentence. Take your remaining sentences through this same narrative. Enhance each sentence with words and phrases that will help your reader to see the scene that you are describing. Think about your five senses as you write. This will help you create more vivid images in your writing.

What did you...

- a. See
- b. Hear
- c. Feel
- d. Taste
- e. Smell

Day Two: Review the Narrative Paragraph

Part One: Select your favorite and least favorite sentence from your homework and write the two sentences on a sheet of paper. Turn in your sentences to your instructor.

1.

2.

Part Two: Take the two sentences that you were given and try using free modifiers to re-write the sentences. Once you have completed the activity, return your version to the original author.

1.

2.

Homework: Take your five sentences from yesterday and implement free modifiers into each sentence.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Activity with Modifiers

We will now look at some examples that Weaver shares via Dia Calhoun's *Firegold* (1999). Pay attention to the underlined modifiers. Notice where they are placed. Take a minute and connect each modifier to the word that it is describing so that we can see how this author uses words to describe nouns or pronouns.

Sentences with underlined modifiers	Word that is modified
<u>Taut, arched</u> , the bow shimmered, free from its linen covering; someone had strung it.”(p131).	
He saw himself shackled to a post, <u>wild-haired, slavering</u> ” (p.41).	
<u>Tall</u> and <u>rangy</u> , she was among the best runners in their Bristol and hoped to be a Master Hunter someday. (p.256).	
<u>Keen-eyed, long-limbed</u> , they wore leather and carried gleaming bows. (p. 202).	
Someone, something, called Jonathan's name. He looked at his father, then at Uncle Wilford, who were both staring at him, <u>bewildered.</u> ” (p. 74).	
<u>Unconvinced</u> , Jonathan dug his heel in the snow. (p. 79).	

<p><u>Dazzled</u>, Jonathan squinted: he was half-blinded, but unable to look away. (p. 196).</p>	
<p>The nice shadow reared up, <u>huge, grotesque</u>, cast on the house behind him. (p. 145).</p>	
<p>Rosamund looked, <u>unperturbed</u>, at the brown stains. (p. 98).</p>	

Free Modifiers

- a. Lara's eyes were riveted on the water, *sparkling with pinpoints of light that danced invitingly*.
- b. *Sparkling with pinpoints of light that danced invitingly*, the water caught Laura's eye.
- c. *Sparkling*, the water caught Laura's eye as pinpoints of light danced invitingly.
- d. The water, *sparkling*, caught Laura's attention with its pinpoints of light that danced invitingly.
- e. *Screaming loudly*, and infant finally got on Bill's nerves.
- f. An infant, *screaming loudly*, finally got on Bill's nerves.

Taken from Weaver, page 75

Day Three: Narrative Outline

I. Introduction

- A. Get the reader's attention by using a "hook."
- B. Give some background information if necessary.
- C. Thesis or focus statement.

II. First paragraph of your narrative—describe the beginning of your narrative

- A. Topic sentence explaining the beginning of your narrative
- B. Elaborate with details and description
- C. Additional elaboration
- D. Transition to the middle of the narrative

III. Second paragraph of your narrative—describe the middle of your narrative

- A. Topic sentence explaining the middle of your narrative
- B. Elaborate with details and description
- C. Additional elaboration
- D. Transition to the end of the narrative

IV. Third paragraph of your narrative—describe how your narrative ends

- A. Topic sentence explaining the end of your narrative
- B. Elaborate with details and description
- C. Additional elaboration
- D. Transition to your conclusion

Conclusion

- A. Summary of the narrative
- B. Personal comment and concluding statement

Day Three: Narrative Outline

I. Introduction

A. Get the reader's attention by using a "hook." **During my sophomore year at DePauw University, I selected the Wolf tracking experience as my January Term class.**

B. Give some background information if necessary.

C. Thesis or focus statement.

II. First paragraph of your narrative—describe the beginning of your narrative

A. Topic sentence explaining the beginning of your narrative **I grew up in California, so I was unprepared for life in MN in January and had to do quite a bit of shopping to get ready.**

B. Elaborate with details and description **buying WINTER gear**

C. Additional elaboration **training for cross country skiing and snowshoeing**

D. Transition to the middle of the narrative

III. Second paragraph of your narrative—describe the middle of your narrative

A. Topic sentence explaining the middle of your narrative **After my long flight to MN, I discovered that the airline had lost my luggage.**

B. Elaborate with details and description **arriving in MN with only the clothes on my back—left balmy 70 degree weather for -20 degree weather**

C. Additional elaboration **wearing the same underwear for 5 days and borrowing clothes from strangers**

D. Transition to the next part of the narrative

IV. Third paragraph of your narrative—continue describing your narrative

A. Topic sentence explaining this part of your narrative **Lost luggage was nothing compared to being sent out into the woods everyday to look for signs of wolves.**

B. Elaborate with details and description **here is a trail map and compass—see you in 8 hrs**

C. Additional elaboration **“training:” kill sites, scat and signs of wolves**

D. Transition to your conclusion

V. Fourth paragraph of your narrative—describe how your narrative ends

A. Topic sentence explaining the end of your narrative **The real highlight of the adventure was meeting the people who also chose to track wolves.**

B. Elaborate with details and description: **I am sharing cabin space with a guy that thinks he is a wolf--creepy**

C. Additional elaboration: **allergic to everything and bonding at a deep level**

D. Transition to your conclusion

VI. Conclusion

A. Summary of the narrative

B. Personal comment and concluding statement

Day Four Handout-Transitions

HANDOUT: Transitions taken from *The St. Martin's Handbook* (2003, pp. 126-127) as cited in Weaver's *Grammar to Enrich and Enhance Writing*

- a. Transitions to signal sequence: again, also, and, and then, besides, finally, first... second... third, furthermore, last, moreover, next, still, to
- b. Transitions to signal time: after a few days, after a while, afterword, as long as, as soon as, at last, at that time, before, earlier, immediately, in the meantime, in the past, lately, later, meanwhile, now, presently, simultaneously, since, so far, soon, then, thereafter, until, when
- c. Transitions to signal comparison: again, also, in the same way, likewise, once more, similarly
- d. Transitions to signal contrast: although, but, despite, even though, however, in contrast, in spite of, instead, nevertheless, nonetheless, on the contrary, on the one hand... on the other hand, regardless, still, though, yet
- e. Transitions to signal examples: after all, even, for example, for instance, indeed, in fact, of course, specifically, such as, the following example, to illustrate
- f. Transitions to signal cause-and-effect: accordingly, as a result, because, consequently, for this purpose, hence, so, then, therefore, thus, to this end
- g. Transitions to signal place: above, and Jason two, below, beyond, closer to, elsewhere, far, far there on, here, near, nearby, opposite to, there, to the left, to the right
- h. Transitions to signal concession: although it is true that, granted that, I admit that, it may appear that, naturally, of course
- i. Transitions to signal summary, repetition, or conclusion: as a result, as has been noted, as I have said, as mentioned earlier,

as we have seen, in any event, in conclusion, in other words,
in short, on the whole, therefore, to summarize

Day Four Handout—Narrative One

Narrative One:

Not a Funny Story by Emily Franklin

Franklin, Emily. (2012, March 19). *Not a Funny Story*. Retrieved May 20, 2012, from <http://dearbully.com/Not a Funny Story>

A note to readers: I planned on making this essay funny. I thought I'd write a sarcastic, amusing letter to a former bully or the girl who made me feel crappy in eighth grade. I am funny. Really. My novels are filled with wry humor and wit. And yet, when I sat down to write about this particular incident, funny isn't what came out.

Say it's sixth or seventh grade and say you're one of those girls who is not quite in one group and not quite in another. You can't be categorized. You don't know this at the time, but some girls find this a problem. People like to have you fit neatly into one social heading: alpha girls, bookish girls, poor girls. You—happily—float from one group to the next.

This means that while you are welcome in all the groups, you are integral to none of them. No one waits for you to go to lunch. No one feels their party is incomplete without you. On the other hand, you always have a place to sit and can chat equally well with B about her new hair cut and crush on A or S about her parents' divorce or C about writing stories, which you both love to do.

When X announces her sleepover, you can't wait to attend. There will be laughter way late at night, food tucked into bathrobes, dares and truths about boys, private jokes to reference the following Monday.

