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New Possibilities for the ESL Classroom: Toward an Appreciation of Creative Writing

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Cover Page Footnote

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METHODS

New Possibilities for the ESL Classroom: Toward an Appreciation of Creative Writing

Alyssa A. Jewell

“Miss, do you know Bachelard?”

“Have you read Pablo Neruda? We memorized his poems in my country.”

“Where can I read poetry in my language?”

As a teacher of ESL writing and grammar courses at the community college level, these inquiries are only a few that students offer when they find out I write poems, teach creative writing courses, and often assign creative writing projects in ESL classes. This student intrigue in poetry persists as a welcomed joy, leading to engaging classroom conversations similar to those in the creative writing workshops and literature courses I teach. Students want to know more about creative authors, their craft as well as my own, in addition to ways to access more poetry in hopes of experimenting with it in their class writing journals. Many ESL students prove open and even eager for creative writing—to see others’ words as well as their own expressing truth on the page. However, my own ESL teaching experiences reflect a common trend in ESL and EFL classrooms worldwide: creative writing is only sporadically used and rarely, if ever, serves as part of a long-term curriculum.

This article, then, addresses ways that practitioners may begin to bridge the gap between ESL and creative writing while taking inspiration from Gloria Anzaldúa’s iconic explorations about language and identity. In addition to offering my own experience in implementing poetry in the ESL classroom, this article will further highlight studies that feature the short-term use of varied creative writing genres in EFL and ESL college classrooms. Moreover, Felicia Rose Chavez’s scholarship on the anti-racist writing workshop provides a means of practical implementation.

Creativity: Defining Terms

First, it is important to understand how varied linguists have understood the concept of creativity as well as what may constitute a short-term creative writing activity in an ESL classroom. Creativity takes on manifold definitions that focus on some version of the cognitive processes implemented during these non-traditional assignments. Lee (2019) defines creativity as “a complex concept that involves identifying problems, making inferences and new connections, generating new ideas, and communicating results” (p. 239). Vander and Zygiar (2019) identify the five incremental stages of creativity: preparation, incubation, insight, evaluation, and elaboration. Lee (2019) adds flexibility and fluidity of idea generation to this list. Vander and Zygiar specifically identify breaking grammar rules and innovating lexical and syntactical choices as key creative practices for EFL students, as do Rosenhan and Galloway (2019).

Creative assignments that have previously been used in college-level EFL and ESL classrooms may include but are not limited to work within lyrical, concrete, and ekphrastic poetry, short story writing, filling in plots in stories presented in digital game-based learning materials, personal narrative writing, and descriptive paragraph writing. My hope is that by offering a variety of teaching experiences that have utilized creative genres, these examples will provide new possibilities for instructors who may feel more drawn to one type of creative writing or another or who are new to the idea of using creative writing in ESL instruction. As the research shows, ESL instructors often teach in the creative genres in which they feel most comfortable or have a personal interest. It should be noted, additionally, that paying attention to genre can play a key role in sharpening language skills for ESL/ EFL students and fosters “expert readers—of self and other cultures and canons” (Disney, 2014, p. 5).

Opening Doors and Benefiting ESL Learners: A Rationale for Increased Creativity

As aforementioned, so often, creative writing is overlooked as a possibility for fostering learning in the ESL classroom; it is sometimes used sporadically, but hardly, if ever, is used as the basis for a full course curriculum such as an ESL creative writing workshop. Further, implementing creative writing in ESL and EFL classrooms has not yet progressed as the norm for college academic preparation programs. Frequently, creative writing is eliminated in academic preparation classrooms in favor of prescriptive grammar practices and assignments centered around functional communicative competence (Lee, 2019).

Nonetheless, several theorists and practitioners agree that creative writing assignments offer several benefits to the ESL learner. Among them are increased self-esteem and a sense of self-empowerment through building self-identity (Rosenhan & Galloway, 2019; Geok-Lin Lim, 2015; Anzaldúa, 2015 & 1987), increased confidence and an overriding of nervousness about producing language (Lee, 2019), a sense of community building that fosters personal growth (Chin, 2014), as well as increased innovation in language use (Zhao, 2015). Additionally, EFL and ESL students may produce aesthetically pleasing work that promotes subversive, creative use of the grammar and lexical choices in the target language (Hanauer, 2014).

Given the clear benefits of utilizing creative practices in college ESL and EFL classrooms, practitioners in the field would benefit from examining studies that implement creative activities in these educational spaces as well as teaching philosophies and theoretical frameworks around such practices. Practitioners may ask themselves, “How would more widespread use of creative writing assignments for college-level English language learners benefit ESL and EFL students?”

