

Special Issue of *The Journal of Literature in Language Teaching*
**Empirical Studies of Creative Writing in the Second Language Classroom:
Challenging the Oxymoron**

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Editorial

The concept of second/foreign language creative writing is still considered by some as an oxymoron and the idea that creative writing can and should be taught in the language classroom is still often seen as incredulous. Equally puzzling to some is the idea that the investigation of L2 creative writing should be an empirical endeavor directed by quantitative or mixed methods designs. The current Special Issue of *The Journal of Literature in Language Teaching* is dedicated to the investigation of creative writing in the language classroom using empirical methodologies and aims to offer some insight into what a teaching and research agenda dedicated to creative writing could look like. We offer data, research approaches and some outcomes with which to consider the fascinating aspects of second/foreign language creative writing.

In these studies, we also offer conceptual and methodological models that may be used to research creative writing across the curriculum. As the humanities, at least in the US, faces threats of lost funding, we may be called upon to defend ourselves and our importance to higher education more convincingly. We may find it useful to point to cross-disciplinary movements such as STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics) and learning activities such as science-fiction prototyping, which illustrate how creative writing supports areas of study that government's value. Yet while creative writing is already being used in other disciplines to spark students' imaginations in the sciences, what remains is for creative writing scholars to bring to the table what we know about the process and teaching of creative writing to support systematic study of how creative writing assignments and experiences may engage and motivate students.

The studies presented in this Special Issue emerged from a two-year research group situated at Indiana University of Pennsylvania dedicated to the investigation of creative writing with second/foreign language learners. The research group was comprised of a very international group of investigators all interested in the intersection of writing and language teaching. As with many teachers in the language arts, access to empirical methodologies was partial and understanding

and exposure to creative writing was limited. But as with any research groups, extended shared work and cooperation leads to positive outcomes. We mention this in the introduction to this special issue as a way of saying that the people who conducted the studies presented here did not necessarily start with deep understandings but developed through reading, writing, researching and presenting their findings. Similarly, our hope is that by sharing our collective output in a single volume, it will inspire others to join us in this endeavor and to conduct their own studies of creative writing in the language classroom. As evidenced here, there is still much that we do not know and would like to know about the pedagogical, textual, psychological and sociological aspects of creative writing in the language classrooms across the world.

We do, however, make a start and build upon previous work conducted in this area. The papers in this special cover three main topics: 1) *Genre Characteristics and Differences between Poetry and Prose*; 2) *Poetry Writing Ability and Processes*; and 3) *Poetry Pedagogy and Evaluation*. Together this set of papers with their adjacent literature reviews and methodological approaches enhances our current knowledge particularly in relation to poetry writing in the language classroom and sets an agenda for future research in this area.

As stated above, we think the collection of papers presented here provides an interesting introduction to a series of issues relating to L2 creative writing. This is intended to raise more questions than it answers, and we hope that any thoughts emerging from the reading of these papers will lead you to consider your own projects. Finally the editors of the special issue would like to thank the leadership of *The Journal of Literature in Language Teaching* for the opportunity to develop and present this collection of papers and results from our research endeavors in the arena of creative writing in a second language.

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