But then you can't make it. Not because you don't want to—nothing sounds better than sitting with your knees tucked to your chin while X

braids your hair or asks who you like. But you've got a high fever, a serious infection—again—and wind up missing not only the sleepover but the whole following week of school.

When you enter the classroom on Monday morning, hang up your red book bag on its metal hook, you see W and wave, looking forward to hearing every details of the sleepover jokes and conversations you missed. But W turns away from you. So do K and B. In fact, no one will make eye contact with you, and when you decide it's not just your imagination, you approach E and B and say, "Hey, what's going on?" they turn away.

You experience the same feelings as watching the scary movies everyone else loves but you hate: chills, rapid heartbeat, dry mouth, fear, that sickening pull in your gut. You try again, just to talk to someone. Anyone. But even the people who have no one to talk to—the girl who doesn't wash her hair, the boy who still picks his nose—they won't speak to you.

Finally, S with her sad eyes, divorced parents, and tiny voice, says, "Just so you know, I didn't sign it."

You ask what she means.

"The petition. The one W wrote."

This is what happened when you were away. You missed the sleepover and W moved in for the kill. You never realized she was jockeying for some social position, or how it's always a game, even if you chose not to play it. So W writes a document, forms a club called the I Hate [Your Name Here] club. Like all clubs, it has focus, a sole goal: hating you. She works on it the whole week and convinces some kids easily. They are eager to please W and sign without question. Others take work—W has to persuade them, make them long to be part of the majority of

haters, woo them with campaign promises. She is the president of the club.

But there are those who will not be so easily conned or swayed. For them, W offers them the chance to just be in the band. It's like a lesser form of hating. You just sing the club's theme song. But still, you can't speak to the subject.

S is the only person in the entire grade who joins neither the band nor the club.

I could tell you how this is all real, how hellish it was, how alone I felt, or how I rallied. I called W's second-in-command and when she hung up on me, I went right to her mother. Once I involved the parents, the club crumbled, but the damages were never addressed, just absorbed into everyday life.

We should have talked about it. We should have all spoken with teachers and parents. I never did.

I tell this story to my own children so that they will tell me, so they will speak.

But mainly, I tell my children so that they will be like S and stand up—though standing up is difficult and sometimes dangerous. I tell my children this because it is easy to pass it off as a funny incident that happened a long time ago. I tell them now because as a parent I am amazed at how quick people are to say “Well, girls are mean at that age” or “Everyone does stuff like that at one point or another” or “I wouldn't go back to that age if you paid me a million dollars.” Where do you draw the line between not being nice and being cruel? At what point is it unacceptable? How threatened can you feel going to school each day?

I tell this story now because it should have been told then. Because out of a class of sixty people, only one of was by my side. Only one said no.

*Emily Franklin is the author of over a dozen books for teens, including two critically-acclaimed series, *The Principles of Love* and *The Other Half of Me*. Emily's other young adult titles include the novels in the *Chalet Girls* series, and the forthcoming *Half-Life of Planets*. She has also written two novels for adults, *Liner Notes* and *The Girls' Almanac*. She also edited the anthologies *It's a Wonderful Lie: 26 Truths about Life in Your Twenties* and *How to Spell Chanukah: 18 Writers on 8 Nights of Lights*. Check out her website at www.emilyfranklin.com.*

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Franklin, Emily. (2012, March 19). *Not a Funny Story*. Retrieved May 20, 2012, from <http://dearbully.com/Not a Funny Story>.

Day Four Handout—Narrative Two

Narrative Two:

By Jed Portman

[Rene Anderson, a 55-year-old Idaho woman, was bowhunting last September when she was charged by a wolf. She tells the story:](#)

"I WAS HUNTING ALONE outside my hometown of Headquarters on a cloudy fall afternoon. I prefer to be in the woods alone. Besides, my husband, Denny, has had some health problems and isn't hunting much these days. I planned to hunt for elk, but I had a wolf tag with me.

Denny had dropped me off on top of a ridge and intended to pick me up at the bottom. I hiked in about three-quarters of a mile, cow calling occasionally. Suddenly, I heard a crunch in the trees to my right. I looked over and made out a gray wolf about 120 yards away. I could tell he saw me at the same time that I saw him -- he made eye contact, stiffened, and began running directly toward me.

I didn't have a lot of time to think. My mind and heart were racing. The wind was at my back, and I thought, He must be able to smell me. He

knew that I was human and he was coming at me anyway. I couldn't find the air in my lungs to yell. Should I shoot him? The wolf kept coming. Bow or pistol? I dropped my bow and drew my .44 Magnum Smith & Wesson. The wolf leapt onto a pile of logs about 10 feet away, then started moving in my direction. I could see that it was going to be him or me.

My first shot hit the wolf on the left side of the head. It stopped him, but it took three more rounds to put him down for good. I called my husband on my two-way radio and said, "Get me out of here!"

We needed a third person to help carry out the wolf's 90-pound carcass later that night. Lucky for me, I had that wolf tag. I hadn't planned to use it until later in the year in another area.

I know that wolves aren't usually so aggressive, but this experience is fresh in my mind when I see wolf tracks where I hunt. I'll always carry that pistol, just in case.

Reference

Portman, J. (2012). Predator Call. *Field & Stream*, 117(1), 11.

Day Four Handout—Narrative Three

Narrative Three:

Anonymous Author

It was 32 years ago; I was a young lad of about 10 years old. My dad worked for 3M in New Ulm Minnesota. Every summer 3M had a fishing tournament. My dad asked me to go with him. Friday night before the tournament Dad told me to go go through all my tackle, to get ready for the tournament Saturday morning. I did for what seemed like an eternity for a 10 year old, it was actually 10 minutes. After I did my eternity of preparing for the upcoming day, I went to play star light moon light with friends. Morning came, and dad woke me at 5:30. We had breakfast consisting of eggs over easy, toast, bacon, and for me milk, dad was coffee. At 6:00 we headed for Lake Washington. It was a very uneventful trip. When arriving at the lake I noticed two things I will never forget. The first is the cool breeze the lake gives off in the early morning; the second is the feeling of warmth that I felt as the sun hit my face. Dad and I put our little boat in the water. It was a small 14 foot

boat with a 6 horse power motor. It wasn't much but it got us around the lake. As the motor screamed we motored out to our first spot to fish. We still fished for an hour or so. Dad drank his coffee, and I my coke, the sun felt good on my face as I dreamed about the big one that would not get away. Nothing bit, dad decided to try trolling. Trolling for fish was a new experience for me as most of the fishing I did was sitting on the river edge and letting the current do the work. Not knowing what I was doing for sure, dad did his best to help me. (Remember the lack of preparation) Dad let out line for me, the worst thing that could happen did. A knot in my line, not a small one, it was huge. It looked like something out of the movie "*Arachnophobia*". Dad was not just mad he was irate. He gave me his poll and said fish. I did no questions asked. I tried not to listen to him, but some of the words out of mouth would make a sailor blush. Dad got the mess figured out and gave me my poll. This time I let out my own line. Dad mumbled "you want to ruin my day, here, do it yourself. We will see." I don't know how much line I let out, but it was a lot. Not much time went by, when I felt a lite tug. I set

the hook, Dad said” YOU GOT IT” I reeled in a bit and said no, that I was going to reel in and check anyway. As I worked my line in there was a lite tug now and then, the end of the line came closer and closer with every turn of the crank. Dad looked in the direction of my line, then again, and then with his blue eyes as big as pizzas one more time. Dad had no emotion, acted very unexcited, and very quietly asked me for my fishing poll. I handed it to him, and looked at him with confusion in my eyes. “Dad what is it” I asked. His response was “a fish, a big one and we have no net.” As he said that I looked at the water and saw the back of the biggest fish I had saw in my life. Dad looked around for a moment then yelled to another boat” Do you have a net! The people in the other boat yelled back with a response. I didn’t hear what they said, and neither did dad. Dad looked at me and said “I don’t know what they said but we need a net.” We motored over to the other boat, got the net, netted my fish, and started small talk. I don’t remember what was said, I just remember it was big. The fish was weighed in at 10 and ½ pounds. I won first place in the tournament for biggest fish caught and the heaviest

amount of Northern pike caught. I did have it mounted. After 30 years the poor thing was in such I had to toss it, but I still have the memory.