A Framework: A Firsthand Teaching Philosophy and Approach

The studies and teaching experiences highlighted later in this article mainly showcase lesson attempts within a limited period of time which implement creative writing assignments in select classrooms, but some instructors and writers have offered their personal experiences and broader philosophies when using creative genres in the classroom. Particularly of note are Geok-Lin Lim’s (2015) personal observations as both a multi-lingual creative writer herself as well as a practicing cre-

ative writing teacher in ESL classrooms of multiple skill levels.

Geok-Lin Lim highlights two main approaches to language use in creative contexts: “parole” and “langue,” terms that were coined by Ferdinand de Saussure (2011). “Langue” is concerned with the language system shared by a speech community whereas “parole” signifies the act of speaking in actual situations by an individual. Geok-Lin Lim favors a “parole” focus in creative ESL pedagogy and argues that well-known writing teacher, Peter Elbow, practices a “langue” approach which may commonly be found in mainstream writing classrooms. Practitioners, such as Elbow do not make room for what Geok-Lin Lim calls “the complexity of teaching with the ear” that may benefit ESL students in these mainstream classrooms. Elbow’s approach supports listening for patterns in standard English with which ESL students may struggle. Geok-Lin Lim then promotes the idea of:

encouraging the student creation of texts that satisfy criteria operating in the domain of literary arts, which include the qualities of self-expression, aesthetic shape, pattern, structure and form, of the sounds, rhythms, and musicality in the work; the presence of surprise, humor, wit, discovery, and revelation. (p. 340)

Moreover, Geok-Lin Lim advocates for a “show and tell” (p. 339) approach to creative writing teaching as opposed to “show, don’t tell,” a common maxim in creative writing classrooms. She emphasizes “living speech” language that is genuine to the speaker which may take into account pidgin and creole languages, variations of world Englishes, and code-switching. In essence, Geok-Lin Lim is interested in:

a different aspect of education, that of the students’ bildungs, the social, ethical, psychological, emotional and intellectual development of the student, rather than the acquisition of a language skills set, as evidenced in acquisition of vocabulary, grammar correctness, and other language proficiencies. (p. 340)

Geok-Lin Lim’s philosophical approach suggests that creative practices in the ESL and EFL classrooms can be used to promote students’ growth and well-being; the rationale for these practices need not be limited to language acquisition concerns alone.

Identity & Empowerment from a Critical, Theoretical Viewpoint: Gloria Anzaldúa

In a similar yet expansive vein of Geok-Lin Lim’s work, Anzaldúa provides a critical, theoretical perspective on the

importance of creativity and the use of bilingual writing for persons of color in *Light in the Dark/Luz en lo Oscuro* (2015) as well as her most well-known work, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987). As a self-identified Chicana and Mestiza scholar who is a bilingual creative writer, Anzaldúa provides another key voice in the conversation at hand. The scope of her work stretches beyond the realm of linguistics. While her voice is not cited in the linguistics-based studies referenced in this article, it is difficult to imagine a discussion of creativity for language learners without glossing from her key works.

One of the primary aspects that threads throughout Anzaldúa's work is the notion of "psychological borders" and her statement, "rigidity means death" (1987, p. 79). In adapt-

Using the language of one's home life appears important on a number of levels to Anzaldúa, and she reminds readers of the dangers of linguistic prejudice.

ing a porous identity and rejecting boundaries of both the land and the inner-self, a kind of reclamation of power as well as healing can take place for the new Mestiza. How, then, does a Chicana person, for example, inhabit

this consciousness? In her book, *Light in the Dark/Luz en lo Oscuro* (2015), part of this reclamation appears as a repossessing of indigenous spirituality and feminist cultural archetypes. There is also a creative force at play as we read in the introduction to Anzaldúa's work in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*: "its energy comes from continual creative motion that keeps breaking down the unitary aspect of each new paradigm" (2018, p. 1988). Anzaldúa continually seeks her fullest, unrepressed self, and her work will always stem from that pursuit.