Day Five Handout-- What is ACTIVE voice? What is PASSIVE voice?

Change Passive Voice to Active Voice. (n.d.). Retrieved September 19, 2016, from <http://grammar.yourdictionary.com/style-and-usage/change-passive-voice-to-active-voice.html>

Change Passive Voice to Active Voice

When a sentence is written, it can either be written in active voice or passive voice. In most cases, writing sentences in passive voice is discouraged because it can obscure the subject of the sentence, and confuse the reader. It also usually creates a wordy and awkward sentence construction.

Defining Passive Voice

Every sentence contains, at minimum, a subject and an action. The subject is the person or thing the sentence is about, and the action is what the subject is doing. When a sentence is in active voice, the subject doing the action comes before the action. For example:

- I swim. *I* is the subject. *Swim* is the action. The subject doing the action comes before the action, so it is immediately clear to the reader who is doing what.

When a sentence is in passive voice, the subject comes after the action. For example:

- Swimming is something I do. Here, the action is swimming. The subject is I. The sentence is in passive voice, since the person doing the action (I) is not mentioned until after the action

Some sentences also contain objects- the thing being acted upon. This can make it more difficult to determine whether the sentence is in passive voice. For example, here is a sentence in active voice:

- Anna hits the ball. Anna is the subject. Hits is the action. The ball is the object.

That same sentence in passive voice reads:

- The ball is hit by Anna.
- The ball is the object- not the subject of the sentence. The ball is not doing an action. Therefore, it should be after the subject (Anna)

Tips to Recognize the Passive Voice

Sometimes a sentence in passive voice does not necessarily sound "wrong" or wordy. However, it is still best to write in active voice when possible.

In order to recognize that a sentence is in passive voice, watch out for these keywords:

- Be
- Is
- Are
- A
- Was
- Were
- Has been
- Have been
- Will be

- Being

Reference

Change Passive Voice to Active Voice. (n.d.). Retrieved September 19, 2016, from <http://grammar.yourdictionary.com/style-and-usage/change-passive-voice-to-active-voice.html>

Day Five Activity Part 1

One memory, I can recall is the day I went deer hunting with my father, Kevin, for the first time. I was eager to go out hunting with my father leading up to this day. I passed my hunters safety class weeks in advance; my dad had bought me blaze orange clothing, I even had butterflies in my stomach because I was so excited about the big day. It was the morning of deer hunting season. My father woke me up before the sun had a chance to rise. My father and I ate a big breakfast since we knew we were not coming back into the house until lunchtime. Before I got dressed, I went outside to see what the weather was like. Outside was cool with a light breeze in the air. The sky was still pitch black and the birds had not even begun to sing. I thought to myself, “What have I gotten myself into this time?” I got myself dressed in my hunting attire, from my orange hat to my big black boots. To me, I looked like a huge pumpkin. What a sight to see. We finally arrived at the hunting spot. The sun was just starting to rise over the horizon. We had to walk through the woods, over dead branches that had fallen off

trees, through the muddy marsh, and around sawn off tree trunks. We had to make as little noise as possible, so we did not scare away the deer. It was a long, tiring walk. My legs got their work out that day. My dad sat me down by an old hollow log. There were dead branches everywhere. The woods are quite a scary place. I was happy when I heard the birds chirping; saw the squirrels playing in the leaves, and a mouse running on the dead branches nearby. I am afraid of mice, but since there was only one, it did not bother me. I actually enjoyed watching the little gray mouse; so much that I forgot to pay attention for deer. Finally, when I looked up there were three deer coming right towards me. I thought the deer were going to run me over. I started to panic and I forgot everything I was taught. I pulled back my gun, forgot to aim, and shot. Well, of course, I missed. I went to pump the gun to put another bullet into the chamber and nothing happened. My nerves got the best of me because then I remembered my dad let me use a single shot gun which only had one bullet in the chamber. I was shaking so much that I had to sit down and relax. By the time my father

approached me he was laughing. He had seen some of what had happened. I explained to him what went on and he started to laugh even harder. After that day, I never went deer hunting again. I guess you could say, “The deer scared me right out of the woods.”

Day Five Activity Part 2

One memory, I can recall **is** the day I went deer hunting with my father, Kevin, for the first time. I **was** eager to go out hunting with my father leading up to this day. I passed my hunters safety class weeks in advance; my dad had bought me blaze orange clothing, I even had butterflies in my stomach because I **was** so excited about the big day. It **was** the morning of deer hunting season. My father woke me up before the sun had a chance to rise. My father and I ate a big breakfast since we knew we were not coming back into the house until lunchtime. Before I got dressed, I went outside to see what the weather **was** like. Outside **was** cool with a light breeze in the air. The sky **was** still pitch black and the birds had not even begun to sing. I thought to myself, “What have I gotten myself into this time?” I got myself dressed in my

hunting attire, from my orange hat to my big black boots. To me, I looked like a huge pumpkin. What a sight to see. We finally arrived at the hunting spot. The sun **was** just starting to rise over the horizon. We had to walk through the woods, over dead branches that had fallen off trees, through the muddy marsh, and around sawn off tree trunks. We had to make as little noise as possible, so we did not scare away the deer. It **was** a long, tiring walk. My legs got their work out that day. My dad sat me down by an old hollow log. There **were** dead branches everywhere. The woods **are** quite a scary place. I **was** happy when I heard the birds chirping; saw the squirrels playing in the leaves, and a mouse running on the dead branches nearby. I am afraid of mice, but since there **was** only one, it did not bother me. I actually enjoyed watching the little gray mouse; so much that I forgot to pay attention for deer. Finally, when I looked up there **were** three deer coming right towards me. I thought the deer **were** going to run me over. I started to panic and I forgot everything I **was** taught. I pulled back my gun, forgot to aim, and shot. Well, of course, I missed. I went to pump the gun to put

another bullet into the chamber and nothing happened. My nerves got the best of me because then I remembered my dad let me use a single shot gun which only had one bullet in the chamber. I was shaking so much that I had to sit down and relax. By the time my father approached me he **was** laughing. He had seen some of what had happened. I explained to him what went on and he started to laugh even harder. After that day, I never went deer hunting again. I guess you could say, “The deer scared me right out of the woods.”

Day Five Activity Part 3

Example Revisions

Original

One memory, I can recall **is** the day I went deer hunting with my father, Kevin, for the first time. I **was** eager to go out hunting with my father leading up to this day. I passed my hunters safety class weeks in advance; my dad had bought me blaze orange clothing, I even had butterflies in my stomach because I **was** so excited about the big day.

Revised

I cherish my memories of the day I went deer hunting with my father, Kevin, for the first time. I eagerly anticipated hunting with my father leading up to this day. I passed my hunters safety class weeks in advance; my dad bought me blaze orange clothing, I even had butterflies in my stomach because of the intense excitement I felt about the big day.

Day Six: Revising the Essay-Appositives

Notes: “An appositives is a noun—or a nominal with a primary (“head”) noun or pronoun—that most commonly comes right after another noun that it describes. The appositive may serve as a near-synonym for the noun, renaming it in a different way....In every case, the appositive is set off by a comma or, commas from the rest of the sentence (or occasionally by dashes or a colon)” (Weaver, 39-40).

- a. “The metal -- and -- enamel image of **Yalina**, **goddess of water**, dropped from the shelf on which it sat. (p42).
- ii. Notice how the Appositive “goddess of water” renames Yalina in a descriptive way. It acts as an adjective to describe as it re-names.
- b. “Tris grumpily thrust the thread at **Sandry**, **an adept weaver of cloth**. (Sandry).
- iii. “An adept weaver of cloth” provides us with another image of Sandry, while also renaming her and giving her another identity.

Homework:

Continue revising each of your paragraphs by replacing passive voice for active voice. Also, add appositives to your paragraphs where it would enhance meaning.

Day Seven Handout : Revising the Essay-“Out-of-Order”

Adjectivals

Notes: “Harry Noden, in *Image Grammar* (1999), has characterized as ‘adjectives out of order’ those adjectives that occur at the beginning of the sentence; right *after* the noun they modify; or at the end of the sentence (even if they modify the subject). Such adjectives -- singly, in pairs, or in threes -- are set off from the rest of the sentence by a comma or commas” (Weaver, p. 40).

Activity:

As we look at the following examples from Weaver’s book, *The Grammar Plan Book*, notice where the adjectival is placed in the sentence.

- a. **Bare**, it looked like a child's top with much too long to stem. (p.94).
- b. Bare describes “it,” but we would normally see this sentence as, “It looked bare like a child's top...” By leading with Bare, the sentence stands out and the description immediately grabs the reader’s attention.

- c. “Nervous and eager, Sandry obeyed.” (p.96) vs. Sandry, nervous and eager obeyed.
- d. “She stared up at him, terrified.” (p.131) In this example, by ending with the adjectival, the reader is left with the final impression of how she felt. It adds an extra punch to the sentence.

Homework:

Spend some time in your narrative, working on adding “out-of-order” adjectivals. Make a note in the margin of why you added adjectivals in this manner. Share what impact it had on your paper.

Day Eight Handout: Revising the Essay—Present Participial

2. **Notes:** “A present participle is what the -ing form of a verb is called when it functions adjectively to modify noun” (Weaver, 42). These descriptive words can bring action and life to the nouns that they are modifying. Sometimes we see present participial as phrases.

Activity:

3. We will take a look at several examples from Weaver’s book, *The Grammar Plan Book*, paying attention to the impact that the present participial has on the sentence.
- “**Whistling**, Briar took it and walked right into a shaft of light that nearly blinded him.” (p.90)
 - “**Blinking**, he shielded his eyes to find its source.” (p. 90)
 - “**Darting over to the rail**, she turned up her face just as a tall wave slapped the ship.” (p. 34)
4. Now, we will spend some time generating our own present participials. Write a sentence about going out to each at your favorite restaurant using a present participial as a single word or a phrase.
- Starving**, she raced to the front door, hoping to beat the rest of the people parking.
 - Climbing into the booth**, she grabbed the menu and quickly scanned for her favorite dish.
 - Driving over the speed limit**, she could taste the cold refreshing margarita that awaited her upon arrival at El Picante!

Homework:

Revise the paragraphs in your narrative essay by adding present participials throughout each paragraph. Comment in the margins

wherever you have added a participial. Describe why you added one and the impact that you feel it has on your sentences and overall content.

Day Nine Handout: Revising the Essay—Absolutes

Notes: “An absolute is almost a sentence, but not quite. Typically it is lacking only *was* or *were* to be a complete sentence. In other words, most absolutes could be restored to a full sentence by adding *was* or *were*. Sometimes the absolute refers back, grammatically, to something in the main clause” (Weaver, 42).

Activity:

5. We will look at several examples of absolutes in action from Weaver’s book, *The Grammar Plan Book*, on page 42.
 - a. “Daja watched him go, **her hand tightening on her staff until her knuckles were white.**” (p.185)
 - b. The Trader was glaring at everyone, **her chin up, the dark skin of her cheeks burning red.**” (p.38)
 - c. Little Bear, **his belly round with the meal of scraps he had gulped**, sprawled on the floor and slept, **paws twitching as he dreamed.** (p.201)
 - i. In this sentence we can really see how the absolutes work to enhance the sentence.
 - ii. Look at the sentence without the absolute: Little Bear sprawled on the floor and slept.
 - iii. By adding the wonderful descriptive detail of **his belly round with the meal of scraps he had gulped**, and **paws twitching as he dreamed**, we are able to create vivid images in the reader’s mind about Little Bear
6. Now we are going to practice adding appositives to the following sentences.
 4. Charlie reached for his little sister Maggie.
 5. The house stood at the end of a dark street.
 6. The soldier walked into the battle.

Homework:

For your homework tonight, take one last look at your narrative and add absolutes to each paragraph. In the margin, comment on how you feel the absolute improves your sentences. You may add as many absolutes as you wish, but please add at least five.

Day Ten Handout Grading Rubric

Grading Rubric	Narrative Essay
Criteria:	Points:
Development of Plot -characters are developed -story follows a clear chronological sequence	/25
Setting -The location of the narrative is clear. -The time of the narrative is clear.	/5
Use of Modifiers -Uses at least five of each of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Free modifiers b. Appositives c. "Out-of-Order" adjectival d. Present Participials e. Absolutes 	/25
All Components are Present	

Rough draft paragraph	
Outline for essay	/25
Rough draft of essay	
Final draft of Essay	
Workshop homework assignments	
Transitions	
-Revision draft and final draft show evidence of transitions between paragraphs and within paragraphs	/10
Active Voice	
-Revision drafts and final draft show evidence of active voice in each of the paragraphs	/10
Overall Score	/100

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English 6200 Post-Colonial Literature and Film

23 July 2012

Departing at Dawn: Re-Birth of Identity

The novel, *Departing at Dawn*, by Gloria Lisé, depicts a young woman's journey towards a symbolic re-birth as she re-defines her identity during Argentina's Dirty War. Despite experiencing countless horrific events during the war, the main character, Berta, emerges strong and empowered. In the novel's foreword, author, Gloria Lisé describes her own experience growing up during this "terrifying period in Argentina's history." Through her novel, readers experience both the horror and the triumph of her people. Early on in the novel, the characters find themselves living a horror-filled reality. Lisé indicates that the novel begins during a period of terrible civil and political unrest. "There have already been many years of ungodliness, injustice, and senselessness before March 24, 1976" (Lisé, 25). During this time, political unrest abounds and the government shows a lack of compassion for the people. Lisé's novel depicts this conflict through the interactions of her characters. In response to the government, political activists recklessly abandon their own safety in order to fight for their causes. They nobly fight for social justice; however, their cause feels futile to the reader, as the events of the novel move from difficult to disturbing.

As the novel opens, the reader meets the main character, Berta. She is a young woman, pursuing a medical degree. She has an incredibly bright future ahead of her, one that she has worked incredibly hard to achieve. She recently fell in love with a young man best described as a political activist. Berta loves her boyfriend; however, she does not follow politics with the same

intensity or fervor as her lover. At her mother's urging, Berta spent the majority of her life working towards a better future. The setting, at the start of the novel, takes place at a political protest in Argentina. During the rally, Berta, a mere spectator, watches as her lover falls to his death from a balcony while delivering an impassioned speech about social injustice. The events that follow shape the Berta's growth and development. Although Berta does not consider herself an activist, her lover's death sets in motion a chain of events that force Berta to flee her home. The government wants justice and seeks her as an accomplice to her lover's political crimes. Devastated and heart-broken, she flees to her mother's childhood home as a wanted woman. She leaves behind a promising future as a doctor, and all of her mother's hopes and dream for her. Berta experiences a symbolic death and re-birth as she re-discovers and re-defines herself.

To understand Berta's resilience and strength, in the midst of her tragedy, we look to her relationship with her mother and the impact of this relationship on Berta. At sixteen, Berta's mother fell in love with a married man and ran away from home. They had five children together; however, the children's paternal relatives labeled them "children of sin" and "bastard offspring" (Lisé, 14). Berta's mother would never receive any help or support from her lover's family. Despite these circumstances, Lisé never presents Berta's mother through negative connotations that typically define mistresses. Instead, she uses words and descriptions that paint her as a pillar of strength in her family. Berta's own description of her mother includes words like indomitable, arrogant and intelligent. Despite a difficult family situation, Berta's mother demonstrates undeniable strength and courage throughout the novel. She provides an interesting perspective of the Argentinean mother figure. Berta learns to admire and respect women like her mother as seen in the following description she shares comparing her mother to other Argentinian women.

“Most of the people there were on the fringes of society waiting and hoping to be landowners someday, whereas my mother, a widow at thirty-one, with five children and no relatives or friends to depend on in the area, was just trying to make a living. She had to create her own sense of dignity, because, as she taught me in this life, ‘Nobody gives you anything, you have to earn it all on your own, even more so if you are a woman’” (Lisé, 15).

Berta hears these words from her mother repeatedly, and when the time comes, she relies on these words and to find strength and rely on herself. Berta’s mother was a woman who found herself both in love and pregnant with a married man’s child at the age of 16. She did not have an education, but managed to instill the importance of education in her daughter. Just like her mother, Berta also finds herself alone with an incomplete education and a lost identity. She must re-build from scratch in the midst of her circumstances.