In *Light in the Dark/Luz en lo Oscuro* (2015), the section entitled "The ground from which I speak," Anzaldúa explains:

Soy de rancho. I speak and write from what grounds me at any given moment and that hub core of identity— my physical body, the body of a female, a Chicana tejana, embedded in an indigenous Mexicana culture rich in symbols and metaphors, a body immersed in many cultures, a queer body. (p. 182)

Anzaldúa seeks a liberating kind of writing and creation: one that can serve as inspiration for anyone whose native language is not a white "standard" variation of English but who is forced to engage in literacy in this linguistic space that reinforces colonialist structures of power. She promotes the self-exploration of each person's multi-faceted identity.

One instance of that creativity enacted in most of Anzaldúa's works is the use of translanguaging: the process of strategically implementing two or more languages in a given context. Anzaldúa continually provides examples of how to purposefully and artistically use a combination of English and Spanish in selections from *Borderlands/La Frontera* (1987), and she requested the Spanish to English translations not be included in the footnotes for *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism* (2018). This editorial choice speaks to the power inherent in using one's native language. Her work enacts the creative practices she promotes for language learners.

Reading Anzaldúa, then, raises essential questions about the greater significance of using creative, non-prescriptive approaches for English language learners such as: 1) How does refusing translation speak to power dynamics inherent in linguistic choices? 2) How can we encourage more translanguaging in more academic realms? 3) How can creative writing spaces open doors for students of color in terms of shaping identity? Using the language of one's home life appears important on a number of levels to Anzaldúa, and she reminds readers of the dangers of linguistic prejudice. She pushes toward a greater acceptance of all parts of the self that shape one's identity in *Borderlands/La Frontera*: "I will not be shamed again/ Nor will I shame myself" (p. 109). Further, in the same book's section entitled "Linguistic Terrorism," Anzaldúa discusses in depth how language and identity are intertwined and how all the variations of Spanish and English she uses must be accepted on a broader scale in order for her to feel empowered to accept her identity as a Chicana woman (pp. 80-81).

Anzaldúa's work consistently strives toward healing, toward reclaiming all that white people have rejected and attempted to erase about the Chicana identity. She seeks not to stand on an "opposite bank" but rather to stand on "both shores at once, and, at once, see through serpent and eagle eyes" or to disengage completely and create new territory (1987, pp. 100-101). As she reminds us, "the possibilities are numerous" (p. 101). As a bilingual scholar and poet, her work may have significant influence on expanding horizons for creativity in the multi-language classroom.

Previous Studies: Short-Term Usage of Creative Writing Assignments

In some cases highlighted in this section, creative writing activities have been utilized in short-term settings, yielding positive results. Poetry especially serves as an effective means

of creative expression in ESL and EFL classrooms, yet it is often underutilized, if implemented at all. Rosenhan and Galloway (2019) conducted a study where poems were used in a global English classroom in a private Japanese University: “We hypothesize that poems enable learners to develop voice and confidence as English users, foster a positive identity as a legitimate speaker of a global language and subvert native-speaker norms” (p. 2). Their study was guided by the following questions: “Can poems provide a means to show creative self-reflection about the global spread of English?” and “In what ways can they [poems] provide a means of emancipation from ‘native’ English norms in their use of metaphorical language?” (p. 5)

Indeed, the results showed students using multiple instances of metaphoric and metonymic language in their discussions of English, indicating that English has many different varieties, often comparing English to food or water in varied metaphoric ways. A corpus of frequently used words was recorded, and positive and negative connotations for each word were labeled when applicable. Positive and negative associations with metaphors were also noted, for example: “I think English is like a virus” (p. 10). Learners were able to produce poems of nuance—indicating through metaphors such as the wind: (a storm or a breeze) that English can be viewed through multiple, complex lenses, and that lexical choices stem from a variety of social influences within acquisitional contexts. In essence, expressing this nuanced, critical stance toward English allowed students a reclamation of personal power. In this case, poetry provided a means of self-expression and learner agency.

In addition to poetry studies, several creative short-term prose exercises have been widely utilized including game-based learning where ESL students played an interactive, narrative-based video game called, *Her Story*, and responded to the narrative in a series of creative writing assignments (Lee, 2019). In Khorsheed’s 2018 study, twenty-five students at the remedial English learning level at the Arab University wrote descriptive paragraphs of nature scenes under the guidance and use of the British National Corpus. Zhao (2015) offers a study on prose writing and process in the EFL college setting where two students each completed two tasks: a personal narrative and a story continuation task. Both writers engaged in think-aloud writing before and during the production of the work, looking at focus areas such as goal-setting for ideas, content, and evaluating grammar.