In addition to Berta, her mother had four sons, and some would assume that in a male dominated society, she would focus all of her attention and financial resources on her sons, but instead she wants her daughter to have a future far better than her own reality. Even as a young child, Berta was encouraged to study hard and obtain an education. Despite her own lack of education, her mother set her sights on Berta. “My mother had decided long ago that I would not follow in her footsteps and therefore she never allowed me to work and always insisted that I bring home the highest grade” (Lisé, 16).

Having a parent’s encouragement, support and faith has a profound effect on any child. Berta is no exception. She quickly embraces her education and all of the doors that an education opens for her future. “I studied because I loved studying and I loved my mother more than anything else, along with medicine” (Lisé, 16). While some teenagers might rebel under the pressure of high expectations, Berta instead embraces her mother’s dreams for her until they become her own dreams. “I had other more pressing dreams to realize, regardless of whether they were originally my mother’s or my own, and I was preparing myself to be able to make a

difference in the world later, armed with the thing I believed in most—a profession that enables you to save lives and alleviate pain” (Lisé, 17). Berta thrives and completes her degree, and she continues her education at medical school. The title of Dr. is just within Berta’s reach when she chooses an unfortunately similar path to the one her mother ventured down twenty years earlier.

Like her mother, Berta throws away her entire future in exchange for the love of a married man. Like her mother, she is blinded by love. And, like her mother, she must flee from her home. “I could not look you squarely in the eye, for I was not the daughter you had dreamed of. I was guilty; I failed both myself and you. Now I was leaving you alone with all my brothers; leaving you, who had dreamed that I would be a doctor, a physician, paying you back for all your sleepless nights. Instead I was going away like a thief, shaming and frightening you” (Lisé, 5). The pain of disappointment overwhelms Berta. She feels guilty that she allowed her passion for a political activist to steal away her focus on her future. Although she is not guilty of any political crimes, she is guilty by association. She must flee because the government believes she has hidden money and that she is involved in some way with the activities of her dead lover. Knowing all that her mother sacrificed in order for her to achieve her educational dreams, makes the pain of shame and disappointment all the more acute when Berta must go into hiding in order to save her life. In this moment of extreme sadness and darkness, Berta’s mother looks at her with “eyes full of truth,” as she helps Berta flee without uttering a word of disappointment, anger or blame. Although “they would never see each other again” (Lisé, 7), Berta begins to draw strength from the knowledge that she was the “daughter of your love and your pride, the fruit of your haughtiness” (Lisé, 8). She leaves the childhood home that she shares with her mother and brothers with the final thought that, “We will go on living, I swear this to you” (Lisé, 8). Her final thought amidst supreme sadness and disappointment is one of strength and determination.

Berta grew up witnessing this resilience in her mother. Lisé does a beautiful job of demonstrating how a mother's influence can carry over to a child and support them in times of challenge.

This turn of events is shocking to the reader. It is hard to imagine history repeating itself in such a devastating manner. Why would Berta allow herself to fall for a person who could destroy her future, especially when her future was so bright? Her mother's response is even more surprising. We can imagine how disappointed she feels, as well as the devastation that accompanies the knowledge that her only daughter made the same mistakes that she did, despite all that she sacrificed to avoid this outcome. It is every parent's most dreaded nightmare. Her mother also knows the intense power that love has on a young woman, having lived the same experience in her early years. She demonstrates her deep love for Berta by not "uttering a word of disappointment, anger, or blame" as she helps Berta pack to leave "like a thief" (Lisé, 5). No doubt, this reaction intensifies the pain that Berta feels inside as she lives up to the novel's title and *departs at dawn*. For Berta, the dawn brings with it a new day, and a new beginning in her quest to redefine her future and her identity.

Although Berta leaves her childhood home for her mother's family home with the determination to survive, she heads into an unknown future. She knows that she must create a new identity for herself. Berta's first three days of travel mark the beginning of her transformation. Initially, she is numb from the pain of tragedy and feels nothing; the old Berta symbolically dies, but on the third day she comes to life again when she arrives at her mother's childhood home, La Rioja. The days on the bus are full of nostalgic reflections on the experiences that brought her to where she currently finds herself. By the time she reaches her destination, she has reflected on her relationships and the impact that the society she grew up in has on her. She works through all of the emotions of pain, sadness, regret, remorse, and finally

resolve. Like the words of a song that she hears playing through the bus's radio, the old Berta began dying. Berta knows that leaving home is the only chance she has at living. She is "creating for herself a new identity and purpose that would explain her presence elsewhere" (Lisé, 26). She arrives broken, but with the knowledge that when she puts herself back together, it will be with a new identity.

Throughout the novel, Lisé uses the image of the calla lily to represent Berta's transformation. In her old life, calla lilies adorned her father's funeral, representing sadness and death; however, when Berta sees the flowers at La Rioja she feels a strong desire to live. "I have not felt pain or fear or anxiety, I have not been hungry for anything, not even justice, love or flowers. And now I see the water and I want it, I need it so I can go on living, and I envy those lilies" (Lisé, 32). Her strong desire for water and life represents a re-birth or a baptism. "I am looking at the lilies and I feel, suddenly feel everything: that I need water to live, to be brave, to be able to take that one step that will carry my body over the threshold to somewhere else" (Lisé, 33). For Berta, home represents safety. She allows herself to break down and cry uncontrollably for the first time since watching her lover's murder. She finds peace and comfort in the family that shut out her mother after her betrayal 20 years earlier. Interestingly, she takes comfort in the story her aunt invents for why she has come to La Rioja. It is a story of love gone awry, a story much easier to tell than the truth. Berta does not share her truth at this time, as it is something she wants to erase and forget in her quest to redefine herself. "She realized that she was feeling and hearing her body because it had gotten far away from so much hatred and fear. Now she could allow herself the luxury of actually living in her body and in that way simply survive" (Lisé, 47). The image of Berta finding strength in her survival begins to repeat throughout the novel. Berta emerges from basic survival mode, to actually living. Lisé makes it clear that war cannot destroy

strength that comes from within. She presents us with a character like Berta who has lost everything she ever loved, worked for and believed in and shows us the steps that Berta takes towards reclaiming her place in the world. Her time at La Rioja allows her to heal, and she learns about herself and what makes her happy. Although her transformation is not yet complete, she is finally well on her journey towards a place of healing and open to new possibilities.

In order to help guide Berta by example, Lisé also presents a character who has suffered an even more profound loss than Berta. The character of Lusaper Gregorian, a survivor of the Armenian genocide, provides an image of supreme survival in this novel.

She had lost her teeth, smile, and youthful freshness in the holocaust the Turks carried out against the Armenians in 1915. Those legs, now deformed, had held her up when her village was deported, and they did not stumble even when, to escape from the bayonets, she had to run like a wild animal, thirsty and crazed, through the hottest and reddest sands, stained with the blood of all her siblings, in a desert full of horrors, where mirages and the worst possible monsters had come to life. In just a few short months, practically a whole nation was exterminated; a million and a half people were murdered (Lisé, 125).

It is as if Lisé wants the reader to see that in the face of any situation, characters will rise above and survive. She presents a scene of supreme loss and suffering and then counteracts it with stories of overcoming all of that adversity to become a “brilliant” student and doctor. Lisé adds the character of Lusaper to act as a final reminder to Berta and a catalyst in Berta’s quest for joy in her future. Prior to meeting Lusaper, Berta happily existed, but she was not actually living her true destiny. When Lusaper calls upon Berta to assist in a difficult delivery of twins, Berta once again comes alive. “She was more sure than ever that happiness for her would involve returning

to a hospital to resume her study and practice of medicine” (Lisé, 128). Berta and Lusaper save the life of the pregnant woman and her twins; however, it becomes clear that this scene also serves as a life-saving moment for Berta. Lusaper illuminates the transformation that happens during the delivery and within Berta as they are leaving the property. “As they drove away, Berta turned around to look at the sign at the gate that identified the property: it was called *La Renata*. ‘It is a lovely name for a woman,’ Lusaper murmured as they passed by. ‘She who has been reborn’” (Lisé, 134). In this moment Berta is permanently changed. Her transformation is complete and she no longer suffers from feelings of being lost and without purpose or direction. She is *La Renata*. After her encounter with Lusaper, at the delivery of the baby twin boys, Berta receives additional word from home that she is still being hunted. This news would have devastated the old Berta, but she has come to a point in her life where she realizes that she is in control of her own destiny. It is a powerful moment in the novel, when we see a character that has been profoundly impacted by loss and suffering as a result of the Dirty War, finally experiencing an epiphany that she is in control of her destiny. “But this time, instead of getting upset about the incessant buzzing of horror, the real fear of something so palpable as the murder of a whole generation, her own, this time she felt the joy of thankfulness for support, for the hands that had reached out to help her, all through her life but especially during this escape” (Lisé, 151).

Lisé tells a riveting tale of the impact of the Dirty War in Argentina on the character of Berta and her family. We are able to experience this time in Argentina’s history through the eyes of our narrator. Lisé purposefully allows us to experience this war through Berta’s transformation. This novel shares one individual’s quest to find her future, despite living in a country with a long history where, “Little by little, people were becoming accustomed to living

in shock and horror, and...a silent tragedy was unfolding, a tragedy in which nobody was listening to anybody else or understanding what they were saying, because the shared meaning of the most basic words had been lost” (Lisé, 24). Instead of not listening, we are able to hear Berta’s story—a story that embraces life and lets go of the fatalism that defines this period. The story becomes one of triumph and resurrection. Just as calla lilies at Easter represent re-birth, Berta falls into the depths of despair, only to slowly re-emerge as La Renata: she who has been reborn.

Reference

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Talking Back: A Feminist Examination of How Kate Chopin Uses Edna Pontellier to “Talk
 Back” to a Male Dominated Literary Tradition

Abstract:

Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* is an excellent example of what H  l  ne Cixous calls “  criture f  minine--feminine writing” (Cixous, p. 1942). Chopin addresses sexual exploration and repression of her main character, Edna Pontellier in a manner that exhibits   criture feminine, feminine writing. As an early example of feminist literature, *The Awakening* preemptively answers Cixous’ call to women writers to claim authority as authors. Chopin does, in 1899, what Cixous urges in 1975 when she says, "women must put herself into the text" (Cixous, p.1942). In conjunction with Cixous, the work of Gilbert and Gubar further locates *The Awakening* and Chopin within a feminist literary tradition. An application of Gilbert and Gubar's "anxiety of authorship" can be used to interpret *The Awakening* and the choices Chopin made in creating her main and supporting female characters. Throughout the text of *The Awakening* we see Chopin making several statements against male dominated literary tradition. She uses a traditional male created version of the ideal woman when she writes the character of Madame Ratignolle. She portrays the character of Edna in sharp contrast to everything that Madame Ratignolle represents. For example, where Madame Ratignolle is attentive and loving, Edna is dismissive and selfish. By creating characters who are foils to one another, Chopin personifies her opposition to the expected standards of male dominated literary tradition. **Throughout the course of the novel, Chopin "talks back" to patriarchy by creating a character who undergoes a**

transformation that can be seen as a response to a society where a young woman cannot seek sexual liberation, artistic expression or freedom from societal expectations without facing dire consequences. Chopin made a strong break from the dominant patriarchal tradition that valued quiet, loyal, submissive women when she wrote about Edna's sexual desires for a man other than her husband.

Female writers today have much less holding them back when compared to their counterparts in the 18th and 19th centuries who were holed up like “madwomen” in their “attics” attempting to break through the barriers of a society controlled by the standards of “male dominated literary tradition” (Norton 1924). Feminism is a field of literary theory and criticism that developed in response to the realization that female authors did not hold a valued position in the literary world.¹ Feminist theory embodies several areas related to “rectifying sexist discriminations and inequalities” (Norton 24). Some areas that fall under the Feminist umbrella include bringing to light the impact of male-dominated literature, looking at the roles women play in society and literature, and rediscovering lost women writers. By challenging “sexist representations and values,” feminist theories have created a strong voice for women among literary theorists providing women with a language with which they can challenge the male dominated representations of females in literature. By challenging these representations, feminist theorists are able to instigate major societal changes.

Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar assert that "a literary text 'is inhabited...by a long chain of parasitical presences, echoes, illusions, guests, ghosts of previous texts'" (Gilbert and Gubar,

¹ Feminist Theory is a large umbrella under which multiple approaches to concepts of sex, gender, power, identity, and responses to patriarchy are developed and expressed.

p. 1927). Does Kate Chopin adhere to the parasites of the past in her text, or is she actively talking back to them? One could argue that Chopin pays a nod of recognition to the “parasites of the past” when she creates the character of Madame Ratignolle, who is the ideal mother woman; however, she also creates the character of Edna as a way of attacking the parasites. Writing the character of Edna was an act of survival for Chopin. According to Elaine Showalter in her essay, *Tradition and Female Talent: The Awakening as a Solitary Book*, “By the late 1890’s, when she wrote *The Awakening*, Chopin had come to believe that the true artist was one who defied tradition, who rejected both the ‘convenances’ of respectable morality and the conventions and formulas of literary success” (Showalter, p. 204). Male dominated literature did not give life to characters such as Edna, nor did they allow authors like Chopin to write their own stories or experiences. As a result, Chopin defiantly created a character, Edna, who does not hold a place of prominence in male literary tradition. Although Chopin was well aware that Edna did not fit the mold, it has to feel incredibly frustrating and also exciting to create this character. “Her revisionary struggle, therefore, often becomes a struggle for what Adrienne Rich has called ‘Revision—the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction. . . an act of survival’” (Gilbert and Gubar, p. 1930). Chopin gives life to Edna and, as a result also sheds light on the issues of female authors.

Showalter addresses the importance of Chopin’s work on the landscape of literary tradition. Chopin was not the first female writer of her day; however, her female pre-cursors and contemporaries were not attempting to break new ground. Elaine Showalter addresses the impact of *The Awakening* on feminist tradition “Literature depends on tradition, on shared forms and representations of experience; and literary genres. . . .Generally recognized today as the first aesthetically successful novel to be written by an American woman, it is marked a significant

epoch in the evolution of an American female literary tradition. . . .*The Awakening* broke new thematic and stylistic ground” (Showalter, p. 203). As a result of her break from tradition and what was considered acceptable content by male and female authors in America, Chopin’s work was deemed unworthy. She did not conform to the mold that other authors, such as Nathaniel Hawthorne, John Steinbeck and Ernest Hemingway were following. Showalter describes *The Awakening* as a novel that “represents a literary beginning as abruptly cut off as its heroine’s awakening consciousness. Edna’s explicit violations of the modes and codes of nineteenth-century American women’s behavior shocked contemporary critics, who described *The Awakening* as ‘morbid,’ ‘essentially vulgar,’ and ‘gilded dirt’” (Showlater, p. 204). Kate Chopin lived during a time when patriarchy, “male dominated social order,” was a force to be reckoned with if one were a woman who did not fit into the descriptive role that men used to define the gentler sex (Gilbert and Gubar, p.1923).

Fifty years after *The Awakening* was written, Zora Neal Hurston does not paint a picture of progress for minority authors. In her essay, “What White Publishers Won’t Print,” Hurston speaks specifically about the representation of African Americans in print; however, she also includes minorities in general, women and anyone who is not a white male. Her points directly apply to the plight of feminist authors. She asserts, “Publishing house and theatrical promoters are in the business to make money. They will sponsor anything that they believe will sell. . . . This public lack of interest is the nut of the matter. The question naturally arises as to the why of this indifference, not to say skepticism to the internal life of educated minorities” (Hurston, p.1024). Hurston goes on to say that minorities are better dealt with in terms of stereotypes; therefore, when authors like Chopin and Hurston write characters that do not fit into the stereotypes, they are deemed unpublishable. If an author were to develop a high society female

character who openly expresses sexual desire, or even more shocking, acts on her sexual desire with someone other than her husband, she will find herself facing an outcry of public dissatisfaction. Her work would be deemed corrupt. The publishing worlds of Hurston and Chopin were certainly not the publishing worlds of authors like E.L. James of *Fifty Shades of Grey*. In the book, *Desegregating Desire: Race and Sexuality in Cold War American Literature* by Tyler T. Schmidt there is a discussion of race and sexuality in writing. “Elaine Tyler May observes, ‘From the late forties to the fifties, subordination made the difference between good or bad female sexuality’” (Schmidt, 74). Chopin’s work, *The Awakening* was met with such resistance that it was basically unread by the masses until well into the 1960s. Had it been accepted earlier, chances are that Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar would not be known for “second-wave feminism” and instead they would perhaps be known for 4th or 5th wave feminism. The inability for a work like *The Awakening* to find its way into mainstream readership at the time it was authored, demonstrates the issue that feminist scholars fight to illuminate and rectify today.