In these creative prose studies, students reported positive feedback in reflective surveys, or the researchers measured

growth in content quality based on student work. In Zhao’s report, both participants felt “motivated to negotiate meaning through creative writing when they [found] a medium through which the imagination and imagery relating to the perceived or desired ‘selves’ could be meaningfully played out” (p. 464). In Lee’s study, the majority of students (over ninety percent) engaged in more work than was required, interacted with more games than required, and the surveys about their experiences seemed positive, using words such as “meaningful” and “interesting” (p. 250). The student surveys indicated that interest in the subject matter overrode any nervousness they had about producing language.

While implementing a full semester’s curriculum centered around creative writing in ESL may not prove possible due to curriculum constraints of varied community college classrooms and other ESL learning environments, the studies here may encourage creative writing as a powerful means of satisfying course objectives and indicate there is room for creative writing’s use in the ESL classroom.

Personal Contexts: The Changing Community College Writing Classroom

In my own academic setting at the community college, our ESL program consists of four levels each of Writing and Grammar, Reading and Vocabulary, as well as Speaking and Listening. Students test into the appropriate level in each category and are encouraged to finish the fourth level in all areas before moving on to other coursework including English 101, typically known as freshman composition. Our ESL program is specifically geared toward academic preparation, readying students for the rigors of college learning.

A typical ESL classroom consists of students originating from four or five continents, and on average, twenty or more languages are represented. Our college is situated in a city that is favorable for refugee resettlement, and ESL students are often involuntary immigrants of varied ages. Students may derive from educational backgrounds where rote memorization of lesson material is the norm; therefore, creative writing can present as a novel pursuit. Typical learners may have received previous education in refugee camps or were enrolled in high school ESL or EFL programs of varied resource levels before attending community college.

In recent years, I have mainly focused on teaching fourth level Writing and Grammar (ES 114), the course most crucial for preparing students for success in EN 101. In mainstream

English department course offerings across liberal arts college campuses, creative writing practices may prove common, and more and more, creative projects are emerging as scaffolded, small assignments or even as major assignments in freshman English composition classrooms (Hout, 1996). As our own EN 101 curriculum has changed in the past five years to include several scaffolded, smaller writing projects centered around three major writing projects as well as a final writing portfolio, I have sought to implement comparable assignments alongside the current ESL curriculum. Currently, ES 114 centers around writing four to five 3–6-page essays and reviewing advanced grammar points. Informal writing assignments such as journal entries may be assigned to help support essay preparation.

Instructors in EN 101 are further mindful of implementing writing assignments for authentic audiences; rhetorical moves are well-considered based on context. Writing outside the typical five-paragraph essay is standard practice, and a variety of genres are assigned based on instructor choice. As more and more freshman composition courses across U.S. colleges and universities move in similar directions, ESL academic preparation courses in writing must adapt to meet the changing times, offering students writing for a variety of rhetorical purposes that favor what the New Literacy Movement would identify as “more nuanced, multimodal, and multilingual comprehensions of reading and writing for an increasingly globalized world” (de los Rios, 2017, p. 16). Not only can shorter creative writing assignments help ESL students to write in a new genre that falls outside the five-paragraph essay, but the aforementioned benefits of creative expression can be honed during students’ time in the ESL program. This transitional space can serve as an environment for fostering both academic and personal confidence as well.

Personal Contexts: Creative Writing in ES 114, George Ella Lyon, & *The Poetics of Space*

One need not be a lifelong creative writer to implement creative writing in the ESL classroom. Accessing and creating lesson plans that utilize some mode of creativity can be as complex as the instructor deems appropriate. One of the scaffolded assignments that I offer takes cues from Gaston Bachelard’s *The Poetics of Space* (2014), poet George Ella Lyon (1993), and the Lake Michigan Writing Project for K-12 and community

college teachers of writing. The assignment centers around objects and other concrete nouns, and it could be readily implemented in college-level or high school classrooms. As a poet myself, I enjoy thinking about how Bachelard’s poetics fits in with Lyon’s poem, looking for ways to layer both sources. Instructors who are interested in this lesson could use as little or as much of either author’s materials as they deem appropriate.

Bachelard discusses the connections among home, memory, and image building and considers how the recollection of objects can build worlds in creative work: “Then, from the depths of his corner, the dreamer remembers all the objects identified with solitude, objects that are memories of solitude and which are betrayed by the mere fact of having been forgotten, abandoned in a corner” (2014, p. 161). Bearing in mind the power of concrete nouns and specific details from the writer’s own life, too, students use Lyon’s “Where I’m From” poem as a model for their own poems that focus on environments that have formed their sense of self. Further, in paralleling the EN 101 short assignment scaffolded model, I assign students a “Where I’m From” influence poem that may serve as a springboard for their more expansive critical personal narrative assignment.