Nearly seventy-five years after *The Awakening* was written, feminist theorist Hélène Cixous writes what might be considered a manifesto; *The Laugh of the Medusa* is a call to women writers to write, and more importantly to “write her self” (Cixous, p. 1942). How does one write her self when she is not allowed a voice? Female authors in the 1800’s were expected to write a male version of the female. Chopin had a limited example to follow when developing her female characters. Ironically, one could argue that Edna was created in the image of male author, Gustave Flaubert’s, version of a similar female character, in his novel *Madame Bovary*. The similarities between Edna and Emma Bovary are unmistakable. The definition for the female “self” was created by males, since female authors did not yet have a strong voice in the literary

tradition. America was not ready for characters like Edna, even if they did exist in reality. The voice of women like Edna had not yet been heard on the pages of books in America.

However, one can argue that Chopin did write her self into the pages of her book. Like Edna, Chopin desired autonomy and freedom. While Edna sought sexual liberation, Chopin sought intellectual liberation as demonstrated by writing a “revolutionary book.” She was well-ahead of her time in her development of a character who defies her husband, openly pursues sexual relationships and abandons her children and husband. When Cixous calls for women to write “her self,” one has to wonder if Kate Chopin allowed Edna to defy societal expectations in a way that she herself could never effectively achieve in her own earthly life. Chopin fits the description of the “Madwoman in the Attic” as described by Gilbert and Gubar, since she has masterfully written a moving and important work, only to have it remain unread and hidden from view because of a “male dominated literary tradition” (Gilbert and Gubar, p. 1924). “The female ‘anxiety of authorship’ described by Gilbert and Gubar was an ‘isolation that felt like illness, [an] alienation that felt like madness’ as women writers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries wielded their pens in defiance of the social injunction that writing was not women’s work” (Gilbert and Gubar, p. 1924). As she wrote *The Awakening*, Chopin must have known that her peers would not appreciate her character’s sexual freedom. “Chopin went boldly beyond the work of her precursors in writing about women’s longing for sexual and personal emancipation” (Showalter, p. 203). Just as Chopin knew her work would not exist beyond the societal pressures of her time, so does her character, Edna eventually discover that she cannot exist in the way that she desires, given the societal expectations that she is up against. Clearly, she must remain a devoted and dutiful wife if she wants to fit in to her society.

Edna's death in *The Awakening* can be seen to symbolically represent the death that Chopin may have felt as an author who was unable to have her voice or her work read and valued in a male dominated literary culture. However, Edna creates a survival story for Chopin and her fight to be "re-visioned" as a female author. "The 'anxiety of influence' that a male poet experiences is felt by the female poet as an even more primary 'anxiety of authorship'— a radical fear that she cannot create, that because she can never become a 'precursor' the act of writing will isolate or destroy her" (Gilbert and Gubar, 1929). Unknowingly, Chopin becomes a precursor for other female authors and she helps the field of feminism by illuminating a female author, who represented so much more than just a "madwoman in the attic." Roland Barthes' *Death of the Author* and Michel Foucault's *What is an Author* allow us to examine Kate Chopin as both an "authorial voice" as well as an author whose readers did eventually bring her text to life.

Feminist authors experience conflict with Barthes' assertion that "Writing is the destruction of every voice, of every point of origin. Writing is that neutral, composite space where our subject slips away, the negative where all identity is lost, starting with the very identity of the body or writing" (Barthes, p. 1322). Barthes asserts that the "death" of the author is in fact the "birth of the reader." Even though the author is not literally dead, it is the words that the author has written that have meaning and life, as opposed to the author as "authority." Taking away "intention" from an author and leaving the determining of a work to the reader is in conflict with the feminist author's need to be seen as a part of the text, to write something that reads as feminine and that documents the female experience. However, in the words of Dr. Labbie, "Writing is the emergence of the "I" because the identity that comes out on paper is a unique identity. This connects with fragmentation of the subject. The "I" can only speak through

writing, so there is no singular "Author" sitting in a tower imposing thought from on high" (Labbie, Module 2 Discussion forum). In short, Chopin, as author asserts her authorial voice in the only way that she can, through the words on the page. The feminist author creates the words, and her voice is heard, her voice that has been silenced or unheard before. Foucault uses a discussion of the "author function" to place the author and his/her intentions within the text. "Undoubtedly, this construction is assigned a 'realistic' dimension as we speak of an individual's 'profundity' or 'creative power, his intentions or the original inspiration manifested in writing. . . .The author explains the presence of certain events within a text, as well as their transformations, distortions, and their various modifications" (Foucault, p1484). With a text like *The Awakening*, Chopin's desire to present a new version of the female in literature can be linked to the notion of her authorial voice. She also creates a space for future feminist authors to look to her work as an example of "authority" in feminist literature.

Chopin's authority is present in her representation of female sexuality. In *The Laugh of the Medusa*, Hélène Cixous addresses the issue of sexuality and encourages female authors to write about their own sexual exploration. *The Awakening* was groundbreaking in how it revealed issues of sexuality and sexual exploration in the main character of Edna. Cixous commands the author and her experience to become her text. Chopin's authorial voice as a feminist author can be heard through her text. However, she also points out that because of a strong male tradition of female asexual representation, the desire to explore oneself sexually leaves women feeling like monsters. "Who, surprised and horrified by the fantastic tumult of her drives (for she was made to believe that a well-adjusted normal woman has a . . .divine composure), hasn't accustomed herself of being a monster?" (1943). Women, like Chopin's Edna who stray from their marriages and seek sexual pleasure, know that what they are doing is not considered 'normal' or acceptable

by their society. In fact, if one is married (and a mother), that behavior is perceived as downright monstrous. The patriarchy makes the rules.

Showalter develops this patriarchy based concept when she states, “The nineteenth-century idea of female ‘passionlessness’—the belief that women did not have the same sexual desires as men—had advantages as well as disadvantages for women. It reinforced the notion that women were the purer and more spiritual sex, and thus were morally superior to men” (Showalter, p. 205). Chopin made a strong break from the dominant patriarchal tradition when she wrote about Edna’s sexual desires for a man other than her husband. “No multitude of words could have been more significant than those moments of silence or more pregnant with the first-felt throbbings of desire” (Chopin, 30). Showalter concludes that, “Chopin went boldly beyond the work of her precursors in writing about women’s longing for sexual and personal emancipation” (Showalter, p.203) This is exactly what Cixous encouraged women writers to do in the late 1970’s, so that other women writers will see their voices paving the way for future female authors. Chopin must be crying out in her grave, “Wait, did you read my book? I did this, but nobody heard me.”

Chopin’s work in *The Awakening* demonstrates her place as an early feminist. She was doing what women of her time were not allowed to do. She was talking about sex and desire from a female’s perspective, instead of a male’s perspective. After hearing a story about a woman’s sexual exploration, Cixous reflects on the story when she writes, “I wished that that women would write and proclaim this unique empire so that other women, other unacknowledged sovereigns, might exclaim: I, too, overflow; my desires have invented new desires, my body knows un-heard of songs” (Cixous, p.1943). Chopin has already done exactly what Cixous wants female authors to do when she plays on the role of the monster women versus

the divine mother women in her work. She describes Madame Ratignolle as a “faultless Madonna” and a “sensuous Madonna” and further develops her in contrast to Edna.

In short, Mrs. Pontellier was not a mother-woman. The mother-women seemed to prevail that summer at Grand Isle. It was easy to know them, fluttering about with extended, protecting wings when any harm, real or imaginary, threatened their precious brood. They were women who idolized their children, worshipped their husbands, and esteemed it a holy privilege to efface themselves as individuals and grow wings as ministering angels (Chopin, p.8).

These mother-women would never be represented in a sexual manner. Desire is not part of their vocabulary. Chopin presents their foil in Edna, “Edna felt extremely restless and excited. . . .She wanted something to happen—something, anything; she did not know what. She regretted that she had not made Arobin stay a half hour to talk over the horses with her. . . .But there was nothing else to do, so she went to bed, and tossed there for hours in a sort of monotonous agitation” (Chopin, p. 75). In this scene Edna is depicted as the sexually frustrated character, which is typically a role that belongs to males. In fact, Chopin writes this same scene from the male perspective early on in the story when Edna will not come to bed with her husband. Edna denies her husband’s sexual advance and in so doing asserts her power—something women were never to do.