Lyon, then, uses objects that metaphorically shed light onto moments from her life as well as recollections of important places, people, and words spoken aloud to her as a young person, and these brief associations construct a portrait of the speaker. In the initial stanza, we find unique objects and spaces: “I am from clothespins/ from Clorox and carbon-tetrachloride. / I am from the dirt under the back porch./ (Black, glistening,/ it tasted like beets)” and later, “I’m from the know-it-alls/ and the pass-it-ons,/ from Perk up! And Pipe down!” Implementing what Heather Sellers would identify as an “imitation poem” (2021, p. 66), ESL students use Lyon’s work to write their own poems that consider various objects, language choices, dialogue, and descriptions of space from their own lives, especially spaces that have proven important to shaping their identities. I model my own “Where I’m From” imitation poem as ESL students are often new to the process of writing poetry. Learners seem to grasp the concept of an imitation poem fairly quickly; they practice writing these poems in their class writing journals initially.

Once students feel confident in their drafts, these poems are then posted to the class online discussion board so peers may engage with one another’s work; this piece of writing also

serves as a classroom-community building activity. Students get to know one another better through these poems that are encouraged to be autobiographical in nature.

When asked if students would be willing to share portions of their poems publicly in this article, I received an enthusiastic “yes” from all participants. Here are a few samples of their lines, the first from a student who chose to focus on natural imagery:

I am from the mountains and rivers./ Clouds softly surrounding the mountaintops./ Fish hiding in the yellow sandy rivers./ I am from the muddy road and little silky rain./ Fresh grass and flowers./ Frogs hiding under the lotus.

Another student offers these descriptive, felt images while practicing translanguaging:

I am from the taste of an early and cool morning./ family breakfast./ a table full of plates of *frijoles de la boyá*, *queso*, *salsa de molcajete*, *tortillas*/ (beans from olla pot, cheese, sauce of stone tool, tortillas)/ I am from December days./ the smell of tamales, atole, and peregrine dancers/ I am from the ‘good morning’ people exchange./ I am from aprons worn by elder ladies/ when going to buy groceries at the corner of the street.

Finally, another writer’s concluding stanza evokes pathos:

I’m from where the skies in the evenings are dressed in beautiful orange and red colors/ and at night they light up with a multitude of beautiful stars./ oh beautiful land that took care of me for so many years./ and that makes me wish that the time will come soon to return to you.

As aforementioned, this sort assignment serves as a stepping stone for longer pieces of writing such as expository essays and personal critical narratives. By considering and writing about meaningful objects and places, the creative doors in students’ minds are opened much wider. Something clicks for students who consider smaller spaces and the objects therein within their own memories; when those objects are given importance, their life stories, too, are given importance in a broader context. Further, as this low-stakes assignment boosts confidence, it may alleviate anxieties that function as stumbling blocks in language acquisition for apprehensive ESL learners.

While this short poetry assignment has produced some of the most image-driven and genuinely-voiced writing I have read from ESL students, I often question how best to help students write about spaces centered around home when, for many of them, their sense of home has been uprooted. At times, I have more questions than answers about how best to help students create meaningful images and overall writing

projects from important yet difficult inner places—a necessary consideration when dealing with many types of creative writing. Indeed, home may exist in the memory, but what effects might present day consciousness about a destroyed home have on the daydreaming that Bachelard (2014) promotes? Home is often spoken about with a sense of love and comfort in his work, and homesickness is a real force, yet how does one write about home and space when one has lived a consistently transient life, moving from refugee camp to refugee camp, from city to city, from country to country? How does one feel about daydreaming of home when, through a Google search, home can be viewed as a bombed-out neighborhood?

Perhaps Bachelard, then, would recommend people to lean into natural spaces, those “ancestral forests” (2014, p. 206), a solution I have offered to anyone who finds these space writing exercises too emotionally taxing when thinking about home. In some cases, even these natural environments may no longer exist in the present day for those students fleeing war-torn countries. A more recently discovered outdoor space might suffice, but would it open doors to felt images in a way that a space which is connected to one’s deep memory might?

As I often think about the difficulties that may arise when students associate spaces with destruction and the trauma therein, I keep myself on the lookout for authors who may have faced similar challenges. First- and second-generation voluntary and involuntary immigrant contemporary poets such as Ocean Vuong (2016), Eduardo Corral (2012), Leila Chatti (2018), and Javier Zamora (2017), among others, offer several facets of writing about and through transitional spaces. Their poems can serve as accessible models for students as they take on autobiographical subject matter.

Additionally, one may look further back to poets who have grappled with the destruction of their homelands after war, such as Paul Celan and the other post World War II *trümmerliteratur* (rubble literature) authors. These writers, in particular, are willing to face mass destruction of their home countries head on in a style that has been described as “clear cutting” in terms of language use. However, many students may not be prepared to write in the bold style that one encounters in Celan’s 1948 “Todesfugue,” for example, an often-cited representative poem of the rubble literature movement that provides a glimpse into the horrors

Nonetheless, I believe it is important for students to be provided with examples of authors who have pursued writing about home spaces in multiple ways.

of Holocaust concentration camps. While writing about and through traumatic spaces may prove a viable exercise for some writers, such exercises cannot be expected to help everyone. Moreover, asking students to face trauma head on for classroom writing assignments may not be considered best teaching practice.

Nonetheless, I believe it is important for students to be provided with examples of authors who have pursued writing about home spaces in multiple ways. For the ESL student, writers who grapple with the psychological borderlands between space and identity, as Anzaldúa brings to light, can serve as invaluable models. For students searching for footing in what may be a new world of poetry, thinking through physical spaces that have left their imprints in the heart and psyche can serve as a gateway exercise into new writing realms.

Big Dreams and Small Sparks: New Possibilities for Creativity in the ESL Classroom

In the future, my greatest dream is to organize an entire semester's creative writing workshop for college-level ESL students, using Felicia Rose Chavez's *Anti-Racist Writing Workshop: How to Decolonize the Creative Classroom* (2021) as a model for how to manage an uplifting creative learning

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environment. In the traditional writers' workshop, students bring in creative work for critique, much in the way that students would take part in the peer review process during a traditional essay-writing assignment. If a college-level ESL classroom were to move toward a significant portion of its structure as grounded in creative activities, more appropriate methodologies for students sharing their creative work with one another should be considered.

As Chavez asserts in *The Anti-Racist Writing Workshop: How to Decolonize the Creative Classroom* (2021), the majority of creative writing workshops that take place across the United States are based on the Iowa Writers' Workshop model, which has been practiced widely in creative writing classrooms since

World War II. This traditional model's practices can create a hostile classroom environment, especially for people of color and other vulnerable populations. Particularly, this model's "gag order," where students are required to sit quietly and listen as peers orally review their work proves an especially problematic practice. Traditional power dynamics that silence people of color in public spaces are called into question in Chavez's work.

As such, Chavez notes several key changes that need to happen in traditional U.S. creative writing classroom settings in order for vulnerable student populations to better thrive in these critical spaces. While Chavez does not note ESL classrooms specifically, this is likely because creative writing is so little practiced in these settings. If ESL and EFL instructors hope to bring creative writing into their learning environments at an increased level, Chavez's key takeaways should be addressed. Her main considerations are as follows:

As aforementioned, it is imperative that students are given space to talk during their workshop.

The teacher should not be the center of the classroom nor have the final word when the student is discussing their work. Rather, the classroom should be student-centered. The student should control the conversation around their work, asking questions that are important to them and what they hope to gain from the creative process. This advice complements the notable Interaction Hypothesis in linguistics studies that proposes the effectiveness of learning new language through personal and direct interaction (Gass & Mackey, 2006).

Students are encouraged to invest in one another, to seek to understand one another's work and the intentions therein, rather than to retort. Discussions around students' hopes, fears, and expectations for themselves and for their own work are encouraged. Dialogue within the classroom as a whole is highly encouraged.

While an entire creative writing workshop for ESL students would be empowering and ideal, one must consider that many academic ESL programs deal with curriculum and time constraints. Nonetheless, the possibilities for implementing some creative writing in varied classrooms has its benefits and room for expansive applications, as the studies and classroom narratives within this article demonstrate.

In moving forward, ESL educators may ask themselves where creative writing assignments could fit in alongside current assignments. What assignment substitutions could take place that allow for outlets in creativity while still maintaining learning objectives? ESL teachers are well-versed in consider-

ing complex concepts and reworking them for the appropriate level for the learners in their classrooms. Increasingly, ESL teachers are learning what Anzaldúa has known all along: creativity opens doors for language learners. There is room for expansive application in this growing, promising field in ESL education.

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