She heard him moving about the room, every sound indicating impatience and irritation. Another time she would have gone in at his request. She would, through habit, have yielded to his desire; not with any sense of submission or obedience to his compelling wishes, but unthinkingly. . . .

‘Edna, dear, are you not coming in soon?’ he asked again, this time fondly, with a note of entreaty.

‘No; I am going to stay out here.’

‘This is more than folly,’ he blurted out. ‘I can’t permit you to stay out there all night. You must come in the house instantly.’

With a writhing motion she settled herself more securely in the hammock. She perceived that her will had blazed up, stubborn and resistant. She could not at that moment have done other than denied and resisted. She wondered if her husband had ever spoken to her like that before, and if she had submitted to his command, Of course she had; she remembered that she had. But she could not realize why or how she should have yielded, feeling as she did then (Chopin, p.31).

In this scene, Edna awakens from the stupor of patriarchy, which her marriage represents. She asserts “her self” as Cixous wishes all women to do. She is defiant and she is aware of her place. She is no longer gliding through life unaware of how she is being treated and how she is responding to her husband’s treatment of her. Her husband’s desires are apparent and are not met. Edna’s blatant disregard of her husband’s desires represents her new found strength and independence. The reaction from her husband shows that her response is something new and highly disturbing to him. His tantrum is similar to the agitation that she feels later in the story when she becomes more male like in the way her sexual desires are portrayed.

Women who begin to assert themselves and demonstrate independent behavior are seen as “a little unbalanced mentally” (Chopin, p 57). Edna’s husband describes her in this manner in response to her decision to no longer follow the societal expectations placed on her. “Mr. Pontellier had been a rather courteous husband so long as he met a certain tacit submissiveness in

his wife. But her new and unexpected line of conduct completely bewildered him. It shocked him. Then her absolute disregard for her duties as a wife angered him. When Mr. Pontellier grew rude, Edna grew insolent. She had resolved never to take another step backward” (Chopin, p.57). Edna’s treatment of her husband is presented in contrast with Madame Ratignolle who is seen as the purist most beloved image of the Virgin Mary. The Madonna would never dream of defying her husband or talking back to him as a sign disrespect. There is no place in patriarchal society for monster women like Edna. They are banned and shunned. This treatment of monster women carries over to female authors who write about such monstrous topics. Their works are shamed and deemed unpublishable. In short, the monster woman does not hold a place of value—her experience is not considered worthy of discussion. And yes, despite that, Chopin wrote as a monster women, creating a groundbreaking piece of feminist literature.

Sexual exploration is not the only banned form of pleasure for traditional female roles. Cixous carries this theme of pleasure to other areas of a woman’s life where she might find her independence and her passion. “Who feeling a funny desire stirring inside her (to sing, to write, to dare to speak, in short, to bring out something new), hasn’t thought she was sick? Well her shameful sickness is that she resists death, that she makes trouble” (Cixous, p.1943). Chopin was an author who wrote under the “great arm of parental-conjugal phallogentrism” to create female characters that are “creating trouble” by choosing the path of artist. These are the “other” women. “Other” women are depicted in a negative light and looked down upon by their peers. Chopin creates the character of Mademoiselle Reisz to represent the artist/monster/woman. “She was a disagreeable little woman, no longer young, who had quarreled with almost everyone, owing to a temper which was self-assertive and a disposition to trample upon the rights of others. . . .She was a homely woman, with a small weazened face and body and eyes that glowed”

(Chopin, p. 25). There is not a single woman on earth that wants to be depicted like a weasel with small beady glowing eyes. Chopin uses Mademoiselle Reisz to depict the male created image of the monster woman—the unmarried artist, but she also uses Edna to represent Cixous’ “New Woman.” Interestingly, Reisz, the weasel is basically hated by everyone for what she represents in terms of her sexuality and her personality. She is the epitome of the spinster, having never been married or a mother; however, she does earn respect when she plays music. It seems that she does have worth as a form of entertainment; however, this is only respected because it is not a role she tries to take on in addition to being a wife and a mother. If this were the case, she would be looked down upon for wasting sacred parenting time for her selfish endeavors. We see this in the case of Edna, who is not allowed to pursue her artistic desires. In the *The Awakening*, Edna embodies the New Woman when she talks back to her husband when he confronts her for choosing to paint and not conform to the social expectation that she meet her Tuesday callers.

“It seems to me the utmost folly for a woman at the head of a household, and the mother of children, to spend in an atelier days which would be better employed contriving for the comfort of her family.’

‘I feel like painting,’ answered Edna. ‘Perhaps I shan’t always feel like it.’

‘Then in God’s name paint! But don’t let the family go to the devil. There’s Madame Ratignolle; because she keeps up her music, she doesn’t let everything else go to chaos. And she’s more of a musician than you are a painter.’

‘She isn’t a musician, and I’m not a painter. It isn’t on account of painting that I let things go.’

‘On account of what then?’

‘Oh! I don’t know. Let me alone; you bother me’” (Chopin, p. 57).

This exchange between Edna and her husband offers a depiction of how society would respond to a woman who chose to indulge a passion like painting or writing over her family. It would be allowed, as long as it did not interfere with her duties to her family. It would be considered a trivial endeavor and not taken seriously. Mr. Pontellier admires Madame Ratignolle for playing the piano, but that is because he is well aware that she would never put it ahead of her mother-women duties. Artists like Mademoiselle Reisz and Edna are not admired for their focus on themselves. Showalter addresses this point when she says, "Thus artistic fulfillment required the sacrifices of maternal drives, and maternal fulfillment meant giving up artistic ambitions" (Showalter, p. 207). Edna's decision to pursue her art and abandon her husband and children makes her the true definition of the monster women. More than her sexual exploration, the choice to abandon one's family was too shocking for Chopin's readership in the early 1900's

"Writing is precisely the very possibility of change, the space that can serve as a springboard for subversive thought, the precursory movement of a transformation of social and cultural structures" (Cixous, p. 1946). Although Chopin's work did not act as a springboard for transformation at the time it was written, it is an interesting piece to examine because it serves as a precursor to the Feminist movement. Cixous speaks of writing as the possibility of change and she uses the word transformation to indicate the change that she wants to see culturally. Seventy years prior, Chopin also wanted to see a social change. She created a character who went against social and cultural structures; however, Chopin also knew that such a character would never find a happy ever after in her time. So, while Edna pushes the limits of acceptable *écriture féminine*, she also makes a statement in her decision to have this bold new female character end up killing herself. Rather than allowing Edna to live her life as a sexually liberated independent artist, Chopin chooses to illustrate the reality that such women do not maintain their place in society in

reality or in fiction. Ironically, her decision to kill the offending monster women was not enough to have her work accepted into masculine literary society of her time. We learn that female authors were to write as they lived, “Women writers, in other words, were expected to adhere in their writing to the same standards of feminine propriety they were to observe in their personal conduct, and if they did not, then what they did was castigated as ‘unladylike’”(Walker, p. 13). Additionally, reviews said *The Awakening* is not a “healthy book. . . is too strong a drink for moral babes, and should be labeled poison” (Walker, p. 16). “Although there is no evidence that *The Awakening* was ever banned or removed from library shelves in St. Louis (Toth 422-25), the overwhelmingly negative reviews effectively removed the novel from wide circulation and influence for fifty years following its publication” (Walker, p. 17). So, although Cixous calls upon women to write themselves and the reality of being a women, she must also acknowledge that such writing may feel fruitless to authors like Chopin, if there is no place for the writing to go and be heard or read. Chopin met the call to write about women before Cixous made it, but her words fell on deaf ears. Like a child who is punished for talking back, so too is Chopin punished for talking back to male dominated literary tradition. She is shushed and sent to her attic as punishment for talking back to a male-dominated literary tradition that would not accept a female heroine who explores her own sexuality. A character like Edna and a writer like Chopin were only truly set free from the confines of societal expectations after their deaths. Years after Edna’s death in the novel and Chopin’s literal death, they are both examined and applauded for the work that they did in the realm of feminist literature. In death, they have both become legends.

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